

Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 06. No. 145 Zilhajj 28, 1445 AH Friday July 05, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

Pakistan committed to strengthen SCO for peace: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to SCO objectives of peace and prosperity, urged the member states to put in their collective efforts against terrorism, poverty alleviation and dispute resolution, particularly the on-going Israeli barbarism in Palestine.

"I reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to working together to strengthen SCO as an active and integrated regional forum to achieve the common objective of peace and prosperity in line with the Shanghai spirit," the prime minister said addressing the 24th Summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which commenced here in the capital city of Kazakhstan.

Titled "Strengthening Multilateral Dialogue - Striving Towards a Sustainable Peace and Prosperity", the summit is being attended by leaders from Pakistan, China, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkiye, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, India and others.

The prime minister's address encompassed all major regional and international issues, including terrorism and extremism, Islamophobia, instability in Afghanistan, poverty, climate change, regional connectivity, and resolution of disputes.

The prime minister said that Astana held significance for Pakistan where the country had formally joined the SCO in 2017 and congratulated Belarus for being the newest member.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is being received by President of Kazakhstan H.E. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as he arrives at the Independence Palace of Astana to attend Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit.

Political process necessary till grassroots level for making Balochistan complete hub of peace, stresses Chairman PPP

Bilawal Batutto Zardari says narrative of terrorism has to be defeated to foil nefarious designs of terrorists; urges Balochistan government to expedite compensation process initiated for affectees of 2022 floods

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has emphasized upon initiating political process up to grassroots level in order to make Balochistan complete hub of peace. He also stressed that the narrative of terrorism should have to be defeated for foiling the nefarious designs of terrorists.

The Chairman PPP hailed the first Youth Policy and stressed to implement it fully so as to provide maximum opportunities to youngsters.

He directed to complete the projects of health

in the province immediately.

In addition to this, the Chairman Bilawal directed to expedite completion of the project of construction of homes for those affected in the floods of 2022 in the province.

Similarly, he directed to take steps on emergent basis for improving the infrastructure all over Balochistan.

The Chairman PPP expressed these views and issued directives during briefing conducted for him about the overall performance of the provincial government in different sectors here on Thursday.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Italian Ambassador Marilina ARMELINI.

Scholars, religious leaders meet DG Rangers to discuss Muharram security measures

KARACHI (INP): Delegations of scholars and prominent religious figures from various schools of thought and the Bohra community met with Major General Azhar Waqas, Director General of Pakistan Rangers Sindh, at the Rangers headquarters to discuss security measures for Muharram-ul-Haram.

During the meeting, the DG Rangers briefed the scholars on the security arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram and religious gatherings of the Bohra community, according to a Rangers spokesman on Thursday. He assured that comprehensive security measures would be imple-

mented by Rangers and other law enforcement agencies to maintain law and order. The DG Rangers encouraged all scholars to promote solidarity, religious harmony, and tolerance.

It was agreed that, following the provincial government's directives, full compliance with existing laws and codes of conduct would be ensured, with strict action against violators. The meeting participants also pledged their cooperation in identifying individuals spreading religious hatred and violence. They expressed their satisfaction with the security arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram.



ASTANA: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz in a group photo with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus Summit, held in Astana.

Pakistan to pursue anti-terrorism, dispute resolution, multilateralism goals during UNSC term: PM

Demands Israel's accountability for war crimes in Palestine

ASTANA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday while calling effective multilateralism a key to address regional and global challenges, reiterated Pakistan's commitment to just and peaceful resolution of outstanding and ongoing disputes, opposing unilateral and illegal use of threats or force, and combating terrorism.

The prime minister, addressing the summit of SCO Plus format, said during its 2025-26 term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, "Pakistan remains committed to pursuing just and peaceful resolution of outstanding and ongoing disputes, opposing resort to unilateral and illegal use of threats or force, combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and advancing SCO

agenda in partnership with member states." The SCO Plus format meeting was held on the sidelines of the 24th Summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) at the Palace of Independence in the capital city of Kazakhstan. The prime minister told the gathering that complex global and regional challenges could be best addressed through effective multilateralism within the UN framework.

He said Pakistan brought to the UNSC its rich experience and expertise, and strong legacy of contributions towards the maintenance of peace and security.

He congratulated President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev for holding the SCO summit and expressed the hope

that the Astana Declaration and other documents adopted at the event would go a long way in strengthening efforts for the objectives of peace and prosperity. Highlighting the increased incitement to hatred and discrimination based on race and religion, in particular Islamophobia, climate-induced disasters and post-COVID-19 impacts on the countries, he said the challenges necessitated unity of thought and action, upholding the value of peaceful coexistence, resolving disputes, and reposing confidence in multilateralism.

He also drew attention to the unprecedented sufferings of Palestinian people, including the killing of over 37,000 people and displacement of millions others. He also endorsed the UNHRC Council's Commission of

Inquiry report calling Israel's acts war crimes and the International Court of Justice terming it genocide, besides calling for accountability.

"We must call upon the international community, in particular the UN Security Council, to uphold its responsibility and ensure an immediate ceasefire, free flow of humanitarian assistance, and protection of civilians in Gaza. UN must ensure the implementation of its resolutions for peaceful settlement of all long-standing disputes," he remarked.

Highlighting the issue of climate change, the prime minister mentioned the 2022 floods in Pakistan causing an "unimaginable loss" of lives and properties despite the country's minimal contributions to carbon omission.

On SCO sidelines, PM Shehbaz interacts with world leaders

ASTANA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday interacted with world leaders as they gathered here in the capital city of Kazakhstan to attend the 24th summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

On the sidelines of the summit, the prime minister interacted with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres and discussed regional and international matters. He also had an interaction with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan, Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov and President Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus, and discussed bilateral and other matters of mutual interest.

Italian Ambassador meets Interior Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Marylina Ermelin on Thursday met with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Discussing the bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest in the meeting, the interior minister told the ambassador about his recent very successful and effective visit to Italy.

Mohsin Naqvi told the ambassador that in a meeting with the Italian Minister of the Interior, it was agreed to work together against illegal human trafficking and in this regard, a delegation of the Italian Ministry of Interior will soon visit Pakistan.

The delegation will meet Pakistani authorities and visit the border. Naqvi told the ambassador.

He said that in order to prevent drug and human trafficking, the two countries will have to strengthen mutual cooperation and there will be no compromise on human trafficking and all possible steps are being taken to control it.



QUETTA: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari presiding over a meeting at Chief Minister's House. Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, Provincial Ministers, and senior officials provided briefings on health, education, law and order, and other flagship programs.

Commissioner Karachi chairs rain emergency meeting

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi presided over a meeting regarding rain emergency here on Thursday. The meeting reviewed the progress of cleaning storm water drains and other preparations for expected monsoon rains.

The Deputy Commissioners, KMC, PDMA, Water Corporation, Cantonment Boards and other civic agencies officials briefed the Commissioner about the step being taken for implementation of decisions made in the previous rain emergency meeting.

The deputy commissioners briefed the meeting about the arrangements being made for the desilting of storm water drains by KMC and deployment of de-watering pumps and staff required.

Senior Director municipal services KMC Zulfikar Ali Abro told the meeting that work of cleaning were being carried out on 30 drains.

He presented a list of drains where work had begun.

The Commissioner stressed the need to speed up the cleaning of storm drains and asked Deputy Commissioners to coordinate with utility departments for facilitation to the kmc for the cleaning work of nullahs.

The meeting decided that KMC would submit a weekly progress report on the cleaning of storm drains.

The meeting also discussed the need for a comprehensive plan for dewatering rainwater from low-lying areas, underpasses, and roads.

KMC and other stakeholders would ensure the availability of dewatering pumps and machinery.



KARACHI: Teachers from Interior Sindh protest in front of Sindh Assembly in the Provincial.

CM presents Sindh Govt's 15-year progress through pictorial presentation

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, under the banner of Vision Sindh, on Thursday toured various areas of the province to showcase the development initiatives undertaken by the PPP government over the past 15 years through pictorial and video representations on a big screen at the Auditorium of the provincial assembly to the participants.

The members of civil society, representatives of chambers of trade and commerce, media houses and their associations such as APNS, PBS and CPNE, religious leaders of different faiths, provincial ministers, Chief Secretary, IG Police and secretaries of various departments attended the first ever such an elaborated and comprehensive presentation.

The chief minister stated that the total power generation based on Thar coal was 3240 MW. He provided a breakdown, explain-

ing that Thar Coal Block-I, which was installed for \$2 billion, generates 1320 MW. Thar Coal Block-II has generated 660 MW since July 2019. Thar Energy Limited has been generating 330 MW since September 2022. Thal Nova Power Thar Limited has been generating 330 MW since February 2023, and Lucky Electric Power at Port Qasim has been generating 660 MW since March 2022.

Murad Shah mentioned that Thar Block 1 and II alone would ensure the energy security of the country by generating power from local resources, saving foreign exchange.

The CM also mentioned that the ongoing projects, including Coal to Gas fertilizer, Keti Bandar Park of 10,000 MW, and Dhabaji Special Economic Zones, would help ensure the economic security of the country once they are commissioned.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori presenting a bouquet to Consul General Conrad Tribble during a ceremony at US Consulate in connection with Independent Day of America.

SC suspends LHC decision, ECP notifications on tribunals' formation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday suspended the verdict of Lahore High Court (LHC) and the notification of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding the establishment of election tribunals, and ordered to address the matter with consultation.

A five-member larger bench, led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprised on Justice Amin Ud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Aqeel Abbasi heard the appeal against the establishment of election tribunal.

In its order regarding the hearing, the court said that the ECP's lawyer showed the letter dated June 27, to the registrar LHC. The ECP first wrote letters to the high courts of

four provinces for establishment of election tribunals. The first two tribunals were formed with collaboration of LHC which were insufficient, after that the names of six more judges were sent by the LHC as tribunals. It said that the ECP appointed only two judges out of six as tribunals. The dispute rises after the LHC formed more tribunals, it added.

The top court said that the ECP is a constitutional institution while the Chief Justice LHC is also the head of a constitutional institution. The matter could have been resolved if a meeting of chief justice LHC and ECP convened, it said, adding that the top court respects the both institutions. The order said that the the Supreme Court left the matter to the consultation of the Chief Justice LHC and the ECP.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui meeting with Deputy Speaker of New York State Assembly Mr. Philip Ramos at Ministry of Education.

Minister inaugurates people's bus service in Nawabshah

HYDERABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Health and Population Welfare Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho on Thursday inaugurated the People's Bus Service provided by the Sindh Government for District Shaheed Benazirabad at DC Office Shaheed Benazirabad.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Azra said that the People's Bus Service is a gift from the Sindh government to the citizens of Shaheed Benazirabad due to the efforts of Member National Assembly Mifza Bhutto Zardar.

She also said that the vision of Pakistan People's

Party is to serve the people and efforts will be made to provide People's Bus Services to other cities of the district soon. Special persons will be able to travel free of charge in the People's Bus Service which will be started from today, she added.

She further said that soon NIVCD project will be start in Nawabshah as Zafar Arain has given place, while the services of BIUT are also being started soon, the provincial minister added that the promises made by the PPP to the people of Shaheed Benazirabad are being fulfilled.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Elusive justice

In Pakistan, justice of any form is, more often than not, difficult to come by. Recently, judges and prosecutors from across the country found themselves in agreement at a seminar in Karachi on the need to urgently reform the colonial-era Code of Criminal Procedure, which, it seemed from the discussion, was the biggest hurdle they faced in ensuring justice.

Several other proposals also came forth, among which were some to improve the investigation and prosecution of criminal activity through improved coordination and communication between investigators and prosecutors, with a view to preventing the collapse of cases due to insufficient or defective evidence.

Other recommendations included the introduction of deterrent measures to prevent frivolous and false litigation, a pervasive issue plaguing the legal system. Yet more changes were sought from the legislative branch, including depoliticisation of the police and proactive legislation on legal reforms from the political leadership.

One need only conduct a brief survey of those who have come into contact with the legal system to realise that it is fundamentally broken. From antediluvian laws to a corrupt enforcement apparatus, from a perennially understaffed judicial system to inept prosecution and perverse penal systems — none work towards ensuring justice, one of the most basic duties of any state towards its citizens.

These days, it is just as common for the accused to walk free in instances where it seems obvious that a crime has been committed as it is for a seemingly innocent citizen to be punished for an obviously fabricated crime for which there is no compelling evidence on the record. It is no wonder, then, that victims often run from the justice system, instead of turning to it: they would rather resign themselves to living with injustice than dare to hope for reparations from the state.

A similar sentiment was expressed by former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on the same day the Pakistan Prosecution Forum was discussing reforms. Perhaps exasperated by an accountability case which has, by Mr Abbasi's account, "been pending for five years without progress", the politician said the country "will not progress till NAB exists". NAB, the state's tool of choice for putting out-of-favour politicians out of commission, has provided some of the most prominent examples of how perverted our legal system can be.

However, as discussed earlier, the actual problem is much deeper. Till the Pakistani justice system institutionalises the fundamental principles of justice — fairness, equality and entitlement — it cannot fulfil its responsibilities. It also seems that the tools it is equipped with — ie, various laws and procedures — are insufficient for this purpose. Therefore, the legislature needs to step up and address the existing deficiencies in the legal system. This is one of the most pressing issues of our time.

Mango diplomacy

F.S. Aijazuddin

It was a brave attempt. Our embassy in Washington, after having failed to stem the tsunami of the US Congressional vote on Resolution HR 901 (368 for, seven against) threw a mango party to influence Biden's faltering administration.

The last time this friendly fruit had been used in our diplomacy was in the 1950s, when some mangoes grown in the Chinese embassy (then in Karachi) were sent to Chairman Mao Zedong.

Later, president Ziaul Haq tried to sweeten Mrs Indira Gandhi's sourness with lychee juice. She remained unmoved. To her, it tasted of military blanco.

At the recent mango party in DC, the guest of honour — Elizabeth Horst, principal deputy assistant secretary in the State Department — spoke feelingly about the Pak-US "long-standing relationship" as being in "the best place it's been in years". She neglected to say that she was there out of official necessity, nor that she was on her way to Sri Lanka as the next US ambassador there.

Nor did she dilute the message by the bipartisan US House of Representatives, urging President Joe Biden "to collaborate with Pakistan in upholding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law". The House assumes that 81-year-old Biden is still composed and can remember where Pakistan is.

Biden has probably forgotten that he came to Lahore on Feb 18 to monitor the 2008 general election. He asked a minister in the interim Punjab cabinet what would be the outcome. He was told: "The parties have to accept its conduct, its consequences, and the novelty of a coalition government." The results came in. The PPP and PML-N had to form a coalition government. They fell

out. The PPP then allied itself with the MQM, ANP and JUI-F.

Sixteen years have passed since the time when the US felt Pakistan was important enough to send three senators there to report on its general elections. Now, if we appear on the State Department's screen, it is for the wrong reasons.

Resolution HR 901 should not have come as a surprise, either here or in the US. It had been gestating since November 2023, a bipartisan indictment, parented by a Republican from Georgia and a Democrat from Michigan. It emphasised "the importance of free and fair elections, calling for a thorough and independent investigation into any claims of interference or irregularities in Pakistan's 2024 elections".

It also "urged Pakistan to uphold democratic and electoral institutions, human rights, and the rule of law, and respect the fundamental guarantees of due process, freedom of press, of assembly, and of speech of the people of Pakistan". Contestants in Miss Universe pageants have made more convincing appeals for world peace and harmony.

Going further, "the resolution condemned efforts to suppress democratic participation in Pakistan. It specifically denounced harassment, intimidation, violence, arbitrary detention, and restrictions on internet access, as well as any violations of human, civil, or political rights". Every-thing, except the stinking kitchen sink.

Our missions in Washington and the UN had enough notice of HR 901 to sandbag against its impact. Our government, awakened from a cipher-induced stupor, reacted by shooting its messengers. It removed our representatives in Washington and New York.

Their replacements

have a difficult task ahead. They have to develop a strategy that must anticipate Biden's funeral without sporting black armbands. They must prepare themselves for the probable (inevitable?) coronation of Donald Trump.

A hurricane of change is blowing through the world's democracies. Great Britain is likely to have a Labour government after 14 years of continuous Conservatism. In France, Macron watches helplessly as its electorate oscillates between the far right and far left. Iran's voters are being asked to choose between hardliner Saeed Jalili and the relatively less conservative Masoud Pezeshkian. The low turnout of Iranian voters reflected their diminished interest.

In such a volatile environment, the natural question is whether our Foreign Office is equipped to do its job. Gone are the days when India's MEA envied Pakistan's nimble diplomacy. They begrudged that we got more of a bang for our buck.

Today, our foreign ministry is in the hands of a former chartered accountant. He divides his time between part-time responsibilities as deputy prime minister and his enduring love, the finance ministry.

Some in the foreign ministry think we should not take Resolution HR 901 seriously. Others apprehend that the massive endorsement of it is a warning to our government that we are losing friends faster than a politician sheds principles. The Chinese, the Saudis, the UAE, and now the US are palpably inching away from us. Isolation, to paraphrase Paul Cezanne, may temper the strong; it is the stumbling block of the uncertain. - Courtesy Dawn

Peace or weapons?

Naeem Sadiq

On Feb 28, 2013, the then interior minister Rehman Malik, in a written reply, informed the National Assembly (NA) that his ministry issued 11,776 prohibited bore arms licences in 2008; 27,551 in 2009; 5,789 in 2010; 8,369 in 2011; and 15,988 in 2012, thus empowering parliament with 69,473 prohibited bore weapon licences. A simple calculation suggests that on average every MNA got 203 prohibited bore weapon licences over a period of five years. This must be the world's most well-armed parliament, whose assets could spark envy in any member of the National Rifle Association (NRA).

On Aug 21, 2019, the government issued SRO (1)/2019, lifting the ban on issuance of prohibited bore weapon licences for nine categories of individuals — the president, prime minister, Senate chairman, NA Speaker, governors, chief ministers, federal ministers, Supreme Court and high court judges. They were now free to purchase or receive as gifts lethal weapons of "prohibited" bore category. The notification was objected to by a Supreme Court judge who wrote, "the judges' code of conduct did not permit receiving such gifts. What moral authority will the government exercise in tackling the spread of weapons by encouraging the spread of yet more lethal prohibited bore weapons?"

On Sept 25, 2021, the government announced a yet more crazy and classist notification extending the list of beneficiaries of prohibited bore weapons licences to include all members of the Senate, the national and provincial assemblies, and all Grade 21 and 22 officers. Generously, it clarified that they were all entitled to

not one but two prohibited bore arms licences.

In 2024, information received under the right to information law revealed that KP had issued 68,9510 arms licences in the last 10 years, while Sindh blessed its citizens with 115,467 in the same period.

It is beyond comprehension that a nation in such dire need of peace and tolerance would engage in such proliferation of the instruments of crime, violence and militancy. One can safely assume that every gun licence in Pakistan was issued without mandatory verification, training, background check or written test. They were either issued as an act of appeasement or through political clout, status, power or bribe. Perhaps, Pakistan could have had greater success in combating terrorism if, instead of the wishy-washy "20-point National Action Plan", it had chosen just a single-point agenda of eliminating all weapons. Here is how it could still be accomplished.

The government must understand that crime and militancy in Pakistan stems from its own flawed arms-promoting policies, its legal and illegal gun-licensing facilities and its failure to monitor the sale, smuggling and spread of weapons. Arms possession must be declared as the exclusive domain of the state; no citizen, regardless of his or her status, wealth, influence or political clout, should be allowed to possess, carry, store, buy, sell or display a weapon — licensed or otherwise.

In compliance with Article 256 of the Constitution, private militias operated by militants in urban, riverine and mountain areas, regardless of their size and patrons, must be dis-

banded via the full might of the state. The import, sale, purchase, transportation, delivery and possession of all kinds of weapons — except those in use by law-enforcement agencies — must be banned. Issuance of all types of gun licences be banned; those already issued must be declared null and void. The discriminatory and discretionary Arms Ordinance should be struck down. Starting with unlicensed weapons, all citizens must be made to surrender their weapons through an incentivised buy-back scheme.

Private weapons manufacturing in areas like Darra Adam Khel ought to be regulated and directed towards export rather than home consumption. The Small Arms Survey (Switzerland), in its 2018 report Estimating Global Civilian-Held Firearms Numbers, estimates 43.9 million guns held by civilians in Pakistan — far more than the combined number held by all the law-enforcing organisations of the country. We could learn much about gun control from Australia, the UK, New Zealand, Japan, China and Vietnam, which have successfully and smartly tackled this menace. On the other hand, successive Pakistani governments have contributed actively to violence and militancy via the issuance of uncontrolled gun licences, creating special provisions of prohibited bore arms for its militant elite (violation of Articles 25 and 256), using weapons as an instrument of political bribe and neglecting the rampant smuggling and sale of illegal arms. It has two choices: pursue peace and progress or remain embroiled in the world of militancy and armed militias. It would do well to log out of its NRA mindset. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Privatization Commission asked for ensuring cooperation with companies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatization, Investment Board and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday directed that all stakeholders should be taken on board for the privatization of national institutions and the Privatization Commission should ensure its full cooperation to the companies coming forward with serious offers.

The minister was chairing a high-level meeting of the Board of Privatization Commission to finalize the privatization

of various institutions and regarding important issues related to it, said a press release.

Abdul Aleem Khan said the Prime Minister wants the privatization of PIA as soon as possible so there should be no further delay while completing the remaining process in this regard. He said that Privatization Commission should attain financial autonomy by reducing its dependence on the Federal Government and ensure increase in its own resources. Moreover, Federal Minister

Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister of Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb and Minister of Law Azam Nazir Tarrar held a meeting to review the progress on privatization of House Building Finance Corporation. In this meeting, it was agreed that the protection of the employees of the institution will be kept in view during its privatization. The technical and legal aspects of the privatization of the House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) were also discussed in the

meeting and a negotiation session was held with business group interested in purchase of the HBFC along with the officers of the Privatization Commission. Minister for Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan directed that all proposals for privatization should be opened in front of cameras in the presence of the media so that there should be no question on its transparency. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarrar also emphasized on the privatization.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation / Chairman Privatisation Commission, Abdul Aleem Khan chairing 220th meeting of the Privatisation Commission Board.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, and Country Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mr. Yong Ye, met at BISP Headquarters, Islamabad to discuss empowering BISP beneficiaries through innovative skill development and global job market integration.

Shaza advocates for enhancing technological exchanges between Pakistan, China

ISLAMABAD (APP): State Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja has advocated for enhancing technological exchanges and cooperation between Pakistan and China, aiming towards a more robust digital future together.

In an interview with China.com.cn, she highlighted China's transformative digital economic development as nothing short of a miracle and expressed her anticipation for

strengthened technological collaboration between the two nations. Currently in China to attend the 2024 Global Digital Economy Conference at the Beijing National Convention Center, Shaza Fatima Khawaja believes the conference will catalyze meaningful cooperation. It offers a platform for companies from both countries to explore joint ventures, share best practices, and engage in knowledge exchange.

She said that China has established its leading

position in global technology and innovation. China's progress in artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing and 5G technology is particularly remarkable, she added. The Minister said, the Belt and Road Initiative and the Digital Silk Road project demonstrate that China is committed to building an interconnected and technologically advanced world. In recent years, the global economic landscape has witnessed a digital revolution.

NY State Assembly Deputy Speaker meets Minister for Commerce

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level delegation led by Deputy Speaker New York State Assembly Phil Ramos on Thursday met with Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan to explore the avenues for enhancing mutual trade interests between the two regions.

The meeting emphasized several key areas of collaboration, including the establishment of a Sister State relationship between New York and various Pakistani provinces, which would

NA Committee for ensuring resource mobilization for farmers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Food Security and Research on Thursday emphasized the need to ensure farmers support with resources mobilization such as high-quality seeds, fertilizers and access to credit for sustainable agriculture development in the country.

Chaired by Syed Hussain Tariq as its Chairman, the Committee

also stressed the need to focus on expanding research initiatives to develop climate-resilient crop varieties to maintain national food safety and security, said a press release. The Committee underscored the importance of investing in agricultural research and development (R&D). They proposed increasing funding for agricultural universities and research institutions to develop new farming techniques and seed varieties.

EuroAsia Pak Digital Forum to forge new digitalized CPEC

BEIJING (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunications, Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that in the next stage, the collaboration between Pakistan and China would extend from traditional to new or upgraded economic corridors such as transportation, circulation and exchange of data.

"Pakistan's human resources could not be underestimated in the world. 60% of our population is under the age of 35, which is both an opportunity and a challenge. By working

closely with China to provide systematic sci-tech training to such a huge talent pool, we are going to maximize the role of our valuable resources in such a digital age," she said at the EuroAsia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum held in Beijing.

The Minister gave a detailed introduction to the experience gained by Prime Minister Sharif after his recent visit to China with a delegation, repeatedly emphasizing that the Pakistani government has regarded the digital field as a top priority for current

governance, CEN reported on Thursday.

Dr. Zhao Baige, recipient of the "Medal of Excellence Crescent" National Honorary Medal of Pakistan, echoed by a series of specific suggestions. "Training of all types and levels badly need to be a top priority. Training at not only the government level, but also non-governmental and corporate levels should be included in the entire system, due to the cross-border connections are the key to the success of the entire digital economy revolution."

S.Arabia wins Presidency of ACAO Executive Council

RIYADH (SPA/APP): The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia unanimously won the presidency of the Executive Council of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO) during the 28th Ordinary General Assembly meeting in Rabat, Morocco. Minister of Transport and Logistic Services, Eng. Saleh Al-Jasser, stated that this victory reflects the Kingdom's high status in international and regional organizations.

BISP-ADB to connect beneficiaries with global job markets and skill programs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mr. Yong Ye. Speaking on the occasion, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the need for ADB's assistance in developing skill enhancement initiatives and connecting beneficiaries to international job markets. "ADB's support in designing these programs will be instrumental in breaking the cycle of poverty."

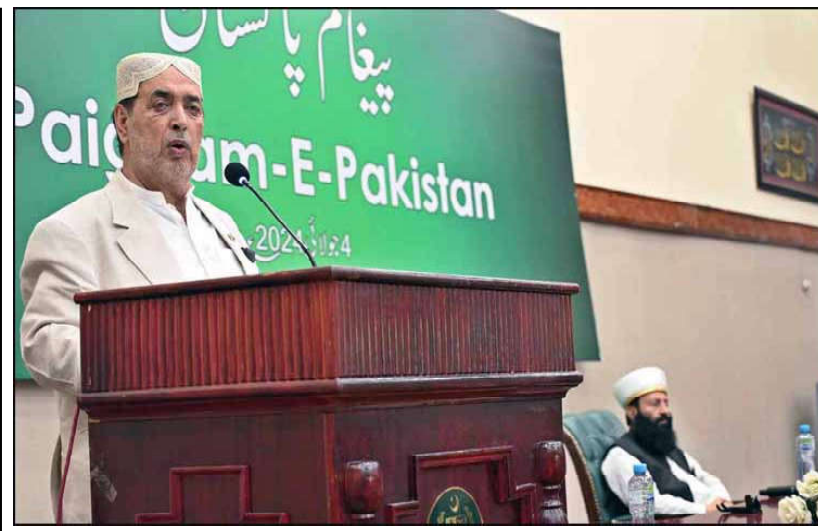
Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mr. Yong Ye. Speaking on the occasion, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the need for ADB's assistance in developing skill enhancement initiatives and connecting beneficiaries to international job markets. "ADB's support in designing these programs will be instrumental in breaking the cycle of poverty."

CM chairs meeting to finalize Muharram security plans

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, chaired a meeting to review the arrangements for Muharram ul Haraam. The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary, IG Police, Additional Chief Secretary Home, and other senior officials. The meeting discussed the security plan for Muharram, which includes the deployment of 40,000 security personnel, including FC and Pakistan Army troops, to ensure the safety of processions and majalis. A central control room will be established to monitor the security situation, and CCTV

cameras will be installed to oversee the processions. Special arrangements have been made for sensitive areas, including additional security forces and the establishment of special check posts. Mobile services will be suspended in these areas, and social media will be monitored to prevent the spread of hate speech. Health and rescue services will be on high alert during Muharram, with special teams deployed to handle any emergencies. Chief Minister directed officials to ensure a peaceful Muharram, emphasizing the importance of maintaining law and order and preventing any untoward

incidents. He also appealed to the public to cooperate with the government in maintaining peace and harmony during the month. Religious scholars and public figures will be engaged to promote peace and harmony and to prevent the spread of hate speech. Tents will be set up along procession routes to provide shade for participants, and electricity arrangements will be made to ensure an uninterrupted power supply. A coordination system has been established among all relevant departments and agencies to ensure the smooth observance of Muharram.



GILGIT: Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah addressing during the Paigham-e-Pakistan Conference, an initiative to maintain peace and harmony in Gilgit-Baltistan organized by Govt of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Government to uplift marginalised segments of society: Arora

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Ramesh Singh Arora attended a consultative session of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) on Thursday and said that the Punjab government wanted to uplift all marginalised sections of society. Addressing the session, he said that initially formed with the support of Nawaz Sharif, the PPAF had been a cornerstone institution in Pakistan for over 25 years,

delivering impactful projects across various sectors, including health, education, flood relief, and the Benazir Income Support Programme. Minister Arora highlighted his involvement with the PPAF from 2003 to 2008 and praised its significant contributions towards its mission and vision. He emphasised the upcoming projects focusing on providing skills training to minority students, ensuring their inclusion and empowerment.

15 dead, 1342 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least fifteen people died while 1342 were injured in 1238 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of whom, 615 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 727 people with minor injuries were treated on the spot by Rescue Medical Teams. Analysis show 746 drivers, 52 underage drivers, 136 pedestrians, and 475 passengers were among the victims of road crashes.

LHC orders police to ensure recovery of brother of Gill

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) while ordering police to ensure recovery of brother of Dr Shahbaz Gill adjourned the hearing of the case till July 18. Justice Amjad Rafiq of LHC heard the petition Thursday. Home secretary Punjab Noor ul Amin Mengal, DIG operations Faisal Kamran and other officers appeared in the court. The state council told during the hearing data of geo fencing was obtained on Monday under the orders of the court.

Punjab to set up Polio Counters at entry points of province

LAHORE (APP): On the directions of the Chief Minister Punjab, the provincial government has stepped up its efforts to ensure the complete eradication of polio and has decided to establish polio counters at all 14 entry and exit points of the province. The decision was taken during a meeting of the Provincial Taskforce on Polio Eradication held at the Civil Secretariat. Provincial ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique, Khawaja Imran

Nazir, Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Secretary Health Ali Jan, Punjab Polio Prevention Program head Khizar Afzal and officers concerned attended the meeting. The participants agreed to raise the target of routine immunization to 95 percent for prevention of polio and other diseases. Khawaja Salman Rafique said that during the next anti-polio campaign, all the provincial ministers would be present.

Salman Rafique visits PDMA to review monsoon arrangement

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Health and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Disaster Management, Khawaja Salman Rafique on Thursday reached Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Headquarters to review monsoon rains preparations and river conditions. He toured the PDMA control room where Director General PDMA Irfan Ali Kathia briefed him in detail about the status of monsoon rains

and water levels in rivers and working of the department to meet the challenges. Minister Rafique also reviewed the safety measures in place across the province regarding the monsoon rains. On the occasion, Khawaja Salman Rafique said that preparations were complete to tackle the torrential rains and potential floods in Punjab and an awareness campaign was being conducted regarding precautionary measures.



RAWALPINDI: Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) establish Flood Response Unit at Guwalmandi near Nullah Lai as pre-monsoon spell is expected to start from Thursday to Sunday and assured that all necessary arrangements have been made in this regard by Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA).

Qasim visits Medical Complex to inaugurate welfare initiatives

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Health Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Syed Qasim Ali Shah, visited Hayatabad Medical Complex today for the inauguration of important public welfare projects. He was received and welcomed by the President of IDF-HMC, Dr. Nazeef Ullah. The Health Minister was briefed on the launch of the Free Drugs Bank for underprivileged cardiac patients at Heart Linq, Cardiology

Department by Chairman Cardiology Dr. Shah Sawar. This initiative will ensure needy individuals receive lifesaving medicines without cost burden. Dr. Shah Sawar also briefed the Minister on the newly launched Executive Clinic that utilizes cutting-edge technologies to expand access to specialized cardiac care. Mr. Faisal Khan, briefed the Minister on how the new Telemedicine Services leverage technology to provide remote care.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Information and Broadcasting Azma Bukhari and Provincial Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani talking to the media in a press conference in DGPR of the provincial capital.

KP Govt to utilize receipts from oil, gas on concerned districts

Independent Report PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to further improve the production bonus guidelines issued for the better utilization of the receipts in the districts with oil and gas production capacity and to involve the district administrations of the respective districts in the consultation process for the purpose. Work has been started on forming committees for the utilization of using the income

from oil and gas reserves discovered in Dera Ismail Khan and North Waziristan in the development process in the respective districts so that the population related to the natural resources of oil and gas could be benefited to maximum extent. In this connection, the Energy and Power Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in light of the instructions of the KP Chief Minister organized a one-day consultative seminar was organized in a local hotel.

BISP-KP DG directs for more BISP centers in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Director General (DG), Zohra Aslam on Thursday directed the authorities concerned to open more centers to benefit maximum women. She stated this during his visit to different BISP centers in Dera Ismail Khan wherein she also inspected the arrangements and distribution process of the stipend amount among the beneficiaries. The director general expressed her satisfaction over the arrangements. However, she directed the BISP staff to further improve their behaviour towards the beneficiaries. Speaking on this occasion, Zohra Aslam informed that about 130,000 families were being benefitted through BISP. Similarly, she said, the educational stipends were being provided to the children of BISP's beneficiaries under 'Waseela-e-Taleem' program. Besides, she added, the 'Benazir Nathonuma Centres' were also established for children's malnutrition.

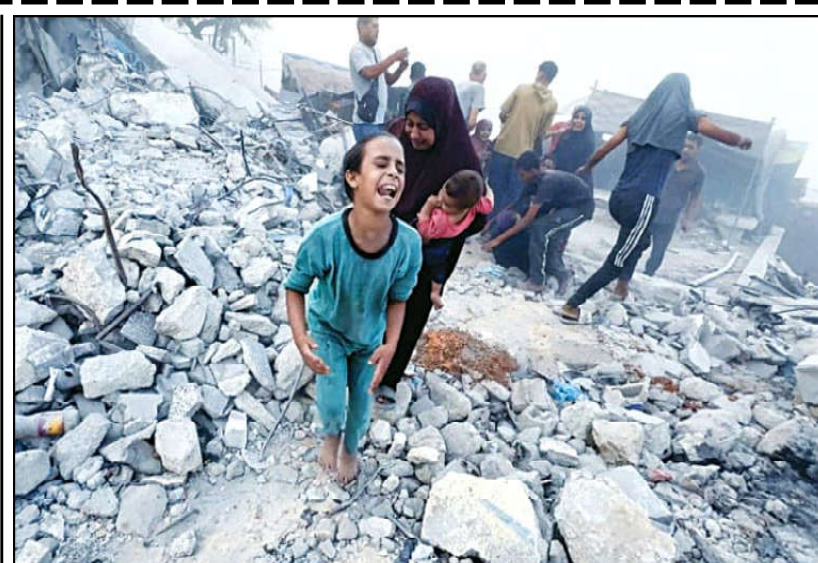
International News

Israel approves biggest West Bank land seizure in decades

Monitoring Desk JERUSALEM: Israel has approved its biggest land seizure in the occupied West Bank in more than three decades, a move criticised by activists on Wednesday as detrimental to Palestinian peace hopes. The 12.7-square-kilometre of land in the Jordan Valley was officially declared "state property" in June, according to an official declaration revealed by the Peace Now group. "The size of the area designated for declaration is the largest since the (1993) Oslo Accords, and the year 2024 marks a peak in the extent of declarations of state land," Peace Now said. The Israeli government has seized a total of 23.7 square kilometres in the West Bank since the start of the year, it said. When land is declared "state property", Palestinians lose private ownership rights and are barred from using it, Peace Now said. Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem

and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Since then, it has constructed dozens of settlements across the West Bank, home to more than 490,000 Israelis, which are illegal under the international law. About three million Palestinians reside in the West Bank. In the 1980s, Israel seized hundreds of square kilometres of land, halting seizures in 1992. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's first government resumed them in 1996. Israel's hard-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced one earlier seizure in March, when he slammed those "in Israel and the world who seek to undermine our right over" the West Bank. Peace Now criticised Netanyahu and Smotrich, accusing them of prioritising "a handful of settlers" over resolving the political conflict or ending the war. Israeli forces carried out new military strikes in the southern city of Rafah

amid fierce fighting with Palestinian militants overnight, residents said. At least 12 people were killed in new strikes in central and northern Gaza, health officials said. Israeli leaders have said they are winding down the phase of intense fighting and would soon shift to more targeted operations in the nearly nine-month-war. But fighting continued 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. In Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, two Israeli airstrikes killed five Palestinians, health officials said. In Shejaia 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, officials said.



Palestinians react, following an Israeli strike near a UN-run school sheltering displaced people, in Khan Younis.

More than 136,000 displaced by spread of war in southeast Sudan, UN says

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: More than 136,000 people have fled Sudan's southeastern Sennar state since the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces began a series of attacks on towns, the United Nations said on Wednesday, the latest wave of displacement caused by Sudan's almost 15-month long war. They join nearly 10 million people driven from their homes since war broke out between the RSF and the regular army. The war has sparked

accusations of "ethnic cleansing" and warnings of famine, mainly in RSF-controlled areas across the country. The RSF on June 24 began a campaign to seize the city of Sennar, a trading hub, but quickly turned to the smaller towns of Sinjah and al-Dinder, prompting an exodus of civilians from all three, mainly to neighbouring al-Gedaref and Blue Nile states. Images on social media showed people of all ages wading across the Blue Nile.

White House says Biden not pulling out of race

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: Joe Biden is "absolutely not" pulling out of the White House race, his spokeswoman said on Wednesday, as pressure mounted on the veteran Democrat following his disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump. The 81-year-old Biden has told a key ally he must convince the public quickly that he can do the job, the New York Times and CNN reported, raising the stakes for Biden's first post-debate TV interview, scheduled for Friday.

Five Palestinians killed in Israeli raids in West Bank

Monitoring Desk RAMALLAH: Israeli forces killed five Palestinians in two military operations in the occupied West Bank where tensions have risen because of the Gaza war, Palestinian and Israeli sources said Wednesday. One night-time air strike killed four men at a refugee camp near the town of Tulkam, which has seen a surge in violence as Israel has intensified raids. The Palestinian Authority health ministry said the four were "killed as a result of the occupation's bombing of Nur Shams camp".

UN rights chief warns about rise of far-right in Europe

Monitoring Desk GENEVA: The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Wednesday called for vigilance in the face of far-right political gains in Europe, citing narratives that dehumanise migrants and asylum seekers. "We need to be very vigilant because especially history tells us, in particular in Europe, that the vilification of the other, the denigration

of the other, is a harbinger for what's to come," Volker Turk told reporters at a press conference in Geneva. "It's an alarm bell we need to ring." Far-right parties made gains in the European Parliament last month and France is holding a run-off election this weekend where opponents of its far-right, anti-immigrant National Rally are seeking to block them from power.

China's Xi urges regional security bloc to resist 'external interference'

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping told a regional economic, defence and security bloc that includes Russia and its latest member Belarus that member-nations must work together to resist "external interference" and firmly support one another. "In the face of the real risks of small yards with high fences, we must safeguard the right to development," Xi was quoted by Chinese state television CCTV as saying in Astana at the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The 10-member bloc must handle "inter-

nal difference" with peace, seek common ground, and resolve co-operation difficulties, Xi added. The Chinese president also stressed the need to jointly promote scientific and technological innovation, and to maintain the stability and smoothness of industrial and supply chains. Since its inception in Shanghai in 2001, the SCO has expanded from a regional organisation with six members into a trans-regional bloc with 10 full members, including Belarus, which officially joined on Thursday. Other members of the bloc include India, Iran and Kazakhstan.

Iran candidates hold final rallies before presidential run-off on Friday

Monitoring Desk TEHRAN: In a bustling Tehran prayer hall, ultra-conservative Saeed Jalili has rallied fervent supporters ahead of Friday's runoff presidential vote, while his reformist rival Masoud Pezeshkian stirred up a crowd in a nearby stadium. The two candidates held their final campaign rallies late on Wednesday night, after leading the first-round vote in snap elections to succeed president Ebrahim Raisi who died in a helicopter crash in May. Chants of "All Iran says Jalili" echoed as thousands of supporters of the hardline former nuclear negotiator gathered at the Grand Mosalla mosque in central Tehran, buzzing with excitement. Jalili promised "strength and progress" if elected, as posters of the late ultra-conservative Raisi adorned the walls, bearing the slogan: "A world of opportunities, Iran leaps forward." At an open-air sta-

dium elsewhere in the capital, Pezeshkian made the case for "unity and cohesion", his supporters' chants invoking another former president — the reformist Mohammad Khatami who has endorsed their candidate. "Long live Khatami, long live Pezeshkian!" called the spirited crowd, waving green flags adorned with the reformist candidate's "For Iran" slogan. At the prayer hall, women draped in black sat in a designated section, separated from the men. But all burst into rapturous applause as Jalili made his entrance. "We are at a historical moment," he told the cheering crowd, urging voters to head to the polls on Friday. Only 40 per cent of Iran's 61 million eligible voters turned up at the polls last week — representing the lowest turnout in any presidential election since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Hurricane Beryl steams towards Cayman Islands, Mexico after striking Jamaica

Monitoring Desk KINGSTON: Hurricane Beryl steamed towards the Cayman Islands and Mexico on Thursday, after thrashing Jamaica with intense wind and rain, causing floods and power outages after forging a destructive path across smaller Caribbean islands over the past couple of days. The death toll from the powerful Category 4 hurricane climbed to at least 10 across the region, and is widely expected to rise further as communications return on islands damaged by flooding and deadly winds. As Beryl moved away from Jamaica early on Thursday, the island discontinued its hurricane warning but kept a flash flood watch, the Meteorological Service of Jamaica said on X.

By late Wednesday, the storm's eye was about 100 miles (161 km) west of Kingston, according to the US National Hurricane Center (NHC), as its core headed toward the Cayman Islands. Packing maximum sustained winds of 130 miles per hour (209 kph), Beryl was expected to dump 4-6 inches (10-15 cm) of rain on the Cayman Islands into Thursday, where a hurricane warning was in effect and life-threatening surf and rip currents were possible, NHC said. A hurricane warning was also in force for the eastern coast of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula. Around 0900 GMT, the Category 3 hurricane was just 55 miles from Grand Cayman and about 440 miles off Tulum Mexico, NHC said.

Senate resolution on Bajaur blast demands effective measures by govts to contain terrorism resurgence

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Upper House of the Parliament on Thursday unanimously approved the condolence resolution tabled by Senator Kamran Murtaza condoling the sad demise of Senator Hidayat Ullah in bomb blast incident in Bajaur demanding the federal and provincial governments to take active measures against terrorism resurgence in the country.

The 340th Senate session started almost eight minutes late with Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani in Chair that commenced with the recitation of Holy Quran verses from Surah Al Waq'iah that highlighted the bounties of the Almighty on pious and virtuous believers in the hereafter as a reward for their good deeds on the earth.

Prior to the motion, the Chair announced the members for the panel of presiding officers of the 340th session including Senators Anousha Rehman, Saleem Mandivwalla and

Abida Ateeba. The Chair directed the mover Senator Kamran Murtaza to lead prayer for the departed soul of Senator Hidayat Ullah and his colleagues who got killed in a bomb blast incident.

Presenting the motion to the House, Senator Kamran Murtaza read the motion, "This House expresses its profound grief and sorrow over the sad demise of former Senator Hidayat Ullah and his colleagues in a tragic incident of bomb blast in Dama Dola area of Bajaur on 3rd July, 2024".

Senator Hidayat Ullah belonged to the Bajaur Agency of erstwhile FATA. He was elected as Member of the Senate for two consecutive terms i.e., March, 2012 to March, 2018 and March, 2018 to March, 2024 as an Independent Member from FATA. During his tenure, Senator Hidayat Ullah always raised his voice for the rights

of the under privileged people of tribal areas. He remained an active member of the Senate of Pakistan and also served as the Chairman of the Senate Standing Committees on Aviation, Communications, Industries and Production and also as member of various other Standing Committees. He was well respected and widely liked by amongst all members.

The late Senator always took active part in debates on important legislation and other issues of national and public importance. The services rendered by him would be long remembered and his loss will be deeply mourned. The House resolves that the Federal and Provincial Governments take urgent and effective measures to combat the resurgent threat of terrorism in the country. We all share the loss sustained by his family and friends and expresses the deepest sympathies with the bereaved family.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif delivers a National Statement at Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit.

Govt efforts lead to inflation drop amid global economic pressures, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (Online): Planning Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chaired a meeting of the National Price Monitoring Committee held today in Islamabad. The meeting witnessed the attendance of Member-Support Services, Joint Chief Economist, AC Islamabad, senior officials from the Line Ministries and Planning Ministry, representatives from Provincial Governments, and the Senior General Manager of Utility Stores.

In his opening remarks, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal directed that the National Price Monitoring Committee be convened monthly to establish a rigorous monitoring

mechanism aimed at controlling market prices. He emphasized the importance of maintaining vigilant oversight to stabilize the prices of essential commodities across the country.

A significant reduction in inflation over the past year was reported. The inflation rate decreased from 29.4% in June 2023 to 12.6% in the current year, marking a notable downward trend. Significant decrease observed in Food prices, where the Food inflation in Urban cities dropped from 40.8% in June 2023 to 2.6% in June 2024 and in Rural Areas dropped from 41.5% in June 2023 to 1.3% in June 2024. Despite global infla-

tionary pressures, Pakistan has managed to reduce its inflation rate, although the prices of imported items have seen an increase in June 2024. The meeting highlighted the substantial price difference between various edible items available at Utility Stores and those in the open market, attributed to government subsidies intended to facilitate the public at large.

The Minister instructed that price behavior in regional countries be closely monitored. He highlighted the necessity of being aware of demand and supply dynamics during special occasions such as Eids and Ramadan to ensure price stability.

Pakistan, Belarus reaffirm commitment to strengthen trade, economic ties

ASTANA (APP): Pakistan and Belarus on Thursday noting positive growth in all aspects of their bilateral relations over the past decade reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation and economic and trade relations.

The bilateral relations were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President of the Republic of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko on the sidelines of the SCO Summit here.

A wide range of topics, including political relationship, trade and investment, military cooperation and regional issues, were discussed.

Prime Minister Shehbaz congratulated President Lukashenko on Belarus' membership of the SCO underlining that this would further strengthen the organization.

He highlighted Pakistan's policy of economic revival through export-led growth, strengthening of public finances, and attracting investment from friendly countries.

The two leaders also discussed global and regional developments and reviewed progress on various aspects of work under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The prime minister shared Pakistan's efforts and desire for a peaceful and stable region.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with President of the Republic of Belarus H.E. Aleksandr Lukashenko on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit.

Pakistan, China to collaborate promoting a new digitalized CPEC

BEIJING (INP): EuroAsia Pakistan Economy Forum held here to forge a new digitalized CPEC, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday.

"In the next stage, the collaboration between Pakistan and China would extend from traditional to new, or to day upgraded economic corridors.

For instance, the transportation, circulation and exchange of data," Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication of Pakistan, said bluntly, at the EuroAsia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum.

"Pakistan's human resources could not be underestimated in the world. 60% of our population is under the age of 35, which is both an opportunity and

a challenge. By working closely with China to provide systematic sci-tech training to such a huge talent pool, we are going to maximize the role of our valuable resources in such a digital age."

The Minister gave a detailed introduction to the experience gained by Prime Minister Sharif after his recent visit to China with a delegation, repeatedly emphasizing that the Pakistani government has regarded the digital field as a top priority for current governance.

Dr. Zhao Baige, recipient of the "Medal of Excellence Crescent" National Honorary Medal of Pakistan, echoed by a series of specific suggestions.

"Training of all types and levels badly need to be a top priority.

DC chairs meeting regarding Muharam arrangements

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Tharparak Abdul Aleem Jagirani presided over a meeting in his office to review arrangements made for Muharam ul Haram.

DC directed officers of relevant departments to maintain law and order situation in the district, ensure health facilities, cleanliness and availability of drinking water during the first 10 days of Muharram ul Haram.

DC said that all religions impart lesson of love, cohesion brotherhood and harmony which are essential for building a civilized

society. He directed officers concerned to ensure all arrangements ahead of Muharam ul Haram including cleanliness drive, availability of lights and other arrangements so that people particularly mourners do not feel any inconvenience.

He appealed ulema and religious leaders belonging to different sects to show tolerance, cohesion, interfaith harmony and peace during the sacred month and keep a vigilant eye on miscreants and extremists to avert an untoward incident during Ashura days.



KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami workers protesting against the budget and electricity prices at Regal Chowk, in the Provincial Capital.

Mayor directs comprehensive strategy for Muharam ul Haram arrangements

HYDERABAD (INP): The Mayor Hyderabad Kashif Shoro directed officers of all relevant departments to formulate a comprehensive strategy and prepare special teams to ensure cleanliness and other necessary measures during Muharam ul Haram so that mourners at Majalis and processions should not face any inconvenience.

According to a hand-out issued on Thursday, these directives were given during a meeting chaired by the Mayor, attended by officials from various departments, religious scholars and heads of concerned associations, focusing on preparations for Muharam ul Haram. The Mayor emphasized the need for consultation with religious scholars and relevant organizations.

Shoro assured that there would be no power outages during the times of Majalis and processions, and a letter in this regard had been sent to HESCO authorities. He stated that efforts were being made to provide all possible facilities for processions and gatherings, while the administration and religious leaders will play a crucial role in maintaining law and order during this period.

He instructed the relevant authorities to immediately repair any damaged roads along the procession routes.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing a Press conference after a meeting held in connection with Muharamul Haram at Governor House.

Pak, Kazakhstan discuss bilateral cooperation in sports, tourism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs, Rana Sanaulah, met with Kazakhstan Ambassador to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin to discuss bilateral cooperation in sports, tourism and cultural exchange.

The meeting was also attended by Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), Nadeem Irshad Kiani, said a statement issued here Thursday.

Both expressed interest in strengthening bilateral

relations and explored opportunities for cooperation in sports, tourism and cultural exchange.

Rana Sanaulah, who hold the portfolio of IPC Ministry, appreciated Kazakhstan's efforts to strengthen bilateral ties and expressed hope that cooperation in sports and tourism would further enhance relations between the two countries. Experts from both countries would soon hold an online meeting to discuss possible memorandums of understanding in the sports sector.

Anti-polio campaign gains momentum with focus on refusal cases

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Zain-ul-Abideen Memon remained active in the field on the fourth consecutive day of the anti-polio campaign, successfully addressing multiple refusal cases.

According to a hand-out issued on Thursday, the district administration intensified the anti-polio campaign under the leadership of DC Zain-ul-Abideen Memon after positive environmental samples were found in Hyderabad. Meanwhile, in Latifabad Unit No. 4, with the help of the police, several parents were convinced to administer anti-polio drops to their children.

DC Larkana visits waste water drains, order cleanliness on a war footing

LARKANA (APP): Drains visits Deputy Commissioner Larkana, Dr Sharjeel Noor Channa on Thursday, while inspecting the waste water drains of Wapda Scarp Department, instructed to clean the drains on a war footing.

Deputy Commissioner Larkana Scarp Department Drainage Division Ex Larkana Municipal Corporation Municipal Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner Larkana Darya Khan Qureshi along with R(2) Sub Drain South System near Allahabad Khaliq Colony, Main South Branch Drain of Wapda Grid Station Otha Chowk, Dargah Sanachta Village Abdullah Lashari visited R(1) Sub-Drain, New Dero Drainage Sub-Division and Larkana Drainage Division and reviewed the cleanliness of the drains.

Sukkur Police issues traffic plan for Muharram

SUKKUR (APP): In order to ensure security of the mourning processions during Muharram-ul-Haram, the Sukkur Police on Thursday issued a comprehensive traffic plan.

According to the plan, there would be a complete ban on parking of any vehicle or pushcart on the route of the procession. DSPs and inspectors would perform duties on city roads to control the traffic flow during Muharram.

While talking to APP, PRO of the SSP office Sukkur, Shahjahan Soomro said that traffic Police had also been directed to take action against vehicles having tinted glasses.

US report on religious freedom in Pakistan runs contrary to facts: FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan while rejecting US report in regard to religious freedom has said report runs contrary to the facts.

Over half report is wrong and is made without investigation. Every person enjoys religious freedom in Pakistan.

This was said by Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Thursday during her weekly media briefing.

During the weekly media briefing, the spokesperson emphasized that the report overlooks Pakistan's efforts to ensure religious freedom and does not aid in promoting human rights.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal addressing to media during his visit at National Productivity Organization (NPO) Office.

Chairman EPZA urges business community to set up private EPZs

KARACHI (APP): Chairman Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZA) Saifuddin Junejo has urged the business community to take advantage of EPZA's two new concepts of Private and Public Participated export processing zones.

The concepts allow potential investors having the required capital and land to develop, maintain and operate private EPZs whereas Public Participated EPZs could also be developed and maintained by the developer but operated by EPZA, he informed to a meeting during his visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said a statement issued here on Thursday.

Delivering a presentation on "Private and Public Participated EPZs", Chairman EPZA stated, "We have created this opportunity in line with Prime Minister's vision to establish EPZs in all the cities which offer best incentives package." EPZA has already started receiving several requests from local and foreign investors intending to establish EPZs which will be processed as per pre defined timeline, he said.

Underlining the vital role of EPZs in export expansion he mentioned that a total of 9 EPZs were operational in Pakistan and contributing 3 to 4 % in exports. He hoped that the new concept for Private and Public Participated EPZs would encourage many potential investors to establish SEZs in any area of Pakistan. Saifuddin Junejo stressed the need of expansion of Karachi Export Processing Zone from its current area of 300 acres to the area of 3000 acres as per the original plan and said the present area is very small as compared to other such zones in the region. Referring to free zone of Jabal-e-Ali in UAE he said that it spreads over 15,000 acres and its trading volume last year was recorded as US\$104 billion.



HYDERABAD: Members of All Pakistan Wapda Hydro Electric Workers Union are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, in Hyderabad.

Commissioner chairs meeting regarding arrangements for monsoon, urban flooding

SUKKUR (APP): Commissioner Sukkur Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi on Thursday chaired a meeting of all the relevant department to review the arrangements made for the upcoming monsoon forecasts and urban flooding. He emphasized to immediately prepare emergency plans about utilizing available resources, clear distribution of work and sharing responsibilities.

Briefing the meeting about the predictions of upcoming monsoon, PDMA authorities said that although July and August is expected to receive a below

to normal range of rainfall. However, after mid July to late August Sukkur division may receive 100 percent extra rainfall than that of 2022. He quoted Meteorological department for forecasting relatively more rainfall than 2022. The Commissioner directed all the officials of relevant department to prepare their emergency contingency plans with clearly stating their available and required machine and human resource, and share such plans with his office so that these may be compiled and shared with PDMA.



LARKANA: District Council Larkana, Chairman Aijaz Ahmed Leghari presiding over the meeting for Annual Budget Session 2024-25 held at District Council Meeting Hall in Larkana.

DIG advised citizens to remove tinted glasses in days

SUKKUR (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police, Sukkur Region, Pir Muhammad Shah on Thursday gave three days time to owners of vehicles using tinted glasses.

Talking to Media, he warned that if the tinted glasses and blinds were not removed within three days, strict legal action will be taken against such vehicles. He said in some other cases, it has been noticed that different kinds of plates are used over the government number plates which cover up the original number plate, and various elements had been found involved in unlawful activities under its garb.

He requested the people concerned not to use any other plate over the

original number plate, and rather keep the government number plate conspicuous. He said if they want to use any other plate, the same should be fixed away from the original number plate so that no subversive or other unlawful activity could be carried out under its garb and the district police check the suspected vehicles. The DIG said the people should comply with the law and action taken in such cases will apply on everyone regardless of his status or position.

The DIG said the people have fully co-operated with the security personnel deployed at mosques and Imbargahs, and it has helped thwart a conspiracy.