

# Independent

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## PM announces shifting 28,000 tube wells of Balochistan on solar system

Says federal govt to provide 70%, Balochistan to contribute 30% in Rs55 bln solarization project

### Independent Report

QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif announced on Monday that under an agreement between the Federal and Balochistan governments, as many as 28,000 agricultural tube wells in the province would be shifted to solar system within three months. While talking to media persons after the agreement signing ceremony, the prime minister said that the federal government would provide 70 percent funds while Balochistan government will contribute 30 percent in the solarization project worth Rs55 billion.

Premier Shehbaz Sharif also held meeting with mem-

bers of the provincial cabinet in which the federal ministers and Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhel and Chief Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti were also present. Earlier, the PM witnessed an agreement signing ceremony between the federal and the provincial governments for shifting of electricity run tube wells to solar powered mechanism. He tasked the chief minister to complete the solarization project within three months.

The prime minister opined that the completion of project would ensure prosperity of the farmers and bring a large area of cultivable land under farming,

adding that with functioning of the solar powered tube wells, the farmers would get uninterrupted power supply throughout the day. Addressing to the provincial cabinet, he termed the agreement as 'a deep structured change' firmly rooted in the government's conceived reforms agenda and said that a huge sum of Rs500 billion would be saved from going down the drain. The federal government would be absolve of paying Rs80-90 billion burden which was provided as subsidy to the province due to non-payment of bills and still the farmers community was getting 2 to 6 hours power supply, he added.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a meeting of the Agriculture Department held at CM House in Karachi.

## UN High Commissioner for Refugees calls on Deputy PM Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi Monday called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

In a meeting, they discussed wide range of issues pertaining to the global refugee situation with a particular focus on Afghan refugees. Views were also exchanged on the longstanding cooperation between Pakistan and the UNHCR.

High Commissioner Grandi appreciated Pakistan's efforts and contributions in hosting millions of Afghan refugees for decades and termed it as a remarkable example of the country's hospitality.

He briefed the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on UNHCR's ongoing projects and emphasized on the importance of sustained engagement and cooperation between Pakistan and the UNHCR.



QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhel during his one day visit to Quetta.

## Pakistan armed forces deployed in Sindh for Muharram

KARACHI (INP): The Interior Ministry on Monday approved the deployment of the army in Sindh during Muharram at the request of the government of Sindh. Sindh Home Department has contacted the military authorities.

Army, Rangers, and FC troops will be deployed keeping in view the ground conditions. Sindh Home Department has prepared a road map for army deployment in Muharram. Under the Anti-Terrorism

Act, the army will be deployed in Sindh like the rest of the country.

The army is being deployed to help the civil administration, the order of the Interior Ministry says. The deployment of the army will be done in view of the ground conditions there, it says further.

The army will be deployed as per requirement in mutual consultation of the concerned parties, and Interior Ministers.

## Federal cabinet meeting today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Meeting of federal cabinet has been called today (Tuesday) in Prime Minister (PM) house.

Important national issues will come under discussion in the federal cabinet meeting to be held under the Prime Minister (PM).

The summary of ministries will be presented in the cabinet meeting for approval. Overall economic and law and order situation of the country will be reviewed in the meeting. Decisions of different committees will be endorsed in the meeting.

PM will take cabinet into confidence on his foreign tour and his meetings in SCO session.

The other national matters will come under consideration with the approval of PM.

## Court rejects PTI founder plea for making contact with his sons on whatsapp

RAWALPINDI (Online): Judge Malik Ijaz Asif of Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Rawalpindi has rejected petition of PTI founder Imran Khan nominated in May 9 cases for making contact with his sons on whatsapp. The court has rejected the plea in the light of report from jail administration. The court had sought reply from the jail administration on petition of former chairman PTI.

## Bilawal pays tributes to Abdul Sattar Edhi on his 8th death anniversary

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid rich tribute to Abdul Sattar Edhi on his death anniversary.

Bilawal, in his message, said that today, on the 8th death anniversary of Abdul Sattar Edhi, we remember and pay tribute to a true humanitarian and a beacon of selfless service.

He said that Edhi's steadfast dedication to the underprivileged and his profound compassion for humanity continue to inspire us all.



QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif talking to the media after the signing of agreement to solarise agricultural tubewells of Balochistan.

## CM reviews flood situation, directs depts to prepare contingency plan

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, in response to the Met Office forecast of above-average rains, instructed the Irrigation and Relief (PDMA) departments to develop a contingency plan to manage anticipated Riverine floods.

"I want proper coordination between all the departments concerned and agencies, including law enforcement and the Pak Navy so that timely action can be taken in case of any emergency."

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers including Sardar Shah, Saeed Ghani, Mohammad Bux Khan Mahar, Jam Khan Shoro, Makhdoom Mahboob, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, various department secretaries, Mayor Sukkur Nauman Shaikh, DG PDA Salman Shah, Chief Met Dr. Sarfraz, a representative from COMKAR, and Commissioners of different divisions via video link.

Dr. Sarfraz from the Met Office explained to the CM that the monsoon typically begins in Pakistan on

July 1st and continues until mid-September.

He outlined various factors influencing monsoon rains in Pakistan, such as Sea Surface Temperatures (SST of Pacific & Indian Oceans), Sub Tropical High/Tibetan High (STH/TH), Tropical Easterly Jet (TEJ), Heat Low-pressure area, Low-level Jet (LLJ), Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO), and Indian Ocean High (IOH) pressure area.

He also mentioned that the differential heating of land and adjoining oceans causes Low-pressure formation over land and High-pressure over the ocean.

The Copernicus climate change service's multi-model ensemble forecast for July to September indicates wetter-than-average precipitation with a 60-70% probability, and WMO multi-model ensemble Irf predicts a wetter-than-average June to September 2024 season with a 60-70% probability over Sindh.

The chief minister, in response to the Met Office forecast of above-average rains, instructed the Irriga-

tion department to develop a contingency plan to manage anticipated Riverine floods.

He mentioned that most of the rainwater in Thado Nai is stored in Thado Dam. The excess water from the dam and Konakar Nai flows into the Malir River near Shafi village after crossing the M9 motorway near Dumba Goth.

Murad Shah also noted that the rainwater from Lat Nai, after overflowing from Lat Dam, affects Sadi Garden, Gulshan Usman, Sadi town, and other areas when it spills over the M-9 motorway near the Northern bypass during heavy downpours in Karachi. To address urban flooding, the Sindh Irrigation Department has built eight small dams in the basin of Lat Nai, in addition to the existing dams.

Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro briefed the CM said that the flood mechanism in Sindh was derived from three sources - the Indus River, Hill Torrents and the monsoon rain-fall-induced floods.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting regarding maintenance of law and order during Muharram.

## Minister for devising comprehensive strategy to address environmental challenges

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Coastal Development, Dost Muhammad Rahimoon, Monday, emphasized the importance of framing a comprehensive strategy for addressing the environmental issues in the province on sustainable basis.

He was chairing a progress review meeting of Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) that was attended by provincial Secretary Climate Change Nabeela Umer and other officials, said a statement issued here.

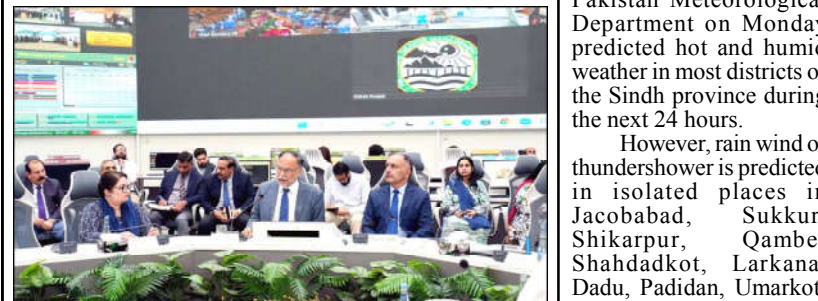
The in-charges of all the districts of Sindh presented their progress reports covering in detail the environmental problems in various districts, the steps taken to address them and progress on the taken measures.

These reports included various environ-

mental projects such as air pollution control measures, water treatment projects, forest protection, and the status of implementation of environmental laws. The meeting identified various challenges faced by the districts for environmental protection including lack of funding, need for public awareness, and technical support issues.

The meeting decided to leverage the modern technology for addressing environmental issues and their impacts while it was also decided that public awareness campaigns will be launched in the province to sensitize people about their role in environmental protection.

The minister appreciated performance of district in-charges of the agency and stressed on need of more efforts for environmental protection and sustainable development.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal presiding 1st meeting of Disaster Response at NEOC, NDMA Headquarters.

## Security linked with economic situation; PPP to attend Govt called APC: Bilawal

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that security was linked with the country's economic situation and his party has principally decided to participate in the Govt's called all parties conference (APC) for a broad-based political consensus on issues related to national security besides ensuring durable peace in the country.

Addressing a press conference at Governor House here Monday,

Bilawal Bhutto said that an inclusive and across the board political consensus was inevitable on all issues related to national security and the decisions once taken at APC would get support of the political forces and the entire nation. He hailed the Prime Minister's decision to invite the PTI in APC.

He said that we stand with our brave security

forces in their fight against menace of terrorism and demanded strong action against facilitators of terrorists. Bilawal Bhutto said that collective decisions against scourge of terrorism were imperative for durable progress and prosperity of the country.

He said that major problems of the country were unemployment and price hike and these issues could be addressed only through better economic and monetary policies.

Bilawal said that it would have been better if consultation was made with PPP before the budget, saying that his party would continue to support the government to take decisions in the country and people's interests.

He said that the PPP did not believe in the politics of accusation, confrontation and blame games. PPP would be reactivated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a press conference along with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House, in the Provincial Capital.

## Faryal Talpur elected as chairperson of SA Standing Committee on Home Affairs

KARACHI (APP): Leader of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Faryal Talpur was elected as the Chairperson of the Sindh Assembly's Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

In this regard, an important meeting under the chairmanship of the newly elected Chairperson of the Standing Committee for Home Affairs was held here Monday, in which she said that they would all work together to improve the affairs and initiatives of the Home Department. The Committee has to keep an eye on all the issues and give more suggestions for improving the home department, she said.

Faryal Talpur said that during the previous regime, her focus was on improving law and order, dis-

couraging drugs and narcotics. Hopefully, we will do good things for our city, province and the country. We will do whatever is best, she said.

Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hasan Lanjar extended congratulations to Faryal Talpur for being elected as the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

He hoped that any legislation to be made under her supervision would be good for the Home Department. The Home minister said that Faryal Talpur would further improve the Standing Committee on Home while all affairs and policing measures of Sindh Police would also gradually improve. MQM and Jamaat-e-Islami have also supported Faryal Talpur, he added.



KARACHI: Funeral prayer of martyred Ali Raza, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) CTD Investigation, who was assassinated in Karimabad on Sunday night, is being offering at Central Police Office (CPO) in Karachi.

## Pakistani nation stands united with their Kashmiri brothers: Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the Pakistani nation stands united with their Kashmiri brothers and fully support their demand for the right to self-determination.

He expressed these views while meeting with a delegation of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, led by Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi and included APHC General Secretary Pervez Ahmed Shah, Kashmiri leader Sardar Nazakat, senior Hurriyat leader Syed Ejaz Rahmani, Raja Khadim Hussain, Imtiaz Iqbal Wani, and others. Also present were Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad

and Mayor Karachi Spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi.

The Mayor said that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always advocated for the rights of oppressed nations, including the freedom movement in Kashmir, on various international platforms. Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan, and sacrifices like those of Burhan Wani and other martyrs will never be forgotten, he said. Barrister Murtaza Wahab emphasized that we all pay tribute to Shaheed Burhan Wani, whose martyrdom occurred on this day, and urged for the documentation and publication of all documents and movements related to Kashmir in written.

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## Taxing targets

After setting a massive revenue target for the Federal Board of Revenue for the next fiscal year, the government seems to be building pressure on the tax authority to perform. It is just as well that this may lead to a tightening of the net around those who have so far managed to evade the taxman.

A day after another massive shakeup in the FBR, which reportedly saw the transfer of dozens of officers of the Inland Revenue Service and Customs Groups, and with more transfers and postings of senior officers expected over the weekend, the tax authority was told to immediately go after the around 4.5m citizens it had identified, which it thinks are liable to pay taxes but do not. The prime minister is also reportedly overseeing an accelerated action plan to digitise and reform the FBR, along with a review of its existing and required resources. These are all positive signs. Reportedly, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is serious about cracking down on corruption within the FBR, introducing a merit-based culture, and reforming the institution. Worryingly, however, he has involved two intelligence agencies, according to a report in local media, to 'assist' him in the task of identifying and penalising FBR officials.

Time will tell how successful this strategy will prove. The FBR has generally proven to be a difficult nut to crack for most past governments, with efforts to reform it invariably encountering resistance as soon as certain thresholds begin to be crossed. That said, it is clear to all and sundry that Pakistan's economic viability depends on the Board's ability to extract revenue in line with government policies and that the room for failure is no longer there. With the ongoing economic crisis, the need for a diligent tax authority has become an existential necessity for Islamabad.

The FBR's operational competencies aside, the fiscal policies, as outlined in the budget, have set it up for another huge challenge. It can expect to be reminded very soon that taxation is just as much a political issue as it is a fiscal concern. The FBR may begin executing the tax directives more diligently than before, but how will the government react when the various 'protected' classes once again begin agitating against its tax drives?

Not only that, the salaried classes, usually a lot easier to control, also seem to be in a black mood. Discussions on various social forums these days are increasingly turning to questions about why they should pay so much in taxes and if it isn't more sensible to be operating off the books. This is a dangerous sign for a government battling a crisis of legitimacy. How delicately and firmly it handles discontent will make or break its tax plans.

Maleeha Lodhi

The Shehbaz Sharif government faces multiple challenges — from the opposition, its political allies and from growing public discontent with a dire economic situation as people struggle with a cost-of-living crisis and the punishing burden of taxes. It also confronts a surge in security threats. How has the government managed so far to deal with these multiple fronts? Does it have a firm grip on the political, economic and security situation?

Dealing with PTI was never going to be easy. But it was a test of the government's political management skills to engage the opposition's parliamentary members in a way that minimised frequent disruptions of proceedings. However, with the party continuing to be the target of coercive actions by the authorities and their leader and activists in jail, PTI lawmakers have been in no mood to cease their protests in parliament and outside.

Despite a fleeting pause when the prime minister offered talks to the opposition — a move that was dead on arrival in the

current fraught climate — there have been unending, bitter government-opposition clashes in the National Assembly. It has involved rejection by PTI lawmakers of the budget — as "anti-people" — as well as the government's other policy measures including its latest counterterrorism plan. Government ministers have also been lashing out at PTI in and out of the House. But neither has secured the upper hand in this confrontation. Instead, both have reached a virtual dead end in trying to prevail on the other. A tense and disorderly stalemate persists.

A 'normalised' relationship between the federal government and the PTI-run provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is especially consequential for national stability. Issues concerning allocation of financial resources from the centre, adequate power supply and postings of officials remain a bone of contention between them. They need to be resolved for a proper working relationship to be established. Smooth working relations are also necessary for the robust execu-

tion of the federal government's counterterrorism campaign as its main theatre of operations is obviously in KP.

Governments always have more to lose from confrontational politics. Certainly, it has distracted the PML-N-led coalition from greater focus on governance. It has laid bare a style of leadership evidenced by the prime minister's dealings with allies, in which political engagement or negotiations are left to others. This reinforces his long-standing image as someone more comfortable being an administrator rather than a political leader; more at ease with bureaucrats than with politicians who he has to negotiate with. His not-so-frequent appearances in parliament also testify to this, which discourages ministers from showing up. This once prompted the elder Sharif, president of PML-N, to say the Shehbaz government should free itself from "bureaucratic influence".

Lack of consultation has emerged as a major grievance with the government by its principal political ally, the PPP. Although this complaint sur-

passed publicly at budget time, PPP leaders say it extends to the government's overall functioning and lack of structured and sustained consultation. It prompted PPP legislators to sharply criticise the budget and call it "directionless". Initially, the PPP threatened to boycott the budget session. Its lawmakers only agreed to participate after assurances by senior government leaders. Even so, PPP MNAs did not pull any punches in assailing budget proposals.

The Senate Standing Committee on Finance, chaired by a PPP senator, went so far as to call the budget against the national interest and in its report to the House called for withdrawal of several proposed measures. In his speech, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari also took aim at budget proposals. Significantly he claimed the government had not fulfilled its commitment under the PML-N-PPP agreement, forged at the time of government formation, to consult his party on the budget and related decisions.

Despite its misgivings, the PPP voted for the budget. But not before some changes to the finance bill,

although this was also in response to demands by the business community. In any case, the whole episode underlined fiftful management by the government of its relations with an ally without whose support it cannot survive in office. Of course, some of the PPP's complaints reflect political posturing to bargain for more from the government, such as its power-sharing demands in the Punjab government. Nevertheless, it suggests this would remain an uneasy and unpredictable relationship, especially as the government has preferred an ad hoc approach to managing it rather than an institutionalised one.

The budget was the first major test for the Shehbaz government. It evoked criticism across the board, from political parties, business community, media and the public at large. Having to meet IMF conditionalities to qualify for a new larger Fund loan programme provided the government no choice but to take painful adjustment measures. But the budget was an example of how to reward the elite and punish everyone else.

The Pakistan Busi-

ness Council had this to say: "Sacred cows will graze freely while the golden geese will be cooked." Certainly, placing the burden of additional taxation on the salaried middle class marked a failure to equitably distribute the pain of adjustment, especially in view of the budget's pro-elite measures including salary increases for civil servants. This deepened public discontent at a time of mounting economic hardship, especially as increasing disruptions in power supply worsened people's plight at the peak of summer.

The government's lack of a communication strategy to explain budget measures and how they would extricate the country from the economic crisis contributed to public frustration. In fact, the government's weak communication on other counts too has denuded it of the ability to demonstrate it is running the affairs of state purposefully. Its response to the deteriorating security situation came on the heels of the public expression of concern by a senior Chinese official visiting Pakistan. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Death and taxes

Umair Javed

The recently passed budget reveals three aspects about the present ruling regime. The first one is the external constraint of getting an IMF deal. It is clear that securing a new agreement, by any means necessary, is the primary motivation of decision-makers. The entire budget exercise seems to be working backwards from whatever targets have been communicated by the lender.

The second aspect is a hard domestic constraint. The ruling parties at the centre, especially PML-N, are fully aware of their nearly non-existent electoral legitimacy. Their uncertain position in power is thus far more reliant on the civil bureaucracy and the military establishment.

The third and final aspect is that the PML-N has made a decision that there is no need or urgency in the current moment to seek greater support among different groups in society, such as salaried individuals. Therefore, its primary impulse for whatever

little space is left in the budget after the first two constraints is to reward the few narrow segments that may still be supporting them in some way. This primarily includes businesses working in the wholesale retail and other undocumented sectors.

It is worth exploring these three aspects turn by turn. While some of the economic mess is self-inflicted by the present regime, a large part of it is down to structural deficiencies in Pakistan's economy. A lack of productivity and the consequent inability to earn enough dollars means every government has a forex borrowing requirement, one which makes the IMF more or less indispensable in the current framework. Any government in this situation, at least one unwilling to take any radical steps, would have had to appease the external lender.

The external lender, in turn, makes a set of demands in terms of raising domestic revenue. In recent programmes, the demands have been specific when it comes to re-

moving electricity price distortions and various forms of tax exemptions. This budget is mostly an outcome of these revenue-related demands.

If that external constraint informs the overall thrust of the budget, some of its internal workings reflect domestic realities. An increase in pensions and government officer salaries shows the entrenched control of the civil and military bureaucracy on financial decision-making. It is clear that the 'overdeveloped state', theorised by Hamza Alavi nearly 50 years ago, is still a valid way to describe the country. The 'permanent' state bequeathed by colonial rule is first and foremost interested in feeding itself rather than catering to any group in society.

The same reality is visible in the exemption offered in advance taxes on the sale of immovable property by civil and military officers, as well as in the numerous regulations showing government officers sanctioning perks and privileges for themselves. I am sure there are a few state offi-

cial who are doing their jobs for a range of pro-social and service-oriented objectives. But it is hard to ignore the fact that the vast majority now see the state as a means of securing upward mobility, greater social status, and generational wealth, even when it comes at the cost of greater immiseration for the rest.

This insatiable appetite is being catered to by a hybrid regime that is sustained by the (coercive) actions of state officials, rather than by the votes of citizens. Even if the regime politicians wanted to resist, and it is far from clear that they want to, they barely have any legs to stand on.

Finally, after the IMF's conditions and the state officials' own self-serving appetite, there is very little space left in the budget for anyone else's concerns. The first to be sacrificed is the white-collar salaried class in the formal sector. Recent estimates place the total number of this group, to which I too belong, at around two million individuals. Our un-

fortunate status as fully documented taxpayers serves as a convenient way to squeeze out more revenue, whenever required. This budget has taken full advantage of this, and will further contribute to downward mobility and decreasing living standards that have been the norm for the past few years. It is no wonder that every other conversation within this demographic is about foreign migration.

On the other hand, there are those who continue to operate in the informal sector, such as large swathes of the wholesale and retail sector and others engaged in real estate. Initial claims that the noose is being tightened around these groups as well turn out to be fairly hollow. All that was done is a further segmentation between filer, non-filer categories. Most businesses can get away with this by filing nil/null sales and income tax returns, or by turning to even more cash-based transactions. The number of wholesale-retail businesses is around 2.5m. Among these, a couple of hundred thousand are the larger ones,

who hide turnovers and earn large returns. As former finance minister Miftah Ismail attempted, and a recent piece by economist Ammar Khan argued, it would have been relatively efficient to implement a fixed income tax regime through commercial electricity connections. That could have then been used as the first step towards greater documentation. Instead, the ruling party has made an explicit choice to protect its core support base, while subjecting every other group to greater taxation.

The budget has since passed and is now in force. An IMF deal will likely go through, which means more 'stabilisation' in the coming years, with anaemic growth. Barring some great challenge from the judiciary, the political landscape is expected to stay the same, with a regime held in place by force of the state rather than through popular support. It is then likely that the next few budgets will look the same as this one. No respite for the weary, with both economic death and taxes for the salaried class.

## A trusted space

Huma Yusuf

At a recent anti-corruption conference, I briefly chatted with a Bolivian gentleman who is both an activist fighting corruption and convener of a network of librarians. My first instinct was to dismiss his involvement with libraries as an interesting hobby. But shortly after our encounter, it clicked: public access to information is the bedrock of anti-corruption, so why wouldn't the activist wear both hats?

I am not alone in forgetting the democratic underpinning of libraries. Due to their growing rarity, we tend to consider them ends unto themselves. They are sometimes treated like artefacts rather than civic spaces, the books inside reframed as relics from a literate past that must be preserved rather than sources of information that should be consumed, considered, challenged.

Often, our public discourse curtails libraries to their educative role — quiet places, typically on campuses, where students can use reference books or work without interruption. This is a critical function, but it misses the wood for the trees.

In a democratic context, libraries are places where citizens can access information that helps them make informed decisions about who to vote for, and that empowers them to hold those elected representatives to account. This conception assumes that libraries are public access, funded by the government in the spirit of making the democratic system work. And at its best, the concept does work: in a world of misinformation and polarisation, public libraries remain trusted places.

The world was reminded of their power in November 2023 when the

Russians shelled the Kherson Regional Scientific Library in Ukraine. The library caught fire after the first rocket hit, and the Russians continued attacking it until it burned to the ground. The state-owned library boasted collections in 45 languages, many of which focused on the history and ethnography of southern Ukraine, including Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea. The library's destruction was a political act, a strategic win in Russia's occupation effort; if information about Ukraine's history and society was unavailable, it was — literally and figuratively — up for grabs.

It is no wonder then that preserving and developing libraries is low on the priority list of the Pakistani state, which is more interested in suppressing inclusive politics and disempowering citizens. What hope can libraries have in a context where even social media musings are considered subversive and censored under any pretence? The information that public libraries offer, coupled with their ability to convene communities in real life, is a democratic force not to be taken lightly.

And so we have instead the proliferation of private libraries — those in the homes of the educated elite, in private clubs, private schools and universities, and those under the control of vested community groups.

Despite their private nature, this latter category continues to play a key democratic role, engaging local communities, providing access to otherwise obscured information, sparking debate through events, and, increasingly, providing digital access to world reference materials. But these spaces are dwindling and increasingly threatened.

This was evident in this paper's coverage of the Sayad Hashmi Reference Library, which is threatened by demolition as it falls on a proposed route for the Malir Expressway. Created and maintained through a communal effort, the library houses 16,000 books with a focus on Baloch literature and culture. Even as demolition day creeps closer, the authorities have yet to offer an alternative location for it. In a clear illustration of the political nature of libraries, its sponsors and supporters believe that this is due to its links to the Baloch community, with the razing of the library perceived as part of a broader effort to suppress that community's voice and access to information.

The idea of the library as a political battleground is not new in Pakistan. Some may recall the Western press's gushing coverage of a small library that popped up in Dara Adam Khel at the height of the TTP insurgency. A local graduate decided he did not want to join his father's gun shop and set up a small community library next door in the hope that reading would provide both understanding of and sanctuary from the region's collective trauma.

Such examples should not be one-offs. Given the mounting democratic challenges in our country, it is time for civil society to reprioritise the role of the library. And this may best be done by going back to basics and celebrating the joy of reading.

Reading, after all, engenders empathy, which is the starting point for all engagement, understanding and notions of fairness. And those qualities are the real fuel of functioning democracies. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Poor livability

Dr Noman Ahmed

In a recent assessment of urban livability, the Economist Intelligence Unit rated Karachi as one of the world's least livable cities. The metropolis fared poorly in terms of stability, healthcare, education, culture, the environment and infrastructure. Karachi now compares with Lagos, Tripoli, Algiers and Damascus.

This is hardly surprising for Karachi residents, who are regularly subjected to power shutdowns, the absence of piped water, shortage of public transport, gas load-shedding, broken roads, street crime, toxic air quality, criminal tree-cutting, and other challenges. Despite these odds, the city remains the major contributor to national GDP and revenues from direct and indirect taxation.

Karachi has long been aspiring to a semi-autonomous governance model to address its issues. Barring the City District Government format under Gen Musharraf, this demand has not been realised. As a result of a controversial electoral process, 245 union committees, 25 town municipal corporations, and a metropolitan corporation came into existence about a year ago. All of them are still trying to find a visible role to play in managing Karachi's core affairs. With a limited financial base and executive capacity, people justifiably see these local government organs as mere cosmetic entities.

Karachi's political economy is complex. There are many overt and covert interest groups, who have their fingerprints all over the decisions pertaining to Karachi's development and management.

Local and international investors and devel-

opers attempt to safeguard everything that fuels their business. One observes endless land supply for investment, albeit at the cost of farmlands, fruit orchards, and indigenous settlements. The eviction of people in planned and unplanned localities is an ongoing nightmare. Whereas a few investors amass exponential profits, millions see their lives altered for the worse after forced dislocations. The realtors are abetted in their projects by the provincial authorities, the city administration, and high-flying engineers, architects, contractors and service providers.

Utility agencies bend the rules to extend their services to these schemes. The mystery of the status of the K-4 Bulk Water Supply Scheme for over a decade is an example. To benefit privileged localities, K-4's right of way has been changed. A resident in Bahria Town receives uninterrupted water supply while another in Federal B Area has to run from pillar to post to access water.

To promote costly and state-subsidised buses on a few routes, the authorities have closed operations on many ordinary bus routes where city transporters offered their services at affordable prices. The Bus Rapid Transit is a joke. Constructed at an astronomical cost and inconveniencing residents, the BRT has been Karachi's most financially and operationally unviable transport option ever. If and when all seven BRT lines are operational, they will cater to only nine per cent of the total passenger trips. BRT beneficiaries will be IFIs, government officials, consultants and contractors. The losers will be Karachites.

There is a visible housing need in the city that remains unmet due to

multiple reasons. For a very long time, the city has been functioning without a development plan with data on demographic trends at city scale, migrations, housing and infrastructure needs, and solutions to urban challenges. For the past many years, no public scheme for housing the urban poor has been announced, despite the fact that thousands of households are added to the existing tally every month.

Land in the peripheries, earmarked for housing low-income communities, has been given to a dubious mega realtor. As a result, existing low- and middle-income neighbourhoods are densifying fast. Single-storeyed yards on 80 or 120 square yards are being swiftly replaced with five- or six-storeyed structures. Most of these buildings are built without proper design and supervision. They are virtual death traps for the inhabitants. Many such buildings have already collapsed. Poor ventilation and lack of legal electricity connections make life miserable, especially for the elderly, women and children. Authorities only wake up in the event of an accident, conduct an inquiry and end up suspending a handful of officials.

To address all these concerns, the city's decision-making and governance mechanism must change. A broad-based steering committee under the Sindh chief minister and composed of representatives from stakeholder groups is needed. The body must be empowered to appraise city affairs and take appropriate decisions. Karachi's livability will not improve unless appropriate institutional arrangements are put in place to address the challenges faced by the residents. -- Courtesy Dawn



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting regarding over-billing of protected consumers.

## Finance minister assures KE of resolving delayed payment issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday assured K-Electric of addressing its matters related to delayed payments.

The minister asked the KE team to focus on improving service delivery in Karachi and to expedite its plan for adding cheaper generation capacity so that the cost of electricity could be brought down.

Earlier, the KE representatives stated that the agreement signed between the government and KE earlier this year had addressed a number of issues and KE was now vigorously working on implementing the new generation projects to improve its electricity mix.

The delegation raised the issue of delayed payments of KE's consumer bills collected through the post office.

## Philippine ambassador visits Dhodial Mansehra to foster trade relations

MANSEHRA (APP): Ambassador of the Philippines, Maria Agnes M Cervantes on Monday visited Dhodial Mansehra with her embassy staff to discuss and promote trade relations between the Philippines and Pakistan.

The ambassador visited at the invitation of former Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Hanif Gohar.

During her visit to Gohar House, the ambassador and her delegation met with key figures from the business community. They engaged in discussions about enhancing trade between the two nations and explored the economic landscape of Pakistan. Former Federal Minister Azam Khan Swati was also present to participate in the discussions.

The delegation extended their visit to include the Al-Mustafa Trust Gohar Campus Hospital in Dhodial and the Dadar Sanatorium Hospital. At Al-Mustafa Trust Hospital, the hospital administration provided a detailed briefing on the medical facilities and modern machinery available at the hospital.

Furthermore, the ambassador visited the SOS Village Dhodial, where she and her team interacted with the children residing there. They were informed about the residential and educational facilities provided to the children.

The children showcased their skills through impressive performances of judo, karate, and taekwondo, which were highly appreciated by the visitors.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja chairing first meeting of Functional Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication.

## Telenor launches Startup Mentors' Network to empower entrepreneurial ecosystem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Telenor Pakistan, a frontrunner in providing telecommunication services and digital solutions across the country, unveiled its latest initiative, the 'Startup Mentors' Network'.

As a natural extension of Telenor Pakistan's successful corporate accelerator program, Telenor Velocity, which has empowered startups to scale through access to expertise in product management, growth hacking, and digital assets, the Startup Mentors' Network aims to deliver an even more supportive entrepreneurial landscape across the nation, said a news release issued here Monday.

The Startup Mentors' Network features a distinguished panel of 31 seasoned professionals from Telenor Pakistan, each recognized for their profound

expertise spanning critical domains such as communications, marketing, finance, strategy, and business models. These mentors, selected for their proven track records and dedication to innovation, will collaborate closely with startups embedded within various incubators and accelerators nationwide.

The primary objective of the network is to provide tailored guidance and strategic support to emerging ventures, enabling them to refine business concepts, devise robust strategies, optimize pricing models, and enhance their market positioning. By leveraging the extensive industry knowledge and network of Telenor Pakistan's mentors, startups will gain invaluable insights and actionable advice to accelerate their growth trajectory.

## IT industry share to be increased up to 25 bln dollars; Chairman PMYP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Monday expressed the resolve to increase the Information Technology (IT) industry share up to 25 billion dollars from the current 2.5 billion dollars in the next five years.

Addressing the "International Conference on Sustainability in Workforce" at a local hotel, he said that as many as 200,000 youths would be

trained in high-tech and Information Technology programmes with the skills needed to thrive in the modern workplace.

"By equipping students with the latest tools and technologies, and fostering collaboration with industry leaders, we can prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow."

Mashhood said that the government was intensifying efforts under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif towards enhancing skill development through strategic partnerships and targeted programs.

He added that the country's economy was moving towards the right direction under the leadership of PM Shehbaz Sharif and will succeed in overcoming the financial problems. Rana said due to the economic policies of the government during the last three months and the signing of multi-billion-dollar investment projects with China, Qatar, UAE.

## PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 353 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 353.41 points, a positive change of 0.44 percent, closing at 80,566.21 points against 80,212.79 points on the last working day.

A total of 261,649,614 shares were traded during the day as compared to 448,981,017 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 13.024 billion against Rs 18.995 billion on the last trading day.

Around 427 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 216 of them recorded gains and 158 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 53 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hum Network with 20,667,563 shares at Rs 11.36 per share, National BankXD with 19,555,510 shares at Rs 50.92 per share and Bank of Punjab with 17,587,329 shares at Rs5.79 per share.



Chief Collector to resolve genuine issues & expedite digitalization: Saquib

**Independent Report**  
 KARACHI: Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has apprised that Chief Collector of Customs Appraisal (South), Mr. Mohsin Rafiq, has agreed with principal stand of FPCCI to improve ease of doing business benchmarks vis-a-vis customs during clearance at customs appraisal. The only way forward to cut human interaction is to

we want our due and rightful facilitation during customs appraisal.

Mr. Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, maintained that Custom House and its staff in Karachi should be made more hospitable, amicable and facilitative as it will promote liaison and compliance from the traders. WeBOC was meant to be a 24/7 facility; but, it is not being operated as such and shortage of staff is the primary reason



LAHORE: AWAPDA engineer is busy in repairing Transformers at G.R.O in the Federal Capital

## Shaza chairs first meeting of functional committee on IT, Telecom

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja chaired first meeting of Functional Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication. Secretary IT Captain (Retd) Muhammad Mahmood was also present in the meeting, said a news release issued here on Monday. Member IT Syed Junaid Imam, Member Telecom Muhammad Jahanzeb Rahim, and

authorities from Finance Division, Ministry of Commerce, State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) also attended the meeting.

Secretary General P@SHA Nadeem Malik briefed the minister about cash reward scheme for IT industry. The meeting deliberated upon bringing a scheme alternative to cash.

## Saudi group to invest in retail Oil Sector in Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a recent development, Saudi Group Asyad Holding through UAE-based Wafi Energy Holding Limited has acquired 77.42% shareholdings and control of Shell Pakistan Limited.

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the acquisition under Section 11 of the Competition Act, 2010, thus solidifying the said transaction to boost the retail oil sector in Pakistan, according to a press release issued here on Monday.

M/s Shell Pakistan Limited, listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange, maintains a substantial business footprint in the retail supply of motor fuels and lubricants across Pakistan. Whereas, M/s Wafi Energy LLC is a wholly-owned affiliate of Asyad Holding Group which specializes in the management and operation of fuel stations in Saudi Arabia. The Group has established M/s Wafi Energy Holding Limited to flex its wings for

investment purposes in Pakistan.

The CCP's Phase I competition assessment identified 'Retail Fuel, Vehicle Lubricants, and Industrial Lubricants' as the relevant product markets. It was also revealed that Shell Pakistan has distinct shares in all three relevant markets but that will remain unchanged post-transaction.

The analysis further confirmed that Wafi Energy Holding Limited will not gain a dominant position in the relevant markets even after attaining direct control of Shell Pakistan. Therefore, the CCP has swiftly authorized the said acquisition under Section 31 of the Competition Act, 2010.

Chairman CCP, Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, while signing the Order expressed that this development is expected to boost competition by elevating service standards in the retail fuel supply chain and thus, contribute immensely to flourishing Pakistani markets.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with the CEO of K-Electric Syed Moonis Abdullah Alvi and other executives.

## Jazz appoints Farrukh Khan as CFO and CEO of MFH

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz appointed Farrukh Khan, CEO & Managing Director of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), as its new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and CEO of Micro-Finance Holdings (MFH), effective September 15, 2024.

Farrukh will also join the board of Mobilink Microfinance Bank.

Gabor Koosis, the outgoing CFO, will remain with Jazz until the end of the year, focusing on strategic projects to facilitate a smooth transition and maintain momentum in ongoing initiatives said a news release.

Farrukh Khan brings over 30 years of leadership experience in major financial institutions, including roles as CEO of Acumen Fund, co-founder and CEO of BMA Capital Management, and CFO at American Express. His expertise in mergers and public offerings will enhance Jazz's financial strategy and innovation.

Amir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz & Chairman MMBL, commented, "We welcomed Farrukh Khan to our leadership team. His rich expertise and leadership in capital markets are crucial as we evolve into a ServiceCo."

## Gold rates dip by Rs.1,300 per tola to Rs.245,100

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,300 and was sold at Rs.245,100 on Monday against its sale at Rs.246,400 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.1,113 to Rs.210,134 from Rs.211,247 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.192,622 from Rs.193,644, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,900 and Rs.2,486.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$12 to \$2,376 from \$2,388.

## Pak-China Joint Lab for AI to intelligently Pakistan's agriculture

BEIJING (APP): In May, the Pakistan China Joint Lab for Artificial Intelligence and Smart Agriculture (AI&SA) has been established at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

Punjab Province, as Pakistan's main agricultural production area, its annual grain output accounts for about 76% of the country's total annual grain output.

Both parties agreed that it has unique advantages to carry out pilot applications of high-throughput crop monitoring projects here. In this province, about 600 farmers have joined the pilot application.

Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor UAF, noted lately that in the 25,000 villages across Punjab, if drone spraying technology could be adopted on a large scale, it will help increase productivity, reduce costs and greatly promote the development of intelligent agriculture. "We use drones equipped with visual recognition equipment to fly around the fields to

## PIC directs SBP to make public list of 1000 loan defaulters

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Information Commission has issued a directive to the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to disclose the list of the top 1000 loan defaulters.

Azmat Khan, a resident of Karachi, had sought the list from SBP under the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017. In response, the SBP requested an exemption from disclosing the information under Section 7(d) of the Act, which relates to the records of banking companies and financial institutions concerning their customers' accounts.

The commission thoroughly examined the information request, the written reply from the SBP, and the relevant law. The Commission's order clarified that Section 7(d) of the Right of Access to

Information Act, 2017, which exempts certain records from disclosure, does not apply to the requested list of loan defaulters.

The order said: "It is an admitted fact that 1000 individuals obtained loans from the concerned banks and failed to repay them, causing significant financial damage to both the country and the banks involved. Such individuals cannot be protected from disclosure."

The Commission observed that the exemption cited by the SBP did not pertain to this case. Consequently, the plea of the public body has been rejected.

The SBP Governor has been directed to disclose the required information and submit it to the Commission within 10 days.



HYDERABAD: LPG dealers, users and Taxi drivers hold a protest demonstration to block the center point of city Hyder Chowk, demanding the ban on LPG should be lifted and dealers should be allowed to do business, which was ban after 24 deaths in cylinder blast in a shop.

## CM directs health dept to eradicate polio as 2 new cases detected

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed his displeasure over the detection of two polio cases in the province and directed the health department to intensify efforts to eradicate the disease and fulfil his government's commitment to polio eradication.

He expressed his concerns during a meeting at the CM House to evaluate the progress of polio eradication initiatives. The meeting was attended by various officials including Dr Azra Fazal, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Local Government Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, CEO PPHI Javed Jagirani, Coordinator EOC Irshad Sodhar, DG Health Dr Waqar, and others.

The Chief Minister was briefed about two polio cases detected in May and June 2024. The first case involved a 30-month-old malnourished boy from the Jatoti tribe in Lakh area of Shikarpur, who was tested positive for polio on May 11, 2024.

The Health Minister, Dr. Azra Fazal, informed the CM that the child's condition was improving, and the paralysis had subsided.

In response to a question, Coordinator EOC Irshad Sodhar mentioned that the child had received three doses of RI OPV and two doses of IPV. Minister Health Dr. Azra highlighted that 73 per cent of children within six union councils of Shikarpur had been administered IPV.

The second case involved a three-year-old girl from the Malkani tribe in UC Keamari-3 of Karachi, who was diagnosed with polio on June 3, 2024. The affected child had received three doses of RI OPV, two doses of IPV, and over 7 doses of SIAs. The Health Minister mentioned that in response to this case, 18,000 children were vaccinated with OPV and over 4,000 children received the IPV booster dose.



LARKANA: MPA and Political Secretary to PPP Chairman, Jameel Ahmed Soomro presides over the meeting regarding monsoon rains held at Deputy Commissioner office in Larkana.

## Place where Quaid-d-Azam had spent last days was set ablaze: SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has adjourned till July 11 hearing of case against trial of civilians in military courts.

The order said the plea of Lahore High Court (LHC) Bar for becoming respondent is accepted.

Faisal Siddiqui told the court he does not want to pursue the petition for direct broadcasting of the proceedings. The appeal plea of KP is wrapped up being withdrawn.

A 7-member larger bench of SC presided over by Justice Amin ul Din took up the case for hearing. Suleman Akram Raja counsel for PTI said the family is not being allowed to meet the accused persons since 5 weeks.

Counsel Latif Khosa remarked the accused have been kept in bad circumstances.

Justice Jamal Mandokhail inquired if meeting has not taken place then how it became known that they have been kept in adverse circumstances.

The counsel replied the people who met earlier told that the hands of the accused were tied.

Attorney General (AG) told the court the matter of meeting between the accused and their families had been resolved.

## HESCO determines to provide uninterrupted power supply during Muharram

HYDERABAD (APP): Delegations of Anjuman Haidari Qadam Gah Maula Ali and Tanzeem Azaa (Registered) met with the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) Zulfikar Ali Memon, and stressed upon uninterrupted power supply during the month of Muharram ul Haram.

The COO clarified that HESCO administration had made arrangements to provide continuous power supply during the month of Muharram ul Haram, and a control room had been established at the HESCO headquarters to prompt address any technical issues, while relevant officers had been directed to visit all Imambargahs and immediately resolve any electricity-related problems.

He informed the delegations that Hyderabad has a total of 135 feeders, out of which 65 feeders will provide continuous power supply from 7 pm to 5 am during Muharram ul Haram. Similarly, this facility will be available on 171 feeders across the entire HESCO region. He also appealed to the public to close markets early and minimize lighting in shops during Muharram to ensure a continuous power supply for mourning processions and Majaalis. He also urged people to turn off lights on billboards and signboards.

The COO stated that in an emergency move, all leave for line staff had been canceled during Muharram, and mobile teams were formed to be present at necessary locations with full T&P.



KARACHI: A view of massive traffic jam at intersection in the Provincial Capital.

## Two minor kids died in Fish Form

Independent Report SHIKARPUR: An other tragic incident occurred in Shikarpur in which two minor boys fall down in Fish Form and died in the jurisdiction of Bado police station on Monday.

According to initial reports, two minor boys identified as Aboob Bakor of 9 and Muhammad Umar of 8 were playing with motorcycle tyres at village Aandal Marfani and accidentally fall down in Fish Form near to their village and died there.

While receiving the information of tragic incident, area police and parents reached there and taken out the dead bodies of two minor boys from the Fish Form and sent to Government Hospital for Medico-legal formalities.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari chairing a meeting on Green Pakistan Initiative at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Kachhi Canal project must be completed within 1.5 years: Asif

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has directed the authorities concerned to complete the Kachhi Canal project within one and half years to irrigate around 713,000 acres land of Balochistan province.

Chairing a meeting on the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI) at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Monday, he said that the federal government would provide funding for the project to ensure its timely completion on a priority basis, said a press release issued by President House.

On the occasion, the president was briefed about the construction of six strategic canals for the Green Pakistan Initiative. The meeting was attended by Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and senior military officials.

He was informed that the construction of six strategic canals, viz. Chashma Right Bank Canal, Kachhi Canal, Raineer Canal, Greater Thal Canal, Cholistan Canal, and Thar Canal, would help enhance the agricultural potential of Pakistan by increasing the cultivable area as well as the livestock and fisheries potential of the country.

The president underscored the need to revamp and improve the Indus River System Authority. He also proposed establishing a state land bank to productively utilize state-owned lands surrounding strategic canals by securing funding and investment from international financial institutions and the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

The meeting was also briefed that 27 telemetry points would be established to ensure accurate data sharing regarding the availability and flow of water.

He urged the need to develop Pakistan's irrigation sector along modern lines to conserve water, reduce water losses, and enhance water availability. He also underlined the need to promote drip irrigation in the barren areas surrounding the canals.

## Gilani greets parliament, people, govt of Argentine on Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has extended his heartfelt greetings to the parliament, people and government of Argentine Republic on their Independence Day to be marked on July 09 (Tuesday).

In his felicitation message on Monday, he said that Pakistan and Argentina were intertwined in a bond of friendship based upon trust, mutual respect and similarities of opinion on various issues.

## District administration imposes ban on pillion riding

SUKKUR (APP): Pursuing the orders by the Home Department Sindh, the Sukkur district administration in light of Muharram, has taken several measures under Section 144 of the CrPC to ensure the Muharram activities continue uninterrupted.

According to district administration, the pillion riding would be banned on Muharram 9 and 10, notification said on Monday.

## One robber killed, four held with arms, other valuables

KARACHI (INP): One robber was killed and four others including two injured were arrested with arms and other valuables after separate encounters in different areas of the metropolis on Monday.

According to details, two robbers were engaged in looting citizens in Zaman Town area of Karachi when police approached them. An exchange of fire took place in which one robber was killed while other managed to escape.

Two encounters took place in Tasweer Mahal Chowki and Industrial Area in which four robbers including two injured were arrested.

## PIA launches special flights to Najaf

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has launched a series of special flights to Najaf and Iraq to facilitate pilgrims during the Ashura, commemorating the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA). According to details, the operation, dubbed "Operation Ashura," commenced on July 5, with additional flights scheduled for July 7 and July 11. PIA's special flights will not only transport pilgrims to Najaf but also ensure their safe return.

The return operations are set to begin on July 20, with flights scheduled on July 21 and July 25 to bring pilgrims back from Najaf. "Operation Ashura" was designed to provide a seamless travel experience for pilgrims during this significant period of religious observance.

## AJK President, PM pay tributes to Burhani Wani on his 8th Martyrdom anniversary

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry and Prime Minister Chaudhary Anwar ul Haq on Monday paid tributes to young Kashmiri freedom movement leader Burhan Muzaffar Wani and his companions on their 8th martyrdom anniversary.

In their separate messages, they while highlighting the martyred commander's role for a new spirit in the Kashmiri freedom movement, termed him as a shining star and a powerful symbol of resistance against the Indian occupation in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

Hailing the Kashmiri martyrs' matchless struggle and sacrifices for the noble cause, they said, "The sacred blood of the Kashmiri martyrs will never go in vain".

They regrettably noted that since the past several decades the Indian rulers had used their military might and repressive policies to crush the Kashmiris' legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination guaranteed to them by the international community.

They said that the mass uprising triggered after the martyrdom of Burhan Wani not only rendered the Indian government's narrative on Kashmir irrelevant at a global level but also proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the ongoing freedom movement was Indigenous. The duo also lauded the Kashmiri people's resilience in the face of Indian state terrorism.



MUZAFFRABAD: Members of Refugees Jammu Kashmir shouting slogans during protest against Indian army on the eve of death anniversary of Burhan Muzaffar Wani, in the city.

## SAAR holds awareness seminar under positive peace campaign

HYDERABAD (APP): The Positive Peace Awareness campaign Jagurta Mahag initiated by SAAR Organisation and Global Women Cadre organized a seminar with Hindu and Christian Community members of Jamshoro district at UGA Church.

The stakeholders, human rights advocates, journalists, Hindu and Christian Community activists shared their experiences about common issues faced by the community.

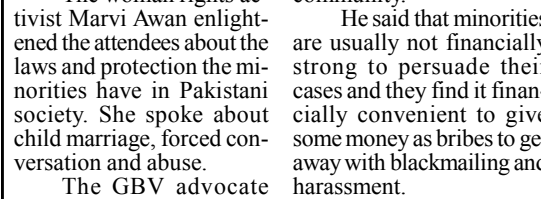
Adv Ayaz Latif Palijo the senior advocate expressed his view on religious harmony and inclusiveness, he encouraged the women from Minorities to persuade their education and join the field as lawmakers in Pakistan.

The woman rights activist Marvi Awan enlightened the attendees about the laws and protection the minorities have in Pakistani society. She spoke about child marriage, forced conversion and abuse.

The GBV advocate and founder SAAR Organisation Sunnum Kabooro shared her concern over the empowerment of women from the Minorities. She addressed the attendees about how they can join the work force and start businesses. She requested the crowds to learn to keep their finances black and white so that they cannot easily become prey to the "Sood mafia". In many cases of mob lynching and blasphemy the culprit uses blasphemy to sort their financial disputes against victims.

Ramsh Lal general secretary minority wing district Jamshoro expressed his grief over expensive lawyers fees which are unbearable for the Hindu community.

He said that minorities are usually not financially strong to persuade their cases and they find it financially convenient to give some money as bribes to get away with blackmailing and harassment.



KARACHI: Activates of Jamat e Islami hold protest against K electric at Orangi Twon Islam Chowk.

## President summons NA session on Tuesday

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday summoned the National Assembly session on July 09, 2024.

The National Assembly will meet at Parliament House on Tuesday at 1700 hours, a President House press release said.

The President summoned the session in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Article 54(1) of the Constitution.

## Shah Mehmood Qureshi 'shifted' to Kot Lakhpat Jail Lahore

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vice chairman and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi was shifted from Adiala Jail Rawalpindi to Kot Lakhpat Jail Lahore.

According to media reports, the incarcerated PTI leader will be presented before the anti-terrorism court in Lahore's Kot Lakhpat Jail.

It stated that Shah Mehmood is booked in several May 9 riots cases in Lahore and police have interrogated the former foreign minister in jail. Earlier, the PTI leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi was sent to judicial remand following his alleged involvement in May 9 riots.

## Add Session Judge escapes in firing on vehicle

SHIKARPUR (INP): Additional Session Judge Kandhkot escaped in firing of robbers on his vehicle, police said on Monday.

According to details, the Additional Session Judge was on his way to Sukkur from Kandhkot when robbers started firing on his vehicle. However, the driver of the judge sped the vehicle due to which he remained safe in the fire. Heavy contingent of police reached the scene and collected the evidences. A case was also registered in the incident and investigations were kicked off.

## Fire breaks out in PSX building, no loss of life reported

KARACHI (APP): A fire broke out in the Pakistan Stock Exchange building here on Monday while rescue efforts were underway to overcome the blaze.

Five fire tenders, a snorkel, and a browser were used in the operation to tackle the blaze which was reportedly caused by a short circuit, media reports said.

Due to the fire which erupted at about 8 am, trading in the PSX remained suspended for an hour while firefighters overcame the blaze which was of low intensity.

The PSX building was reopened after rescue efforts were completed, sources added.

## Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi reviews security plan during Muharram

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday reviewed a Security Plan for ensuring peace and order during Muharram across the country. The minister presiding over an important meeting. The meeting reviewed security situation in all provinces including Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad.

The meeting also decided to ban the use of drones in processions and assemblies from 1<sup>st</sup> Muharram to 10<sup>th</sup> Muharram.

It was also decided that the decision to shut down the internet and mobile phone will be taken in consultation with the respective provinces in the context of security concerns.

Citizens face problems due to internet or mobile phone outages, said Mohsin Naqvi adding a decision in this regard needs to be made according to the ground facts and security situation. Federal, Provincial, Azad Kashmir will provide all possible support for peace in Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad and the needs of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan and provinces will be met related to public order.

He instructed to prepare advance plans for rallies and gatherings in view of rains while ordering of strict checking at entry and exit routes. He said that processions and gatherings should be monitored through cameras and the code of conduct should be enforced.

He ordered Security of mosques, imambargahs and other places of worship should be given full attention. Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad IGs Police and Interior Secretaries briefed on public peace plan during Muharram.



QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti during his one day visit to Quetta.

## UNHCR's delegation led by UN High Commissioner for Refugees calls on Amir Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): The UNHCR's high level delegation led by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi accompanied by Philippa Candler Representative of UNHCR, Pakistan called on Minister for States and Frontier Regions & Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Engr Amir Muqam here on Monday.

The meeting was attended by Secretary SAFRON Zafar Hasan, Joint Secretary Refugees Agha Waseem Ahmad and Chief Commissioner Afghan Refugees Muhammad Abbas Khan and other senior officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a news release said.

Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that Pakistan acknowledge UNHCR's continued support for Afghan refugees in Pakistan for the past 45 years. He said that Pakistan hosts millions of Afghan refugees, providing protection, education and health facilities.

"Currently, there are 1.45 million registered Afghan citizens card holders and this does not include a great number of unregistered Afghan refugees and other nationals," he added.

## DC urges masses to maintain peace during Muharram

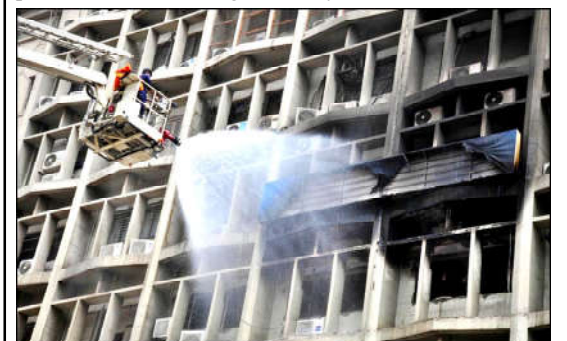
SUKKUR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC), Khairpur, Syed Ahmed Fawad on Monday urged the religious scholars, traders, and citizens to support the district administration's efforts.

During his visit to different routes of procession in the city, the deputy commissioner praised the community's past efforts in maintaining peace and order during the holy month and emphasized the need for continued cooperation.

He highlighted the importance of adhering to the schedule, respecting the sanctity of mosques and pulpits, and avoiding sectarian speeches to prevent any untoward incidents.

He also stressed the necessity for religious scholars and traders from all sects to respect the law and collaborate with the administration.

On the occasion representatives from the traders expressed their views and assured their full cooperation in maintaining peace and order during the holy month.



KARACHI: Firefighters used a snorkel to extinguish a fire that erupted on the fourth floor of the Pakistan Stock Exchange building.

## KMCH to remain on high alert during Muharram: Dr Najaf

SUKKUR (APP): Additional Medical Supranational, Khairpur Medical College Hospital (KMCH), Dr Syed Najaf Ali Shah has said the district headquarters hospital would be on high alert on 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram-ul-Haram to provide medical cover to public and to deal with any bigger emergency if needed.

Talking to APP here on Monday, he said that he himself would monitor working of the staff during Muharram holidays and it has been ensured that every patient would be accommodated as per requirement. Special arrangements have already been made at filter clinics and emergency department to accommodate patients reaching the hospital.

Dr Najaf Ali Shah said that senior level officials including directors would remain present within the premises of the hospital during Muharram holidays while a good number of beds have already been reserved for any emergency.

He added that heads of all departments including medicine, surgery, neurosurgery, orthopaedics and general surgery would monitor working in their respective departments during Muharram holidays and would remain on call.