

Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 06. No. 151 Muharram 05, 1445 AH Friday July 12, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

Pak, Azerbaijan agree to expand investment volume upto \$2 bn

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Thursday agreed to enhance the bilateral investment level of up to US\$2 billion in areas of mutual beneficial projects. In a joint press stakeout along with Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, after witnessing signing of agreements and MoUs in diverse areas between the two countries, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said "we have discussed an initial figure of \$2 billion investment in areas of mutual beneficial

projects". The prime minister hoped that when he will visit Azerbaijan in November this year, the two sides would be ready to ink agreements worth \$2 billion to start with, as there was great potential in both sides to multiply this figure in years to come. "In today's in depth conversation, we have agreed to enhance our bilateral trade besides discussing areas of joint cooperation and joint investments," he added. The prime minister said, "The bilateral investment volume of less

than \$100 million does not reflect the strength of our brotherhood and friendship in the field of joint investment in areas which are mutually beneficial". Expressing satisfaction over the bilateral meeting, the prime minister said discussions were held on mutual trust and confidence where both sides expressed their unwavering commitment to move forward and touch higher levels of achievements in the fields of trade and investment. He emphasized that Pakistan had always supported

Azerbaijan's stand while the brotherly country had always supported the cause of millions of Kashmiris who had rendered huge sacrifices for more than seven decades to achieve their right of self determination as per UN Security Council resolutions. He recalled the President Aliyev's visit in 2017 during the tenure of then PM Nawaz Sharif saying that history was repeating as Nawaz Sharif's younger brother was now receiving him along with people of Pakistan.



Prime Minister of Pakistan H.E. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Azerbaijan H.E. Ilham Aliyev leading their respective delegations during bilateral talks in Islamabad.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a cabinet meeting at the CM House.

President criticises PML-N-led govt over its handling of IMF deal and its reliance on loans

LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari has criticised the PML-N-led government over its handling of International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal and its reliance on loans.

"The IMF loans are a test for the public," Zardari said, accusing the PML-N of failing to manage the government effectively. "We know how to form and dismantle governments," he declared, promising that the PPP would take decisive action. Party leaders voiced their concerns about the lack of cooperation from the Punjab and federal governments. "We are not getting our full rights," a leader complained, pointing out that electoral issues remain unresolved.

Zardari assured the leaders of addressing their grievances directly, stating his commitment to active engagement in Islamabad and Lahore. He emphasized the PPP's unmatched capability in Pakistani politics, view-

ing criticism of the party as a form of recognition. Directing the PPP Punjab leadership to collaborate in resolving internal issues, Zardari affirmed, "We are conducting a test of the people by taking IMF loans. The Muslim League (N) is not in power. We know how to form and dismantle governments. We will not abandon our people." He urged PPP workers to prepare for intensified efforts ahead, particularly in promoting youth leadership within the party's ranks. Zardari also called for a comprehensive report on the party's organizational structure, emphasizing the need to move beyond the politics of closed rooms and take proactive steps forward. Previously, President Asif Ali Zardari revealed the government's intention to impose taxes on agricultural income in alignment with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions.



KARACHI: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi meeting with the Leader of Dawoodi Bohra Community Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin.

Mohsin Naqvi visits Karachi, meets Dawoodi Bohra community leaders

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visited Karachi and met with Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, the leader of the Dawoodi Bohra community, at the Burhani Palace.

He also visited the Shah Shaheedan Imam Bargah in Soldier Bazaar and reviewed the arrangements.

During the meeting with Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, his son Shahzada Hussain Burhanuddin was also present. Interior Minister expressed good wishes for Saifuddin saying, "We welcome you to Pakistan with an open heart. Your arrival is an honor for us. We have a relationship of respect and admiration with you, which will always remain the same." He added that the Dawoodi Bohra community is a peaceful and loving community.

Saifuddin thanked Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for resolving issues related to the Dawoodi Bohra community and presented him with a beautiful chadar and tabarruk (blessings).

Later, Interior Minister visited the Shah Shaheedan Imam Bargah in Soldier Bazaar and reviewed the security arrangements. He also met with Molana Ayatullah Aqeel al-Gharavi and former Sindh Chief Minister Justice @ Maqbool Baqar. The Interior Minister expressed satisfaction over the security and other arrangements at the Imam Bargah.

Interior Minister said that the Federal Government is in contact with all provinces to maintain peace and security during Muharram. He added that all provinces are being provided with necessary resources to ensure peace and security during Muharram.

Justice Aalia Neelum sworn in as first woman chief justice of LHC

LAHORE (INP): Justice Aalia Neelum on Thursday became the first woman sworn in as a chief justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) when she took oath as the top judge of the LHC in a simple ceremony at the Governor's House here.

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan administered the oath to Justice Neelum. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, judges of the High Court and other top officials attended the oath-taking ceremony.

It may be noted that Ayesha Malik is the first woman Supreme Court judge.

Rangers, Police conduct flag marches in Karachi, other areas of Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police conducted joint flag marches in Karachi and other cities of Sindh, ensuring heightened security during Muharram-ul-Haram.

According to spokesman for Rangers on Thursday, the flag marches were carried out in several key areas of Karachi, including Super Highway, North Nazimabad, Surjani Town, Orangi Town, Shah Latif Town, Shahrah-e-Faisal, Korangi Town, Baldia Town, Saddar Town, and Jamshed Town. Similar security measures were observed in other cities across Sindh, such as Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Dadu, Mirpurkhas, Tando Muhammad Khan, Umerkot, Chhachro, Sukkur, Rohri, Salehpota, Nawabshah, Shahdadpur, Sanghar, Kandiaro, Badin, and Thatta.

Flight makes 'emergency landing' at Karachi airport after passenger dies

KARACHI (INP): The Colombo-bound plane made an emergency landing at the Jinnah International Airport Karachi in the wee hours of Thursday after a passenger's health worsened mid-air.

According to sources, the flight was going to Colombo from Dubai, when the health of the woman passenger worsened after a heart attack. The pilot of the flight sought permission for an emergency landing at the Karachi airport from the ATC. After getting clearance, the flight made an emergency landing at the Karachi airport.

President Zardari calls for timely project completion in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday stressed the timely completion of the ongoing development projects of Balochistan and urged the provincial government to take proactive measures for the province's welfare.

Talking to Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, President Zardari acknowledged that the provincial government has implemented effective measures for the development and prosperity of Balochistan and emphasized the urgent completion of the

Kachhi Canal with federal support to meet provincial water demands, boost agriculture, and ensure food security. The President also expressed his satisfaction over the ongoing public welfare projects in the province and the measures taken by the provincial government for maintaining peace and order in the province.

Bugti briefed President Zardari on provincial situation during the meeting at Presidency and briefed him on ongoing development projects, the overall law and order situation in the province.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Joint Press Conference of Sharjeel Inam Memon and Sardar Shah

Independent Report

KARACHI: Senior Minister of Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that during an important meeting of the Sindh Cabinet, decisions were made regarding the housing project for flood victims in Sindh. There were complaints from people that their names were not included. Surveys were conducted by the Pakistan Army, Rangers, and private parties, and the data of the remaining flood victims will also be collected.

Benazir Bhutto Medical College, Lyari. He said, previously, if a person bought a car, they would get the vehicle registered within sixty days. Now, no unregistered vehicle will be allowed on the road. People used to drive vehicles without registration for years, but this will no longer be allowed. This measure will discourage the use of unregistered vehicles in crime and increase revenue. He said that the federal government has allowed the export of



A total of 2.1 million houses are being built for the flood victims in Sindh. While holding a press conference in Karachi after the Sindh Cabinet meeting, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon announced that the master plan for Rani Bagh Hyderabad has been approved. Rani Bagh, under the Public-Private Partnership Department of the Local Government Department, is being revived. The government aims to provide recreational facilities for children.

He said that the Cabinet meeting approved the recruitment of teachers at Shaheed Mohtarma

Sindh cabinet decides to protect Karoonjhar, designates Khasar as granite mining area

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh cabinet has decided to protect the entire Karoonjhar as cultural and heritage sites, forests and a wildlife sanctuary/Ramsar Site and designated the Khasar as a granite mining area, subject to clearance from the Forest and Wildlife Department.

Chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah here at CM House here Thursday, the cabinet meeting was informed that during the caretaker government, a proposal was initiated to launch the Granite Excavation Project at Nagarparkar.

According to the Geological Survey of Pakistan's 2015 report, there are around 14 billion metric tons of Granite in Nagarparkar spread over 11 different locations. However, the Mines and Mineral Department mentioned that the Sindh High Court,

on October 16, 2023, banned excavation in the Nagarparkar area due to the presence of cultural/heritage sites, forest and a wildlife sanctuary/Ramsar site. The Sindh government has filed an appeal in the Supreme Court, which ordered that any government policy for mining in Karoonjhar hills should consider the competing interests of wildlife/forest, environment, and heritage.

As a result, the Cabinet committee identified the Khasar Area, located 25 km away from Nagarparkar, where the potential for granite excavation indicated an area of 3.6 sq km, as per the GSP Report 2015. The committee found that the Khasar Area has no overlapping with forest areas. Subsequently, the cabinet approved Khasar as Granite mining in the area subject to the clearance of Forest and Wildlife Department.

On the recommendation of the health dept the Sindh cabinet approved a Rs 3.84 billion grant-in-aid Patients' Aid Foundation (PAF), for the Procurement of Medical Equipment and supply of utilities for a new 12-storied 532-bedded medical complex including a dedicated floor for cardiology and six-storied 60-bedded government officers' ward at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), Karachi.

The amount would be released in two installments, Rs 2.13 billion in 2024-25 and Rs.1.71 billion in 2025-26.

The cabinet approved the Amendment in the Provincial Motor Vehicle Ordinance (PMVO) 1965 to ensure swift registration of vehicles, enhance public safety by preventing the misuse of unregistered vehicles for illegal activities.

PTI can hold public meeting after Chehlum: DC tells IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Acting Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad has said in Islamabad High Court (IHC) that PTI can hold public meeting after Chehlum.

Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamir Farooq remarked the court has issued order earlier too. The way matter is running it is not permanent solution. I issue directives to chief commissioner that he should meet them. He should call them, make consultation and find out permanent solution to the issue. 40000 to 50000 people will come in the public meeting. It makes no difference. Public meeting will be held. Speeches will be delivered. Nothing will occur due to it. Understand it. If some one delivers wrong speech and violation of NOC is committed then you can hold them responsible. The CJ IHC gave these remarks during hearing of petition filed by PTI leader Aamir Mughal against Chief commissioner Islamabad notification regarding suspension of NOC of PTI public meeting.

No designs to enter into any talks with TTP: FO

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan says it has no designs to enter into any talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the terrorist entity is involved in the killing of Pakistani and foreign citizens inside Pakistan.

The Spokesperson said Pakistan respects Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. She said we expect the Afghan authorities to uphold their sovereignty and take action against terrorist groups

which have found sanctuaries inside Afghanistan and using their territory for terrorist attacks against Pakistan.

Responding to a question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan is committed to implement Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan. She said the first phase of this plan is near completion and alluded to the illegal foreigners including Afghans repatriated to their home countries.

The spokesperson clarified that Pakistan has not given any understanding to the UNHCR for the suspension of the plan.



KARACHI: Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori.

Commissioner Karachi seeks removal of unsafe billboards

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Syed Hasan Naqvi has issued instructions to immediately start the process of removing unsafe billboards and hoardings in the city.

He directed the Deputy Commissioners and concerned local and development departments to take immediate action, said a spokesperson on Thursday.

The Commissioner has said that in view of the expected monsoon rains, there is a need to take prior and immediate steps to remove unsafe billboards and hoardings.

The Commissioner has directed all the Deputy Commissioners in writing to take effective action. The Sindh Govern-

ment has directed the departments concerned to take action in this regard, he added.

He has asked the Deputy Commissioners to contact all the concerned departments including local government and concerned authorities and ensure the implementation of the government's orders.

He has said that after the prediction of heavy rains by the Meteorological Department, it is necessary to ensure all the measures to deal with the rains.

Whenever unsafe billboards or hoardings are installed on government or non-government land in the city, they should be removed by taking immediate steps, he noted.

Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves increase to \$ 14.64 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan increased to US\$ 14,644.7 million in the week ended on July 05, 2024 while the reserves held by central bank were recorded as \$ 9,405.1 million.

The SBP reserves, according to a statement issued here on Thursday, increased by \$ 16 million to \$ 9,405.1 million during the week under review. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were recorded as \$ 5,239.6 million, it added.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on June 28, 2024, were \$ 14,573 million.

Among them foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$ 9,389.5 million while \$ 5,183.5 million were held by commercial banks.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent
 Friday July 12, 2024

Population crisis

Pakistan is the world's fifth most populous nation, yet the resources and socioeconomic tools needed to provide for over 240m souls are severely lacking. The only logical measure is to bring down the fertility rate in order to provide a better standard of living to citizens, as well as the generations to come. Unfortunately, successive governments, beyond providing lip service, have failed to act to prevent the population bomb from coming close to detonation. If we continue on this trajectory, the UNFPA projects that Pakistan's population may hit 263m by 2030, which is just around the corner. Does Pakistan have the resources to adequately feed, clothe, educate and house this massive number? The answer is worryingly self-evident.

Therefore, today, as World Population Day is being observed globally, both state and civil society must pledge to address the population issue in a progressive and sagacious manner. This can be done by declaring a 'population emergency', and committing funds and efforts to the cause of addressing the explosive population growth. While some states have taken invasive steps, such as limiting the number of children couples can have, there are better examples in the neighbourhood that do not infringe on personal rights, yet achieve the goal of planned families.

In this regard, UNFPA cites the Muslim-majority states of Turkiye, Iran and Bangladesh, which have managed to implement successful family planning programmes. As per the UN body's research, these countries succeeded because the state was fully supporting policies aimed at reducing population growth, while information and family planning services were easily available to citizens. There is no reason why Pakistan — which in the 1960s had initiated similar plans — cannot learn from these Muslim states, with which we share many cultural similarities. Perhaps the biggest factor that can give a boost to family planning campaigns is unwavering commitment from the state at the federal and provincial levels. There needs to be buy-in from political parties, as well as the clergy.

The fact is that due to the social structures in Pakistan, it is imperative to have ulema, tribal elders and other community leaders on board to successfully implement family planning programmes — from big cities to the furthest hamlets. Both men and women need to be counselled about the options available. Moreover, successful programmes, such as Lady Health Workers, can be utilised to provide information and reproductive health services to women. At the policy level, the skewed weightage given to large populations in the NFC Award formula should be reconsidered, as provincial administrations will continue to ignore rampant population growth in order to secure more funds. For a balanced future where all Pakistanis have access to food, water and basic services, a successful family planning model is essential.

Zeba Sathar

Today is World Population Day and the theme this year is 'Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope'. While the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, it has, paradoxically, also become vastly inequitable. Many citizens around the world, including those of Pakistan, continue to be highly neglected despite their lives being interwoven with those more fortunate.

UN Secretary General António Guterres has expressed concern over the achievement of the global development agenda outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals, and the collection of data that measures progress towards a better world for all by 2030. A mere six years prior to the SDG deadline, he has highlighted the need for data to capture inequalities in the achievement of universally agreed goals to ensure that no one is left behind. Importantly, while Pakistan may not be recording adequate progress with regard to the SDGs, we certainly collect data to measure inequities in most development outcomes.

The country's official

statistical agency, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, has completed not one but two censuses in the last seven years! PBS also collects annual data through a range of regular surveys — the Household Integrated Economic Survey, Labour Force Survey, the Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement survey, and many others. The truth is that PBS seems to have little time to share the heaps of crucial data it collects as it is caught up collecting more.

The data of the 2023 census, which has essential ground-level information on the condition of the Pakistani population, has yet to be released. In general, there appears to be a lack of appetite, awareness and ability in Pakistan to analyse and utilise data especially among those making decisions regarding the employment, health, education and other essential needs of the country's 240 million citizens.

Data reflecting inequities among communities, districts and populations that are being 'left far behind', is, in fact, readily available. What is missing, however, is the will to

analyse the data, prove its veracity and take action accordingly. The Population Council's recent analysis of District-Level Vulnerabilities (based mainly on the PBS Pakistan Mouza Census 2020), shows that the distance to a basic health unit in rural Punjab is seven kilometres, 25km in Sindh, 15km in KP, and 51km in Balochistan. Similarly, the average distance to a girl's secondary school in Punjab is 8km compared to the much higher 38km in Balochistan.

Socioeconomic data is periodically collected by PBS, but barely used. The PBS website is the window to Pakistan's official figures on everything ranging from prices, numbers of animals and acreage of land to education, health, national accounts, etc. It should be making widely available development data on inequities across Pakistan, showing chunks of the population, especially in the districts of rural Balochistan, which are left very far behind.

There is one silver lining in District-Level Vulnerabilities in the area of communications — mobile density is almost 100 per

cent in Pakistan. Undoubtedly, an equaliser, mobile phones make it easier for families to connect with each other and the self-employed to connect with their clientele. Specifically, a large number of migrant families are able to remain regularly in touch with their relatives back home thanks to mobile phones. But, while we remain progressively interconnected through telecommunication, internet and social media, we are drifting apart as a nation, due to the wide disparity of living standards across the population.

We do not need data to recognise the inequality of lives across Pakistan; it is visible around us and just requires a bit of sensitivity and empathy to observe. It is palpable in the lived experience of countless people — a large proportion of whom live below the poverty line. We are surrounded by poverty, discrimination and injustice.

The country's elite need to take a break from their mundane chatter about politics, the heat, and inflation, and focus on the glaring divide between the rich and the poor. In this regard,

the poor treatment of domestic help stands out as a grave issue of concern. Often, these workers who provide household services face humiliation and even violence at work and at home.

Women's empowerment is a priority area of the SDGs and human rights in general. Still, women in Pakistan (with the exception of a privileged few) generally fall in the bottom rung of any socioeconomic metric; they lead a life fraught with difficulty. They are often malnourished and experience frequent and unwanted pregnancies, and have poor access to basic services, such as health and education. Above all, they are generally devoid of any agency to make decisions concerning themselves or their children, and struggle to make ends meet.

Children's rights and welfare is at the heart of the SDGs. In spite of that, a majority of children in Pakistan are denied even their basic rights. We continue to remain complacent about high levels of fertility when out of the 7m babies born each year, about half are either unwanted or mistimed,

and are likely to end up being born in poor households. The vast majority of these children are likely to be stunted and never go to school. Many would be lucky to survive their first birthday.

The poor are berated through remarks such as 'these people have too many children and do not look after their health'. Given the indifference to their plight, there may come a point when the poor are blamed for not wanting to get out of their state of poverty. This attitude is in divergence with the values of a just and humane society. A thread of hope in terms of providing basic needs to the millions being left behind would lie in our state leadership, elites and citizens groups waking up to the situation. A major jolt is required to disturb the prevailing complacency, apathy and lack of conscience that are preventing policies that direct resources towards access to health, education and safe drinking water for millions of Pakistanis. Without immediate course correction, Pakistan is headed towards default on its SDGs by 2030. -- Courtesy Dawn

Pressure building

Khurram Husain

There is no precedent in our history of such a long and intense spell of inflation gripping the country. It has never happened before. Pakistan has had bouts of high inflation, with the last one running roughly from early 2008 to 2010 or so, depending on which metrics you use to measure its rise and tapering off. But the most recent bout began in May 2021 and is continuing unabated, despite what the measurement of the Consumer Price Index might be showing.

That is three continuous years with no end in sight. Not only that, if the last peak that inflation saw was about 20pc, this bout has seen it touch a peak above 30pc. Not only is the present bout of inflation longer in duration than any in the past, it is also more intense.

We have a new situation on our hands, because there is no model, no projection and no way of knowing what such

prolonged exposure to such intense inflationary pressure can do to a populace. Already we are surrounded by anecdotes and stories told by those around us of electricity bills that are in excess of or equal to a household's monthly expenses. But wait till the month of August. That is when the new electricity bills will start arriving, and for those who live on a salary, the new tax deductions will be applied. The pressures on household purchasing power are set to intensify further.

How far will this process go? The state is balancing its books on our backs, yours and mine. It is shedding its deficits and offloading them onto us instead. This is what they call 'stabilisation' in the sterile language of economists. For the rest of us, it simply means a severe eroding of our standard of living.

Since 2008 onwards, Pakistan has been under a virtually continuous stabilisation programme. I say 'virtually continu-

ous' for a reason. There were a few years in between, from 2014 till 2017, and again from around 2021 till 2022, when a brief spurt of economic growth passed through our midst. None of those were real. They were fuelled by heavy borrowing, domestic and foreign, and both played a big role in creating the crash that followed.

I have written a lot about why this has been the case. For now, I want to draw your attention, dear reader, to this simple fact: Pakistan's populace has been subjected now to the longest and most intense bout of inflation that it has ever experienced in its history. And it isn't over yet.

The reason I want you to focus your mind on this is equally simple. We don't know where the breaking point lies, and we certainly don't know what happens when we hit that breaking point. A few countries offer some clues. Kenya, for example, saw the outbreak of large-scale rioting on the streets when the govern-

ment rolled out an IMF-mandated budget laden with taxes and withdrawals of vital subsidies required to keep food prices in check.

But riots need not be the only expression of popular anger and desperation. A rising tide of street crime usually accompanies rising urban unemployment coupled with inflation. But beyond these more traditional outlets for the growing desperation lies a danger zone that we can barely imagine.

Economists do not have the models to tell you what sustained exposure to intense economic desperation can do to a populace. The consequences need not come overnight, as in Kenya where riots broke out almost immediately following the announcement of the budget. The slow burn of inflation can bring changes that we are not equipped to measure or detect. The vote that needed to be suppressed so ruthlessly in February this year is perhaps one example. It is easy to see where

Miftah Ismail is coming from when he says the (real) outcome of the February election was actually driven by prolonged inflation.

But beyond protests and riots and petty crime and votes, the rising arc of desperation can also lead to conflict. People can turn on each other with bizarre justifications that don't seem to connect with their economic circumstances in any rational way. They can turn towards faith healers and other quacks, whether for health advice, or advice on 'get rich quick' rackets, or even political and religious advice. What can follow is a train of consequences that leads in strange directions: the growth of bubbles and pyramid schemes or the spread of bad medicine or rising cases of domestic violence or the growing incidence of lynching and looting and other violent mob behaviour.

The state can no longer rely only on its repressive apparatus to keep the consequences of

inflation in check. The personnel who staff this apparatus are themselves drawn from the general populace, and it is to the same general populace they return when they go home after performing their duties. Whatever happens to the people happens to them, unless the state tries to use its dwindling resource base to secure these personnel from the depredations of inflation. Doing so leaves less behind for others, and makes the situation worse by aggravating the inflationary fire rather than helping put it out. The inflation engulfing the country is no longer just an economic problem. It is a danger to the social order. It is not clear when a tipping point will be reached, nor what it will trigger if and when it does arrive. I do not know any longer who I am writing this for. Those in power cannot be reached, and even if they could, there is not much they can do about it anymore. For the rest of us, however, it is worth bearing in mind that power in Pakistan is losing its grip.

More than change

F.S. Aijazuddin

President Joe Biden insists that he is still running. He has not said in which direction. He needs to decide quickly before someone makes up his mind for him. Some expect the Democratic Party to push him over the edge. Others that his medical team will advise him against subjecting himself to the rigour of a gruelling election campaign. The only person he will listen to is his wife Jill Biden.

It will not be the first time that a spouse has had the last word. In November 1990, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, locked in a leadership contest within her Conservative Party, survived the first ballot. She would have taken the fight into a second ballot — 'to fight on and fight to win' — had her husband Denis Thatcher not persuaded her to quit. He gave her this pithy advice: "Don't go on, love."

In Great Britain's recent general election, the British voters themselves, rather than a furtive cabal of Conservative bigwigs, were invited to decide on the future of PM Rishi Sunak and the party. The results — unequivocal but not unexpected — sent Rishi and the Conservative Party packing.

His successor as PM is Labour's Sir Keir Starmer who won by a landslide. No one can predict how long he will last. It seems the only permanent resident of 10 Downing Street is the photogenic tabby cat which poses artfully on its doorstep.

In the UK, the transfer of power is like the passing of an Egyptian pharaoh, interred with meticulous ceremony and a treasure of memories.

In US politics, a presidential election is not a contest of ideologies. It is a clash of personalities: for example, the winsome John F. Kennedy vs Rich-

ard Nixon with a five o'clock shadow; the dynamic Bill Clinton vs Bob Dole; the underdog Barack Obama vs Mitt Romney; the brash Donald Trump vs Hilary Clinton, and then the corrective Joe Biden vs Donald Trump.

Should a US president retire prematurely through death (Franklin D. Roosevelt) or resignation (Nixon), the automatic replacement is the incumbent vice president. Harry Truman replaced Roosevelt; Gerald Ford succeeded Nixon. It is said that during George H.W. Bush's presidency, though, the Secret Service had been instructed that if the president was ever in mortal danger, VP Dan Quayle should be shot first.

If Biden does stumble into premature retirement, his successor would be his Vice President Kamala Harris. She would by default become the US's first female off-white president.

Kamala Harris, like Rishi Sunak, comes from immigrant stock. As did Baroness Sayeeda Warsi (chairwoman of the Conservative Party, 2010-12). Warsi, the first Muslim to serve as a cabinet minister, held two posts: minister of state for the foreign and commonwealth office and simultaneously for faith and communities. She resigned in August 2014, after disagreeing with PM David Cameron's policy relating to the Israel-Gaza conflict.

Ten years later, that Israeli-Gaza conflict is continuing, unresolved. However, her then lone voice has gathered strength. In the new UK parliament, there are 89 MPs from ethnic minority backgrounds, among them 26 Muslim MPs who have made their position on the Gaza conflict clear.

By comparison, in India's current Lok Sabha, there are only 24 Muslim MPs. Con-gress has seven; Modi's ruling BJP

none. Some BJP cynics have questioned how many true Muslims Pakistan has in its parliament.

Interestingly, in the UK and in India, future policies will be influenced less by ideologies than by changing demographics. The Rev Martin Luther King's dream that humans should "not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character" is being fulfilled gradually. Ask Barack Obama. Ask Mi-c-hael Jackson. Ask Meg-han Markle. But in a rainbow world, colour will continue to matter.

This year 2024 will be known as that of general elections. One quarter of the world's population across 97 countries is eligible to vote. They include eight of the most populous — Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Indo-nesia, Brazil, Mexico, Russia, and the US.

Their voters will inevitably have significant, differing expectations of their governments. Over the next four to five years, they want to see not just the change promised during the electoral hustings but a discernible improvement in governance, resource distribution, climate change, etc.

Governments might like to follow these five simplified commandments: Thou shalt not kill (the US); Thou shalt not commit adultery (Donald Trump); Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods (Netanyahu); Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour (the Western media); and Thou shalt not steal (Pakistani politicians).

But then leaders are neither saints nor miracle workers. To them, any accountability is best postponed until the time of the next general election or their political death, whichever comes first. -- Courtesy Dawn

Climate diplomacy

Aisha Khan

Climate change is now globally recognised as an existential threat to the planet and all life systems. Diplomacy has been used as a tool for centuries to address geopolitical issues and resolve contentious matters through negotiated agreements.

In today's world and the current global scenario, the overarching threat of climate change makes climate and diplomacy inseparable. The use of one to step up action in the other has played a critical role in moving the needle on climate change from its inception at the Earth Summit in Rio (1992) to the Paris Agreement (2015) that finally succeeded in getting 196 countries to agree on an 'Agenda of Solutions'.

As we move forward into uncharted territory, it is more important than ever before to forge mutually beneficial alliances to preserve nature and invest in sustainable development so that people and nature can thrive in tandem. To this end, the Conference of Parties is held annually to reach agreement on contentious issues within the Paris Agreement on the way forward. Diplomacy is in full swing at these meetings and country delegates from their respective foreign offices play an important role at these multilateral dialogues.

However, while recognising the necessity of multilateralism, it is equally important to acknowledge the need for strengthening bilateral cooperation that can promote dialogue and confidence, thereby contributing to regional stability. Cooperative and coordinated mechanisms are an investment in future peace and crisis management between and among

countries that live in close proximity and are connected by land, air and water. The benefits of an integrated approach include reducing future risks, improving productivity of resources and people, boosting innovation by seeking solutions to new challenges, increasing environmental benefits and improving ecosystems.

South Asia is a complex and dynamic ecosystem with climate hot spots, high mountains, large glaciated areas and a vast coastal belt. It is also the least integrated region in the world with a population of approximately two billion and a large youth cohort. The geography and topography of the region makes each country an upper or lower riparian that derives its waters from the same mountain source. The type of climate-induced disasters and the coping capacity of people also have similarities that go beyond economic indicators to sharing social norms and traditional practices, especially with regard to gender, access and opportunity.

Air pollution is a transboundary issue and a common concern that is rapidly eroding the environmental integrity of urban centres and putting glaciated areas under threat causing damage to human health and accelerating the melting of glaciers. All of the above make a compelling case for collaboration.

Under a rapidly warming world with high humanitarian stakes, it is time for countries in South Asia to prioritise policies based on the urgency of the crisis and plan accordingly. Climate diplomacy is the best tool for re-evaluating and recalibrating relationship dynamics taking into account the scope of the climate threat, its impact on

communities and the capacity of states to manage it on a stand-alone basis. Given the interconnectedness of the landmass, climate impacts will have a spill-over effect making the future risky at best and hazardous at worst.

The recent climate stocktake in Dubai and the post-election scenario in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India present the region with a new opportunity to explore the potential of developing a regional climate vision strategy that offers practical cooperative solutions for safeguarding the natural resources of South Asia and protecting human life.

Given the trunca-t-ed and traumatic history of the region, this may not be easy but using climate as an entry point and diplomacy as a tool can open windows for constructive conversations.

The courts in Pakistan and India have recognised climate change as a human rights issue and justified this rights-based approach by linking the state's obligation to take precautionary measures to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. This shift in constitutionalising climate change offers a unique opportunity to both countries to address the challenge jointly and use it to deliver on an agenda that is seen not only as an exogenous threat but as a core legal and ethical responsibility of the state towards its citizens. Cooperation and collaboration on approaches that support sustainable development, protect the rights of people and nature, ensure that decisions on climate change are equitable and develop better understanding of the problem and solutions to environmental issues can only be a win for all. -- Courtesy Dawn

PM stresses using technology for effective enforcement of customs duties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday emphasized the importance of taking comprehensive measures to eliminate corruption in customs operations. He stressed the need to remove unnecessary hurdles and utilize modern technology, including artificial intelligence and advanced equipment, to ensure the full enforcement of customs duties.

Chairing a meeting focused on the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Pakistan Customs, the prime minister described the customs sector as the backbone of the country's economy. He stated that reforms within the FBR and complete digitization would secure economic stability.

Prime Minister Shehbaz instructed the relevant authorities to ensure a third-party audit of reform initiatives in the FBR and other departments, consolidating all such projects under a single framework.

He directed efforts to increase revenue collection through enhanced enforcement measures and called for the establishment of a project management unit dedicated to reforms in the customs sector. Addressing issues related to mis-invoicing, he stressed the need to resolve these problems and eliminate under-invoicing to protect Pakistan's



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding the Federal Board of Revenue.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chairing the Advisory Committee Meeting on Release of International Mobile Telephony (IMT) Spectrum for Next-Generation Mobile Broadband Services in Pakistan.

Govt committed to boost cotton production: Tanveer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday reiterated the government's commitment to promote the cotton industry. He said this while addressing the meeting of the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee's governing body, said a news release.

which will significantly alleviate its financial burdens and alleviate its difficulties to a great extent," he added. He said that research and development must be prioritized, and the government is committed to providing comprehensive support to farmers, ginners, and all relevant stakeholders.

The minister stressed that Pakistan's economy heavily relies on cotton production and textile industry growth is linked to good cotton yields. "The textile industry has been granted Rs 10 per unit subsidy on electricity,

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 increased by \$10 to \$2,382 from \$2,372, the Association reported.

Speakers highlight potential, challenges in IT, Telecom sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers at a public-private dialogue on Wednesday called for strategic collaborations and rationalized spectrum and licensing mechanisms to address challenges and unlock potential in the Information Technology (IT) and Telecommunication sector.

The dialogue, organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)'s study group on IT and Telecommunication, focused on the state of competition in the telecom sector and ways to promote it. Brig. Muhammad Yasin Senior Advisor Emeritus at SDPI, highlighted the critical role of the telecom sector as the backbone of the country's economy, impacting education, health, industry, defence, and agriculture. He emphasized the need for a robust and competitive environment, meaningful regulations, and collaborations among service providers to foster sector development. He also noted that infrastructure sharing among telecom operators could reduce business costs and improve service delivery, especially in rural areas where competition has dwindled the number of internet service providers from six to three.



MULTAN: Students visiting different stalls during the Tech Expo 2024 organized by the Institute of Computer Science and Information Technology at the Jinnah Hall.

WUM hosts TECHExpo on modern advancement

MULTAN (APP): Students of 10 universities of exhibited their projects at one-day TechExpo, hosted by WUM Institute of CS & IT on modern advancements which included several educational and technological advancements. This expo and poster exhibition was the first of its kind at WUM featuring different modules in disciplines such as computer science, engineering, applied sciences, AI intelligence, and healthcare.

organized by final-year students from different universities. The expo attracted participants from 10 universities, which made it an gathering of academic minds. Students from the BZU, Emerson, Air Universities, NCBA, Times, MNSUA, NUML, NFC and Education University. This diversity of participation enriched the event, fostering a spirit of academic exchange and collaboration. Women University Multan (WUM) Dr Kalsoom Pracha stressed upon the importance of technological and academic advancement in today's world while speaking at the event.

Gold rates up by Rs.1,200 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,200 and was sold at Rs.246,800 on Thursday against its sale at Rs.245,600 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.1,029 to Rs.211,591 from Rs.210,562 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.193,959 from Rs.193,016, 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 increased by \$10 to \$2,382 from \$2,372, the Association reported.

Rupee sheds 09 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee witnessed a devaluation of 09 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs 278.60 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.51. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 279.50 and Rs 281.25 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 72 paise to close at Rs 302.01 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.29, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.72, whereas an increase of Rs 2.17 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 358.57 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 356.40.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal also increased by 03 each to close at Rs 75.85 and Rs 74.28 respectively.

ERDA organizes capacity building workshop for Agri input dealers

PESHAWAR (APP): The USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (ERDA) here on Thursday organized a one-day workshop for the capacity building and business-to-business networking of the agriculture inputs dealers from different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the Merged Districts.

The workshop also provided a platform to some of the leading national and multinational agriculture input providers participating from across the country. Titled as 'Building Capacities and Creating Partnerships.

Advisory Committee discusses release of IMT Spectrum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Finance Minister, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday chaired the meeting of Advisory Committee on 'Release of International Mobile Telephony (IMT) Spectrum for Improvement of Next Generation Mobile Broadband Services in Pakistan'.

According to press release issued by finance ministry, the meeting was attended by Minister of State for IT and Telecom, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairman P a k i s t a n Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and senior officials from relevant ministries and departments.

The key stakeholders from the telecommunication sector and regulatory authorities briefed the minister on strategic plans for the

OGRA organizes seminar on "Safe Use of LPG, 'Zero' Fatal Accident"

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) here on Thursday organized a national seminar on "Safe Use of LPG - 'Zero' Fatal Accident" to address the need for enhanced safety measures in the use of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). The seminar was attended by senior officials from the Petroleum Division, Islamabad Police, Motorways Police, Civil Defense and CEOs of leading LPG sector companies.

Chairman OGRA Masroor Khan along with Member Oil, Member Finance and the senior team from OGRA's LPG and Enforcement Departments, were also present on the occasion.

Masroor Khan said that the increasing use of LPG across the country, from urban centers to remote villages demanded urgent need for robust safety protocols. He said that the seminar aimed to address these safety concerns by bringing together industry leaders, policymakers,



LAHORE: People are buying used items from a roadside vendor at Shadman area in the Provincial Capital.

Indonesia to promote industry, trade, tourism with Pakistan

PESHAWAR (APP): Indonesian Charge d Affaires, Rahmat Hindiatra, and Economic Attache, Axelsyah R Miraza has expressed the desire to promote industry and trade, as well as youth and cultural tourism, with Pakistan, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They conveyed their commitment to future collaboration during a meeting at the residence of former caretaker provincial minister Adnan Jalil.

Welcoming the Indonesian delegation, Adnan Jalil was joined by former Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, Adnan Jalil, and other participants to visit Indonesia, an invitation that was warmly appreciated by the hosts. Rahmat Hindiatra, and Economic Attache Axelsyah R Miraza praised the hardworking and dedicated people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and expressed eagerness to collaborate with them. They emphasized the need for both countries to exchange experiences in industry and trade to strengthen and expand their commercial relations.

Govt making concerted efforts to reduce electricity prices: Awais Leghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari has apprised the National Assembly Standing Committee on Energy (Power Division) that the Power Division was making concerted efforts to reduce the price of electricity by intensifying anti-theft campaigns and reducing line losses.

The committee which met with Muhammad Idriss in the Chair and was attended by MNAs; Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Raja Qamer ul Islam,

Chaudhry Naseer Ahmed Abbas, Rana Muhammad Hayat Khan, Khurshid Ahmed Junejo, Syed Waseem Hussain, Junaid Akbar, Malik Anwar Taj, Sher Ali Arbab, Haji Imtiaz Ahmed Chaudhry and Ali Afzal Sahi, Muhammad Iqbal Khan. The senior officers from Ministry of Energy (Power Division) and its attached departments also attended the meeting. The Secretary, Ministry of Energy (Power Division) briefed the Committee on working and performance of the Ministry and its attached departments. The Secretary informed that the Power Division dealt with the matters relating to development of power resources of the country, electric utilities, liaison with international engineering organization in power sector, federal agencies and institutions for promotion of special studies in power sector etc. He further apprised that the Ministry had plans for development of large scale alternative renewable energy (ARE) projects including hydro power projects.

PSX gains 150 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday gained 150.80 points, a positive change of 0.19 percent, closing at 79,992.35 points against 79,841.56 points on the last working day.

A total of 389,024,310 shares were traded during the day as compared to 495,910,236 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 20,924 billion against Rs 22,116 billion on the last trading day.

Around 445 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 181 of them recorded gains and 212 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 52 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Agritech Limited with 22,041,367 shares at Rs 24.24 per share, Hub Power Company with 18,624,585 shares at Rs 163.75 per share.



SIALKOT: Assistant Commissioner Miss Anam and Chairperson of Women's Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Maryam Nauman addressing a seminar "No to Plastic Campaign" on the initiative of Chief Minister Punjab organized by WCCIS.

CDNS accomplish Rs 1.742 trillion targets in fresh bond in FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has realized a target of Rs1.742 trillion in fresh bonds and 100 percent of the annual target in the last fiscal year 2023-24, from July 1 to June 30th. The National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1.742 trillion for the year 2023-24, it is encouraging that 100 percent of the target has been achieved, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Thursday.

The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the fiscal year 2022-23, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the

target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country, he said. Given the current market trend in the country the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added.

FPCCI stresses on FTA with Indonesia to enhance, diversify bilateral trade

Independent Report KARACHI: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Thursday, emphasized the need of entering into a free trade agreement with Indonesia to enhance and diversify bilateral trade while rectifying trade imbalances. President FPCCI, Atif Ikram Sheikh, in a statement, stressed that Pakistan needed to work with Indonesia to formulate a free trade agreement

Pakistan in the Southeast Asia region," he suggested. Senior Vice President FPCCI, Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, said that ASEAN countries can be a huge export market for Pakistan as it has a population of over 600 million with a very strong middle-class. Their collective GDP in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) has well surpassed \$10 trillion, he added. VP FPCCI, Aman Paracha, stated the



(FTA) in order to rectify bilateral trade deficit of up to \$3 billion. "We should work on Brand Pakistan through single-country exhibitions; exchange of trade delegations; cultural & trade exchanges and projecting soft-image of importance of diversifying imports from Indonesia beyond palm oil and exploring opportunities for Pakistani exports in diverse sectors. He announced FPCCI's plans to organize single-country exhibition in Indonesia.

All IMF conditions already met, Pakistan eyes \$6b bailout program: FM Aurangzeb

Says consultations with provinces on about tax on agricultural income

ISLAMABAD (INP): Finance Minister Aurangzeb has said that Pakistan wanted to get \$6 billion bailout package from the IMF as Islamabad has already met all IMF conditions. Talking to media after attending a meeting of National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance, the Finance Minister said new loan program will be finalized this month. He said climate change issues will also be discussed after the first review mission of the new loan program. The Finance Minister said climate financing funding was not being negotiated in current negotiations with IMF. He said progress has also been made on improving income tax collections on agriculture and the con-

sultations with provinces regarding agricultural income tax were underway. Earlier, the National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance meeting was held under the chair of MNA Syed Naveed Qamar to review the performance of the Finance Ministry. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb gave a briefing to the committee about the government's various initiatives to boost economic recovery. Finance Minister Aurangzeb told the participants that all economic indicators remained positive during the last financial year 2023-2024 and foreign exchange reserves touched over 9 billion dollars while the inflation rate also declined gradually.

He said currency remained unstable due to a delay in IMF bailout program in 2023 but after the agreement, economic conditions improved, profits and dividends of foreign companies were being paid. The Finance Minister claimed that due to the IMF program, the government was getting funds from other institutions. He said now World Bank has approved funding of 1 billion dollars for the Dasu Dam. Aurangzeb claimed that nothing was being controlled artificially by the government, adding that there are no restrictions on imports and the assumptions about the value of the dollar were a thing of the past.



ISLAMABAD: President of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister of Pakistan H.E. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses the signing of MoUs and Agreements in various sectors between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Pakistan calls upon India to cease extrajudicial killings, use of lethal force in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday reiterated its call for the Indian government to cease its campaign of extrajudicial killings and indiscriminate use of lethal force against the Kashmiri people in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch, at her press briefing, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to provide political, diplomatic, and moral support to our Kashmiri people for the just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. She told the media that the 93rd 'Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Kashmir' (Kashmir Martyrs Day) would be observed on July 13 to honor the martyrdom of 22 Kashmiris who sacrificed their lives in Srinagar in 1931, bravely facing the indiscriminate firing of Dogra forces under the former Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. Commenting on Israeli aggression, she said Pakistan strongly condemned this week's indiscriminate attacks by Israeli occupation forces on four schools in Gaza, which resulted in the massacre of dozens of women and children seeking shelter there. These attacks are further evidence of Israel's genocidal campaign against the people of Gaza.

Research-oriented public legislation key to achieving national priorities: Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday said effective and research-oriented public legislation was key to achieving national priorities and development. Addressing the first meeting of the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS) Board of Governors (BoG), he said, the goal of establishing PIPS was to assist and support parliamentarians, especially in legislative matters. Emphasizing the importance of PIPS as a research-oriented legislative institution, he said, "Promotion of cooperation between national and provincial legislative bodies is of pivotal importance." He, further, directed to conduct a financial and performance audit of the PIPS by a third party to maintain transparency and improve performance of PIPS. In the meeting, deliberations were also held regarding making the Speakers of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Assembly and Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly permanent members of the BoG Speaker Punjab Assembly. Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, Speaker Sindh Assembly Awas Qadir Shah, Speaker Balochistan Assembly Abdul Khaliq Khan and Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Saleem Swati, Speaker Azad Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar and Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir also participated in the meeting.

SC adjourns appeals regarding civilians trials in military courts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday adjourned hearing for indefinite time on intra court appeals against termination of civilians' trial in military courts. A seven-member larger bench headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan heard the appeal of federation. During the course of proceeding, Attorney General of Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan said that the meeting of arrested accused have been arranged with their families. He said that the authorities concerned have been told about the court directives in this regard.



BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Mr. Khalid Hashmi and Former Ambassador to China Naghmana Hashmi at welcome banquet hosted for dignitaries attending the high-level forum on the Action Plan for Global Development and a Shared Future organised by CIDCA.

World Population Day: PM stresses importance of joint efforts for resilient future

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday called on government departments, civil society, the private sector, and international partners to collaborate for a resilient and equitable future. In his message on World Population Day being observed on Thursday, (July 11, 2024), he stressed the importance of sustainable population growth to ensure every citizen enjoys dignity, security, and prosperity. "Our government is fully committed in its endeavors of providing quality education and skills training to this young generation to compete in a rapidly evolving global economy. Additionally, we are creating sufficient job opportunities for the youth to harness their potential and turn this youth bulge into an asset." "I urge all stakeholders - government departments, civil society, private sector, and our international partners - to join hands in our pursuit of a resilient and equitable future.

Narcotics worth millions of rupees seized

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh Excise and Narcotics Control Department conducted five major raids across Karachi, resulting in the arrest of seven smugglers and the seizure of substantial quantities of narcotics. The operations, executed in various parts of the city, yielded a total haul of 59 kg of hashish, 7 kg of ice (crystal methamphetamine), and 1 kg of heroin. Notable arrests included Chingiz Ali and Riyaz Ahmed at Hub River Road, where 3 kg of ice was found hidden in their vehicle. Another operation at Jhanda Shah graveyard led to the arrest of Amjad Khan and the recovery of 1 kg of heroin.

Ulema, Mashaikh united to promote religious harmony in Muharram: Ashrafi

FAISALABAD (APP): PM's Special Representative for Religious Harmony and Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi Thursday said that Ulema and Mashaikh belonging to all schools of thoughts are united for promotion of religious harmony, peace and tranquility during the holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram. Addressing a press conference at the committee room in the Deputy Commissioner's office here, he said all religious parties have passed a resolution unanimously for establishing a peaceful atmosphere and better law and order in the country during the holy month. He said that some forces wanted to create anarchy in the name of religion through a false propaganda on social media in the country, but they would never succeed in their negative designs. Release of a three-year-old video on social media recently was an attempt to mislead the nation, but ulema would ensure national solidarity, peace and harmony by forging unity among their ranks, he added. He said that committees of religious harmony had always played a positive role whenever any untoward situation arises in the country. "We would have to stop all kinds of sectarianism and extremism through promotion of peace and unity in the country collectively," Ashrafi said. He said that all schools of thought have respect for each other's sanctities during Muharram-ul-Haram. Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) is the leader of all humanity and not only of Muslims. Muharram days are very holy and respectable for all, he added. Maulana Ashrafi said that Ulema and Mashaikh were standing unitedly with their armed forces and all other state institutions for establishing peace in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with German Parliamentary delegation headed by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) at Parliament House.

UNHCR welcomes Government of Pakistan's decision to extend PoR cards for Afghan refugees

ISLAMABAD (APP): UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency Thursday welcomed the Government of Pakistan's decision to extend the Proof of Registration (PoR) cards for one year, until 30 June 2025. "This announcement brings a wave of relief for Afghan refugees, and shows that Pakistan's proud tradition of hospitality continues," said UNHCR's Representative in Pakistan, Philippa Candler. Candler acknowledged

Mirpurkhas district council approves revised budget, saves 741,000 rupees

MIRPURKHAS (APP): Mirpurkhas District Council on Thursday approved a revised budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, presented by Chairman Mir Anwar Ali Khan Talpur. The revised budget estimates a total expenditure of 90.29 crore rupees, with a saving of 74,100 rupees. The council also approved an additional income of 6.37 crore rupees, attributed to an increase in the OZT share.

Sindh govt fully prepared for monsoon rains: Arsalan Sheikh

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Government Spokesman and Mayor of Sukkur, Arsalan Islam Sheikh, on Thursday announced that the Sindh government has completed its preparations for the upcoming rains. These preparations include cleaning the drains, organizing 130 water pumps, 532 de-watering pumps, and mobilizing the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), as well as planning alternative routes. Speaking at a press conference at the Karachi Press Club, Sheikh mentioned that heavy rains are forecasted for Sindh, including Karachi, and the government has almost finalized all necessary arrangements. The rains, expected

Flour shortage on cards as mills go on strike

KARACHI (INP): The Atta Chakki Association announced to support a strike call by the flour mill owners, resulting in a shortage of flour supply to Karachi and Hyderabad. On the strike call, the Atta Chakki Association stopped grinding wheat, as 'chakkis' in Karachi and Hyderabad shut down. Due to the strike, tonnes of flour could not be supplied to restaurants in both cities. The flour mill owners are protesting against the withholding tax imposed by the government. The flour mill owners announced a strike on July 11 against the imposition of a 2.5 percent withholding tax in the budget 2024-25.



Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Ayatullah Syed Aqeel-ul-Gharavi and Former Caretaker CM Sindh Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar in Karachi.

Sindh Excise dept apprehends seven alleged drug smugglers

KARACHI (APP): The Narcotics Control wing of the Sindh Excise Department successfully apprehended seven drug smugglers in Karachi and Rohri during five operations conducted in a single day. A total of 59 kilograms of hashish, seven kilograms of methamphetamine, and one kilogram of heroin were recovered during these operations, said a statement on Thursday. In an intelligence-based operation at the Hub River Road check post in Karachi, the Excise Narcotics Control Wing team searched a car and seized three kg of ICE (methamphetamine), resulting in the arrest of two drug dealers, Changez Ali and Riaz Ahmed. The vehicle was seized as part of the operation. Another intelligence-based operation near Jhanda Shah graveyard in the Old Vegetable Market area of Karachi led to the seizure of one kilogram of heroin from an auto-rickshaw. Accused Amjad Khan, son of Daulat Khan, was arrested. In another operation, the Excise Police District Malir team conducted a raid near Baqai Hospital on the Super Highway in Karachi. They recovered 40 kilograms of hashish and arrested accused Ziaullah, son of Ahsanullah. In Shah Faisal, Karachi, the Excise Narcotics Control Wing arrested two suspects, Abdul Rehman and Naseer Gul, recovering four kilograms of ice and seven kilograms of hashish from them.

Firing incident claims four lives amidst child-related quarrel

LARKANA (APP): Four people were killed in the firing incident following a dispute over children in Naich village of Rashid Wagan police station near Larkana city on Thursday. According to the report, a fight broke out between two factions of the Zangija caste, escalated from a seemingly innocuous disagreement into a deadly confrontation. The conflict erupted over a minor issue involving children. Police arrested several individuals involved in the incident.



FAISALABAD: Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council & Special Assistant for interfaith Harmony, Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi addressing a Press Conference.



KARACHI: Sindh Government Spokesperson and Sukkur Mayor Barrister Arsalan Sheikh addressing a press conference regarding monsoon rains at Karachi Press Club.

Tharparkar sets target of planting 0.2 mln saplings during monsoon plantation drive

HYDERABAD (APP): The District Forest Officer Tharparkar Kashif Ahmed Shaikh on Thursday said that a target of planting 0.2 million saplings was set for the coming monsoon tree plantation campaign in the district. He said this during a meeting presided over by the Deputy Commissioner Tharparkar Abdul Haleem regarding the upcoming monsoon tree plantation campaign. According to a handout, the Deputy Commissioner directed all district government officers and NGO representatives to engage in maximum tree plantation. Kashif Shaikh in-

Petition filed in SHC against tree cutting in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): A citizen has filed petition in Sindh High Court (SHC) against tree cutting by the city government of Karachi. The high court has served notices to Mayor Karachi and others in the case and summoned reply from the respondents on the next hearing of the case. The bench adjourned further hearing of the case until August 21. The petitioner has made the KMC, D.G Parks and other respondents in the case.

51 Muharram's Majalis held in Sukkur under tight security

SUKKUR (INP): On the fourth of Muharram, 46 processions and 51 majalis (gatherings) were held in the Sukkur district with security provided by over 7,000 police officers and personnel, according to the Police Department spokesman here on Thursday. The SSP Sukkur Amjad Ahmed Shaikh said that security would remain on high alert across the district during Muharram. He mentioned that female police officers are deployed for the security of female citizens.



HYDERABAD: Members of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum block road as they are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, outside Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) building in Hyderabad.

"HEC Olympic Day" held at ISRA University

HYDERABAD (APP): HEC Olympic day was celebrated at Isra University, for promoting student activities and sport. Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad, Zain-ul-Abideen Memon, was the chief guest of the ceremony who was warmly received by Dr. Ahmed Waliullah Kazi, Vice Chancellor, along with Prof. Dr. Hameedullah Kazi, Former Chancellor and Director of Isra Islamic Foundation, Prof. Dr. Suhail Kazi, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Science & Technology, and Dr. Saad Baloch, Additional Director (SA&A). The celebrations began with a Tree Plantation Drive, symbolizing the university's dedication to a greener Pakistan. DC Zain-ul-Abideen Memon planted a tree on the campus, emphasizing the importance of environmental conservation. The sports activities included a Table Tennis Competition, a Chess Competition among students, and a 100 Meter race among employees. A Seminar on "Benefits of Sports for a Healthy Life Style" was also organized on the occasion. The highlight of the day was an Exhibition Table Tennis match between Dr. Ahmed Waliullah Kazi, Vice Chancellor, and the Chief Guest, Mr. Zain-ul-Abideen Memon, which showcased the sporting spirit of the event. The Chief Guest also witnessed Chess matches and the 100-meter race as well. Zain-ul-Abideen Memon expressed his gratitude to Isra University for the warm welcome and commended the institution for its efforts in promoting sports and environmental initiatives. Vice Chancellor, Dr. Ahmed Waliullah Kazi, emphasized the importance of such events in fostering a healthy and active lifestyle among students and staff.