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Federal cabinet defers decision on PTI ban, Article 6 on Imran

PTI's new tactics to malign armed forces won't be tolerated, vows PM

Malicious campaign run against COAS Gen Asim Munir from official website of the PTI; Group behind May 9 events left no stone unturned in shaking foundations of country; TTP's Afghan-based terror attacks unacceptable; Pakistan fully prepared to protect citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday denounced the terror attacks in Pakistan involving Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) using Afghan soil saying that was "unacceptable" as Pakistan was fully prepared to protect its citizens but desired to resolve the matter peacefully.

The prime minister, in his remarks at the meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by him, pointed out the surge in terror incidents, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan causing the killing of the personnel of the

army, police and civil armed forces. He called the terrorism wave a machination against Pakistan as it was taking place at a time when the coalition government was making efforts for the country's development as it reached a Staff Level Agreement with IMF despite challenges and announced a three-month relief package for 96% of domestic power consumers.

Highlighting the role of Afghanistan in the surge of terrorism, the prime minister said the government was in interaction with them as Defence Min-

ister Khawaja Muhammad Asif also visited there.

"But how is it possible that we hosted millions of their people here without any complaint? We treated them like our brothers and never considered them as a burden. But we were rewarded in the form of TTP attacks on our citizens to mar the country's peace and business. This is not acceptable," he remarked.

He said Pakistan was ready to face any kind of situation as its valiant armed forces had sacrificed their lives to safeguard the country and its people.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

Sindh CM launches revival of natural route of Dhoro Puran to Shakoor Lake

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurated the restoration of natural water channels from Dhoro Puran to Shakoor Lake to save 1.27 million acres of land. He said that the federal government constructed the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) during the 1980s, but the excavation of its Spinals blocked the natural waterways.

As a result, the lands of Badin, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar and Nawabshah started submerging during floods and degraded, turning saline, the wetland ecosystem was completely damaged, and livelihood opportunities shrank.

Keeping in view these problems, particularly the livelihoods and the damaged wetland ecosystem, the Sindh government has decided to revive the natural route of Dhoro Puran to construct a Spinal Escape regulator at RD 210 and rehabilitate Dhoro Puran up to Shakoor Lake, he added.

CM expressed this while speaking at the public gathering after inaugurating the LBOD system, Sindh minister for irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, Secretary Irrigation Zareef Khero, elected representatives of the area and the notables attended the program.

The CM, sharing the background of the LBOD project, informed that from 1984 to 1997, the LBOD Stage-I project was executed by Wapda to relieve waterlogging and salinity in 1.27 million acres of land in Shaheed Benazirabad, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar and Basin Districts.

He maintained that the LBOD spinal drain connects the drainage network to the sea through a tidal link.

The LBOD spinal drain collects surplus drainage and distributes it through a weir to two branch drains, the Kadhan Pateji Outfall Drain (KPOD) and the Dhoro Puran Outfall Drain (DPOD). He added that the spinal drain system was designed to direct the high salinity drainage into the KPOD and then to the sea. The KPOD connects to the sea via a 26-mile-long ca-

nal, called the Tidal Link. The CM said that 204 drains from three divisions, totalling 1735 miles in length, would discharge into the LBOD. These include 108 drains from Badin, spanning 813 miles, 51 drains from Mirpurkhas, covering 454 miles and 43 drains from Sanghar, extending over 336.6 miles.

He recalled that the Wapda handed over the LBOD Spinal to the Sindh irrigation department in 1993, but the system could not perform and caused damage during the heavy rains of the 1994 monsoon. Therefore, the system was returned to WAPDA in 1995. WAPDA handed over the LBOD System again to the Sindh irrigation department in February 2002.

Murad Ali Shah stated that the LBOD project includes a Spinal Drain of 261.12 km, KPOD/DPOD of 99 km, Tidal Link of 43 km, Surface Drains of 1666 km and 1673 Drainage wells. Its benefited area was spread over 1.270 million acres.

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President Biden requests \$101 m in aid for Pakistan aims to support democracy

WASHINGTON (INP): US President Joe Biden has requested \$101 million in aid for Pakistan.

According to the report, the announcement was made by Donald Lu, the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, during a briefing to the House of Representatives Committee on Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Donald Lu emphasised that the aid request aims to support democracy and human rights in Pakistan.

He said the proposed

assistance will also aid Pakistan in its fight against terrorism, economic reforms, and debt relief, helping to stabilise the country's economy.

In the same briefing, Donald Lu expressed concern over the situation in Afghanistan, particularly regarding the rights of women and minority groups. He stated that normalising relations with the Taliban government is contingent on their respect for these rights and the release of all American citizens.

Chairman PMYP briefs Sindh Governor about projects objectives

KARACHI (APP): Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Wednesday briefed the Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori

of Pakistan is assured only by investing in the youth. He further said that youths are being empowered through IT courses in the Governor's House.

In the meeting, the



about the aims and objectives of the Prime Minister's Youth Program. Rana Mashhood called on the Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor's House here.

The Sindh Governor said that the bright future

Chairman PMYP said that the steps taken to empower the youth under the Sindh Governor's Initiative are commendable. He further said that by providing funds for IT courses and business, the talents of the youth can be utilized.



BADIN: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah starting newly constructed regulator of spinal drain of LBOD at RD210 near Shadi Large.

Justice Minallah expresses desire for open courts during martial law threats

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Justice Athar Minallah of the Supreme Court of Pakistan has expressed his desire for courts to remain open whenever there is a threat of martial law in the country.

Speaking at the New York City Bar in New York, he said, "I want the courts to be open whenever there is a danger of martial law."

Justice Minallah criticised certain television channels for creating an environment suggestive of imminent martial law in Pakistan, although he refrained from naming any specific channels.

"A martial law atmosphere is being created. I don't want to name the TV channel, but it is making it seem as if martial law is about to be imposed," he remarked.

Reflecting on historical events, he lamented that the courts were not open on key dates when martial laws were imposed.

"I wish the courts were open on 12 October 1999, when Pervez Musharraf ousted the elected prime minister.

I wish the courts were open on 5 July 1977, when Ziaul Haq removed the elected prime minister," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Member Parliament from Opposition benches stage hunger strike camp outside Parliament House in the Federal Capital.

An International level exhibition to be held at the Expo Center Karachi to promote leather industry: Jam

Independent Report

KARACHI: A meeting was held in the Sindh Secretariat under the chairmanship of Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikrumullah Dharejo. The meeting was held with the office bearers of Pakistan Tanners (Leather) Association. Secretary Industries and Commerce Muhammad Yasin Shar Baloch, representatives of the association Muhammad Shafi, Aziz Ahmed, Ejaz Ahmed and others also attended the meeting. Addressing the meeting, Provincial Minister Jam Ikrumullah Dharejo said that the Sindh government has provided 277.396 million rupees for the improvement of infrastructure in Leather Korangi Industrial Area. A sum of Rs 500 million will

also be approved soon for further improvement of infrastructure. He said that 8.5 kilometers of roads had been constructed with the help of a Sindh government grant. Encroachments from the Korangi Industrial Area would also be removed.

Jam Ikrumullah Dharejo added, "Leather industry will be promoted in Pakistan especially in Sindh. At the end of this year, an international leather expo will be held at the Karachi Expo Center". He said that the problems of the business community related to the leather industry would be solved on priority basis. The Water Board would be contacted regarding the tax on the use of ground water and the issue would be discussed in the coordination committee meeting.

Finance minister acknowledges high electricity costs in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister of State for Finance Ali Perviz Malik has acknowledged the unsustainable electricity tariffs, stating that current rates of Rs 60 per unit for businesses and Rs 40 per unit for households are untenable.

In a talk with local TV, Malik outlined the government's efforts to ease the burden on consumers, highlighting a Prime Ministerial initiative providing Rs 50 billion in relief for those using up to 200 units of electricity. However, he emphasized that lasting solutions require comprehensive reforms.

Malik discussed the legacy issues surrounding Independent Power Producers (IPPs), noting that IPPs established in 1994, 2002, and 2014 are collectively owed around Rs 80 billion. He called for investigations into any illegal transactions related to these agreements.

CM Gandapur accepts demands of Bannu jirga leaders

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has agreed to all the demands put forward by the Bannu Aman Jirga, as reported by Geo News. The agreement was reached in a meeting held earlier this week, sources revealed on Wednesday.

Sources familiar with the discussions indicated that the jirga called for dismantling armed groups in the province, empowering the police with enhanced night patrols, allowing the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) to conduct search operations, and ensuring that missing persons are presented before courts.

During a meeting held late Monday, CM Gandapur addressed the concerns of the Bannu jirga members. He clarified the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) position on Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, describing it as a strategic approach rather than a conventional military operation.



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador H.E. Jiang Zaidong being briefed by Federal Minister for Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan, during a high level meeting in Islamabad. Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi is also present in the meeting.

STEVA to establish skill development mechanism for affected women at Safe House, women prison

Independent Report

HYDERABAD: Provincial Minister for Women Development Sindh, Shahina Sher Ali Wednesday announced the Sindh Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (STEVA) will soon collaborate with the department to establish a skill development mechanism for affected women at Safe House and women prison.

Talking to media persons at Safe House, she said this program will provide training, workshops and skills development p to empower women in the province.

During her visit to Safe House Hyderabad, the Minister said that an MoU will be signed with STEVA for the skill development of women in all districts of Sindh and added that women will be provided with training workshops and skills development programmes to make them self-sufficient.

She stated that the

purpose of her visit was to meet with affected women and listen to their problems.

The Sindh Minister also met with the parents of a woman who reportedly was sexually abused. She strictly directed for conducting inquiry into the matter without delay and assured the victim for providing legal aid. Director Darul-Aman Khalida Somroo briefed the Minister on the current situation and facilities available in the center.

She said that women are provided with training of different skills like sewing, cosmetics, and beautification while digital skills training on social applications is also being provided to the victims. The Regional Director of STEVA, Manzoor Ali Chandio, said that short courses will be offered in collaboration with Safe House including mobile repairing, IT, beautification, and tailoring. He said that the courses will be designed according to the needs of women.



KARACHI: Residents of City Railway Colony protest for their demands on II Chandegar Road, in the Provincial Capital.

Customs seizes 15,400 liters of smuggled Iranian diesel

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Customs on Wednesday claimed the seizure of a significant quantity of smuggled Iranian diesel in the Gulshan-e-Maymar area of the city.

A spokesperson for Customs stated that the Anti-Smuggling Organization (ASO) conducted a raid on illegal diesel storage sites in the area, confiscating 15,400 liters of the smuggled fuel.

The estimated value of the seized diesel is Rs. 4.5 million. A case has been registered, and further investigations are ongoing.

CTD shoots dead TTP militant in operation in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): A militant, belonging to the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), was killed in a Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) operation near Karachi's northern bypass. CTD official said on Wednesday.

CTD DIG Asif Ijaz said the operation was conducted after the department was informed of the presence of militants in the area. "The slain militant, who has been identified as Umar Farooq, died on way to a hospital. He was the mastermind of attacks on Karachi's Police Office and Abbas Town and had remained in jail in connection with cases of terrorism, murder and attempted murder," he said, adding, "Farooq went to Afghanistan after he was released from jail."

Imran Khan refutes claims of inciting GHQ protests

Monitoring Desk

RAWALPINDI: Imran Khan, the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), on Wednesday stated that a narrative has been created with an agenda to accuse him of inciting the public to protest at the General Headquarters (GHQ) during the May 9 riots.

In a statement released on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), he clarified that in the nearly three-decade history of PTI, there has never been an instance of violent protests. "Over the past two and a half years, the worst tactics were used against PTI to incite violence," he added.

In November 2022, he said that there was an assassination attempt on him, and even his request for an FIR of his choice was denied.

The former prime minister further revealed that his residence was attacked twice by military personnel. On one occasion, during his court appearance, there was a deliberate plan to assassinate him by deploying plainclothes individuals, he added.

On May 9, he explained that the masses were incited by the humiliating abduction of a former prime minister and the leader of Pakistan's largest and most popular political party, which could have led to a major incident.

Sindh High Court blasts Karachi police for ineffective investigation and corruption

KARACHI (INP): Sindh High Court Justice Amjad Ali Sohto sharply criticized Karachi police for their failure to effectively investigate crimes and arrest suspects, alleging that officers are more focused on extortion than on their duties.

During a recent hearing, Justice Sohto expressed frustration over the police's poor handling of cases and inadequate follow-up on registered complaints. He emphasized that simply registering cases is insufficient without timely recovery of stolen property and proper identification of accused individuals.

Additional IG Karachi Javed Alam Odhu, who appeared in court, stated that he was newly appointed

and promised to intensify efforts to apprehend fugitives. Despite his assurances, Justice Sohto lambasted the police for their ongoing failures, noting that the rate of criminal activity and police inefficiency has risen despite bans and orders.

Justice Sohto condemned the practice of declaring suspects absconders instead of pursuing their arrest, questioning whether justice is being served or if innocent individuals are being unjustly detained.

The court adjourned the hearing with a demand for the Karachi Police Chief to enhance police performance, ensure arrests, and improve investigative processes.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Reforming militants

A major question confronting the state concerns those militants who have laid down their arms — euphemistically referred to as the ‘good’ Taliban. Ask the people of areas badly hit by militancy, and they want nothing to do with these individuals.

For example, at the recently concluded Bannu Amn Jirga, participants wanted the ‘good’ Taliban out of their area, while calling for an end to pickets set up and patrols by such fighters. This is a dilemma for the state: what to do with those who are willing to forgo violence? The matter is complicated, and a solution should be found by consulting the people’s representatives, security experts and academics.

By all means those terrorist ideologues and facilitators responsible for the killing of thousands of Pakistani civilians and security men over the years cannot be welcomed with open arms, and must face the courts. Similarly, militants — good or bad — cannot be allowed to roam around freely and create a parallel structure, even if they have surrendered to the state: only the government has the authority to maintain law and order across the country.

But the question of the thousands of foot soldiers, particularly child fighters groomed by terrorist groups and juveniles, is more complex. Pakistan is not alone in facing this dilemma; for example, around 40,000 wives and children of IS fighters are currently being held in a Syrian camp run by Kurdish armed groups, as in most cases their countries of origin refuse to take them back.

Instead of giving militants — who surrender to the state and promise to renounce violence — complete liberty, they can be put through deradicalisation programmes.

Such initiatives have been tried before, in Swat for instance, at centres run by the military as well as NGOs. Initially, hard-core militants should be separated from low-level cadres not involved in gratuitous violent activity, with the former punished as per the law.

The deradicalisation process should involve psychological help as well as education and vocational training, so that the reformed militants can contribute to society. Even after completion of the programme, security forces need to keep an eye on the erstwhile militants so that they do not ‘relapse’ and return to the path of terrorism.

Of course, this is not easy, and will require funds and consistent effort. Moreover, the successes and failures of previous deradicalisation programmes need to be scientifically analysed so that the same mistakes are not repeated.

Deradicalisation should be seen as one component of countering violent extremism, which is part of the revised National Action Plan. Along with religiously inspired militants, it can also be extended to Baloch fighters who wish to renounce violence, and reintegrate into society.

Mental health rights

Ali Burhan Mustafa

Some years ago, in a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court issued a transformative decision in the Safia Bano case, significantly advancing the integration of mental health considerations into the country’s criminal justice system.

Led by a five-member bench, with renowned psychiatrist professor Dr Mowad Hussain Rana serving as amicus curiae, the court declared that carrying out the death sentence in the case of a mentally ill prisoner incapable of comprehending their punishment violated the principles of justice.

The ruling mandated the formation of medical boards for comprehensive evaluations, resulting in the commutation of some death penalties to life imprisonment.

It also directed legislative amendments and prison rule revisions to ensure fair treatment and proper care for mentally ill inmates. This included establishing specialised forensic mental health facilities and training programmes for judicial personnel.

By setting a precedent for considering severe mental illness as a mitigating factor in capital cases, the decision aligned Pakistan’s legal framework more closely with international human rights standards, emphasising a just and humane approach to mentally ill individuals within the criminal justice system.

In cases involving Imdad Ali, Kaneezan Bibi, and Ghulam Abbas, Pakistan’s judiciary grappled with complex issues of mental health and criminal responsibility. Imdad Ali, initially facing death for a murder in Burewala, had his sen-

tence commuted to life imprisonment due to schizophrenia. Kaneezan Bibi, convicted of multiple homicides in Toba Tek Singh, also had her death penalty changed to life imprisonment because of schizophrenia. Ghulam Abbas, convicted of murder in Rawalpindi, saw his execution halted after a medical board identified cognitive impairments and psychotic symptoms.

These cases underscored the need for clear protocols in handling mental incapacity claims during trials and highlighted the crucial role of psychiatric assessments in ensuring fair judicial decisions, reflecting a growing awareness of mental health in Pakistan’s legal system.

In 2016, a three-member Supreme Court of Pakistan bench, presided over by chief justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, issued a verdict imposing capital punishment on Imdad Ali. The judgement, which posited that schizophrenia did not qualify as a mental disorder, elicited substantial controversy and juridical discourse. This ruling underscored the ambiguities and shifting perspectives within Pakistan’s judicial framework concerning mental health issues. The judgement was later reversed.

Before Partition, Pakistan’s mental health laws were rooted in colonial-era statutes like the Lunacy Act of 1912 and provisions from the Indian Penal Code of 1860, maintaining outdated views through Chapter XXXIV of the Criminal Procedure Code. Despite the supersession of the Evidence Act of 1872 by the Qanun-i-Shahadat Order in 1984, terms like ‘lunatics’, ‘unsound mind’ persisted, impacting mental health practices

post-independence. It wasn’t until 2001, under Gen Musharraf’s administration, that the first mental health ordinance emerged, later affected by the 18th Amendment. Provincial legislation in Sindh (2013), Punjab (2014), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (2017), and Balochistan (2019) aimed to modernise mental health laws.

Since 2021, despite clear directives from the Supreme Court in the Safia Bano case, critical aspects of mental health and forensic psychiatry in Pakistan have languished. The establishment of specialised forensic psychiatric expertise, crucial for medical board evaluations, remains unrealised due to a lack of initiative from the state, the Higher Education Commission, and academic institutions.

Furthermore, no efforts have been made to reform prison rules uniformly across Pakistan or to create specialised forensic settings for mental health offenders. Capacity-building initiatives for judicial officers, law professionals, security personnel, and others engaged in mental health cases have also been conspicuous by their absence.

This stagnation is alarming given the Supreme Court’s explicit recommendations. The failure of both the legislative and executive branches to implement necessary reforms reflects a concerning disregard for mental health within Pakistani society. The disconnect between judicial directives and practical implementation underscores a pressing need for immediate action to address these systemic shortcomings and uphold the rights and well-being of individuals affected by mental health issues in the criminal justice system. -- Courtesy Dawn

No joy in Dhaka

Mahir Ali

There is a sense of irony in watching tanks and armoured personnel carriers on the streets of Dhaka, defending a government that traces its lineage to the forces that resisted the Pakistani army’s ultimately futile effort to abort the birth of Bangladesh in 1971.

This month’s unrest in the nation once known as East Pakistan was spurred by the re-imposition of laws that reserved around 30 per cent of government jobs for the descendants of those who fought in the Bangladesh war of liberation. The quota was uncontroversial when it was introduced by the present prime minister’s father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in 1972. Hardly anyone could have objected to special consideration for the stalwarts of the resistance to Islamabad’s hegemony, or their families.

Half a century later, such a law is harder to defend — particularly when unemployment among graduates is substantially higher than the national average. The quota was effectively rescinded in 2018, until revived by a high court last month. After dozens of deaths and hundreds of arrests, it is likely to take much more than a supreme court decision sharply reducing the quota to diminish the rage that led to the unrest, which has lately been subdued following curfew and shoot-on-sight orders.

Unfortunately, Sheikh Hasina Wajed’s reign across four consecutive prime ministerships since 2009 — plus a previous stint as Bangladesh’s second woman prime minister after Khaleda Zia — has been accompanied by an apparent determination to turn Bangladesh into a one-party state. That’s precisely what her father had disastrously

plumbed for in the months before he and most of his family were murdered by Bangladesh army officers in 1975.

Bangladesh had a Gen Zia in charge two years before Pakistan did, but he was killed by the military in 1981, paving the way for a fellow general more in line with the Pakistani Zia’s religious predilections. A joint effort by Hasina and Khaleda Zia managed to topple Ershad, and Zia became prime minister for a second term. It appeared a better outcome than achieved by the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy in Pakistan, but yet another military intervention led to the imprisonment of both the ‘begums’. However, by 2009 Hasina was back at the helm.

She has been there ever since, come hell or high water, based substantially on condemning the opposition to prison, or worse. There have been deaths in jail and disappearances under her watch, and her aim is seen as a one-party state of the kind her father sought to institute months before he was assassinated. Despite all his missteps, nothing of that sort was on the agenda of Mujib’s Pakistani equivalent, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Courtesy of Dr Kamal Hossain, Bangladesh managed to establish a constitution in 1972, before Pakistan managed to do so almost a year later. Unlike Pakistan’s, it was undeniably secular and potentially socialist. Hossain, who served as first law minister and then foreign minister under Mujib, was caught unawares when the leader alongside whom he had been imprisoned in Haripur in 1971 proclaimed a one-party state in February 1975. He was murdered alongside family members in August that year, and the military coup spawned the equally short-lived Zia rule, fol-

lowed by the Ershad interregnum that in many ways imitated the fundamentalist trajectory of Pakistan’s Zia.

The return of democracy has not been smooth, with subsequent military interventions vying for attention with political squabbling that always seemed to have more to do with egos than ideology.

Bangladesh’s economic growth rate since 2009 has been impressive, based to a large extent on garment exports — which have relied primarily on sweat-shops with occasionally deadly locati-ons. It’s an industry that mostly employs vulnerable women, and in which demands for safer working conditions and higher wages have been crushed by the state.

The achievements of Sheikh Hasina’s government stretch from relatively impressive economic figures to state capture stretching from the military to the judiciary. No civilian government in Pakistan can claim to have been equally successful, notwithstanding the obvious parallels related to punishing political opponents.

The question for Hasina’s government now is whether backtracking on quotas that are assumed to have benefited the ruling party will suffice to calm popular anger that extends beyond that particular point to unequal growth, and suspected corruption where the current culprits can more readily be pinpointed under effective one-party rule.

Notwithstanding Bangladesh’s successes, its failures cannot be ignored. Far less repression and a lot more democracy could set it on a more productive path — and the same essentially goes for Pakistan. But embarking on it with Hasina’s Awami League still at helm could be seen as an impossible dream. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Finance Mir Shoaib Noshervani presides over the 7th meeting of Local Councils Finance Commission.

Korea, Japan, Pak collaborating on groundbreaking agriculture initiatives: Chairman PARC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali Wednesday shared a vision for a transformed agricultural sector in which Pakistan will join forces with Korea and Japan to leverage cutting-edge technologies and expertise to enhance Pakistan’s capacity for producing quality-based disease-resistant seeds.

Talking to PTV news, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, unveiled a game-changing trilateral partnership with Korea and Japan, poised to drive

innovation, boost crop yields, and ensure food security in Pakistan. This historic collaboration marks a new era in agricultural cooperation between our nations, he added.

“By pooling our resources and expertise, we can address pressing challenges, ensure food security, and propel Pakistan’s agriculture sector into a new era of growth and prosperity”, he mentioned.

To produce local seeds in Pakistan, he said that Korea’s expertise in seed technology and Japan’s knowledge in plant

breeding will be combined to enhance Pakistan’s capacity for producing high-quality, disease-resistant seeds.

This will reduce reliance on imported seeds, ensuring self-sufficiency and improved crop yields, he added.

He further explained that Research and Korea’s renowned research institutions will collaborate with PARC to establish state-of-the-art research facilities, focusing on developing climate-resilient crop varieties, improving soil health, and exploring novel agricultural practices.

Finance minister vows to protect consumers’ rights on priority, empower vulnerable

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik Wednesday reiterated the government’s unwavering commitment to consumer protection, assuring that it will remain a top priority where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was taking aggressive measures to not only end power outages but also uplift the most vulnerable segments of society. Talking to a private news channel, he while elaborating on the government’s strategy

explained that efforts are underway to create a conducive business environment for the power sector to flourish. “We are not just focusing on privatization, but also on building a robust framework that encourages investment, innovation, and competition,” he said.

This multi-pronged approach, he added, will not only enhance the efficiency and reliability of power supply but also attract private sector participation, driving economic growth and job creation, he mentioned.

Rupee sheds 10 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 10 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.50 against the previous day’s closing of Rs 278.40.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279 and Rs 280.75 respectively.

The price of Euro came down by Rs 1.24 paise to close at Rs 301.55 against the last day’s closing of Rs 302.79, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

WAPDA supplied 34.436b units to national grid during FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has supplied around 34.436 billion clean and low-cost units from its various hydel stations to the national grid system during the last fiscal year 2023-24.

As per official data, 22 hydel power stations of WAPDA cumulatively provided 34.436 billion units of electricity in 2023-24, which is 3.266 billion units more than that of fiscal year 2022-23.

Tarbela Hydel Power Station generated 13.424 billion units, Tarbela 4th Extension 4.672 billion units, Ghazi Barotha 6.556 billion units, Mangla 5.276

billion units, and Neelum-Jhelum Hydel Power Station generated 762 million units. While, rest of the generation i.e. 3.747 billion units - was contributed by other hydel power stations of WAPDA.

This increase in hydel generation by WAPDA to the tune of 3.266 billion units helped save national exchequer an amount of Rs. 143.7 billion, if the same quantum of electricity had to be generated through imported furnace oil. WAPDA achieved this additional hydel power generation because of the improved hydrology and effective operation and maintenance of its Hydel Power Stations.

PSX gains 409.92 points to close at 79,397.01

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 409.92 points, a positive change of 0.52 percent, closing at 79,397.01 points against 78,987.09 points on the last working day.

A total of 386,980,823 shares were traded during the day as compared to 316,245,462 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 14,899 billion against Rs 17,074 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 430 companies transacted their

shares in the stock market, 228 of them recorded gains and 155 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 47 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were SILK Bank Limited with 36,867,747 shares at Rs 1.10 per share, HASCOL Petrol with 25,777,994 shares at Rs 6.69 per share and PIA Holding Company with 17,163,702 shares at Rs16.31 per share.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 70.00 per share price, closing at Rs 7,020.00.

Aleem invites Chinese companies to invest in different sectors of economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Investment Board, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Wednesday said that Pakistan is extending business visa facility to investors from 124 countries including China and invited more Chinese companies to invest in different sector of national economy.

Abdul Aleem Khan along with Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi briefed the Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong on the investment opportunities existing in different sector of the

economy, said a press release.

In this session, the details of the establishment of industries from China to Pakistan under matchmaking industry were presented. During the briefing, seven major sectors were finalized, which include medical equipment, plastic industry, textile, leather, edible meat, fruit & vegetables and waste.

While giving briefing to Ambassador of China Jiang Zaidong and the Chinese delegation, Abdul Aleem Khan said that there are opportunities in Pakistan to invest in infrastructure, housing and other important sectors. He invited more

Chinese companies to come to Pakistan and invest here. He assured that the Chinese brothers are our guests and their fool proof security would be assured at all costs and welcomed the participation of Chinese Ambassador in the briefing session.

Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong assured all possible support for investment in Pakistan and said that business organizations from China will fully participate in the promotion of trade here. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi said that with China Friendship, brotherly relations, investment is always the top priority for Pakistan.

New LESCO BoD formed, Amir to head

LAHORE (APP): New Board of Director (BoD) of Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has been constituted, with Amir Zia as its chairman.

He said that a meeting of the new BoD was held on Zoom here at LESCO Headquarter in which the new Chairman Amir Zia, General Secretary Asad Sahafi, and members Rana Obaid, Zubair Liaquat, Zafar Mehmood and Tahir Basharat Cheema participated.

Governor KP calls for promoting industrial sector of KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday called upon the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to explore measures for enhancing sustainable industrial development in different regions of the province on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi said this while in a meeting with the Chairman FBR, Malik

Amjed Zubair Tiwana and discussed different aspects of ensuring revenue and development of the trade and industrial sector of the province to attain sustainable economic growth and social prosperity in the country.

The senior officials of FBR and other concerned officers also attended the meeting, which also deliberated on measures to promote industrial growth in the province.



QUETTA: A delegation of Poultry Farms Association meeting with Provincial Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development Bakht Muhammad Kakar.

Governor KP advocates for sustainable development in oil, gas exploration areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi in a strategic meeting held with Ahmed Hayat Lak, Managing Director of the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), on Wednesday emphasized the critical need for enhancing community welfare and sustainable development in regions impacted by oil and gas exploration activities.

The discussions focused on three key initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for residents in these areas. Member Provincial Assembly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ahmed Kundi was also present in the meeting.

Governor Faisal Kundi underscored the importance of facilitating health and education services in areas where OGDCL has successfully

explored oil. Recognizing the significant contributions of these regions to the province's and the country's energy resources, he advocated for investments that will ensure residents benefit directly from these natural resource discoveries.

This initiative aims to bridge the gap in healthcare and educational infrastructure, providing long-term benefits to the local population.

Addressing the energy needs of less privileged communities living around the oil and gas exploration sites, the Governor called for the deployment of solar energy systems funded by OGDCL. Many of these communities struggle with the high cost of electricity bills, making it difficult for them to afford consistent power supply.

He said by utilizing OGDCL's Corporate Social

Responsibility (CSR) funds to provide solar systems, these communities can gain access to sustainable and cost-effective energy solutions. This move is expected to promote sustainable energy practices, reduce dependency on conventional power sources, and alleviate financial burdens on underprivileged families, while also supporting environmental conservation efforts in the region, he added.

Special attention was directed towards the communities in Karak, a district noted for its significant natural gas extraction activities.

The Governor emphasized that Karak, being a major contributor to the province's natural gas output, should see targeted development initiatives.



LAHORE: The students of various universities called on Chancellor/Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan here at Governor House.

Minister Yousafzai vows strict action against illegal cutting of trees

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Forests and Environment Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai has said that strict legal action will be taken against those involved in cutting of the forests and no one would be spared in this regard.

He expressed these views while talking to delegations from various areas here in office on Wednesday. Taking action against the people involved in forest cutting and officials of the forest department in violation of ban on cutting, he said that 3 officials will be suspended and an FIR will

Ban imposed on transportation of timber in KPK

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, taking notice of news in a section of media about logging, on Wednesday imposed complete ban on transportation and procurement of wood.

The government has also constituted seven teams to check transportation of timber and to investigate issue of logging.

Meanwhile, anti-corruption department has also started probe into illegal cutting of forest reiterating that stern action would be taken against officials that were found involved in logging.

PPP criticizes KP govt over deforestation

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary Information, Amjad Khan Afridi, has strongly criticized the provincial government for its failure to prevent deforestation.

In a statement, he claimed that the government's slogan of protecting forests is merely a paper exercise, with no real action taken on the ground. He said that forest officials have failed to protect our forests, alleging that trucks loaded with timber are operating day and night under government patronage.

He highlighted the helplessness of the public against the powerful timber mafia, which he accused of operating with impunity.

Mariyum demands Punishment after confession of Imran about May-9 events

LAHORE (APP): Senior Punjab Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb has said that the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has confessed to his role in instigating the events of May 9, and now he should be punished for his crimes. Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday she described the PTI founder's statement as a moment of guilt, witnessed by the entire nation. She alleged that the PTI founder had repeatedly attacked the state institutions since 2014, including an assault on the PTV. She called for accountability, asserting that

the PTI leader manipulated the RTS system to rig the 2018 elections, thereby imposing his leadership on the country. She also accused him of engaging in digital terrorism, damaging the nation's reputation through foreign conspiracies, and advising the IMF against providing financial assistance to Pakistan in 2022, pushing the country towards economic hardship. The minister labeled May 9 as a dark day in the country's history, accusing the PTI of inciting violence and targeting government properties.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi visiting the Saint Jan Cathedral Church at Cantt area.

PML-N-led govt to complete five years' term: Sher Gorchani

RAJANPUR (APP): Provincial Minister for Mines and Minerals, Sher Ali Gorchani said Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government would complete its five-year constitutional term.

Talking to media persons here Wednesday, he said there are few elements who want to derail democracy, economic development, prosperity and thus seeking to sabotage law and order situation of the country.

They wanted to meet the nefarious task by disseminating disinformation about the government, he said.

He said Pakistan entered into avenue of prosperity under leadership of Mohammed Nawaz Sharif which was unprecedented in comparison to past.

He termed Punjab gained exemplary status among the four provinces through guidance of first-ever woman chief minister, Mariam Nawaz.

"Development and prosperity of South Punjab was mission of incumbent government to which it would never back down, he added. He said they are determined to bring subdivisions of Rajanpur like Jampur Fazilpur and eastern mozas at par with upper Punjab with regard to development and prosperity.

Most important purpose of education is to develop tolerance in oneself: Saleem

Independent Report
LAHORE: The students of various universities called on Chancellor/Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan here at Governor House Lahore today. The students informed the Governor Punjab about various issues including girls' hostels, transport and increase in fees.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider said that the youth are the future of the country.

He further said that in addition to imparting education to them, the aspect of their moral training is also very important. He said that the most important purpose of education is to develop tolerance in oneself. Governor Punjab further said that it is the

Protests erupt in Shikarpur against rising crime rate

Independent Report
SHIKARPUR: Hundreds of protesters, led by taxi drivers, blocked the Shikarpur-Larkana Indus Highway at the Kerthar Canal Bridge, demanding action against the rising crime rate in the district. The protesters chanted slogans against the administration, claiming that law and order had deteriorated, and citizens felt insecure.

According to details, the protesters gathered at the Gharhi Yaseen police station and marched towards the highway, blocking both sides of the road. The protesters claimed that the police had failed to control crime, and incidents of car theft were on the rise.

The protesters demanded that the authorities take immediate action to improve law and order in the district and ensure the safety of citizens.

308 raids conducted on drug-traffickers hideouts in single day

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said on Wednesday that in one day, 308 raids were conducted on drug-traffickers' hideouts across the province, including Lahore. As a result, 153 suspects were arrested, and 150 cases were registered. The operations led to seizure of 110 kilograms of charas, three kilograms of heroin, and 1,327 litres of liquor from suspects' possession.

The IGP said that since the special campaign began on February 26, police teams had conducted 37,550 raids on

drug-dealers' hideouts across Punjab. As a result, 17,933 accused involved in drug trafficking were arrested, and 17,431 cases were registered. Seized from the suspects' possession were 10,518 kilograms of charas, 56 kilograms of Ice, 190 kilograms of heroin, 276 kilograms of opium, and 1.7 million liters of alcohol.

He directed to further intensify the intelligence-based operations against drug dealers and smugglers. He Punjab said that RPOs, DPOs should personally monitor the anti-narcotics operations.

International News

Kamala Harris leads Donald Trump 44pc to 42pc in US presidential race, poll finds

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Vice President Kamala Harris opened up a marginal two-percentage-point lead over Republican Donald Trump after President Joe Biden ended his re-election campaign and passed the torch to her, a Reuters/Ipsos poll found.

That compares with a marginal two-point deficit Biden faced against Trump in last week's poll before his Sunday exit from the race.

The new poll, conducted on Monday and Tuesday, followed both the Republican National Convention where Trump on Thursday formally accepted the nomination, and Biden's announcement on Sunday he was leaving the race and endorsing Harris.

Harris, whose campaign says she has secured the Democratic nomination, led Trump 44 per cent to 42pc in the national poll,

a difference within the 3-percentage-point margin of error.

Harris and Trump were tied at 44pc in a July 15-16 poll, and Trump led by one percentage point in a July 1-2 poll, both within the same margin of error.

While nationwide surveys give important signals of American support for political candidates, a handful of competitive states typically tilt the balance in the US Electoral College, which ultimately decides who wins a presidential election. A pollster with Trump's campaign played down any polling showing an increase in Harris' support, arguing that she was likely to see a temporary rise in popularity because of widespread media coverage of her new candidacy.

"That bump is likely to start showing itself over the next few days and will last for a while," pollster Tony Fabrizio said in a

memo circulated to reporters by Trump's campaign.

Candidates often expect a bump after formally accepting their party's nomination at stage-managed, televised conventions such as the one that Trump had last week. But the poll showed no sign of that.

Bump or not, the most recent Reuters/Ipsos poll underscored the rationale for Biden dropping out of the race and for Harris replacing him on the ticket.

Some 56pc of registered voters agreed with a statement that Harris, 59, was "mentally sharp and able to deal with challenges," compared to 49pc who said the same of Trump, 78.

Only 22pc of voters assessed Biden that way.

Biden, 81, ended his reelection effort after a debate with Trump in which he often stammered and failed to aggressively challenge attacks by Trump that included falsehoods.



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators gather on the day of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address to a joint meeting of Congress, on Capitol Hill in Washington, U.S.

Plane crashes in Nepal with 18 dead, pilot sole survivor

Monitoring Desk
KATHMANDU: A passenger plane crashed on takeoff in Kathmandu on Wednesday, with the pilot rescued from the flaming wreckage but all 18 others aboard killed, police in the Nepali capital told AFP.

Nepal has a woeful track record on aviation safety and the Himalayan republic has seen a spate of deadly light plane and helicopter crashes over the decades.

The Saurya Airlines flight was carrying two crew and 17 of the

Blast at Mexico tequila factory kills five

MEXICO CITY (INP): An explosion at a factory producing Jose Cuervo tequila in Mexico killed five people Tuesday, local authorities said. "So far the deaths of five people are confirmed, workers of the company," the civil protection unit in the western state of Jalisco said in a statement. Two others were injured, one seriously, the statement added. It was not yet known what caused the blast in Tequila municipality, with the company saying it happened during maintenance work.

UK government scrapping use of a barge off English coast to house asylum-seekers

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: The British government said Tuesday it will scrap the controversial use of a barge to house asylum-seekers off the south coast of England as part of its immigration system overhaul. The Labour government that took power earlier this month said that ending the contract for the Bibby Stockholm would save 20 million pounds (\$26 million) next year. It's part of a larger plan to save over 7.7 billion pounds (\$9.9 billion) over the next decade by clearing a huge asylum backlog. The boat has been at the center of controversy since it was first towed into Portland harbor in Dorset a year ago to house up to 500 asylum-seekers.

UN welcomes declaration on ending division, strengthening unity by Palestinian factions

NEW YORK (Online): United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has welcomed the declaration on ending division and strengthening unity signed by 14 Palestinian factions in Beijing. According to the spokesperson for the UN Chief, the Secretary General termed the deal an important step towards furthering Palestinian unity. He said Antonio Guterres has encouraged all factions to overcome their differences through dialogue.

Israeli lawmakers back declaring UN agency 'terrorist'

BEIRUT (Online): The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) may be declared a terrorist organization, its staff stripped of immunity and its activities inside Israel outlawed, under a series of bills that have been proposed in the Knesset.

The UNRWA was established in 1949 to deal with Palestinian refugees and has a mandate to operate in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank

Growing cooperation between Russia and China in Arctic, Pentagon says

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Russia and China are increasingly cooperating in the Arctic region, which could impact regional stability, the US military said as it released its strategy for the Arctic region on Monday.

Russia has reopened hundreds of Soviet-era military sites in the Arctic, the report said. China, which describes itself as a "near-Arctic" state, also has ambitions there and has said it intended to build a "Polar Silk Road." China has its eye on mineral resources and new shipping routes as ice packs recede with rising temperatures. "Increasingly, the (People's Republic of China) and Russia are collaborating in the Arctic across multiple instruments of national power," the Pentagon's report said.

"While significant areas of disagreement between the PRC and Russia remain, their growing alignment in the region is of concern, and (the Department of Defense) continues to monitor this cooperation," it added.

Arctic sea routes are increasingly being used for connecting major economies across the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans as global warming shrinks ice packs and allows for longer ice-free periods at sea.

China and Russia have been working together to develop Arctic shipping routes as Russia seeks to deliver more oil and gas to China amid Western sanctions while China seeks an alternative shipping route to reduce its dependence on the Strait of Malacca.

The Pentagon report added that China was looking to leverage "changing dynamics in the Arctic to pursue greater influence and access, take advantage of Arctic resources.

Bangladesh govt accepts apex court ruling to cut job quotas

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: The Bangladesh government said on Tuesday it would heed a Supreme Court ruling that 93 per cent of state jobs be open to competition, meeting a key demand of students after a week of some of the country's deadliest protests in years.

But students raised fresh demands including the scrapping of a curfew, restoration of internet services and a reopening of campuses, leaving unclear whether the government's acceptance of the court decision would completely defuse the unrest.

Relative calm prevailed for a second straight day in Dhaka and most major cities although the army chief said security had still not been entirely restored after he surveyed the capital city by helicopter.

The government announced an easing of the curfew imposed to help contain the unrest, lifting it from Wednesday between 10:00am and 5:00pm to allow people to shop for essentials, with offices reopened between 11:00am and 3:00pm.

Bangladeshi authorities also shut down mobile internet and deployed the army after clashes between protesters and security forces spread across the South Asian country of 170 million.

Almost 150 people have been killed in the violence with more than 1,600 arrested in the two main cities Dhaka and Chittagong. The protests tailed off after the Supreme Court ruled on Sunday in favour of an appeal from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government and directed that 93pc of jobs should be open to candidates on merit.

Pakistan, Turkmenistan agree to expedite TAPI pipeline project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Turkmenistan have agreed to expedite the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, affirming their resolve for continuous engagement.

This agreement was reached during a meeting on Wednesday between Pakistan's Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr Musadik Malik, and Turkmenistan's Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rashid Meredov, who is on a two-day visit to Pakistan.

Amanov, Chairman of the Board and CEO of TAPI Pipeline Company Ltd; Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan; and Eldar Permatov, Third Secretary of the Embassy of Turkmenistan. Pakistani officials present at the meeting included Additional Secretary Hasan Yousafzai, Joint Secretary Shahbaz Tahir, and MD of Interstate Gas Systems Limited, Nadeem Bajwa.

Dr Musadik Malik welcomed the Turkmen delegation and expressed his gratitude for the hospitality offered by the Turkmen side during his last visit to Turkmenistan.

He said the visit of the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan marks a significant milestone in the strengthening of diplomatic and economic ties between the two nations.

TAPI pipeline project, the minister said,

will lower energy costs, which can boost industrial growth, create jobs, and foster economic development. Reliable and affordable energy supplies are vital for industrial sectors and overall economic stability, he added.

This project, he said, aimed at fostering economic integration and energy security, has witnessed substantial progress through collaborative efforts and resolved continuous engagement among both countries.

He further added that Pakistan is fully committed to this project which is significant for regional energy cooperation and infrastructure development.

Rashid Meredov expressed his profound appreciation for the warm welcome extended by the Pakistani side. "Together we will chalk out a roadmap for cooperation between both countries" he added.

The Turkmen delegation accompanying Rashid Meredov included Ata Haljanov, head of the International Economic Cooperation Division at Turkmenistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Eziz Nazarov, head of the Legal Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and M u h a m m e d y r a t



KARACHI: A delegation of Bohra Jamaat meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at governor house.

Incharge Federal Ombudsman Karachi for improving security, cleanliness arrangements at railway stations

KARACHI (APP): Member In-charge Federal Ombudsman Secretariat Regional Office Karachi, Navid Ahmed Shaikh, Wednesday, directed officials concerned to ensure proper arrangements for passengers and cleanliness on Karachi Cantt railway station.

Navid Ahmed Shaikh accompanied with Associate Advisor to Federal Ombudsman Secretariat regional office Karachi Riaz Memon carried out a surprise visit of the railway station on directives of the Federal Ombudsman who took notice of a media report regarding lack of cleanliness and other issues being faced by the passengers at railway station Karachi Cantt.

The member in charge visited different sections of

the railway station including platform, waiting rooms and reservation counters and reviewed the facilities being provided to the passengers. He also had interaction with passengers present there and inquired about the services and facilities being offered by Pakistan Railways.

Navid Ahmed Shaikh, sharing his observations with media persons at the occasion, said that cleaning process was underway at the station but overall cleanliness situation was not satisfactory and arrangements seen insufficient.

The DS Pakistan Railways informed that they were facing issue of shortage of sanitary staff amid heavy work load at the station as all the trains arriving at the station used to

throw garbage there, he said adding that the authorities concerned informed that alternate arrangements for cleanliness were being made to improve the situation.

Navid Shaikh said that during the visit of the railway station walk through gates and scanners installed for security purposes were found nonfunctional. The Ombudsman Secretariat will forward observations and recommendations in the regard to concerned ministry so that remedial measures could be taken as to, he added.

The condition of waiting halls at the railway station was apparently better and arrangements for cleanliness seen in place, the Member noted and stressed on carrying out maintenance on regular basis for facilitation of the passengers.

DC Shaheed Benazirabad chairs meeting regarding tree plantation drive

NAWABSHAH (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Shahryar Gull Memon presided over a meeting regarding tree plantation drive in the district.

Addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner said that a grand tree plantation drive would be started on 14th August.

He urged all departments and social welfare organizations to plant a maximum number of saplings in their offices, streets, homes and public places and also ensure special care of plants so that such plants could benefit people.

He said that due to climate change and less tree plantation the temperature was increasing day by day which was highly alarming for humans and animals however tree plantation was the only solution to protect from heat.

The DS Pakistan Railways informed that they were facing issue of shortage of sanitary staff amid heavy work load at the station as all the trains arriving at the station used to



LARKANA: Students of Chandka Medical College are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands held at college premises in Larkana.

Karachi's Natha Khan Bridge once again prone to collapse

KARACHI (INP): The middle part of the dilapidated Natha Khan Bridge in the Shahra-e-Faisal area of Karachi has been propped badly which might cause a mishap on Wednesday.

Due to the damaged part of the bridge, the traffic flow was affected creating difficulties for passengers going to the airport from Drug Road.

However, the repair work on the affected road could not be started yet.

for long a huge population shuttling between the international airport and a vast territory of this metropolis.

A lack of proper and regular maintenance, as well as a strict check on unscrupulous elements, has turned the vital installation into a dangerous path for commuters and pedestrians alike.

Once strong, smooth and architecturally attractive, the bridge now stands without a complete railing, smooth road and safe pavement. It had lost its colour years back and no official has since bothered to pay attention to the defaced structure.

Natha Khan Bridge is perhaps the only section of the city's prime highway-like thoroughfare, Sharea Faisal, which has been a victim of constant neglect although it has been serving

Court awards death sentence to four accused of murder

KARACHI (INP): The court awarded death sentence to four accused of murder besides imposing fine after proved guilty.

Model Court East on Wednesday heard the case of murder against four culprits.

After proved guilty, the court awarded death sentence to the culprits including Rafique Ahmed, Usman, Sheraz alias Sheri and Zameer Pathan besides imposing Rs100,000 fine on each accused.

The culprits had killed Masood Ahmed on November 26, 2021 and wife of the deceased was eye witness of the murder.

According to Advocate Ashraf Bhatti, solid evidences against the accused arrested by Korangi Police were produced in the court. The detainees had also taken away the wallet of the deceased from his vehicle.

A new route of electric bus service inaugurated

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Transport and Mass Transit Department, on Wednesday, started a new route of environment friendly electric bus service connecting Bahria Town to Numaish Chowranghi in down town area of the metropolis. At its outset, 12 electric buses will be operated on 55-kilometer-long EV-4 route to facilitate the commuters from different enroute areas of the Karachi including Bahria Town, Dunba Goth, Gulshan-e-Maimar, Suhrah Goth, Al Asif Square, Ayesha Manzil, Liaqatabad, Teen Hatti.

Pakistan Peoples Party's Members Sindh Assembly Raja Abdul Razzaq and Sajid Jokhio inaugurated the new electric bus route at Bahria Town.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal chaired a high-level meeting with provincial planning ministers.

Chairs meeting of provincial planning ministers Ahsan stresses collective efforts for national development

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to revitalize the spirit of federalism and promote economic and social development, Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting with provincial planning ministers. This initiative marks a significant revival of the consultative sessions, started by the previous PMLN government in 2013-2018, aimed at harmonizing provincial economic policies with federal goals, said a press release.

The meeting focused on aligning development projects with the Annual National Development Plan, optimizing utilization of allocated funds for higher

education, and strategies for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the imperative of federal-provincial collaboration to address pressing challenges, including rapid population growth, healthcare sector deficiencies, and education sector shortcomings.

He stressed the need for collective efforts to achieve national development goals, particularly in the wake of the seventh census results, which predict a doubling of the population within 24-30 years.

The minister expressed concern over Pakistan's lagging position in healthcare and education, citing issues like diabetes,

hepatitis, tuberculosis, malnutrition, stunting, and out-of-school children. He directed the Federal Bureau of Statistics to collect data on out-of-school children and emphasized the need for federal-provincial collaboration in healthcare and education.

Despite fiscal constraints, the minister committed to funding federal universities through the Federal Government and Provincial universities through Provincial Governments. He acknowledged the brain-drain due to lack of incentives for university faculty and called for consultative workshops on the five-year plan, involving provinces, stakeholders, think tanks, and experts.

Pak - Thai friendship promoting trade, tourism and cultural activities: Envoy

KARACHI (APP): The outgoing Consul General of Thailand in Karachi, Narut Soontarodom has said that Pak - Thai Friendship Association and Business Forum working to promote trade, tourism and cultural activities between Thailand and Pakistan.

He said this while speaking at farewell lunch hosted by Arif Suleman, President of PTFA&BF at a local restaurant and was attended by Panutit Yodkhaew, Azam Durrani, Irshad Adamjee, Aleem Sattar, Rashid Siddiqui, and

Mubeen Ansari and other honorable guests.

Arif Suleman presented a souvenir to Narut Soontarodom and thanked him for his kindness and wonderful support during his tenure.

Additionally, Narut presented an appreciation certificate to Arif Suleman for all his efforts towards Pak - Thai friendship and promoting trade, tourism, and cultural activities. Arif Suleman acknowledged and thanked Narut for the certificate on behalf of PTFA&BF.



HYDERABAD: Volunteer distributing breakfast among the deserving people at Fort Road.

Mian Zahid warns of public & power producers clash over inflated bills

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, as well as former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has warned that the risk of confrontation between the public and electricity companies is increasing due to exorbitant bills.

Talking to business community on Wednesday, he said that people now have to pay electricity bills that exceed their income, leading to quarrels in their homes.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that inflated bills were breaking relationships, and people were shedding blood over it.

He claimed that capacity payments were penalizing the general public and the industrial sector.

Public anxiety and agitation could spiral out of control at any time, so the government should act quickly to stabilize the situation, he warned.

The business leader

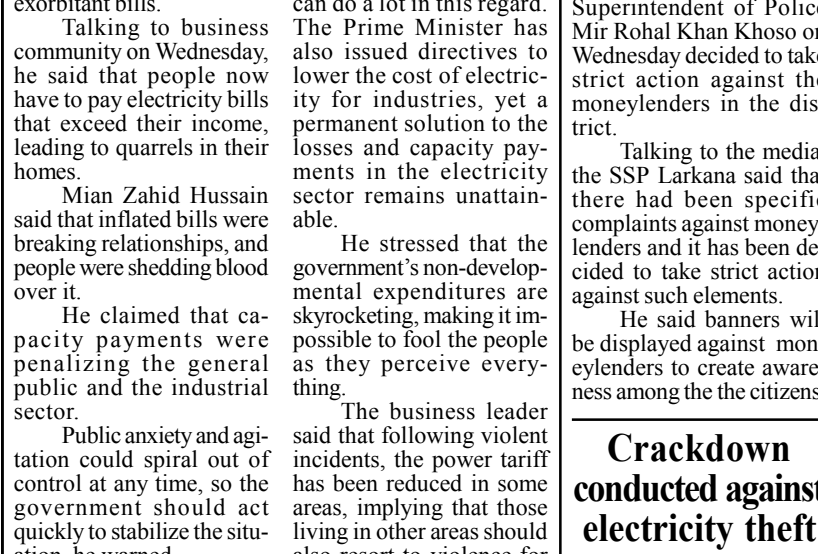
stated that the elites and the government own 80 percent of the IPPs established in the country, receiving far more in dollars than their rightful share.

He warned that this plunder of resources should end; otherwise, the country will plunge into lawlessness and will soon become bankrupt.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the government can do a lot in this regard. The Prime Minister has also issued directives to lower the cost of electricity for industries, yet a permanent solution to the losses and capacity payments in the electricity sector remains unattainable.

He stressed that the government's non-developmental expenditures are skyrocketing, making it impossible to fool the people as they perceive everything.

The business leader said that following violent incidents, the power tariff has been reduced in some areas, implying that those living in other areas should also resort to violence for relief.



HYDERABAD: Laborers are busy in mending main stream track of Pakistan Railway, during a hot weather of summer season as the extremely gripped by heat waves strokes, nearby Railway Station in Hyderabad.

10 sports academies to be established to groom talent of youths: Mashood

KARACHI (APP): Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan on Wednesday said that the present government is going to establish 10 sports academies to groom and nurture the talents of youth.

He said this while speaking on the occasion of inauguration of biomechanics laboratory at the NED Engineering University here.

Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan said that the funding for the biomechanics laboratory at the NED Engineering University is being provided under the Prime Minister Youth Program.

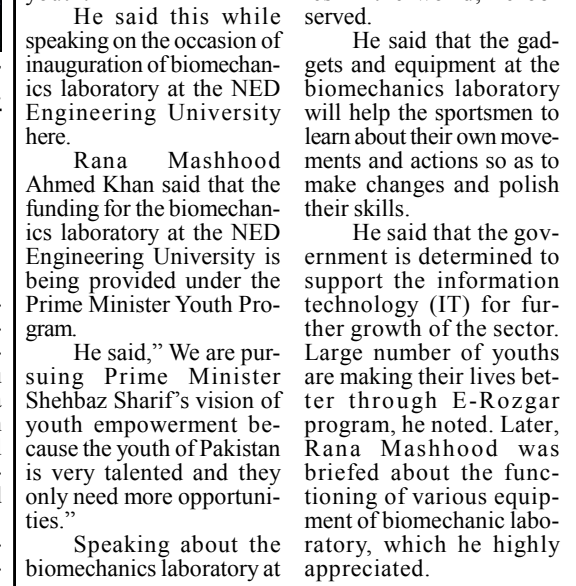
He said, "We are pursuing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision of youth empowerment because the youth of Pakistan is very talented and they only need more opportunities."

Speaking about the biomechanics laboratory at

NED Engineering University, he lauded the NED Engineering University for its contribution in the education sector and said, the varsity is also contributing in the field of sports. Sports is now emerged as an industry in the civilized societies in the world, he observed.

He said that the gadgets and equipment at the biomechanics laboratory will help the sportsmen to learn about their own movements and actions so as to make changes and polish their skills.

He said that the government is determined to support the information technology (IT) for further growth of the sector. Large number of youths are making their lives better through E-Rozgar program, he noted. Later, Rana Mashood was briefed about the functioning of various equipments of biomechanics laboratory, which he highly appreciated.



BADIN: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah addressing to public gathering during inauguration ceremony of newly constructed regulator of spinal drain of LBOD at RD210 near Shadi Large.

Data collection of chemical industries is necessary to prevent misuse of chemicals: Jam

Independent Report KARACHI: Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dharji on Wednesday said that the problems will not be solved until the data of all the chemical industries is available. There is a need to create awareness among the industrialists on this important issue. Brigadier Umar Farooq said that registration of all chemical industries is also the need of the hour.

was placed on the need to collect all the details of the chemical industries and to monitor the import, storage and use of certain chemicals.

Certain camellias can be used in drugs. Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dharji said that the problems will not be solved until the data of all the chemical industries is available. There is a need to create awareness among the industrialists on this important issue. Brigadier Umar Farooq said that registration of all chemical industries is also the need of the hour.

PTI-led opposition alliance announces country-wide protest

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led opposition alliance announced a country-wide protest on Friday for the release of 'innocent' prisoners including party chairman Imran Khan.

Speaking to media persons after a meeting of the Tehreek-e-Taha Fuz-e-Ayem—an opposition alliance led by the PTI—former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser said that they would be holding 'peaceful' protest demonstrations across the country on Friday.

He said that they are protesting for the three prime demands including the end of sky-rocketed inflation, the establishment of peace, and the release of the PTI founder and all other political prisoners who have been behind the bars in 'fabricated' cases.

"The incumbent federal government enjoys a fake mandate," Asad Qaiser added.

Speaking on the occasion, Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) Chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai claimed that Imran Khan is the 'most popular' leader in Pakistan at present.

The PKMAP chief vowed to struggle for the release of all political prisoners, including the PTI founder.

According to the FIA, the suspects were sending people abroad under the name of a fake company. The spokesperson stated that the suspects had provided a UK employment visa to a citizen by falsely representing a healthcare firm.

The FIA revealed that the suspects had extorted a total of 7 million rupees from the citizen. Additionally, the suspects had issued visas to a total of 40 citizens under the name of the fake company.

Strict action be taken against money lenders in city: SPP Larkana

LARKANA (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police Mir Rohal Khan Khoso on Wednesday decided to take strict action against the moneylenders in the district.

Talking to the media, the SSP Larkana said that there had been specific complaints against moneylenders and it has been decided to take strict action against such elements.

He said banners will be displayed against moneylenders to create awareness among the citizens.

Crackdown conducted against electricity theft SUKKUR (APP): The Sukkur Electric Supply Company (SEPCO) and district administration Shikarpur on Wednesday conducted a major anti-theft operation in several areas of the city.

According to the district administration, during the operation, district officials and WAPDA representatives met with the public and urged their cooperation against the illegal and direct connections.

They appealed the public to ensure timely payment of electricity bills to permanently resolve the issue of load shedding.

SRSO launches new programs to support climate change affected communities

SUKKUR (APP): The Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO), has launched a three year program to support vulnerable communities affected by climate change in the Jhuddo area of Mirpurkhas district, Sindh.

According to SRSO's spokesperson, Jameel Ahmed, the program is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The program aims to benefit direct and indirect 7,869 households, comprising 43,164 people (22,445 Women and 20,719

Men) residents, through climate resilience agriculture and infrastructure initiatives, particularly focusing on communities affected by the 2022 floods through PLA- Participatory learning and action approach for community basic infrastructure and agriculture restoration.

The program will also provide training on CBDRM to increase the resilience of communities through DRR Plans, evacuation plans, etc. protecting against climate risks for vulnerable communities, he added.