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Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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## Country's ports being developed for regional corridor: PM Shahbaz

*Directs enhancing seaports' efficiency to tap full potential*

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the government was taking steps for the development of seaports for provision of shortest corridor to the regional countries, especially to the Central Asian States.

He said that with a spur in sea trade by the Central Asian States, China and other countries of the region would have inter-connectivity via Pakistani ports that would enable the country to earn worth billions of dollars as foreign revenue every year.

The prime minister expressed these views during a visit to Hutchison Port, South Asian Pakistan Terminal at Karachi port where he was given a briefing, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

On the occasion, he directed the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to prioritize installation of latest scanners on Pakistani ports.

The prime minister said that the customs authorities in collaboration with the ports authorities should take immediate steps for complete utilization of the seaports in Pakistan.

The prime minister was briefed that the process for installation of latest scanners on ports by the FBR was in

the final stages which would enable rapid scanning of containers in the short time with assistance of latest gadgets and artificial intelligence.

The prime minister said that for the progress of the country, it was imperative that its ports were also developed. He said that for increasing country's exports, the government was taking measures on priority basis.

Federal ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Jam Kamal Khan, Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh, Ahad Khan Cheema, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tesori, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chairman FBR and other concerned officials accompanied the prime minister.

The prime minister was apprised that Hutchison Port, South Asian Pakistan Terminal was amongst the few global terminals located in deep seas which was being automatically operated upon.

The terminal had been equipped with latest technology and scanners and its operations were of the international standards.

The prime minister was further informed that the port had the capacity to handle the shipment of 35,00,000 containers annually.

*Continued on page 2*



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receives briefing about Hutchison Ports Pakistan Terminal at Karachi Port.



RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Interior and Anti Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi in a group photo during his visit to ANF Headquarters.

Visits ANF Headquarters

## Naqvi directs to launch crackdown against drug mafia

RAWALPINDI (APP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi here on Sunday visited Anti-Narcotics Control (ANF) Headquarters.

The minister was welcomed by Director General (DG) ANF, Major General, Abdul Moed and senior officers of the Force.

Mohsin Naqvi visited the Martyrs Memorial at ANF Headquarters and laid floral wreath. He offered Fatiha and paid tribute to the great sacrifices of the mar-

tyrs. The interior minister chaired an important meeting at the ANF Headquarters where he was briefed on counter narcotics achievements of ANF, current drug situation, ANF performance, functions and operations and major challenges being faced with regard to trafficking of narcotics.

Mohsin Naqvi appreciated the performance of ANF for effective operations against drug mafia across Pakistan despite the lack of resources and manpower.

## Normalcy returns to Chaman with implementation of one document regime

QUETTA (INP): Following the implementation of the One Document Regime, life in Chaman city has resumed its regular pace after enduring an arduous 8 month-long sit-in that disrupted daily activities and exacerbated unemployment.

The city responded with enthusiasm to the new regime, with a surge in applications at the Chaman passport office. Currently, 9,500 tokens have been issued, resulting in 7,500 passports being successfully issued to applicants.

Moreover, despite the disruptive sit-in, movement across the Chaman border has resumed smoothly.

Cargo vehicles are once again flowing under the Pak-Afghan Transit Trade Border, alleviating the hardships faced by thousands of local laborers and transporters during the prolonged closure. In a proactive move to prevent future disruptions, the government has announced plans to construct a new road and terminal from Murga Faqirzai to Badini border by December 2024.

## MoU signed to promote gender equality, women's health & basic rights in Balochistan

*Independent Report*

QUETTA: The Forum for Dignity Initiatives Pakistan, Commission on the Status of Women Balochistan, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's provincial chap-



ter, and MHM Technical Working Group have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote gender equality, women's health, basic rights, and empowerment in Balochistan.

Under the agreement, the parties will work together to provide equal opportunities for women in all spheres of life, raise awareness about women's rights, and implement laws and policies related to women's empowerment. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Uzma Yaqoob, Fauzia Shaheen, Dr. Tahira Kamal Baloch and Farukhanda Aurangzeb emphasized the need for practical implementation of laws and policies related to women's rights.

## Premier to visit Quetta today

*Independent Report*  
QUETTA: The Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is due to arrive in Quetta today (Monday) on a one-day visit.

During the visit, Prime Minister would inaugurate the project of solarization of over 29,000 agricultural tube wells in Quetta.

The sources said that the project of solarization of the agricultural tube wells is pending for last 10 years.

## Balochistan cabinet meets today

*Independent Report*  
QUETTA: The Provincial Cabinet of Balochistan is scheduled to meet in Quetta at 10:00 AM today (Monday).

The Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti would chair the meeting.

According to the sources, 21-point agenda would be discussed in the meeting.

The sources said that the agenda of cabinet meeting includes approval of the recruitment of vice chancellors of public sector universities as well as approval of dams in Jhal Magsi and service rules of BINUQ, regularization of 338 contract and 229 project employees of BDA, approval of separate cadres of Balochistan police officers, conversion of B area of Bostan to A area, agreement between the provincial government and Green Corporate besides others.

## CTD DSP shot dead in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): A Deputy Superintendent of Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Ali Raza was shot dead in Karachi's Karimabad area on Sunday.

As per initial reports, DSP Ali Raza was on his way home when unidentified gunmen riding a motorcycle opened fire on his vehicle in the Karimabad area.

He was shifted to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital where he breathed his last. Senior officials of the police and security agencies reached the scene upon receiving reports of firing by unidentified persons that killed one and severely injured another officer.

## PM has special interest in development & prosperity of Balochistan: Governor

*Independent Report*

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has special interest in development and prosperity of the province.

In an official statement issued here on Sunday, the Governor said that not only the agricultural revolution would be brought by converting the agricultural tube wells on the solar energy in the province but the long-standing demand of the zamindars and poor farmers of the province would also be met.

This would also cast positive results on the agriculture and livestock sectors all over the province, adding the Governor believed.

Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail also said that the Prime Minister is determined to provide new opportunities of livelihood and other necessary facilities to the traders, zamindars and industrialists of the province.

He said that the public

friendly policies of the federal government under leadership of Shahbaz Sharif are gaining extent appreciation at the public level. He said that Prime Minister is busy



in coping upto expectations of the masses from the day first besides diverting attention of the investors of the world toward Balochistan.

In addition to this, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is also taking special interest in provision of the new opportunities of livelihood to the unemployed youth of province.

He believed that the visit of Prime Minister would prove to be result-oriented for solution to the issues being faced by the province.

## President calls for promotion of national unity, interfaith harmony

*Independent Report*

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed upon the nation to nurture the qualities of affection, forbearance and tolerance by shunning all differences and play role for strengthening of national unity and interfaith harmony in the country.

In a message on the advent of new Islamic year 1446 Hijrah, the president felicitated the nation on the arrival of new Islamic year and prayed for the peace, stability, progress and prosperity of the county, President Secretariat Press Wing, on Sunday said in a press release.

The president said that Muharram-ul-Haram signified special importance in the Islamic history, adding that prayers and the worship of Allah Almighty in this month had been of great significance.

This month called for avoidance of sins, following the Islamic teachings and devotedly worship-

ping of the Creator, besides reminding about holding of introspection of the Islamic teachings, he added.

President Zardari said

way, they had always been referred as beacons of determination and sacrifices, he added.

The president said this



that Muharram-ul-Haram also reminded them of the unprecedented sacrifices of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his faithful companions and gave a lesson for the real objective of struggle in life which was linked with sacrificing everything in the path of religion.

Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his companions laid down their lives while facing the evil and atrocious forces of cruelty and in this

## Digitalization of fisheries dept. completed: Govt starts ambulance service for relief of fishermen stranded in sea

*Independent Report*

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has started the sea ambulance service for the relief of fishermen stranded in the sea.

According to an official hand out issued here, the sea ambulance service includes the green and patrolling boats to be equipped with the necessary facilities.

Besides, the process of digitalization of the fisheries department has been completed in the province.

The digitalization of fisheries department cost Rs. 100 million, mentioned in the official hand out.

It was also mentioned that around 600,000 persons are associated with the fisheries sector in Balochistan. Out of them, 82,583 persons are officially registered.

Moreover, at present 36 cold storage plants have been established in the province. According to the hand out, the fisheries industry has the potential to provide livelihood to around 2 million people in the province. As per the official data, a total of 137,000 metric tons of fish was caught in Balochistan during year 2023. The fish caught from sea of the province cost US \$ 105 million.

Meanwhile, new projects have been approved in the fisheries sector in Balochistan for the new financial year 2024-25.

The projects included in the PSDP are: establishment of complexes in Atal and Surbandar.

## Around 98% target of polio immunization achieved as special drive concludes

*Independent Report*

QUETTA: Almost 98 percent target of special polio immunization campaign was achieved till its last day in 16 districts of the Balochistan province on Sunday.

The sources of Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication informed that the special anti-polio campaign came to an end in 16 out of total 36 districts of the province on Sunday.

During the seven-day campaign, around 98 percent target of the campaign has been achieved in 16 districts of the province.

However, the EOC sources informed that some 3,000 parents have been reported who refused to administer the anti-polio drops to their children in the province.

there are also some parents, who didn't cooperate during the campaign to get their children vaccinated against the crippling disease.

It may be mentioned here that the campaign was run in the districts including Pishin, Chaman, Killa Abdullah, Sohatpur, Killa Saifullah, Zhub, Shirani, Usta Muhammad, Lasbela, Ziarat, Barkhan, Musakhail, Sibi and Naseerabad.

It was targeted to vaccinate over 951,000 children below five years of age during the special campaign.

Needless to mention here is that in all six polio cases have been reported in the current year.

Three of the polio cases were reported from Killa Abdullah while one each was reported from Chaman, Quetta and Dera Bugti.

## Increase in electricity demand in Iran: Electricity supply suspended to all grid stations of Makran Division

*Independent Report*

QUETTA: The electricity supply was suspended to grid stations of all three districts of Makran Division of Makran Division from Iran.

According to the sources of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), the electricity supply was suspended from the 132 KV Jeki Gormand and 132 KV Polan Jiwani transmission lines due to increase in the demand of electricity in Iran.

The grid stations affected due to the situation are included: 132 KV Mand, Tump, Turbat,

## 'No plan to abolish Ministry of IT'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication here on Sunday clarified that no directions have been issued to abolish the Ministry and its other departments.

The news item in a section of media giving the impression that the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, among others, is being abolished is distorted and fabricated, the Ministry said in a press release.

## Punjab police raids Umar Ayub's residence, leader escapes arrest

*Independent Report*

ISLAMABAD (INP): Punjab Police raided the residence of National Assembly opposition leader Umar Ayub in an attempt to arrest him, but he evaded capture as he was not present at home.

In a message on social media website X, Umar Ayub revealed that the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Sargodha had issued a bailable warrant for his arrest. He stated that police from Islamabad and Mianwali had recently conducted a raid at his house.

He described the raid as evidence of the lack of rule of law in the country and reaffirmed his commitment to continuing the struggle until PTI founder Imran Khan becomes the prime minister.

The opposition leader resides in Islamabad's F-10 sector, where the raid took place. The incident highlights ongoing tensions and legal battles faced by political figures in Pakistan.

## Jason Gillespie pledges focus on performance consistency, fitness non-negotiable

**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: Jason Gillespie, Pakistan's newly appointed red-ball coach, emphasised the importance of fitness, consistency, and fielding during his inaugural press conference following his acceptance of the role.

Speaking to the media in Karachi on Sunday, Gillespie expressed his enthusiasm for working with the Pakistan cricket team and confirmed his plans to accompany them on their upcoming tour to Australia.

Gillespie, renowned as one of Australia's finest bowlers in history, acknowledged the talent within the Pakistan team but highlighted the need for greater consistency in their performances.

"We will focus on achieving continuity and consistency in our performances," Gillespie affirmed, stressing that player fitness would be non-negotiable. "In international cricket, fitness should never be in question," he insisted, adding, "It's a matter of personal pride and professionalism."

When queried about Pakistan's playing style, Gillespie revealed discussions with skipper Shan Masood and planned further dialogues with players during upcoming fitness camps.

Regarding team selection, he indicated decisions would factor in the opposition and prevailing conditions. "If a player is beneficial for the team, he will definitely be considered," He assured, noting ongoing coordination with Gary Kirsten for managing player workloads.

Addressing Pakistan's perceived weakness in fielding, Gillespie declared improving this aspect as a primary objective. "It's widely acknowledged that Pakistan's fielding needs improvement, so that's a priority," he stated.

"Our aim is to compete effectively against top-quality opposition." Gillespie confirmed his upcoming travel with the team to Australia, reflecting on Pakistan's previous tour where despite a 3-0 series loss, there were phases of dominant play.



KARACHI: Pakistan Men's red-ball Head Coach Jason Gillespie addressing a press conference at the National Bank Stadium.

## IHC Bar condemns social media campaign against Justice Tariq

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Bar Association has condemned the recent social media campaign targeting Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri. In a statement, the IHC Bar described the campaign as malicious and harmful. In a response to the controversy, the Bar Association's Executive Committee has scheduled a meeting for July 9 to address the issue.

According to the announcement, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri is recognized as a competent and diligent judge, with a distinguished career as a lawyer and Deputy Attorney General. The Bar Association praised his dedication and professional achievements.

The Islamabad High

Court Bar Association reaffirmed its commitment to judicial independence and autonomy in its statement, underscoring the importance of supporting the judiciary against baseless attacks.

In response to a letter circulating on social media purportedly from the Karachi University's (KU) controller of examinations regarding the law degree of Islamabad High Court (IHC) judge Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, and the subsequent filing of a reference with the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), the IHC is expected to issue an official statement to the campaign against the judge.

Sources said that IHC judges will convene a meeting on Saturday (today) to discuss the matter.

## Arshad Nadeem secures 4th position at Paris Diamond League

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Pakistan's leading javelin thrower, Arshad Nadeem, marked his return to competition after a year with a commendable performance at the Paris Diamond League, securing a fourth-place finish. While he did not clinch a medal, his participation served as a crucial step in reclaiming his form ahead of the upcoming Paris Olympics.

In his opening attempt, Nadeem launched the javelin to a distance of 74.11 meters, gradually finding his rhythm. He significantly improved with subsequent throws: his second attempt measured 80.28 meters, and his third soared to 82.71 meters, placing him among the top contenders.

He continued his impressive display in the fourth round with a throw of 82.17 meters, momen-

tarily securing a top-three spot until Jacob Vadlejch surpassed him with an 85-meter throw.

Despite a valiant effort in the fifth round, where Nadeem threw 84.21 meters, it was insufficient to reclaim a podium position, leaving him in fourth place.

This event marked his return to the international stage since August 2023, following a prolonged absence due to a knee injury that also sidelined him from the Hangzhou Asian Games. After undergoing surgery in England to aid his recovery, he has been diligently working towards regaining peak fitness.

Looking ahead, Nadeem will return to Lahore on July 8 for additional training before heading back to Paris on July 24 to prepare for the Olympics.



QUETTA: A view of the cover of the manhole is missing in front of the Civil Hospital which may cause any accident that need the attention of concerned authorities

## Malaysian heroic movie 'PASKAL' screens in ASEAN Movie Night in Embassy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of the Malaysia in Islamabad has screened the ASEAN Movie Night event featuring Malaysian film "PASKAL" made in the spirit of patriotism and tactical military operation.

The Malaysian Block Buster Movie "PASKAL" is a heart-wrenching story of a group of special commandos' unit of the Malaysian Navy who not only sacrifice their lives to protect their homeland Malaysia from the seas but also serve as a United Nation peacekeeping force in the African country of Angola. It is ready to be done.

This film is the story of the real military operations of the special forces of the Malaysian Navy, in which these soldiers of the country lay down their lives fighting for their country and humanity.

The High Commission of Malaysia in Islamabad held the grand finale of the ASEAN Movie Nights programme, which was initiated under the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI) aimed at promoting the rich film and cultural heritage of ASEAN member countries in Islamabad.

The final series showcased Malaysia's action-packed film "PASKAL." Based on the true story of the Malaysian Armed Forces' heroic efforts in rescuing the merchant ship MV Bunga Laurel from pirate attack in 2011, the film captivated the audience with its gripping narrative and action-packed performance.

The movie tells the

story of Malaysian Special Forces Commander Arman Rahmat and other commandos fighting against the enemies of their country and humanity, in which the emotions and feelings of their family are also shown on screen.

As the hero of the film, Commander Arman Rahmat, whose father also gave his life for the country while fighting against the enemy in the same special commando unit of the Malaysian Navy, Commander Arman's mother addresses him in a scene of the film and says with great emotion, "You are national heroes, you don't care about anyone's feelings and emotions, instead of your mission."

This Malaysian film is a true story of the special commandos' love for the country, the feelings of their families and the true resilience of the Malaysian nation, in which the love of the country and nationalism are heavy in every aspect of the story.

The Hero of movie Lieutenant Commander Arman Rahmat, a born leader, Arman has the qualities of a true soldier.

His late father once served under PASKAL with Commander Maznan and a subordinate of RMN commander.

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaulah Tarar graced the event as chief guest.

The Minister noted with great satisfaction over the excellent state of relations between Pakistan and Malaysia.

He shared the similar-



ties between Malaysia and Pakistan in nation building and patriotism and lauded the High Commissioner of Malaysia and ACI for the Movie Nights programme, adding that both Malaysia and Pakistan should collaborate in future programmes, especially in cultural exchange and film industry.

Officiating the event, the High Commissioner of Malaysia, Ambassador Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, underlined the key message of the film, stating, "PASKAL is not just an action movie; it is a testament to Malaysia's patriotism, sense of belonging, the exceptional capabilities and professionalism of our military, and the sophisticated qual-

ity of our film industry." In his concluding remarks, the High Commissioner of Malaysia suggested that this programme should be held annually for a much wider cultural engagement and understanding between ASEAN and Pakistan.

The event drew a huge audience of over 200 guests from a cross-section of the society ranging from the Dean and Ambassadors of the Diplomatic Corps, ASEAN Heads of Mission, senior government officials, university students and friends of the media, reflecting the strong interest and support for Malaysia's and ASEAN's cultural and cinematic exchange.

The ASEAN-Malay-

sia Movie Night programme was a resounding success, bringing together diverse communities and fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation to each of ASEAN countries' unique cultures and stories through the cinematic experience.

The Movie is a 2018 Malaysian Malay-language military action film directed by Adrian Teh and produced by Asia Tropical Films and it was inspired by the elite Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) force named PASKAL (Pasukan Khas Laut).

Filming began in Kuala Lumpur from March to May 2018; its official premiere was on 27 September 2018 and the film received positive critical re-

views and it netted an overall profit of more than RM30 million across Malaysia and Singapore, making it one of the highest-grossing local films in Malaysia top local films in Malaysian history.

PASKAL was directed by Adrian Teh and it is based on actual events of the Royal Malaysian Navy's Special Forces Team during the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Angola in 1998, and the successful rescue of the hijacked MV Bunga Laurel trade vessel in 2011.

The movie shooting was conducted at several locations within and outside of Malaysia, including Lumut, Semporna, and Istanbul, Turkey.

## Mortar shell hits house in DI Khan; two girls killed, three injured

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): A mortar shell struck a house from nowhere in the village of Zadkani in Dera Ismail Khan, resulting in the deaths of two young girls on the spot.

In the incident, two women and another girl of the same family were also hurt on Sunday morning. The grieving family members have placed the bodies on the road in protest and blocked the Daraban Domanda Highway.

The channel reported that, due to protest, traffic on the road was badly affected. Since filing this report, negotiations have yet to take place with the authorities to resolve the situation.

## HEC not to attest degrees obtained from unapproved university sub-campuses

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has warned the parents and students that degrees obtained from unapproved university sub-campuses will not be attested by the Commission.

"No university or degree awarding institution is currently permitted to operate through sub-campuses by the HEC under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode", an official source revealed. The HEC does not endorse any such proposals due to a range of issues, previously observed in permitted PPP Campuses established by certain public sector universities in Punjab, and subsequently closed, such as academic irregularities and concerns regarding educational quality.

Degree obtained from unapproved campuses will not be validated by HEC for verification/attestation.

## Indian forces martyr five Kashmiri youth in Kulgam

SRINAGAR (INP): Indian forces in their fresh acts of state terrorism martyred five Kashmiri youth in Kulgam district of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Kashmir Media Service (KMS), the youth were martyred by Indian troops during cordon and search operations in Mudergham and Frisal Chinnigan areas of the district.

Four youth were killed by Indian troops in Chingam Frisal while one body of youth was found on Sunday morning from

the debris of the house destroyed by Indian troops with chemical substances in Mudergham. Earlier, two Indian troops were killed in attacks in the Mudergham and Frisal Chinnigan areas of Kulgam.

Meanwhile, an Indian army man was injured in an attack on an Army camp in Galuthi Manjakote area of Rajouri district. The freedom fighters managed to flee into the nearby forest. The massive operations were continuing in different areas of Kulgam, Rajouri, Poonch and Samba.



LORALAI: A delegation of All Parties meeting with DIG Police Loralai Range Nazeer Ahmed Kurd

## Samit Patel makes the difference as Derbyshire hunt down the Foxes

LONDON (INP): Veteran allrounder Samit Patel tormented Leicestershire Foxes for the second time this Vitality Blast season as Derbyshire Falcons completed a double over their East Midlands neighbours in the North Group to lift their hopes of qualifying for the quarter-finals.

The 39-year-old Falcons skipper, whose 64 was the difference when the sides met at Edgbaston at the start of the campaign, hit nine fours and two sixes in an unbeaten 67 as Derbyshire chased down 185 to win by four wickets with four balls to spare.

Ben Cox hit four sixes in a 30-ball unbeaten 61 and Lewis Goldsworthy 48 from 41 as the Foxes finished strongly to post 184 for six. Former Leicestershire seamer Zak Chappell took three for 42 and Patel two for 27, with Pakistan left-arm quick Mohammad Amir wicketless on his Derbyshire debut.

Derbyshire had been well ahead of the required rate by posting 64 in their batting powerplay but had lost three of their key batters. Luis Reece edged behind off Mike, who then held a good low catch in the deep to remove the

## England Women crush New Zealand in T20I series opener

SOUTHAMPTON (INP): Danni Wyatt's quickfire half-century, followed by Sarah Glenn's brilliant bowling figures of 3/16 led England Women to a thumping 59-run victory over New Zealand in the first T20I here at The Utilita Bowl.

Put into bat first, England Women notched up a massive total of 197/3 on the board, courtesy of a marathon second-wicket partnership between Wyatt and Nat Sciver-Brunt. Earlier, openers Maia Bouchier and Wyatt gave England women a solid start with a 61-run stand. The opening partnership ended when Lea Tahuhu dismissed Bouchier on the fourth delivery of the eighth over. Bouchier made 32 off 26 balls with the help of five fours.

In response, New Zealand only managed 138/9 in the allotted overs despite Suzie Bates' gutsy innings up the order. Bates remained the top-scorer for the White Ferns with a 33-ball 43, laced up with five boundaries and a six.

Besides her, Emilia Kerr was the other notable run-getter for New Zealand with a 26-ball 38 while the rest made modest contributions in the run chase. Notably, the second Women's T20I of the five-match series between England and New Zealand will take place on June 9 in Hove.

## President Zardari to pay three-day visit to Lahore from today

LAHORE (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari will pay three-day visit to Lahore from Monday (July 08).

During the Lahore visit, the president was likely to attend a seminar besides holding meeting with PPP's parliamentary party in Punjab Assembly.

President Zardari will also chair a meeting regarding the reorganizational structure of PPP.

He will also hold meeting with Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider on the occasion.

## Pakistan Railways set to outsource 22 passenger trains

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Railways has decided to privatize more than 20 trains including some of its most profitable services such as the Green Line, Karakoram Express, and Pakistan Business Express.

The Pakistan Railways announced that Rs 25 billion will be generated after running these trains under the public-private partnership.

The channel said the decision to privatize these trains is aimed at alleviating administrative burdens and improving operational efficiency.

## Country's ports being developed....

Continued from page 1

The prime minister appreciated the latest operations of the port.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday directed the relevant authorities to take special initiatives to tap full potential of maritime trade and to spur the economic growth.

The prime minister chaired a meeting here regarding Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim Authority and Pakistan National Shipping Corporation.

The prime minister directed to take steps to minimize the custom clearance time by installing the modern equipment and machinery at Port Qasim and Karachi Port Trust.

He also instructed to ensure the installation of state of the art scanning machinery at the ports besides taking steps on priority to fully benefit from the ports' potential.

To ensure uninterrupted delivery of goods to and from Karachi Port Trust, the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to keep open the Lyari Expressway for cargo traffic for 24 hours a day.

The Malir Expressway should be connected to the port to further improve the delivery of goods, he added.

He further directed to increase the capacity of supply of goods to and from Karachi Port through railway.

"Fees for LNG ships at Port Qasim should be reduced and fixed according to prevailing rates at the international level," the prime minister said adding that a comprehensive action plan for the regulation of shipping lines should be prepared and presented on priority.

He directed the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation to formulate and present a comprehen-

sive plan to reduce its cost and make its operations effective.

The prime minister said that he held meetings with the Russian President Vladimir Putin and the leaders of the Central Asian countries during his recent visit to Kazakhstan.

Pakistan, he said offered the most suitable sea trade route for the Central Asian states.

Central Asian states have expressed deep interest in using Pakistan's ports for trade, the prime minister said adding that Pakistan could earn foreign exchange reserves worth billions of dollars by introducing modern systems in the ports.

He stressed that the development of the existing ports in Karachi will increase exports from value addition industries.

He highlighted that development of private sector in the country, ease of doing business and facilitation of investors were the top priorities of the government.

By the grace of Allah, he said the economy of Pakistan was stable and moving towards growth and development.

He said the government was providing all possible facilities to the exporters to ensure the development of Pakistan's export industry.

The prime minister also directed the Karachi Port Trust to submit a report comparing the performance of the port with other ports in the region.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Attaulah Tarar, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Chairman PNSC and the relevant high officials.

## Romina for launching TV channel to promote climate-resilient agriculture

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam has unveiled plans to launch a dedicated TV channel tailored to support farmers in combating the impacts of climate change.

PM's aide in a statement on Sunday said the idea of this innovative channel aims to educate farmers on climate adaptation strategies, disaster management techniques, and sustainable practices to mitigate environmental degradation.

The Coordinator said the channel will leverage the services of Pakistan

Television (PTV) to broadcast programs in six regional languages, ensuring that vulnerable communities receive timely information.

The programs will be telecast through local PTV stations at the provincial level, maximizing and localizing the coverage and reach, she added.

Romina Khurshid Alam also engaged with a private channel to amplify the voice of the Climate Ministry, promoting clean and green initiatives.

She emphasized the importance of media support in enhancing climate change coverage and rear-

ranging journalism prioritise. She noted the TV channel will provide farmers with timely information and guidance on adapting to climate-related challenges, including weather alerts to enable preemptive measures.

She said adding, the channel will also feature initiatives promoting women's income generation, gender empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

She said the government seeks to empower farmers with knowledge and tools to build resilience against climate change, le-

veraging the power of media.

She stated media teams from relevant climate change departments and TV initiatives will collaborate to strengthen our efforts protecting the socio-economic impacts of climate change on the farming community.

During different meetings convened in June over global heat waves and floods, the PM's aide directed relevant institutions to strengthen official media teams to keep vulnerable communities informed about climate change timely.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters jumping and bathing in nullah korang to get relief from hot weather.



ISLAMABAD: A family selecting and purchasing decoration items and other stuff from vendor at Bari Imam shrine in the Federal Capital.

## Flood risk imminent as heavy rain predicted in next 24 hours

ISLAMABAD (APP): Heavy rainfall has predicted in various parts of the country over the next 24 hours, raising concerns about potential River flooding and urban inundation.

According to a private news channel, the anticipated heavy rain tonight and tomorrow poses a significant flood risk, particularly in the hill streams of Kashmir, Northeast Balochistan, and Dera Ghazi Khan.

According to a statement issued by the Meteorological Department highlighted the risk of urban flooding in the Potohar region, Lahore, Sialkot,

Gujranwala, Narowal, and Faisalabad. Due to the heavy rains, landslides were likely to disrupt traffic movement in the hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Guliyat, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. The affected regions include Murree, Guliyat, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Chakwal, Attock, Gujarat, Gujranwala, Narowal, Sialkot, Lahore, Leh, Bhakkar, Taunsa, Rajanpur, DG Khan, Multan, Sahiwal, Okara, Khanewal, Bahawalnagar, and Bahawalpur, where rain accompanied by wind and thunderstorms was expected.

## AIOU admissions to commence from July 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is commencing the admissions for the Autumn 2024 semester (first phase) across the country from July 15.

Admissions in first phase include Matric, FA, BS (face to face), MS, MPhil, and PhD programs, said a press release here on Sunday.

Prospectuses and admission application forms for all the programs will be available online on the university website ([www.aiou.edu.pk](http://www.aiou.edu.pk)) on July 15, 2024.

Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has instructed the regional heads of university to enable facilitation centers to support students. SWIFT Centers have also been established across the country to provide information and support to students. Details of all swift centers are available on website.

## HEC invites application under Pak-France PERIDOT Research Programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invited applications from Pakistan's faculty members of public and private universities, for funding under the Pak-France PERIDOT Research Programme (Phase XI). According to the HEC, PERIDOT is the Franco-Pakistani Hubert Curien Partnership (PHC) Programme aimed at providing opportunities for Pakistani and French researchers to interact for executing joint research activities. The programme is being implemented in Pakistan by HEC and in France,

jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR).

The objective of this programme is to develop new scientific and technological cooperation between French and Pakistan's higher education institutions (HEIs) research laboratories by supporting the mobility of researchers from both sides. The joint research proposals have been invited from Pakistan's faculty members of public and private universities for mobility grants in three areas.

## Punjab govt. to boost polio eradication efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Punjab government has decided to establish specialized polio vaccination counters at the entry and exit points of the province to reinforce polio eradication efforts. According to a private news channel, the directives issued by the Minister and Chief Secretary of Punjab aimed to ensure inclusive vaccination coverage across the province. Dedicated polio vaccination counters would be strategically positioned at all entry and exit points throughout Punjab, facilitating streamlined vaccination processes. Chief Secretary instructed health authorities and local administrators to identify and resolve any obstacles hindering vaccination goals promptly. Officials pledged to utilize all available resources to eradicate polio and combat other diseases.

## Sri Lankan envoy advocates collaborative efforts for regional challenges, economic integration

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the evolving landscape of South Asian diplomacy, Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Admiral Ravindra C Wijegunaratne has stressed for collaborative efforts to address regional challenges and foster economic integration.

The envoy, in an exclusive interview with APP, offering a compelling vision for the future of Sri Lanka-Pakistan relations, underscored a partnership poised to shape the strategic dynamics of the region. As both nations navigate shared interests in trade, defense, and cultural exchange, their mutual commitment to sustainable development and mutual prosperity stands as a testament to enduring diplomatic camaraderie.

Highlighting Pakistan's pivotal economic developments linked to CPEC and the operationalization of Gwadar Port, he expressed his country's commitment to furthering diplomatic, economic and cultural ties with Pakistan.

He also stressed the importance of long-term policies focusing on youth development, agriculture,

and water security for sustained growth. He emphasized the necessity for Pakistan to formulate long-term policies that prioritize youth development, agricultural sustainability, and enhanced water security to sustain economic growth effectively.

Regarding bilateral ties, the envoy reiterated Sri Lanka's commitment to strengthening relations with Pakistan across multiple fronts, including trade, tourism, and defense. He pointed out Sri Lanka's pivotal role as an international navigation hub, particularly for mega-container ships like the Triple E-Class, which cannot dock at all ports due to their size. He anticipated that the full operationalization of Gwadar Port would provide Pakistan with significant revenue opportunities, particularly for transit trade to Central Asian Republics (CARs).

Reflecting on the historical camaraderie between the two nations, Admiral Wijegunaratne recalled Sri Lanka's steadfast support for Pakistan during critical junctures, including providing crucial logistical support during the 1971 war.

He praised Pakistan's assistance in combating insurgency in Sri Lanka, highlighting the provision of military hardware that helped in defeating the Tamil Tigers.

Economically, he noted the bilateral trade volume of approximately one billion dollars annually, with prospects to exceed this mark, emphasizing Pakistan's exports to Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka's potential to expand its exports to Pakistan. He also discussed Sri Lanka's interest in boosting tourism between the two countries, noting challenges in air connectivity that hinder potential growth in this sector.

On educational and cultural exchanges, Admiral Wijegunaratne highlighted initiatives such as the Allama Iqbal Scholarship, which supports Sri Lankan students studying in Pakistan.

He mentioned Sri Lanka's eagerness to collaborate with Pakistan in religious education and praised Pakistan's hosting of the Gandhara Culture Symposium, emphasizing the cultural ties that could enhance tourism and mutual understanding.

## SP High Security Zone pays a surprise visit to Secretariat Police Lines

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the SP High Security Zone Asad Ullah Khan paid a surprise visit to the Secretariat police lines, a public relations officer said.

He said that, during the visit the SP High Security Zone checked the residential barracks, mess hall

sued to the Line Officer and Mess in-charge to improve the quality of the mess, canteen and residential barracks, by ensuring the supply of good and quality food to the police officer and to take special care of cleanliness.

He said that, if the officers were healthy their morale would be high and they would perform their duties in a better way. He also issued directions to armory in-charge to maintain



and armory at the Secretariat police line. Strict orders were issued.

the weapons in a good condition and keep the record of everything.

## PMDC offers medical education to Gaza's students in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has offered completion of medical and dental education to Gaza's students in Pakistan.

The PMDC Council made this decision on the request of Pakistani High Commissioner in London to adjust the students of Gaza in Pakistan keeping in view the current situation in Gaza, President PMDC Prof Dr Rizwan Taj said in a statement.

ment in Pakistan, these students will graduate from universities of Gaza for clinical rotations in Pakistani medical colleges and attached teaching hospitals in the public sector, as a special case.

He said that a committee will be constituted headed by President PMDC to smoothly execute induction of these students into Pakistani medical education system in the corresponding years.

He said that Gaza students will have the opportunity to learn in a well-equipped environment, which might be lacking in Gaza due to ongoing conflicts and resource constraints.

He said that exposure to various medical specialties during their education in Pakistan will allow students to pursue specific areas of interest.

He said that due to the ongoing conflict many students are facing disruptions in their education.

He added that this decision enables Gaza students to continue their medical education in Pakistan on humanitarian grounds, ensuring that their studies are not interrupted due to the challenging circumstances in their home country.

The High Commission proposed that the students will be coming in batches of 20-30, with an expected number of 100 students and upon completion of their clinical placement.

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## I'abad police arrange workshop on road safety for students

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police arranged a workshop for students of Islamabad Model College for girls F-7/4, to acquaint them with road safety tips and better awareness about traffic rules.

More than 250 students attended the workshop and efforts of the force in ensuring a safe road environment in the city were highlighted.

The Education Wing of Islamabad Police informed the students as to how special measures are being taken to curb various traffic violations in the city and also informed about traffic rules and regulations.

It was informed that educational teams of police visit various organizations as this exercise is helpful in providing a disciplined traf-

fic system to the masses. It was told that personnel of the force have not only helped to establish a disciplined traffic system in the Capital but also reduced the ratio of accidents.

They were briefed about the history of the traffic police force, its targets and achievements. Students were told about safety measures while walking along the road, road crossing code, causes of accidents and how to protect oneself, defensive driving and its requirements, practice to prevent risky situations on road, planning for a long journey, positioning car or lane discipline, right of way on junctions and road markings, safe overtaking, traffic sign boards and traffic light signals and perils of using mobile phone and not fastening seat belts while driving.

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ISLAMABAD: A young boy riding motorcycle on a broken foot pedestrian bridge alongside 7th Avenue, in the Federal Capital, which may cause any incident any times as needs to attention for concern authority.

## Pakistan: Bearing fury of Climate Change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Continuously rising temperature, floods and droughts have pushed Pakistan among the top vulnerable countries hit by climate change with the phenomenon having serious impacts on its economy, habitat and agriculture sector. Smothering summers with extreme humidity and unbearable temperature result in heat strokes and other diseases and thereon causing unprecedented precipitation most often resulting in severe flooding inflicting loss of billions of dollars to our economy.

The 2022 floods are a stark reminder of the vulnerability of this South Asian nation to climatic disruptions, being among the worst in country's history with unprecedented monsoon rains causing colossal loss to millions of people across Sindh, Balochistan

and Punjab provinces.

The country found itself on mercy of extreme weather as these floods affected over 33 million people with approximately 1,739 fatalities, over 12,000 injuries, 1.1 million destroyed houses, submerged vast tracts of agricultural land and significant losses to livestock.

As these catastrophic floods underscored an urgent need for climate action highlighting broader implications for a country already grappling with economic and social challenges, the experts have warned of further aggravation in this situation.

"Pakistan is the least contributor of emissions (less than one percent) but facing the worst consequences of climate change," remarked CEO, Resilient Future International (RFI), Aftab Alam Khan. "It is a

blatant injustice that the world community must realize. We are not alone saying this. The world is also echoing this fact as the Vulnerability Index indicates Pakistan among the leading climate vulnerable nations."

Aftab Alam also mentioned to 2022 floods that inflicted massive losses and said, "we are also victim of inaction of the global community who must take adequate and urgent measures to curb their GHG emissions to control climate change."

He said Pakistan is also victim of delay in operationalization loss and damage fund to rehabilitate affected communities. "Pakistan must be provided adaptation funds to help strengthen its capacity at all levels for climate adaptation and avoid future impacts of climate change."

Pakistan, a country

known for its diverse topography and climatic regions and sandwiched between two emerging economies India and China, has increasingly found itself at the mercy of extreme weather events attributed to climate change.

It has experienced exceptional heavy monsoon, with some regions recording 600% more rains than the average downpour, overwhelming river systems and drainage infrastructures. Rising temperature also accelerates glacial melting in northern regions with increased flow of water contributing to river swelling and compounding flooding caused by heavy rains.

"Heat waves and Floods are indicative of the broader impacts of climate change that Pakistan will continue to face in future as well," said Dr. Asif

Khan, a climate scientist at Pakistan Meteorological Department. "The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in Pakistan had increased significantly over the past decade and is expected to continue if an urgent global climate action is not taken."

Widespread deforestation and inadequate land management practices have reduced the land's ability to absorb rainwater, increasing surface runoff, leading to more severe flooding. Rapid urbanization without proper planning and infrastructure has resulted in clogged drainage systems and increased vulnerability of urban areas to flooding.

Economically, the floods caused losses estimated at around \$30 billion. Agricultural damage, in particular, was severe, with key crops like cotton, rice, and wheat being destroyed.

## IFA actions against expired food seals 1600 kg

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has continuously launched crackdown against substandard, unhygienic, and expired food item and sealed 1600 kg sauces, jams and drum damage units at Tarlai aimed to provide healthy food to the residents of the federal capital. Talking to APP, Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of IFA, Dr Tahira Sadiq said that the food safety team under her leadership raided at various shops of sauces and jam production units.

She said that expired sauce stock was supplied in various small fast food points in Islamabad which causes stomach, vomiting and food poison diseases. Action had already been taken for recovery of expired sauces from the units, said added. Dr Tahira categorically stated that no relaxation would be given to such mafia aims to restrict them from selling unhygienic food items, adding the authority has imposed complete ban on selling expired items.

## Outlaws involved in looting citizens in public service vehicles held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Anti-Robbery and Dacoity Unit (ARDU) of Islamabad Police team arrested five wanted members of two criminal gangs involved in looting citizens by using public service vehicle and recovered cash, mobile phones from their possession. A police spokesman said on Sunday that following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police have intensified the crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city. Following these direc-

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ISLAMABAD: Citizens enjoy holiday at Rawal Dam in the Federal Capital.

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**Political prerogative**

On the question of national security at least, the PTI is willing to lend an ear to the government. The party's decision to participate in a political stakeholders' conference on Operation Azm-i-Istehkam, confirmed to the media by the PTI's incarcerated chief Imran Khan on Friday, has been welcomed by the PML-N-led government and is being seen as a significant development with respect to the prospects of the proposed military action.

The PTI has been one of the strongest critics of the operation and has resisted it strongly, along with other opposition parties. The party and those aligned with it on the matter believe that another military operation may destabilise the country further by disrupting the economies of the affected areas and precipitating the kind of social uprooting and upheaval that became part and parcel of earlier military operations against militants and terrorist forces.

Despite those reservations, Mr Khan has instructed party leaders to hear the government out and present the PTI's concerns through the forum of the proposed multiparty conference. "It is good to hear the PTI founder's statement [...] this is a matter of national importance, and all political parties should be taken on board," the information minister said. However, the government should announce a date for the conference as soon as possible in order to capitalise on the opportunity. Since the PTI rules KP and represents a large section of the national electorate, its buy-in is critical for the operation's success. Encouragingly, some in the ruling party seem to be taking the PTI's willingness to participate as an opportunity for engagement on broader issues as well. The defence minister, while commenting on the matter, has said the government remains open to engaging with the PTI and that the PML-N president, too, has kept the doors for negotiations open.

However, the government and opposition's tentative steps towards political engagement on Operation Azm-i-Istehkam may face difficulties. The Corps Commanders' Conference, held on the same day the multiparty conference was being considered, was followed by a terse public rebuke to those criticising the operation. The military command reportedly considers the critics to be engaging in "deliberate misrepresentation of the [military's] vision, only for furthering their vested interests", according to a statement issued by ISPR.

This perspective seems to completely overlook the concerns held by the residents and representatives of the areas that are most likely to be affected by the proposed operation.

To avoid the social instability that the politicians have voiced their concerns about, it would be better if the proposed counterterrorism operation starts only after a political consensus has been reached. It should be left to parliament to decide how the country must proceed on the matter.



By Hamza Shahzad

In governance, the first 100 days of any administration serve as a critical benchmark—a period during which promises are tested against action, aspirations encounter challenges, and the vision begins to crystallize in governance. The Government of Balochistan (GOB), led by Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, assumed office amidst high expectations and daunting challenges. With a mandate focused on development, welfare, and transparency, the government embarked on its mission to catalyze Balochistan's transformation into a beacon of progress and prosperity.

Central to the agenda of the Government has been economic revitalization and infrastructural development. In its initial 100 days, the government has taken significant strides to enhance the economic landscape. Key initiatives have been introduced, particularly in the agricultural sector, to capitalize on the province's abundant potential. One notable initiative includes the Government of Balochistan's decision to convert all agricultural tube wells to solar energy, effectively reducing electricity costs for farmers. Additionally, a groundbreaking change in the procurement process for grain seeds has been announced, where farmers will now receive payments instead of grain seed supplies—a move aimed at empowering farmers and ensuring more efficient agricultural practices. These measures signify the government's proactive approach to fostering sustainable agricultural growth and improving livelihoods across Balochistan.

According to the vision of Mir Sarfraz Bugti, significant reforms have been introduced in the education and healthcare sec-

tors to ensure high-quality services and equitable access for all citizens. In the healthcare sector, the GOB has launched several pioneering initiatives aimed at improving healthcare delivery across the province. One of the notable initiatives is the introduction of an Air Ambulance service, facilitating the swift transportation of critically ill patients from remote areas to advanced medical facilities. Additionally, GOB has embarked on a Public-Private Partnership model for three major hospitals in the capital city, granting them semi-autonomous status to enhance efficiency and service delivery. Under the direction of the Chief Minister, feasibility studies have commenced for the construction of two state-of-the-art hospitals in South and North Quetta, aimed at significantly upgrading the healthcare infrastructure in the city.

Furthermore, to support patients battling cancer and rare diseases, the government has committed to providing free medicines, and ensuring access to essential treatments. The Health on Wheels Program stands out as another flagship initiative, bringing essential healthcare services to underserved rural areas



of the province. Moreover, the establishment of Balochistan's first forensic science agency marks a milestone in the province's healthcare capabilities, enhancing forensic investigations and justice delivery. These initiatives underscore the Government of Balochistan's commitment to improving healthcare accessibility, quality, and infrastructure across the province, aligning with the vision to ensure comprehensive healthcare services for all residents.

Chief Minister

Balochistan envisions removing barriers to access and promoting excellence in higher education to nurture a generation of leaders poised to drive Balochistan's future prosperity. His strategic initiatives aim to empower the youth of Balochistan with comprehensive facilities and support. One of the pivotal accomplishments under his leadership is the formulation of Balochistan's first-ever Youth Policy, tailored to meet the contemporary needs of the province's youth and emphasizing gender equality. Additionally, the Chief Minister has approved initial funding for Youth Facilitation Centers across Balochistan, enhancing accessibility to resources and opportunities for young people. The development of the Youth Policy reflects the collaborative efforts and insights of stakeholders, including Member of the National Assembly and former caretaker Provincial Minister of Youth Affairs, Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani. In a landmark initiative to elevate global academic standards, the Chief Minister announced full scholarships for aspiring Balochistan students to pursue doctoral studies in

cutting-edge scientific disciplines at 200 renowned universities worldwide, including Oxford University, UK. Furthermore, he has introduced an inclusive approach by allocating 100 scholarships annually for minorities and transgender individuals across all educational levels, from preschool to master's degree programs. Recognizing the sacrifices of heroes, Chief Minister Bugti introduced the Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Program, which supports the educational expenses of martyrs' children from pre-

school through higher education. Additional programs include the CM Skills Development Program, schemes providing laptops and ICT equipment, allowances for the top 10 Matric students (Both Boys and Girls) in each division, and small loans for graduates to foster entrepreneurship. These initiatives underscore the Chief Minister's commitment to enhancing educational opportunities, fostering talent, and empowering the youth of Balochistan to realize their full potential in driving the province towards sustainable development and prosperity.

In a significant enhancement to Quetta's public transportation system, the Government of Balochistan (GOB) has announced the addition of 100 green buses to the city's Green Bus Service. This expansion marks a substantial improvement in Quetta's public transport infrastructure, aiming to provide more efficient and sustainable commuting options for residents and visitors alike. Furthermore, the GOB plans to extend the People's Bus service to Turbat, further enhancing accessibility and connectivity in that region as well.

Empowering women is a top priority for the Balochistan government, recognizing that their inclusion is vital for national development and prosperity. Significant steps are being taken to ensure the empowerment, welfare, and security of women across the province. Key initiatives include the historic appointment of five female deputy commissioners in Balochistan, a move aimed at inspiring young girls to pursue their aspirations with confidence. Additionally, the establishment of women's police stations and legislative measures in the assembly are pivotal in safeguarding women against child marriages, domestic violence, and harassment. These initiatives underscore the government's commitment to promoting gender equality, protecting women's rights, and creating an environment where



women can actively contribute to and benefit from the province's progress and development efforts.

However, the journey has not been without its challenges. The Government of Balochistan faces several significant hurdles that impact its governance, development, and socio-economic progress. One of the most pressing challenges is the law and order situation. Balochistan has been grappling with security issues for years, including insurgency, attacks on infrastructure, and civilians. The year 2024 has witnessed an increase in violence, with over a dozen attacks resulting in approximately 50 fatalities and scores more injuries. This security situation not only poses a regional challenge but also has broader implications for Pakistan's stability, relations with neighboring countries, and economic aspirations, particularly concerning projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Despite increased budget allocations for security forces in the PSDP 2024-25, addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both the economic and political dimensions of the problem. Economically, Balochistan faces significant challenges such as high unemployment rates, limited industrialization, and underdeveloped infrastructure. Efforts are needed to attract investments, promote economic diversification, and generate job opportunities to foster sustainable development. Climate change presents another formidable challenge for Balochistan. While Pakistan's overall contribution to global emissions is minimal, Balochistan faces disproportionate impacts due to its vulnerable geographical and environmental

conditions. Recent floods, exacerbated by continuous rains in April 2024, resulted in the loss of seventeen lives and injuries to twenty-four individuals, as reported by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). These incidents underscore the urgent need for proactive measures, including awareness campaigns and best practices to mitigate the effects of climate-related disasters. Additionally, political instability and governance issues such as corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies pose significant obstacles to effective governance and public service delivery in Balochistan. Addressing these challenges requires systemic reforms, transparency measures, and improved governance practices to enhance accountability and responsiveness to citizen needs.

Balochistan faces a myriad of challenges across governance, security, economic, environmental, and social dimensions. Overcoming these hurdles and unlocking the province's full potential for development and prosperity demands proactive and coordinated efforts. Addressing these challenges necessitates sustained political determination, institutional reforms, and comprehensive strategies that emphasize transparency, accountability, and efficient resource management. Collaboration among the provincial government, federal authorities, civil society, and international partners is crucial for navigating these obstacles and promoting sustainable development in Balochistan. By working together, stakeholders can harness collective expertise and resources to implement effective solutions that benefit the province and its people.

**Chinese investment**

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Since 2015, China has invested billions of dollars in Pakistan. Has that bolstered our economic development? Opinions vary. Most people feel that Chinese investments, led by CPEC, have contributed to improving the country's road, electricity and port infrastructure. A smaller segment is sceptical, arguing that these investments have contributed to Pakistan's debt trap. A dispassionate analysis is needed.

When President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan in April 2015 to launch CPEC, Pakistan was in the throes of transnational terrorism. Operation Zarb-i-Azb was underway in North Waziristan. In 2016, the US, India and Afghanistan commenced efforts to isolate Pakistan diplomatically. Naturally, no country was ready to invest here at that time. Under these circumstances, the \$46 billion worth of promised investments from China were a breath of fresh air.

An early CPEC harvest was the reduction in electricity shortage and load-shedding, which had made everyday life difficult and had choked industrial production. The other benefit was an improved road infrastructure. Work was also initiated on Gwadar port and allied projects, many of which have since been completed.

Under the grand design, once energy shortages had been met and infrastructure developed, Pakistan was supposed to move to the industrialisation phase, for which work had to start on establishing special economic zones. However, we failed to seamlessly transit to the second CPEC phase for two reasons. One, the development of SEZs was inordinately delayed.

Consequently, Chinese industry shifted to other countries in the region. Two, from 2017 onwards, Pakistan entered into another round of political instability. Chinese confidence for investing in Pakistan was shaken gravely. The investments that were once expected to rise to \$92bn tapered at around \$26bn.

The present government has decided to upgrade CPEC. During Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China last month, the Chinese side agreed to help boost industrialisation in Pakistan, digitise the economy, and open new corridors for growth, livelihood, innovation, and the green economy. Decisions were taken to rehabilitate the Karakoram Highway, optimise the port at Gwadar, and train Pakistani experts in tech and agriculture.

This is a welcome agenda. However, there are big challenges to its implementation. First, evolving geopolitics, particularly the US-China competition, is making it difficult for Pakistan's policymakers to strike a delicate balance in its ties with the US, which is a destination for large Pakistani exports, and China, whose investments and financial help are important. The US is doing all it can to check China's economic rise through trade tariffs, investment curbs, and export controls, and is advising allies and friends to avoid Chinese investments.

The second challenge is the security of Chinese personnel working on China-assisted projects in Pakistan. Several attacks have been carried out against them, mostly by TTP and BLA. While China and Pakistan have decided to "enhance counterterrorism cooperation", Pakistani authorities would be well advised

to mobilise the support of local people by addressing their grievances and making them a partner in countering this menace.

In order to sustain China's economic engagement with Pakistan, a number of steps would need to be taken. First, Pakistan must find a way to stabilise its politics. A politically unstable country, with weak institutions, is unlikely to attract foreign, or even local, investment.

Second, there should be a long-term development plan with all major political groups on board so that continuity of the plan can be ensured across governments.

Third, given that CPEC is now open to third countries, we may explore the possibility of multinational joint ventures that include Chinese businesses. As is often said, no candle loses its light while lighting other candles. In a recent roundtable at a Lahore university, one Chinese expert mentioned that Chinese companies would be ready to work with transnational investors for projects in Pakistan.

Fourth, Pakistan would need to expedite the SEZs, without which major investment is unlikely to trickle in. Fifth, Pakistan needs an early solution to the IPP conundrum. Our treasury is bleeding while heavy taxes are imposed on the people to make 'capacity payments' to IPP owners. Chinese investors, who had set up IPPs in Pakistan, are also complaining that their repatriation of \$1.8bn is being held up.

Finally, all good ideas will remain on paper unless implemented in earnest. In this regard, government functionaries and regulators must recognise that facilitating foreign and local firms to do flourishing business in Pakistan is critical for our economic future. -- Courtesy Dawn

**So lonely together**

Muna Khan

I cannot count the number of times I was made to give up my bedroom for a relative visiting wherever we were living as expats in the '70s to '90s. It was not a choice. In fact, I didn't even know I had a choice until I turned 21. It was pretty common for people to turn up unannounced — aunts and uncles who helped raise us — and we were expected to be there, irrespective of homework, exams etc. We were scolded if we complained about unexpected guests.

Now, I can't remember the last time we had an unexpected visitor drop by. I myself have not dropped in on anyone without calling to check if they are available. I guess we're all just that busy now.

Technology has undoubtedly changed our lives and made the world smaller; we can talk to friends and family anywhere, anytime. You can attend birthdays, weddings, even funerals online. You can find everything you need online; you may even be safer online. But you are also cocooned in your own world online and the internet has made us more self-absorbed.

Yet paradoxically there's a loneliness epidemic all over the world. The UK was the first to announce a minister for loneliness in 2018, with the aim of reducing feelings of isolation, anxiety, and suicide ideation. Japan followed in 2021 as it sought to address the social isolation caused by Covid-19 which also saw the first uptick in suicide in 11 years.

Maybe we're ashamed to say 'I'm lonely' because loneliness is seen as taboo, something to feel embarrassed about. Perhaps because we are seen as a family-

oriented society, with a strong sense of community, it's hard to say you're lonely when you're surrounded by people, even when you don't want to be.

As sad as that is, I'm more worried about younger folks who may not even know they are lonely because they believe their community is online. But as their elders, we know better: it is not the same as showing up for someone in their time of grief and happiness or just to shoot the breeze.

"The liminal spaces of our new world are massive — easy for us to be swallowed into — and disorienting," writes Athena Dixon in *The Loneliness Files*, part memoir, part critique on technology's impact on our lives.

Loneliness is personal but it's also the result of technological advancement in communication. By now, most of us have experienced some form of isolation courtesy the pandemic. In fact, isolation was mandated; quarantine was essential for one's survival. Some isolated with families while others were on their own — both faced issues: either wanting space or craving company.

Back in the day, artists and writers sought solitude and produced great works of art. Today, if you have a minute to yourself, you reach for your phone, as if being left alone with your thoughts is too awful a task to bear. Solitude is necessary for creation but look around you and everyone is scrolling on their phones, bookmarking places we'll never travel to or books we'll never read. We are simply 'liking' posts, not living lives. We're moving away from what made us human in the first place.

Given the current

economic crisis, which makes it harder to meet up with friends because we simply cannot afford to, could we begin to see a loneliness epidemic among youngsters, the largest demographic in the country and one that is always online?

We won't even get a minister to care about this. They would probably tax loneliness if they could. Or happiness. Or breathing, bad air at that too.

Simone Heng, who wrote a book on loneliness, told Al Jazeera English: "Online connection is the junk food of connection." How can we find our way back to that time when we showed up for each other and didn't have so many boundaries that are isolating us?

Dixon writes about her overwhelming loneliness. "I know there are those who feel the world is always just a little too far away or a little too close — never comfortable in either situation," she writes.

Loneliness is more than a mental health issue; it has serious health consequences. Loneliness can increase our chances of dementia, heart disease, depression, early death.

The internet is filled with tips on how to manage it — finding hobbies, volunteering, exercise. But my non-expert, tried and tested tip is to embrace it. To resist Netflix, true crime podcasts, the news — all these 24/7 connections are geared to keep you distracted from facing up to something you're avoiding. I believe a period of solitude helps you reflect on things that matter, which in my case, was relationships with friends. We meet to talk about how we're doomed, but at least we are doomed together. -- Courtesy Dawn

Meeting held for reforms in education, health sectors

# CM KP underscores need of digitizing the health, education depts for better utilization of resources

PESHAWAR (APP): An important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur regarding reforms in health and education sectors in which important policy

decisions were taken. Directives were issued by the CM to improve and streamline the existing system of education and health aimed at ensuring efficient management and improving service delivery to the desired level. The chief minister stressed the

need of devolution of management in these sectors to lower level and further directed to post additional director general at the regional level for better and efficient management. He remarked that such large departments

with huge human resources could not efficiently managed from provincial level, adding that service delivery can be improved only when managed and looked after at local level; and therefore, it is necessary to shift the workload to regional level

. He further directed that teachers and paramedical staff recruited on domicile basis should be posted in the areas of their respective domicile where they are supposed to serve and necessary amendments be proposed in the relevant laws for this purpose.



PESHAWAR: Former MNA Usman Khan Tarkai meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.



KARACHI: Activists of Pashtun Tahafuz Movement Sindh are holding protest demonstration against Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, at Karachi press club.

## Federal Minister receives UNHCR's high level delegation

PESHAWAR (Online): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions & Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam warmly received UNHCR's high level delegation led by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on arrival at his residence. The Federal Minister welcomed the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Pakistan. Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam also

presented a flower bouquet to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on this occasion. During the meeting, they discussed various issues pertaining to refugees. Later, the Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions & Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam also hosted a luncheon reception in honour of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi in Peshawar at his residence.

## Work on Daska sewerage going on rapidly: Minister

SIALKOT (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government Mian Zeeshan Rafique has said that work on the mega project of Daska city sewerage under the Punjab Cities Program is going on rapidly. The construction project of 26,000 feet long RCC drains will be completed by the end of this year within the stipulated timeline, delay will not be tolerated and the quality of the projects would not be compromised. He stated this while reviewing the progress of work on the Punjab Cities Program in Municipal Committee Daska today.

He said that in addition to the new RCC drains in the project, the restoration of the old drain would also be completed. He directed local authorities of Municipal Committee Daska to make arrangements for the protection of the city from urban flooding. "The disposal station should be kept functional apart from ensuring the cleanliness of the drains and according to instructions of the Punjab Chief Minister, emergency rain camps should be established in low-lying areas, where sanitation staff along with machinery would be present as soon as the rain starts," he added.

## GOC 9 Div Kohat stresses for peaceful Muharram Ul Haram

KOHAT (APP): All the sects should show patience, solidarity and brotherhood during the upcoming Muharram ul Haram and jointly work to thwart the nefarious intentions of the evil elements. These views were expressed by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 9 Div Kohat Major General Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti while addressing the separate settings of the local elders and youth at Governor's Cottage Parachinar here Sunday. Deputy Commissioner Kurram Javedullah Mehsud explained in detail about the arrangements so far made for peaceful holding of Muharram ul Haram. On this occasion Commander 73 Brigade

Brigadier Shahzad Azim, District Police Officer Kurram Nisar Ahmed Khan, Commanding Officer 55 Baloch Colonel Yousaf, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Yousaf Karim, Assistant Commissioner Upper Kurram Hafeezullah and elders of the area were also present. The GOC said that the sacrifices made by the martyrs of Karbala for the sake of religion was living example for all of us. Therefore, we not only have to show brotherhood, peace and tolerance among ourselves during Muharram ul Haram only but show the same for the whole year, he added. "We have to thwart all the negative plans of anti-state elements with full force."

## Three killed in clash between robber gangs in Shikarpur

SHIKARPUR (APP): Three robbers were killed on Sunday in a violent clash between two notorious robber gangs in Garhi Yasin Tehsil of Shikarpur. According to a private news channel, the police said that the incident occurred near the Jannat Canal within the limits of the Golu Daro police station.

Reports indicate that the two groups opened fire on each other, resulting in the deaths of three individuals of robber gangs. The police received information about the shootout and promptly responded to the scene. The deceased were transported to a nearby hospital and investigations were underway to identify the involved gangs.

## Govt taking measures to resolve issues of masses

SARGODHA (APP): The PMLN, federal and Punjab, government is taking measures to resolve the issues of the masses. It was claimed by PMLN Member Punjab Assembly and District General Secretary Rana Munawar Ghous while talking to APP at PML-N Sillanwali tehsil office on Sunday. He said that the Punjab government under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was taking practical steps for prosperity and development. Rana Munawar Ghous highlighted the government's relentless efforts to combat inflation and reduce unemployment. "The PMLN had always been and would continue to be a beacon of prosperity for the country and nation," he stated.

## Six injured in car-Bike collision in Shahkot

SHAHKOT (APP): Six passengers were injured on Sunday when a car and bike collided in Shahkot, a private news channel reported. According to details, the incident took place GT road pawan stop when can and bike coming from opposite side were collided. After receiving information the rescue team reached at the spot and shifted the injured to the nearby Hospital.

## CM Punjab directs WASA, administration to remain alert amid rains

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has put the administration on high alert in view of possible rains across the province.

The chief minister directed to undertake preventive and essential administrative measures in view of urban flooding. The CM directed the DG Khan administration to take necessary measures in view of the likely danger of the hill torrents. She directed the commissioners, deputy commissioners and WASA officials to remain proactive to ensure prompt water drainage. She said that diligent efforts being made for

timely water drainage in Lahore are praiseworthy. The relevant officers should remain in the field till complete water drainage. The administration and WASA officials should remain vigilant and proactive in this regard. All resources should be utilised for water drainage. Rain water should not remain accumulated and stagnant at any place for long. Implementation of the PDMA's SOPs should be ensured effectively in order to cope up with the flood situation. The CM added that it is the foremost responsibility of the government to protect the life and property of the

citizens and it will be ensured under any circumstance. Life and property of the people of the catchment areas should be ensured as well. Preventive measures should be taken for the protection of livestock in rural areas. She said provision of timely assistance and relief to the affected should be ensured in the flood situation. The Assembly Members should effectively oversee rescue and relief operations in the possible flood situation. An awareness should be imparted among the citizens with regard to preventing themselves from the electrocution incidents.

## Floods, glacier bursts likely in 11 districts of KP: Monsoon Alert

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a monsoon alert, warning of potential floods and glacier bursts in eleven districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The PDMA has instructed all district administrations in the province to remain vigilant, reported a private news channel. According to the PDMA alert, thunderstorms and heavy rains are expected in the mountainous areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There was also a

possibility of dusty winds and floods in low-lying areas. Districts that may be affected include Swat, Chitral Lower, Chitral Upper, Dir Upper, Dir Lower, Charsadda, DI Khan, Nowshera, Tank, and Shangla. The PDMA highlighted that rising temperatures and melting glaciers could lead to flooding. Despite the alert, the situation is currently normal in all districts of KP. PDMA said that to mitigate potential disasters, control rooms will be established in the affected districts.

## Swindler Gang busted, gold ornaments recovered

MULTAN (APP): Old Kotwali police have arrested a gang of swindlers and recovered gold ornaments from their possession during a crackdown launched here on Sunday. In line with special directives of the City Police Officer (CPO) Sadiq Ali Dogar, Old Kotwali police under the supervision of Station House Officer (SHO) Shabana Saif, launched a crackdown against a gang involved in depriving citizens of valuables. The police busted a gang and recovered gold ornaments from their possession, however, further investigations.



PESHAWAR: Awami National Party (ANP) Leader, Ghulam Ahmad Bilour addresses during ceremony to mark the 6th death anniversary of his nephew Haroon Bilour, in Peshawar.

## Under-trial prisoners now receive daily lunch boxes: IG Prisons

LAHORE (APP): The experiment of providing lunch boxes with bottled cold water to under trial prisoners at the time of their departure from jails for appearing before trial courts proved most successful which has now been extended to whole of Punjab.

Inspector General of Prisons Punjab Mian Farooq Nazeer, in an exclusive interview with APP here on Sunday, said initially it was launched as a pilot program in few jails that aimed to ensure that prisoners, who often

endure long and stressful journeys to court, have access to basic nourishment and hydration. The program's success has now led to its extension across the entire Punjab province. He said now nearly 42,863 under trial prisoners housed in various 43 jails across the province are being provided with lunch boxes daily. He added this initiative addresses a critical need, as under-trial prisoners frequently face long waits and challenging conditions during transit and court appearances.

## PFA seizes 200 kg expired snacks

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has seized 200 kilogram expired snacks during a special operation launched on Sunday.

In line with special directives of Director General (DG) Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Muhammad Asif Javed, the food safety teams striving hard to ensure good quality food items to the masses. In this regard, a special operation was conducted by Muzaffargarh food safety team and seized 200 kilogram expired snacks. The expired snacks were going to be supplied at different shops.

## Governor KP stresses on quality education through collaboration with international institutions

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday emphasized that the provision of technical education under the supervision of globally renowned institutions will yield positive results. He underscored the need to focus on quality education rather than quantity in the province. These views were expressed during a meeting with education experts, including the prominent educationalists Nasir Qasuri and his wife, renowned educationist Amina Wattoo. Education experts from Beaconhouse School System were also present at the meeting. Congratulating Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on assuming the constitutional office, Nasir

Qasuri, and his wife praised his efforts and vision for promoting education and combating unemployment.

Governor Kundi highlighted the urgent need for modern and professional education in line with current global requirements.

He anticipated fruitful outcomes from enhanced collaboration between the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission and Beaconhouse School System. He also predicted a competitive environment in the field due to public-private partnerships. The meeting extensively discussed various proposals aimed at promoting education in underserved areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

HYDERABAD: Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party (STP) Chairman, Dr. Qadir Magasi addresses during the Sindh Sawanro Conference held in Hyderabad.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party (STP) Chairman, Dr. Qadir Magasi addresses during the Sindh Sawanro Conference held in Hyderabad.

## Minister meets scholars to discuss Muharram security

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order Khawaja Salman Rafique held a detailed meeting with a delegation of scholars at the Home Department here on Sunday. Key issues, including security arrangements for Muharram, were discussed extensively.

The minister welcomed the scholars and assured them that their good wishes would be conveyed to Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He emphasized that the Punjab government had implemented foolproof security measures for Muharram, with continuous monitoring of the routes for congregations and processions. "I am hopeful that the days of Muharram will pass peacefully," he stated.

He announced that security arrangements would be reviewed across all divisions at the start of Muharram, and all officials

concerned have been instructed to personally visit licence holders during the period.

Home Secretary Noor-ul-Amin Mengal, Secretary Auqaf Tahir Raza Bukhari, Additional IG Chaudhry Sultan, Special Secretary, Additional Secretary Zahid Parvez, and Deputy Secretary Maham Asif Malik were also present.

The delegation included Secretary Shia Ulema Council Punjab Qasim Ali Qasmi, General Secretary Shia Ulema Council Allama Dr. Shabbir Hasan Meesmi, Sagheer Abbas Virk, Allama Hafiz Kazim Raza Naqvi, Safdar Hussain Jafri, Syed Ishtiaq Hussain Kazmi, Maulana Nair Abbas Kazmi, Maulana Liaqat Sial from Jhang, Dr. Syed Hasnat Ahmad, Adnan will pass peacefully," he stated. He announced that security arrangements would be reviewed across all divisions at the start of Muharram, and all officials



KARACHI: Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Chief, Munam Zafar addresses to media persons during press conference, at Idara Noor-ul-Haq in Karachi.

## Climate changes to have wide-ranging impacts on DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): D I Khan District has faced catastrophic floods, droughts, and cyclones in recent years that have killed and displaced thousands, destroyed livelihoods, and damaged infrastructure.

Climate change raises the prospect that these and other natural hazards will increase in frequency and severity in the coming decades—a stark reminder that the district is one of the country's most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Climatic changes are expected to have wide-ranging impacts on DI Khan district with reduced agricultural productivity, increased variability of

water availability, increased soil erosion along river Indus and increased frequency of extreme climatic events, Abdul Haleem Baloch agricultural expert said. Addressing these risks requires the mainstreaming of climate change into national strategy and policy; and climate-smart investments in infrastructure, businesses, and skills. Adapting to these impacts may include: development or use of crop varieties with greater heat and drought tolerance, modernizing irrigation infrastructure and employing water-saving technologies, integrated watershed management,

reforestation of catchment areas and construction of additional water storage, diversification of energy mix including investment in renewable and small hydropower projects, improved weather forecasting and warning systems, retrofitting of critical energy infrastructure, and construction of dikes or village protection walls. Crops are categorized into two: Rabi and kharif. Rabi crops are sown in autumn i.e. October–December and is harvested in spring (March–April). Wheat is the major Rabi crop. Crops sown in summer are called kharif crops. The kharif crop season is generally

longer in Pakistan, starting with sugarcane in February, cotton in March–May, rice in June–July and maize in July–August.

The major patterns are: (i) rice–wheat, (ii) maize–wheat, (iii) cotton–wheat, (iv) Sugarcane & wheat, and (v) coarse grain–wheat, and some other minor patterns.

Crops grown in both irrigated areas and those under spate farming systems are highly sensitive to the amount of water available and temperature variability. It is estimated that with rise of temperature (+0.50C–20C), agricultural productivity will decrease by around 8%–10% by 2040. Different simulation

studies, using the crop-growth simulation model, estimated a decrease in yield of major crops, specifically for wheat and rice, and the length of growing season in four agro climatic zones of Pakistan. The model predicted the largest decrease of around 14 days for 10C rise in temperature in the growing season's length of wheat in the northern mountainous region compared to southern Pakistan, the agriculture expert said.

The climate change has impacted and strained the agriculture sector in the region and has disrupted the entire pattern of cultivation. The sowing and harvesting of different crops especially wheat.



LAHORE: Members of Victims of Contract Water Management Employees Punjab are holding protest demonstration for restoration of their employment, at Lahore press club.

## 5G-AI Revolution: Huawei leads next-level human facilitation towards intelligent future

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the coming decade, the transformative potential of 5G and AI technologies promises to revolutionize every facet of human existence. From smart kitchens that anticipate our culinary needs to autonomous vehicles that redefine travel safety and efficiency, the integration of advanced AI into daily life will streamline processes, enhance productivity, and elevate experiences.

In the recently concluded Mobile World Congress in Shanghai, where the transformative potential of artificial intelligence took center stage, Huawei emerged as the vanguard of the 5G AI revolution, pioneering

next-level human facilitation and ushering in an intelligent future.

The event, a convergence of global leaders and tech giants, highlighted groundbreaking advancements poised to redefine connectivity and human interaction in the era of 5G and AI.

Among the prominent unveilings was Honor's breakthrough technology designed to combat deepfake scam calls—an increasingly prevalent threat in the age of generative AI. These fraudulent calls, which manipulate audio and video to deceive victims, underscore the critical need for AI-driven solutions to safeguard authenticity. Honor's real-time detection

system, set to debut this year, employs AI to scrutinize minute details such as eye contact and lighting, swiftly alerting users to potential scams.

George Zhao, CEO of Honor, emphasized the empowering potential of on-device AI, addressing concerns over AI's impact on authenticity and security. His remarks echoed sentiments shared by industry leaders who see AI as pivotal in shaping the future landscape.

At the forefront of these discussions was Huawei, whose executives outlined a vision where AI's omnipresence is supported by robust telecom networks, particularly the forthcoming 5.5G.



QUETTA: Adviser on Environment and Climate Change to Chief Minister, Naseem-ur Rehman Khan Mulakhel addresses during the inauguration of My Abbas Industry held in Quetta.

## Cosmetics, agro based industry exports can fetch billions of dollars to Pak: MCCI president

MULTAN (APP): Exporting cosmetics, utilities and agro based industry products can bring foreign exchange worth billions of dollars to Pakistan to strengthen the economy which is undergoing troubled times the government should introduce business friendly policies to attract maximum investment to increase exports.

"Cosmetics and utilities are a huge sector for export. It has potential of 10 to 12 billion dollars.

If we shift its certification from Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) to Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), we can inject these dollars to our economy overnight, Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President, Mian Iqbal suggested during an exclusive interview with APP here on Sunday.

Moisturizing lotions, whitening creams, beauty

soaps, facials and scrubs are basic utilities which are in daily usage for everyone, he said and added that if rules are relaxed for its exports in the market, these can add billions of dollars to Pakistani exports.

He informed that fruits and vegetables are perishable and these can be transported to foreign countries with different means. Some countries who import fruits and veggies have set their standards and criteria for it.

## Call for overhaul of export training infrastructure

LAHORE (APP): Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ejazur Rahman has stressed the need for a major overhaul of existing institutions and the establishment of new ones to provide specialized training in export-related fields.

He cited that current setup is inadequate to meet the demands of the industry.

He was talking to a delegation of technical and vocational training experts in a meeting, in which a detailed discussion was held regarding the shortage of skilled workers for the hand-woven carpet industry and other issues.

Ejazur Rahman urged the government to bring in international experts with the assistance of foreign

partners to revamp the training infrastructure, a move that is expected to have far-reaching results in enhancing the country's export competitiveness and bridging the skills gap in the industry.

He said that factors like lack of linkages between export industries and technical institutions are hindering the growth of exports and keeping in view the demand of the industries and the changes in the world, there is a need to establish more vocational training institutes. "Along with this, changes in the curriculum of the already established institutions, they have to be upgraded to make them equal to other countries of the world that provide modern training."

## 9 arrested for overpricing essentials

LAHORE (APP): In a significant move to enforce official prices, the Price Control Magistrates have conducted inspections at 2,862 locations, leading to the arrest of 12 individuals for overpricing fruits, vegetables, and other essential items.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rafia Haider told media on Sunday that 11 cases have been registered for violations of government-set prices. Furthermore, fines totaling Rs 400,000 have been imposed for 95 instances of non-compliance. The DC emphasized that Price Control Magistrates are actively ensuring adherence to official rates. Supervision of the auction process in fruit.

## Governor KP underscores railway line expansion to Uzbekistan under CPEC

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday highlighted the plans to extend railway connectivity to Uzbekistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He said this during discussions with Sajid Hussain Turi, former federal minister and provincial vice president of Pakistan Peoples Party at the Governor House.

The proposed expansion aims to lay tracks from Rawalpindi to Kohat and from Kohat to Parachinar, ultimately connecting to Uzbekistan. The Governor expressed optimism that this initiative would significantly benefit both regions, enhancing economic ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Regarding local concerns, Governor Faisal Kundi addressed the issues related to Kohat division, including delayed project

of Kohat University campus in Parachinar.

He assured of resolving these issues promptly, promising to engage with the Higher Education Commission's officials for necessary actions.

Governor Kundi affirmed his commitment to elevate regional matters to the federal level for expeditious resolution.

He announced plans to meet with the Prime Minister soon to discuss comprehensive solutions to these issues.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, emphasized the acquisition of provincial rights, promotion of peace and playing a role in the economic advancement of youth and women in the province.

He said this during a meeting with a delegation led by former PPP leader MNA Usman Khan Tarakai including Jalal Khan Tarakai and Baland Khan Tarakai.



ISLAMABAD: People purchasing seasonal fruit displayed by vendor at Fruit and Vegetable Market in the Federal Capital.

## Collectorate of Customs achieved the target set by FBR

SIALKOT (APP): The Collectorate of Customs Sambrial, Sialkot achieved the revenue target set by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Islamabad for the financial year 2023-24.

According to a press release issued by Deputy Collector Javeria Shahid here on Sunday, under the supervision of Collector Customs Saima Aftab, Additional Collector Customs Liaquat Ranjha, Deputy Collector Javaria Shahid, Chief Accounts Officer Amara Farooq, Assistant Collector Muhammad Khalid, Assistant Collector Amir Hamza and Assistant

Collector Humayun Mukhtar worked tirelessly together with their staff and the result was received in the form of achieving the target.

Anti-Smuggling Organization, Recovery Branch, Bank Guarantee Branch, DTRE, Export Facilitation Branch and Auction Branch played prominent role to get the target.

Apart from this Rs.852.369 million was recovered due to administrative measures, while a total of Rs. 1356.250 million was collected as customs duty and other revenue in the financial year.

## Strict implementation of price control mechanism ordered

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Commissioner Madam Siawat Saeed directed the deputy commissioners of all four districts of the division to ensure strict implementation of price control mechanism in their respective jurisdiction.

Presiding over a meeting, she reviewed availability of daily-use items and directed the deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners to ensure ample supply of commodities in the markets so as to foil nefarious designs of the elements who wanted to create an

artificial shortage of the commodities and sell them at high rates.

She also directed to monitor prices of flour and wheat and said that to ensure strict implementation of price control mechanism in their respective jurisdiction.

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She also directed to monitor prices of flour and wheat and said that to ensure strict implementation of price control mechanism in their respective jurisdiction.



QUETTA: People are buying toys from a stall at a weekly bazaar in Quetta.



LAHORE: President Industries and Commerce Mandi Bahauddin presenting souvenir to Punjab Minister for Industries and Commerce during a meeting.

## Result-oriented policies vital for attracting investment: Iftikhar

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik said on Sunday that results-oriented policies promoting good governance are crucial for building investor confidence and attracting foreign investment in diversified sectors of Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of traders led by Muslim Khan Buneri, he said, "Good governance, characterized by transparency, accountability, and efficiency, creates an environment where investors feel secure and confident in the stability and predictability of their investments."

He said in Pakistan, result-oriented policies could play a transformative role in achieving and maintaining economic

stability, said a press release issued here. Transparency reduces the risk of corruption and builds trust between the government and the business community, he said and added that accountability mechanisms must be strengthened which include establishing independent regulatory bodies to oversee financial markets, ensuring that laws and regulations were enforced fairly and consistently. Iftikhar Ali Malik said that streamlining procedures for starting and operating businesses could reduce the time and cost associated with investment whereas simplifying tax codes, reducing red tape, and enhancing the ease of doing business could make Pakistan a more attractive destination for both domestic and foreign investors.

## Forex trading reflects global financial stability

KARACHI (APP): The Business Administration Department of Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology (SSUET) here on Sunday organized an awareness seminar on "Forex Trading Awareness for Modern Entrepreneurs" to enlighten students about the opportunities in the Forex trading industry.

According to a University spokesperson, presenting a comprehensive overview of the scope, importance and various modes of the Forex markets, renowned Master Trader and financial analyst, Muhammad Samiullah Khan, said that Forex market was a place where money meets opportunity and you are needed to trade smart to take the full advantage of the opportunities. Empowering trade with cutting-edge technology, we set well defined goals to enhance your trading journey with trader's insight and intuition, he said.

He underscored that the key to trading success was emotional discipline. Be patient and trust the process. Forex trading involves buying and selling currencies on the foreign exchange market. It is the largest and liquid financial market globally, with an average daily trading volume exceeding \$6 trillion, he concluded.

Speaking on the auspicious occasion, the Chairman of Business Administration Department said that Forex trading reflected global financial stability, affecting employment and living standards and the traders use candlestick patterns and Fibonacci retracements for market predictions.

Forex trading can widen economic disparities depending on access to information and resources, he added.

Director, Centre for Continuing Professional Education (CCEP), Noman Ali Khan briefed the students on the technical aspects of the Forex industry. He said there is a Forex Trading System.



GILGIT: Inspection of fresh cherry consignment by Dr. Shahid Baqiri which will export to China from Gilgit Baltistan via Sost dry port at Karamabad Hunza.

## FTO Advisor cautions taxpayers of scammers

LAHORE (APP): Taxpayers should not fall prey to scammers, fake websites, non-existent charities, fictitious emails and dummy tax notices and never respond to such fraudulent tactics.

Advisor to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Waqar Chaudhry cautioned this while addressing an awareness session organized on the direction of FTO Dr Asif Mahmood Jah here Sunday.

The FTO Advisor said that it is his duty to bring into their knowledge pressing matter that requires immediate attention- the escalating prevalence of scams and fraudulent activities

targeting taxpayers across Pakistan.

He said FTO has noticed a disturbing surge in deceptive practices including fraudulent emails, fabricated notices, sham websites, and the creation of non-existent charities, all designed to exploit unsuspecting taxpayers. These malicious modus operandi are adept at mimicking official communication channels, posing a significant threat.

He said tax payers receive calls or messages promising hefty tax refunds in exchange for a fee by impersonating tax authorities. He said in 2023 Pakistan's computer emergency response team reported a 300 percent.

## PFF delegation visited SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): President Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Haroon Ahmed Malik along with the delegation visited Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI).

President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President (SVP) Wahab Jahangir, Vice President (VP) SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh and President Sialkot Football Association Ch. Muhammad Ikhlaiq welcomed the distinguished guests.

During an important meeting scheduled at SCCI Auditorium, discussions were held regarding the promotion of football in Sialkot.

## Coal, mineral projects start changing lives in Thar deserts

THAR (APP): After decades' long life full of disparity and deprivation, Thar residents are finally seeing a ray of hope and some pleasant changes in their lives after exploration of coal and variety of other minerals.

Tharparker, a desert area of Sindh province, with a population of over 1.7 million people had been rich in natural resources like coal, granite, clay and salt. But this unexplored treasure of nature lagged the local people behind in socio-economic uplift as compared to residents of other parts of the province.

For a long time, they did not have even access to clean drinking water, basic healthcare and quality education. Majority of the population had never irrigated their agricultural land due to non-availability of water and frequent droughts as the only water resource depended on for agriculture and drinking, was the rain water.

However, the life started changing gradually after projects for coal extraction by the federal and provincial governments like construction of roads and other infrastructure. The

work was started on couple of blocks that resulted in construction of roads and employment opportunities for local people.

"The region was beleaguered with dearth of water, transport, healthcare and other basic amenities when we were at school level," stated Fakir Saleem, a journalist from the area. "We passed decades of deprivation till year 2002, when for the first time we felt, our destinies were going to change."

With the start of multiple projects like Thar coal exploration and mining

of other minerals from our area raised hopes for a change. "Now infrastructure is being developed, roads are constructed while projects are also on way to address persisting water shortage issue."

"We have definitely witnessed some change but much was needed to provide drinking water to people in the area, mitigate environmental effects and avert threats of drought and famines," Fakir Saleem said.

In the past, economy of this region solely depended on agriculture

and livestock but now people have also access to employment and other opportunities to earn a better living.

People of Thar deserts usually leave their homes along with livestock to riverine areas for feeding their animals and earn some livelihood by working at fields during harvesting season. Almost 35 to 40 percent population opts for seasonal migration during summer where the burning sand and delayed rains make their lives miserable.

Besides living in rural areas.



QUETTA: People are busy on purchasing a used shoe for the Weekly Sunday Bazaar at joint Road.

# Israeli strike kills 16, injures over 50 at UN school in Gaza

## Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: At least 16 people were killed in an Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced Palestinian families in Al-Nuseirat in central Gaza on Saturday, the territory's health ministry and the official Palestinian news agency said.

The Israeli military said it was looking into the report. The health ministry said the attack on the school killed at least 16 people and wounded more than 50.

Mahmoud Basal, spokesman for the Gaza Civil Emergency Service, said the number of dead could rise because many of the wounded were in critical condition. The attack on the school meant no place in the enclave was safe for families who leave their houses to seek

shelters, he said in a statement.

Al-Nuseirat, one of Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, was the site of stepped-up Israeli bombardment on Saturday.

An air strike earlier on a house in the camp killed at least 10 people and wounded many others, according to medics.

In its daily update of people killed in the nearly nine-month-old war, the Gaza health ministry said Israeli military strikes across the enclave killed at least 29 Palestinians in the past 24 hours and wounded 100 others.

Among those killed in separate air strikes were five local journalists, raising the toll of journalists killed since October last year to 158, according to the Hamas-led Gaza government me-

dia office.

Gaza health authorities say more than 38,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive.

Israeli forces, which have deepened their incursions into Rafah, in the south of the enclave near the border with Egypt, killed four Palestinian policemen and wounded eight others, in an air strike on their vehicle on Saturday, health officials said.

A statement issued by the Hamas-run interior ministry said the four included Fares Abdel-Al, the head of the police force in western Rafah neighbourhood of Tel Al-Sultan.

The Israeli military said forces continued "intelligence-based operations" in Rafah.



Palestinians gather at the site of an Israeli air strike on a UN school sheltering displaced people at Nusairat in central Gaza Strip.

# NATO is spending more on defence, but it's likely not enough

## Monitoring Desk

BRUSSELS: Spurred on by Russia's war in Ukraine and the spectre of Donald Trump's potential return to the White House, more of NATO's European members are finally hitting the alliance's defence spending target. But as leaders gear up to celebrate at a NATO summit in Washington there is a clear feeling that will not be sufficient to tackle the challenges it faces.

"Even in countries historically reluctant to spend more on defence, there is now a growing

sense of the importance of greatly increased defence spending," said Ian Lesser, from the German Marshall Fund of the United States think tank. "I think, broadly speaking, in the next years we're looking at levels of defence spending that will begin to approach those of the Cold War."

A decade after setting a spending goal at two percent of gross domestic product, just over two-thirds of NATO's 32 countries are now expected to reach or top that threshold this year.

# 13 injured as elephant goes on rampage in Sri Lanka

## Monitoring Desk

KATARAGAMA: An elephant went on a rampage during a religious event in southern Sri Lanka, injuring 13 people, local media reported on Sunday.

The incident occurred on Saturday night during the Ruhunu Kataragama Mahadevala procession, a major religious and cultural event held at Kataragama, in the Uva province, local English daily The Sri Lanka Mirror reported.

The injured are being treated at the local hospital, and no one was critically injured.

# Brazil says G20 sherpas to avoid thorny issues at prep meetings

## Monitoring Desk

RIO DE JANEIRO: G20 diplomats have agreed to avoid prickly geopolitical issues during their ministerial meetings preparing for the summit of the world's largest economies in November, host Brazil's sherpa said on Friday.

Meetings through October will avoid geopolitical discussions so that agreements can be advanced on issues such as climate change, reducing hunger in the world, trade and investment, according to Mauricio Lyrio, Brazil's G20 sherpa.

# Floods and landslides kill 14 in Nepal: police

## Monitoring Desk

KATHMANDU: Lashing rains in Nepal causing flash floods and landslides have killed at least 14 people across the country, with disaster teams searching for nine missing, police said on Sunday.

Flooding in neighbouring India, as well as in downstream Bangladesh, has also caused widespread damage and impacted millions.

"Police are working with other agencies and locals to find the missing people," Nepalese police spokesperson Dan Bahadur Karki told AFP. Those killed and

missing are in multiple locations.

Monsoon rains from June to September bring widespread death and destruction every year across South Asia, but the number of fatal floods and landslides has increased in recent years.

Experts say climate change and increased road construction are exacerbating the problem.

Parts of Nepal have been receiving heavy rainfall since Thursday, prompting disaster authorities in the Himalayan nation to warn of flash floods in multiple rivers.

# Seven children among 49 people drowned across Russia

## Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Seven children were among 49 people who drowned in waters across Russia on Saturday as scorching heat blankets large swaths of the country, the Ministry for Emergency Situations said on Sunday.

"A total of 65 incidents were registered on the country's water bodies over the past 24 hours — 49 people died," the ministry said on the Telegram messaging app.

That is 10 more drowning incidents than on the same day a year ago, Russia's RIA state news agency reported.

# Tokyo Governor Koike set to win re-election, exit poll shows

## Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike has won re-election to a third term on Sunday, fending off challenges from dozens of candidates vying to unseat the ruling Liberal Democratic Party-backed incumbent, according to an exit poll from public broadcaster NHK.

Koike, 71, got more than 40% of the vote, followed by Shinji Ishimaru, 41, a former mayor of a town in Hiroshima prefecture, who was in second place, the exit poll showed. Renho, 56, who was supported by the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ), came in third.

A victory for Koike could help embattled Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida resist calls within the LDP to step down as public support for him and his ruling group ebbs amid a political donations scandal.



French President Emmanuel Macron casts his ballot flanked by French First Lady Brigitte Macron at a polling station to vote in the second round of French parliamentary elections in Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, France.

# Brazil's Bolsonaro hopes for Trump return at right-wing rally

## Monitoring Desk

BRAZIL: Brazilian far-right former President Jair Bolsonaro at a rally of conservative supporters said the right was gaining ground internationally, in Italy and France, and said he hoped that former US President Donald Trump will be returned to the White House this year.

"God willing, it will be Trump in November," he told a cheering crowd of 3,500 supporters at the CPAC Brasil 2024 event at the beach resort of Balneario Camboriu in Southern Brazil. The event was intended to drum up support for Bolsonaro's party's candidates in this year's municipal elections and project his influence ahead of the 2026 presidential race. The rally was billed

as the first major opposition rally of the campaign for local mayoral elections in October.

"We want Bolsonaro back," chanted some at the event who want to see him back in power, although Bolsonaro has been banned from seeking elected office until 2030 for attacks on democracy. Speakers attacked Brazil's current government of leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, calling it corrupt. They advocated Christian pro-life family values and a ban on abortion in speeches that were pro-gun and anti-drug.

"It will be very important for us to once again bring together Conservatives with a liberal view of the economy to discuss the future of the right-wing in Brazil."

# Sahel military chiefs mark divorce from West Africa bloc

## Monitoring Desk

NIAMEY: The military regimes of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso marked their divorce from the rest of West Africa on Saturday as they signed a treaty setting up a confederation between them.

The first summit of the three countries, who all pulled out of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) earlier this year, also saw calls for greater cooperation across a wide range of sectors.

"Our people have irrevocably turned their backs on ECOWAS," Niger's ruling General Abdourahmane Tiani told his fellow Sahel strongmen at the gathering's opening in the Nigerian capital Niamey.

The three leaders,

who took power through coups in recent years, "decided to take a step further towards greater integration" and "adopted a treaty establishing a confederation", they said in a statement issued at the end of the summit. The "Confederation of Sahel States", which will use the acronym AES and be headed by Mali in its first year, will group some 72 million people.

Their ECOWAS exits were fuelled in part by accusations that Paris was manipulating the bloc and not providing enough support for anti-jihadist efforts. "The AES is the only effective sub-regional grouping in the fight against terrorism," Tiani declared on Saturday, calling ECOWAS "conspicuous by its lack of involvement in this fight".



Niger's military leader General Abdourahmane Tiani and his counterparts, Mali's Assimi Goita and Burkina Faso's Captain Ibrahim Traore, stand during the first ordinary summit of heads of state and governments of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) in Niamey.

# Hamas says it's waiting for Israeli response on Gaza ceasefire proposal

## Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Hamas is waiting for a response from Israel on its ceasefire proposal, two officials from the militant Islamist group said on Sunday, five days after it accepted a key part of a US plan aimed at ending the nine-month-old war in Gaza.

"We have left our response with the mediators and are waiting to hear the occupation's response," one of the two Hamas officials told Reuters, asking not to be named.

The three-phase plan for the Palestinian enclave was put forward at the end of May by US President Joe Biden and is being mediated by Qatar and Egypt. It aims to end the war and free around 120 Israeli hostages being held by Hamas.

Another Palestinian official, with knowledge of the ceasefire deliberations, said Israel was in talks with the Qataris.

"They have discussed

with them Hamas' response and they promised to give them Israel's response within days," the official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters on Sunday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that negotiations would continue this week but has not given any detailed timeline.

Hamas, which controls Gaza, has dropped a key demand that Israel first commit to a permanent ceasefire before it would sign an agreement. Instead, it said it would allow negotiations to achieve that throughout the six-week first phase, a Hamas source told Reuters on Saturday on condition of anonymity because the talks are private.

A Palestinian official close to the peace efforts has said the proposal could lead to a framework agreement if embraced by Israel and would end the war.

# France votes, with far right seeking power

## Monitoring Desk

PARIS: France voted on Sunday in a parliamentary run-off election with the far-right National Rally (RN) bidding for power but likely to fall short of a majority, raising the spectre of a chaotic hung parliament.

A hung parliament would severely dent President Emmanuel Macron's authority and herald a prolonged period of instability and policy deadlock in the euro zone's second biggest economy. Should the nationalist, eurosceptic RN secure a majority, it would usher in France's first far-right government since World War Two and send shockwaves through the European Union at a time populist parties are strengthening support across the continent.

The far right's projected margin of victory has narrowed since Macron's centrist Together alliance and the left-wing New Popular Front (NPF) pulled scores of candidates from three-way races in the second round in a bid to unify the anti-RN vote. "France is on the cliff-edge and we don't know if we're going to jump," Raphael Glucksmann, a member of the European Parliament who led France's leftist ticket in last month's European vote, told France Inter radio last week.

sample of voting stations at 8 p.m. Opinion polls forecast Marine Le Pen's RN will emerge the dominant force in the National Assembly as voters punish Macron over a cost of living crisis and being out of touch with the hardships people face.

However, the RN is seen failing to reach the 289-seat target that would out-right hand Le Pen's 28-year-old protégé Jordan Bardella the prime minister's job with a working majority.

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Voting closes at 6 pm (1600 GMT) in towns and small cities and 8 pm in bigger cities. Pollsters will deliver initial projections based on early counts from a

# Scorching heat expected in US West, Southeast over weekend

## Monitoring Desk

MARIPOSA: Dangerously hot conditions will dominate over the rest of the July Fourth holiday weekend in much of the U.S. West Coast, Southeast and Middle Atlantic seaboard, forecasters said on Friday, as California firefighters battled one of the first big wildfires of the season.

Around 108 million Americans will spend the remainder of the weekend under excessive heat advisories, with record-breaking temperatures forecast for many spots in California, southern Oregon and the Southwest, the National Weather Service said.

The West Coast will hover 15 to 30 degrees above average, reaching 110 Fahrenheit (43 Celsius) on Friday. "Expect only subtle changes to our daily high temperatures through the

weekend," the National Weather Service in Flagstaff, Arizona, said on X.

"Where did you go, monsoon? Hurry back," it said, referring to a recent bout of torrential rain in the area, which is usually bone-dry this time of year.

Some of the hottest spots will include Phoenix where it will be 115 F (46 C), Washington D.C. where it is expected to climb to 100 F (38 C), and Palm Springs, California, where it will reach 119 F (48 C). That is almost three times as hot as it will be in Yellowstone National Park in Montana, where the forecast was for temperatures to dip to 37 F on Friday night.

The weather service urged people to stay hydrated, out of the sunlight, and in buildings with sufficient air-conditioning.

# Pope decries populists, warns democracy is in bad health

## Monitoring Desk

TRIESTE: Pope Francis denounced populist politics and what he called "the cross of ideology" on Sunday, warning that democracy was not in good shape in many parts of the world.

The 87-year-old pope was in the northeastern city of Trieste for a flying visit, his fourth trip within Italy in just over two months as he prepares for a 12-day journey across Asia in September, the longest of his papacy.

Speaking at an annual Roman Catholic convention on social affairs, Francis said many people felt excluded from democracy, with the poor and the weak left to fend for themselves.

"It is evident that democracy is not in good health in today's world," he said, denouncing polarisation and partisanship.

"Ideologies are seductive. Some people compare them to the Pied Piper of Hamelin. They seduce you, but they lead you to deny yourself," he said, referring to a fairy tale where a rat catcher uses his magic

powers to steal away a town's children.

He said the "crisis of democracy" afflicted various nations, but did not give any specific examples.

The pope was speaking on the day France holds a parliamentary run-off election, with the far-right National Rally (RN) expected to take the biggest share of the vote, a month after populist parties scored gains in European Union elections.

"Let us not be deceived by easy solutions. Let us instead be passionate about the common good," the pope said on Sunday, highlighting the damage caused by political "corruption and illegality".

The pope, who himself rules as an absolute monarch in the tiny Vatican state, said it was important to teach children the importance of democratic values, warning that "indifference is a cancer of democracy".

"I am concerned about the small number of people who went to vote. Why is it happening?" he asked.

# Japan, Cambodia to work on removal of landmines in Ukraine

## Monitoring Desk

PHNOM PENH: Japan will work with Cambodia to remove landmines from Ukraine and other war-torn countries, Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa said during a visit to Phnom Penh on Saturday.

Millions of landmines were laid in Cambodia during the nearly three decades of conflict that ended in 1998, with tens of thousands of people killed or maimed over the years.

The Southeast Asian

country is widely regarded as a world leader in landmine countermeasures and has been working with Japan to clear the weapons since 1998.

"Cambodia is an essential partner in Japan's global landmine removal efforts," Kamikawa said at a press conference. "I am confident Cambodia will contribute greatly to raising awareness of the inhumanity of anti-personnel landmines as a country that suffered from them."

# Sydney house fire kills three children, police suspect homicide

## Monitoring Desk

SYDNEY: Three children, including a 10-month-old, were killed after fire ripped through a house in Sydney early on Sunday in an incident Australian police said they were treating as a homicide. Emergency services were called to the property in Lalor Park, about 35 km (20 miles) west of Sydney's city centre, around 1 am (1500 GMT on Saturday), police said in a statement.

Two boys, aged two and four, were treated at the scene but died shortly after being taken to the hospital, while a 10-month-old girl was found dead after the fire was extinguished, police said. A 28-year-old man, who frustrated police at-

tempts to get into the property, was arrested and was being treated for fire-related injuries at the hospital under police guard, it said.

Homicide squad detectives have taken control of the investigation and are treating it as a "domestic-related homicide", said Homicide Squad Commander Detective Superintendent Danny Doherty. "At this stage, it does appear the 28-year-old man is responsible for multiple deaths of young lives that have been tragically taken away," Doherty told a press conference. Four other children, aged from six to 11, were in stable condition in hospital, as well as the mother of the children.

# Two more Congo soldiers sentenced to death for fleeing battle

## Monitoring Desk

BENI: Two more soldiers have been sentenced to death in the Democratic Republic of Congo after they fled battles in conflict-torn North Kivu province, a military court said.

Congo's army has been fighting the Rwanda-backed M23 insurgency for more than two years, as well as battling other militias in its eastern borderlands.

The rebels seized the strategically important commune of Kanyabayonga last week.

## Pak upcoming IMF bailout will 'not be our last' if tax revenues don't rise: Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan will keep seeking financial assistance packages from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) if it does not significantly boost its tax revenues. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said.

Aurangzeb's comments come days after Pakistan's president signed the federal budget for the current fiscal year, which has been criticized by the opposition, trade bodies and even the government's allies, for its ambitious tax targets.

The tax-heavy budget aims to raise Rs13 trillion (\$4.6bn) by July 2025, a roughly 40 percent increase from the current financial year. Financial experts say the budget is aimed at satisfying the IMF, which has repeatedly asked Islamabad to bring tax reforms to ensure growth in its fragile economy.

Speaking to British newspaper Financial Times, Aurangzeb said he was "relatively confident" of reaching a staff-level agreement with the IMF this month for a loan his government has estimated to be between \$6-\$8bn.

"But it will not be our last fund program if we don't bring our tax revenues up," the minister said.

Pakistan hopes the IMF bailout package will stabilize its economy, one of the worst-performing ones in Asia, that has been troubled by double-digit inflation, slow growth and low foreign reserves.

Pakistan's economic indicators have recorded an improvement over the past few months, with inflation dropping down to 12.6 percent in June from the record-breaking 38 percent in May 2023. Pakistan's stock market has registered

high growth in recent weeks while the central bank's foreign reserves have risen to over \$9 billion.

"The direction of travel is positive, and investors are showing confidence in the stock market," Aurangzeb said.

However, he acknowledged Pakistan's tax collection authority, the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR), was viewed negatively by the masses.

"People don't want to deal with the tax authority because of corruption, because of harassment, because of people asking for speed money, facilitation money," Aurangzeb noted. "That's not sustainable."

The finance minister lamented how Pakistan's economy was reliant on imports, stating that Islamabad had to borrow to pay off existing or accumulating debt.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim Authority and Pakistan National Shipping Corporation.

## Speaker, Dy Speaker extend warm felicitations to Muslim Ummah on occasion of new Islamic year

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah on Sunday extended their warm felicitations to the Muslim Ummah on the advent of the new Islamic year Hijri 1446.

On this occasion, the Speaker said that this day was a divine blessing, affording an opportunity to rejuvenate faith, resolve and recommit to noble values of peace, justice and compassion. He expressed the hope that this occasion would inspire people to rededicate themselves to the service of humanity and the pursuit of excellence.

The Speaker said that the Muslim Ummah was

facing numerous challenges, including conflicts, terrorism and economic inequality, which required united efforts to address. He emphasized the need for Muslim countries to stand together in solidarity and work towards peace, stability and prosperity.

He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people for their right to self-determination and urged the international community to play its role in resolving the conflict.

The Speaker prayed that the new Islamic year may bring peace, prosperity and harmony to the country and the world at large, and urged the people

to work together for the progress and development of the country.

Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah said that the new Islamic year heralds new hopes and opportunities.

He urged the people to harness this momentum to propel themselves towards a brighter future, built on hard work, dedication, and service to humanity. He also stressed the need for unity and cooperation among Muslim countries to overcome the challenges faced by the Ummah.

The Deputy Speaker prayed that the new Islamic year may bring happiness and prosperity to the people of Pakistan and the world at large.

## JI to arrange IT courses to empower millions of youngsters: Naeem

MULTAN (APP): Ameer Jamat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman said that JI would arrange Information Technology courses for millions of youngsters in order to empower them economically.

He said this while holding a press conference during his maiden visit to city after assuming charge of Ameer Jamat e Islami, on Sunday.

He stated that youth was pinning hopes with Jamat-e-Islami and JI will not let youth disappointed, he added.

He feared that people would shift industry abroad due to high prices of electricity. He urged government to bring landlords and other influential under tax net instead of the poor.

He also called for provision of due share in resources allocation for south Punjab. South Punjab is comprised of small farmers. Government should ensure

maximum benefits and subsidy towards the peasants, Naeem ur Rehman stated.

He stated that government should investigate wheat scandal and punished the persons involved in the scandal.

Ameer Jamat-e-Islami also stressed for initiating talks with owners of IPPs in order to lower electricity tariff.

Responding to a question about democracy, he stated that JI believed democracy in letter and spirit. He however added that other political parties lacked democracy within their ranks. Local government bodies should be given proper constitutional cover and these should operate independently, without interference of provincial governments as it could help resolve masses problems. Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman also supported reforms in judiciary to solve public problems.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development Bakht Muhammad Kakar listening problems of people at his residence

## Blome says: US to continue backing fundamental freedoms, democratic institutions

LAHORE (INP): US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Armin Blome reaffirmed America's commitment to strengthening fundamental freedoms and democratic institutions during his visit to Lahore.

Celebrating the 248th anniversary of American independence in Lahore, Ambassador Blome emphasized the importance of religious freedom and underscored the significance of the US-Pakistan partnership.

The celebration on July 5th saw attendance from government officials, business tycoons, and civil

society representatives highlighting key areas of cooperation between the United States and Pakistan.

These included robust trade and investment relations and advanced collaboration through the US-Pakistan "Green Alliance."

In his address, Ambassador Blome reiterated America's commitment to strengthening fundamental freedoms and democratic institutions. He emphasized that the United States would remain a steadfast partner in expanding economic opportunities for the Pakistani people.

## Pak Army organizes grand summer camp for school children in Gwadar

GWADAR (Online): Pakistan Army organized a grand summer camp for school children in Gwadar.

The main objective of the summer camp was to promote harmony among children of different schools.

Fifty-one students participated in the summer camp and received training in computer, arts, culture and painting.

## Sir Syed Express to resume operation from Sept 01

LAHORE (INP): Sir Syed Express train, dormant since 2022 due to devastating floods, is set to resume operations from September 1 on the Karachi-Rawalpindi route, under a private sector partnership, announced Pakistan Railways. According to railway officials, an agreement has been finalized between Pakistan Railways and a private logistics company, facilitating the revival of Sir Syed Express. The agreement, valued at Rs. 38,000 annually, stipulates that the railway department will provide new bogies, engines, drivers, and diesel to the private operator.

## Pakistani boxer Shahir beats Indian opponent to become Asian champion

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistani boxer Shahir Afridi Khawar clinched the title of Asian champion in the professional middleweight category by defeating Indian boxer Ronit Solankhi in a bout held in Thailand on Saturday.

Afridi achieved a dramatic victory by knocking out Solankhi in the third round. In the closing moments of that round, Afridi delivered a powerful punch that caused Solankhi to stagger and ultimately fall to the canvas.

The match, which was part of a series of professional boxing events in the region, took place in Bangkok. Afridi's stellar performance has once again highlighted Pakistan's strength and skill in the realm of boxing.

In a Facebook post celebrating his victory, Afridi expressed his gratitude, saying, "Alhamdulillah, I won my fight with a huge knockout against India. Thank you for the appreciation. JazakAllah to everyone." His win not only earned him the Asian champion title but also reinforced Pakistan's growing reputation in the sport.



GWADAR: Deputy Commissioner Hamudur Rehman meeting with journalists during his visit to Gwadar Press Club

## Three Turkish NGOs to serve in Pakistan's education, health, culture sectors

ANKARA (INP): Three prominent Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) of Türkiye have announced of providing services in education, health, culture and social uplift sectors in Pakistan to facilitate its people.

This was announced during a ceremony organized to award certificate of appreciation to President Turkish-Pakistan Women Forum Shabana Ayyaz by four-member directors of Anatolian Union, Turkish World Association of Academics and Bureaucrats, and World Reporters Association in recognition of her services to enhance Pak-Turkiye brotherhood and friendship.

The ceremony was also attended by the directors of all three organizations, Ismet Ta?, Professor Dr. Issa Eleri, Dr. Mehmet Tekin, and President of the Women's Wing, Nur Dilce.

Speaking on the occasion, Director General

Ismet Ta? said that President Shabana Ayyaz of the Turkish-Pak Women Forum did not leave us alone in our effort "Be the Voice for the Silent Children's Scream" and supported us in every possible way. She said, "We acknowledge that Shabana Ayyaz has led many programs for women and children in Pakistan and is doing further research on how Turkish women are improving themselves in the fields of culture, health, and education, in which areas they have achieved successes, and how to transfer their experiences to Pakistani women."

Ismet Ta? said she was also working to enhance Pak-Turk friendship and brotherhood, which Turkish people deeply appreciate. "Shabana Ayyaz is a beautiful representation of love and friendship in our country," the DG remarked.

She said that certifi-

cate was awarded to Shabana Ayyaz in recognition of these services.

The DG further stated that Türkiye and Pakistan are geographically separate states, but they are one. The friendship and brotherhood between Türkiye and Pakistan are getting stronger.

She stated that people of both countries harmonize with each other in pain, sorrow, trouble, and happiness and Turkish people want Pakistan and Türkiye to fully support each other in every field. In this regard, the people of Turkey are ready to support the Pakistani people at every opportunity.

The DG said that Türkiye's achievements in science and technology, art and culture, economy, and human rights are widespread around the world, especially the effort "Silent Children's Silent Scream" has been broadcast in many countries worldwide.

## AJK PM unveils Rs4b uplift package for Poonch division

RAKALAKOT (INP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has announced Rs4 billion development package, in a bid to promote the scenic beauty and positive image of Poonch division.

The package aims to highlight the region's picturesque landscape and promote tourism.

PM Haq announced this while meeting with a delegation from Tain area of Poonch, led by Sardar Mumtaz and assured his

full support for the construction of the Tain Majeed Gula to Thorar Road. He emphasized the need for good governance and criticized previous rulers for failing to address the region's problems. The PM stressed the importance of promoting a positive image of Poonch division and urged the delegation to organize festivals to boost tourism. He also expressed concern over negative propaganda on social media and its impact on society, calling for a long-term plan to tackle unemployment.

## Chairman Senate greets newly elected Iran President

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, extended his felicitations to Mr. Masoud Pezeshkian, the newly elected president of Iran.

Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani expressed hope that Pakistan and Iran's historic ties would further strengthen under new leadership, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration between the two nations in promoting regional stability and prosperity.



RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi laying floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada in ANF Headquarters.

## PM pays tributes to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed (NH) on his 25th martyrdom day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid tributes to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) on the 25th anniversary of his martyrdom day.

In a statement issued by the PM Office, the prime minister said Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed showed great courage and bravery and sacrificed his life for the country's security. He said Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed's great sacrifice symbolized Pakistan armed forces' unwavering resolve and dedication to protecting the country.

The prime minister said that Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed and his family were a source of pride for the entire Pakistani nation.

He also saluted the passion and sense of duty of every Pakistani soldier who was dedicated to protecting the country's borders, from the deep seas of the Arabian Sea to the harsh cold of Siachen.

He vowed that the Pakistani nation would never forget the great sacrifices of its martyrs who had sacrificed their lives for the country.

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## School Meals Program to be extended to Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Food Programme (WFP), the Government of Balochistan, and the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) are partnering to extend the successful School Meals Program to Balochistan.

This partnership aims to improve the nutrition and education of thousands of children across the province, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

The program will provide nutritious meals to students in targeted schools, promoting better health, education, and overall well-being.

## Hefty electricity bills making lives miserable

ISLAMABAD (INP): An anchor of a private TV channel in a report disclosed alarming revelations regarding the heavy electricity bills. The report revealed that the common people are grappling with the heavy electricity bills but on the other hand, the president, prime minister and CJP are provided with unlimited electricity units.

Even after retirement, the president of Pakistan is provided with 2,000 free electricity units per month. After the president's death, his spouse also receives

2,000 free electricity units. The prime minister of Pakistan is also provided with unlimited free electricity.

The Chief Justice receives 2,000 free electricity units per month during and after their term.

The poor are so distressed by the hefty electricity bills that they are attempting suicides. Recently, a rickshaw driver named Muhammad attempted to commit suicide by sprinkling petrol after receiving an electricity bill of over 19,000 rupees.

## 22 peons working under single Assistant Director in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): As many as 22 peons are working under the administrative control of one Assistant Director in a subordinate government department of the province, Chief Minister Balochistan was told in a meeting held here at CM Secretariat the other day.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti was told that there are 22 peons recruited in previous government who are working under one Assistant Director in Environmental Protection Agency and drawing salaries.

Besides, he was briefed about the number of ghost employees not performing duties and causing

massive loss to the national exchequer.

The chief minister upon revelation directed the authorities concerned to take stern action against those causing loss to the national kitty.

It merits mentioning here that Balochistan is marred with the issues of ghost employees, extra recruitment and trend of not attending offices. It merits mentioning here that Balochistan is marred with the issues of ghost employees, extra recruitment and trend of not attending offices. The CM said, "Unnecessary recruitments were made in the past, this trend will be discouraged at any cost."

## Pakistani scientist to be one of the first recipients of Saudi citizenship

RIYADH (INP): A Pakistani scientist, who was raised and graduated from a medical university in England, has been named among the first recipients of Saudi citizenship, according to a list published by the financial news portal Argam.

As part of its Vision 2030 initiative, Saudi Arabia has opened up its citizenship to highly skilled professionals in an effort to attract and retain exceptional global talent to en-

hance the kingdom's economic and social development.

A royal decree was issued in November 2021, allowing individuals in specialized fields such as science, medicine, culture, sports, and technology to apply for Saudi citizenship.

One of the individuals mentioned in the list is Dr. Mehmoed Khan, who earned his medical degree from the University of Liverpool Medical School in England.



QUETTA: National Party Chief, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch along with Zahoar Agha, Former Governor Balochistan, Naseem-ur Rehman Khan Mulakhel, Adviser on Environment and Climate Change to Chief Minister and others inaugurating the My Abbas Industry in Quetta.