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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing National Assembly Session on situation in Palestine.

Pakistan observes mourning day in solidarity with Palestine Public fury to boil over if Zionist state not held accountable for bloodshed in Palestine: PM warns

NA passes resolution unanimously to condemn Israeli oppression

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday strongly condemning the unabated bloodshed of Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation forces and the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, warned that the lava of public anger would get out of control if the Zionist state was not held accountable. The Zionist state has crossed all the limits of crimes... The lava of public anger is boiling... If justice does not prevail and the Zionist state killing innocent people is not held to account, the lava of public fury will be in no one's control. It will risk the annihilation of world's peace and development," the prime minister said addressing the National Assembly after the House unanimously passed a resolution calling Haniyeh's killing a 'deliberate conspiracy to sabotage' Gaza ceasefire efforts and condemning the ongoing Israeli "state oppression and brutality" in Gaza.

The prime minister, who earlier also highlighted the issue in the cabinet meeting chaired by him a while ago and coalition parties meeting on Thursday, said the whole

Muslim world including the Pakistani nation was grieved over Ismail Haniyeh's killing. Thanking the members from both sides of the aisle for evolving a consensus on the resolution, he said the parliament's voice would resonate the world over to shock the enemies of Pakistan and strengthen its friends.

He highlighted that the Palestinian people were suffering the worst bloodshed by the Zionist state for the last nine months which killed around 40,000 people including thousands of women and children.

"The cities have turned into cemeteries. The cries have taken over the joys and smiles of the playing children. Palestine is giving a deserted look," the prime minister said and questioned the inaction and helplessness of the world to end the Israeli oppression. He said not only the Muslims rather every peace-loving human being, regardless of faith or creed, was questioning the non-implementation of the international laws and human rights charters for which the world bodies including the United Nations were created.

Cabinet approves Rs. 5 million aid package for each family of missing persons

Law Ministers says special committee to examine genuine cases of missing persons; Aid package approved after cabinet reviewed reports; Cabinet also approves signing of MoU to enhance trade cooperation with China

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday said that the federal cabinet had approved a support package for the families of the missing persons under which they would be given financial and legal assistance.

He said that each family of the missing persons would be given a grant of Rs5 million to address their financial troubles.

Addressing a press conference, the minister said that the federal cabinet has approved the recommendations of two committees set up on the issue of missing persons. It has also been decided to take measures including giving relief and legislation to stop the incidents of disappearances in future, he said.

The law minister said that the cabinet has decided

to constitute a committee to prepare a mechanism for financial assistance to the affected families.

Furthermore, the National Database Regulatory Authority (NADRA) and revenue authorities would be given instructions to address the problems of these families related to heirship and property.

He said that due to the terrorism, the country had been facing various internal challenges, adding that there were several complex reasons behind the incidents of disappearances.

Azam Nazeer said that the state institutions have also extended positive cooperation and they wanted to address this issue under legal framework.

He said that the government has taken strict actions to resolve the issue of miss-



ing persons. A number of cases were addressed through the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (COIED), he said.

Meanwhile the Federal

Minister Shehbaz Sharif, on Friday approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Trade Promotion Cooperation to enhance trade between China and Pakistan.

The decision was made on the recommendation of the Ministry of Commerce. The MoU was aimed at boosting bilateral trade with focus on several key areas such as smart phone production, new energy vehicles, textiles, agricultural

product processing, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and information technology.

The Federal Government also okayed the enactment of legislation concerning the charter of the National University of Modern Languages, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training.

The cabinet also approved the bill for establishing King Hammad University of Nursing and Associated Medical Sciences being established in cooperation with Bahrain on the recommendation of the ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. The university will impart education in Pakistan to meet modern day challenges.



ISLAMABAD: President, Asif Ali Zardari exchanging views with Syed Ali Khan, Acting Chairman Senate during meeting held at Aitwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad.

Senate deputy chairman calls on President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman of Senate Syed Ali Khan on Friday called on President Asif Ali Zardari here.

In the meeting, they discussed the overall situation in the country and the legislative matters of the Senate, according to a President House press release.

Khawaja Asif says PTI's claims of forming govt are hollow, unwarranted

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Friday ruled out any possibility for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to hold the reins of government anytime soon. Taking a jibe at PTI founder Imran Khan's sister, Aleema Khan, the minister said that Khan's sister's tone and tenor in her recent press talk was directed at requests to the establishments for talks, adding that no one would talk to them until they were taken to justice for orchestrating May 9 violence.

"Imran Khan was denigrating his involvement in May 9 incidents earlier, but finally he took the responsibility of the events. PM Shehbaz had also extended an olive branch to the PTI in the National Assembly.

20 injured in Qila Saifullah road accident

QILA SAIFULLAH (APP): Twenty persons were injured in a road accident that took place near Kan Mahtarzi area of Qila Saifullah district of Balochistan region, tv channels quoting Levies authorities reported on Friday.

According to details, a rashly driven passenger coach was crossing the Kan Mahtarzi area when it plunged into a deep ditch.

President Zardari grieves rain-related losses, urges swift action to aid affected

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and damage to properties caused by rain-related incidents across various regions of the country.

In a statement issued by the President House, he conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. The president underscored the urgency of accelerating relief efforts to aid those affected.

President Zardari also called for the implementation of precautionary measures to safeguard lives and prevent further rain-related tragedies. He emphasized the importance of timely actions by the administration to ensure the effective drainage of rainwater and mitigate the risks of future incidents.

In his prayers, Zardari sought divine peace for the departed souls and strength for the bereaved families to endure their loss.

BYC ends Gwadar sit-in after successful negotiations

QUETTA (INP): In a major development, the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) has called off its sit-in in Gwadar district after successful negotiations with the government.

The sit-in was called off after an agreement was signed between Dr. Mahrang Baloch, representing the protesters, and the Gwadar district's deputy commissioner, says in media reports.

According to a statement issued by the Balochistan Home Ministry, the agreement has led to the restoration of internet services in the region.

"The ministry vowed to open all the roads for traffic and remove obstacles

from the roads," the deputy commissioner added. "The arrested people would be released after the protesters disperse peacefully," it added.

The ministry has also vowed to reopen all roads for traffic and remove obstacles, ensuring the smooth movement of vehicles. Additionally, the deputy commissioner has assured that arrested individuals will be released once the protesters disperse peacefully.

The sit-in began when protesters were prevented from attending the BYC's meeting in Gwadar, resulting in the dispersal of convoys and injuries to 14 people in Mastung.

PM Shehbaz seeks debt reprofiling from China to secure IMF bailout

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday wrote a letter to China with a request of debt reprofiling for Pakistan to secure the IMF's approval for a \$7 billion economic bailout by next month.

According to reports, Pakistan had sought the reprofiling of more than \$27 billion in debt and liabilities with friendly countries including China, Saudi Arabia and UAE to secure a 37-month IMF bailout package.

"I have written a letter to China, it's a matter of public domain now, for [debt] reprofiling," said the prime minister while chairing a cabinet meeting on Friday.

The World Bank defines the debt reprofiling as "modifications of the agree-

gate schedule of future country repayments through refinancing, debt substitution, or renegotiations."

The process can help a country to mitigate the currency risk that often exacerbates debt sustainability issues. The prime minister also lauded the friendly ties with China.

"Nobody was ready to invest in our energy sector at the time, but China stepped in and began CPEC, it was the only country to intervene," said the prime minister, while commending the role of China in developing Pakistan's infrastructure.

A day earlier, a 12-member high-powered Chinese delegation also called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Parliamentarians offering funeral prayer of Shaheed Ismail Haniyeh.

MCQ bans commercial activities in residential areas

QUETTA (APP): Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Quetta (MCQ) and Commissioner Quetta Division Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat has issued directives to ban various activities in the territory of provincial capital.

The Administrator has prohibited the commercial activities in residential areas of Quetta and the residential buildings would not be used for commercial purposes.

The civic body has also proscribed the construction of commercial buildings and residential flats on agricultural land alongside the roads under construction of Quetta Development Package.

The establishment of commercial centers on land adjacent to roads constructed in Quetta Development Package without getting certificate/NOC from Deputy Commissioner Office Quetta will be prohibited.

The metropolitan corporation has restricted the construction of commercial buildings, plazas, flats in the city without prior approval and NOC from competent authority under Building Code and Balochistan Building Control and Town Planning Rules.

PM, Parliamentarians offer Ismail Haniyeh's funeral prayer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, members of the Federal Cabinet and the Parliamentarians on Friday offered the funeral prayer in absence of Ismail Haniyeh, the Chief of the Political Bureau of Hamas, martyred in Tehran.

The funeral prayer was held across the country as part of the government's decisions, taken on Thursday which also included the observance of a day of mourning.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, and leaders of the ruling coalition as well as the opposition parties also offered the funeral prayer.

FS briefs diplomats on situation in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the run up to the fifth 'Youm-e-Istehsal', Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi on Friday briefed the Islamabad-based diplomats on the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In the meeting, he underscored the grave consequences of India's actions of 5 August 2019 from the perspective of international law, human rights, and peace and security, a statement issued by the Foreign Office said.



QUETTA: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh enquiring about health of traffic Head Constable Mustafa Khan, injured in Pishin, at Trauma Center

Shafqat Abbas appointed as Director General PID Lahore Regional Office

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move, the Government of Pakistan has appointed seasoned information officer Shafqat Abbas, a Grade 20 official in the Information Group, as the Director General of the Press Information Department (PID) Regional Office in Lahore. This appointment, effective from July 15, 2024, underscores the government's commitment to strengthening its information dissemination machinery.

A distinguished and accomplished officer, Shafqat Abbas brings a wealth of experience to his new role, having served in various high-profile positions within the Ministry of Information and its affiliated departments and organizations.

His illustrious career includes stints as Director Home Publicity in PID Islamabad, Deputy Director General Information Service Academy, and



Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Additionally, he has had the privilege of serving as PRO to former Prime Ministers Shaukat Aziz and Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, as well as Director/PSO in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Prior to this appointment, he held the position of Director General of PID Lahore Regional Office, further solidifying his reputation as a seasoned information management expert.



QUETTA: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

NA Defence body expresses affirmation to armed forces for defending territorial integrity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Expressing affirmation, the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence unanimously appreciated the Armed Forces for preserving and defending the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan.

The committee resolved that the Armed Forces of Pakistan belong to them and they are with

the Armed Forces.

This resolve was expressed by the Committee in its in camera meeting held on Friday in the Parliament House under the Chairmanship of Member National Assembly (MNA), Fateh Ullah Khan, a news release said.

Earlier the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, briefed the Committee on the organizational struc-

ture and working of the Ministry.

He informed the Committee about the role and responsibilities of the Ministry; assigned to it, under the Rules of Business 1973.

He said that the Ministry plays the role of a bridge between the Government and the Armed Forces in terms of all defence-related matters.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Proscription regime

For over two decades, Pakistan has been proscribing militant groups. But while this list of 'banned' groups has kept expanding, there has been little noticeable reduction in militant activity, apart from temporary periods of calm.

Two fresh entries have been made to Nacta's list of banned groups: the Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group, closely linked to the TTP, and the Baloch separatist Majeed Brigade. Moreover, the state has labelled the proscribed TTP as 'Fitna al Khawarij', a reference to the rebel group dating back to the early Islamic period. But beyond issuing notifications and using historical and religious terms to delegitimise terrorist groups, a deeper probe is needed to ascertain why the state's proscription regime has failed to produce the desired results.

Religiously inspired armed groups are a product of the Zia-era Afghan 'jihad', while nationalist militants with a separatist bent, particularly in Balochistan, have been around for longer. While the sectarian terrorist group Lashkar-i-Jhangvi was banned in 2001 by the Musharraf regime, the general outlawed five militant groups en masse in January 2002. In the febrile post-9/11 geopolitical atmosphere, it was widely believed that the late strongman had acted to keep Pakistan on the right side of the Americans, who had issued the 'with us or against us' ultimatum to foreign states. Regardless of the motivation, some action was taken against jihadi and sectarian groups. Yet 22 years after the event, the list of proscribed outfits has ballooned from five or six to the current 81. The list is an eclectic mix of armed religious outfits, separatists, and NGOs. But again, the key questions are: why does the list keep on growing, and why does militancy continue?

It appears that the state has pursued a flawed approach towards banning groups. After the first round of proscription in 2002, many of the groups took on new names and continued with business as usual. In some cases, their funds were not frozen, and their key leaders remained free men. Even today, some sectarian groups continue to operate with freedom under different names. To truly neutralise the militant threat, only representatives of the state — the military and civil armed forces — should be allowed to bear arms. Moreover, the masterminds and ideologues of terrorist groups need to be prosecuted legally, and all their sources of funding frozen. A complementary effort to neutralise groups promoting extremist ideologies is also required.

Furthermore, the root causes that attract many ordinary citizens to the terrorist cause — injustice, poverty, lack of opportunity — need to be addressed. After the 2002 proscription, this paper had written that the ban "should have a salutary effect on the law and order situation... and lead to... socioeconomic normality". Twenty-two years later, we still await this elusive normality.

The class war

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Working people in Pakistan are literally struggling to breathe. If they seek some relief from the heat by turning on a couple of fans and using a refrigerator (assuming they own one), they will be hit with an electricity bill well in excess of their entire household earnings. To rub salt in their wounds, they are forced to pay through their teeth despite long hours of loadshedding.

It should now be common knowledge that this is all happening because the World Bank and IMF forced the so-called IPPs down our throats in 1994, and we are now stuck with binding agreements to pay these power producers at exorbitant dollar rates. Our own venal ruling class — both khaki supremos and civilian juniors — refuse to pay income tax at all, let alone redistribute wealth, so it is left to the blue- and white-collar working masses to foot the bill.

The IPP scandal is only the tip of a very large iceberg. The government of Pakistan has to meet public debt obligations of \$70 billion over the next three years. This does not include private debt to commercial banks which would make the figures even more unfathomable. Seen thus, the class war against working people will only intensify.

This war includes attacks on livelihoods. Urban sprawl, due in significant part to free-for-all real estate development, is swallowing up more and more agricultural land. Small and landless farmers, as well as non-agricultural castes, are thus increasingly pushed to the wayside, and forced into daily wage work in the metropole, bereft of any social safety net. In villages proper, more and

more of the rural poor are subject to some form of servitude or left to abandon agriculture altogether. Even middle-sized farmers are under attack, as was evidenced by the wheat import scandal which pillaged large parts of the Seraiki belt and parts of other-wise prosperous central Punjab.

The industrial working class, once a relatively powerful entity which could defend itself through trade unions, is on the back foot. This is the odd instance of resistance, workers neither have secure pay, decent working conditions, affordable housing nor other basic amenities.

Beyond 'peaceful', metropolitan Pakistan, another form of the class war is playing out in the long-suffering ethnic peripheries. The border trade in and around towns like Chaman and Taftan which sustains millions of working families is being formally criminalised even while the biggest guns of all continue to make windfall profits from cars to cigarettes and from Iranian petrol to wheat.

Over the past week, the so-called civilian government of Balochistan demonstrated its unerring commitment to colonial statecraft against thousands of peaceful protesters who have sought to gather in Gwadar and other parts of the province. Their crime was only to voice their entirely legitimate demands for economic justice and an end to enforced disappearances.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir and KP, mountainous highlands are being devastated in the name of 'tourism' and 'development'.

Land and mineral grabs are routine, the nexus of state and private capital running amok. Here too wheat subsidies are being

slashed and electricity bills jacked up. While there is heroic resistance to this class war, it tends to be in isolated pockets. This is in large part because there is no shared understanding of class, nation and empire of the kind that once animated progressives across Pakistan's unevenly developed social formation. This is not by chance. The state and its organic intellectuals have diligently cultivated hateful ideologies while clamping down on progressive political workers, artists and intellectuals. Today, a new generation of progressives is fighting for the oppressed in its own way, but there is yet to be a major breakthrough that can transcend palace intrigues and cancel culture that animates the majority of young people.

Today's class war is arguably more intense and harder to resist than in the 20th century when mainstream politics was deeply informed by progressive principles. We should, however, take inspiration from iconic organisations like the National Students Federation and Baloch Students Organisation, which saw the struggle of vibrant trade union and farmers' collectivities in Punjab and other parts of metropolitan Pakistan as part and parcel of the struggle of oppressed ethnic-nations, and aligned themselves with national liberation struggles all over the world, including Vietnam, Palestine, South Africa, and many more.

With class war now playing out on ecological terrains that increasingly places all oppressed peoples into the same boat, perhaps this will provide the impetus for another universalist politics that can bring young people together around a shared vision of the future. -- Courtesy Dawn

Communal richness

Jan-e-Alam Khaki

Sectarianism (firqa parasti) is disdained by most right-thinking people. What, however, needs to be differentiated is firqa and firqa parasti. Firqa (branch or school of thought) is a historical development of a community that has a different perspective from the majority community based on the reading and interpreting of sources, upholding the key ethical principles of the faith as shared by all. Sectarianism or communalism, on the other hand, is an attitude or an orientation where one sees their community as exclusively right, holding the final truth and all others as absolutely wrong and worth condemning.

Communities of interpretation are those that are based on the acceptance of the principle that humans as individuals or as a group living at the same time or in the past, think differently. Although it is said that great minds think alike, it is also true that fools seldom differ!

Thinking differently is surely a sign of creativity based on the fact that humans see things not as they are but as they (communities or individuals) themselves are. We, as individuals or communities, perceive and interpret the outside world based on our own experiences, our internal likes and dislikes, the external influences of friends, elders, teachers, books, etc.

It is not that people create a school of thought deliberately as a result of some conspiracy. Big questions or issues always lead to many opinions and interpretations. Take the example of predestination and free will. Are humans practically predetermined, or do what they are supposed to, because they are pre-pro-

grammed? Or, are they absolutely free to do what they can without any external pressure? Can there be one answer to these questions?

When groups of people take a position for relatively longer, they, over time, form schools of thought, sects, communities or denominations. But the nature of knowledge is such that within the same group there arise people who differ with the position taken, then form their own group, leading to the formation of sub-groups.

So, if we understand humans from this perspective, we do not have to be angry about groups or schools of thought coming into existence with time. If all humans were to think alike, perhaps human societies would not have developed the way they have. We need to perhaps appreciate the hadith attributed to the Prophet (PBUH) that differences among the ummah are a blessing.

Two things make a case for diversity of thought: human constitution (the way we have been made) and the way knowledge is produced. Insofar as humans will be humans, they will continue to differ, unless we all become robots to act alike.

Second, knowledge production is a process of construction and reconstruction. The title of the collection of Allama Iqbal's talks is rightly titled Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.

Imam al-Ghazali wrote Tahafat al-Philosophers (Rejection of the philosophers), a book refuting philosophers and, lo and behold, refuting his ideas, Ibn Tufail, equally an intellectual giant, wrote Tahafat al-Falāsifa (Rejection of the rejection of philosophers). These are examples of deconstruction

and reconstruction of Islamic thought.

This world is to be run by communities of interpretation, sharing their best ideas and developing feasible solutions. Experience tells us that dictators with a messianic image, and the people around them, do terrible long-term damage. Similarly, there may be theological or intellectual dictators who their ideas are 'Urdu ke akhiri kitab'. Gra-ve-yards across the world are filled with those who thought they were super thin-ners. But the world manages to thrive without them.

So, where does this argument take us?

I think that, a) we must take differences as a natural phenomenon, and a historical evolutionary process looking at it as such; b) let us avoid thinking we have the absolute truth and others have only a pack of lies; c) do not compare yourself or your community with others and regard yourself as superior and condemn others as inferior and do not go to the extent of running after their lives just because they have a different way of interpreting things, religious or secular.

Lastly, we need to heed the advice of wiser minds: do not look at who has said something, but look at what has been said. Do not always judge, unless you belong to the judiciary. State your position but be willing to listen to a contrary perspective as well.

Exchange of ideas gives rise to finer thoughts — thesis gives rise to antithesis and both to synthesis. Hence, let us regard the different schools of thought as varieties of intellectual or historical experiences and call them, as Farhad Daftary, an Islamic scholar does, "communities of interpretation". -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

France, Pakistan affirm commitment to deepen economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): France and Pakistan on Friday affirmed their commitment to deepen economic relations, exploring investment opportunities and expanding bilateral trade.

Ambassador of France to Pakistan Mr. Nicolas Galey called on Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervaiz Malik at Finance Division, said press release issued here.

Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik provided an overview of Pakistan's economic progress, highlighting positive trends such as increased foreign exchange reserves, decreased inflation and a

robust stock market, all corroborated by recent ratings from international agencies.

He outlined key reforms underway, including privatization initiatives, energy sector advancements, and restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

The discussion also covered the digitization initiative of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), being implemented with support from McKinsey to enhance tax administration and compliance.

The minister of state highlighted the budget for 2024-25, focusing on strategies to expand the tax

base by integrating untaxed segments and encouraging non-filers to comply.

Significant projects in customs and inland revenue aimed at improving digitization and operational efficiency were also discussed.

Ambassador Nicolas Galey expressed appreciation for the excellent reforms undertaken by Pakistan and offered technical support from France in areas of mutual interest. He recognized the progress made by the Government of Pakistan in stabilizing the economy and expressed confidence in the potential for further collaboration.

Mobilink bank launches Pak first women-led incubator program

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank strengthens its commitment to women's economic empowerment with the launch of Pakistan's first-ever industry-specific incubator program designed exclusively for women entrepreneurs. This initiative falls under the umbrella of the Bank's ongoing Women Inspirational Network (WIN) program. The WIN Incubator program aims to empower 25 women entrepreneurs by equipping them with knowledge in core business areas including ideation, planning, business management, financial literacy and marketing. The graduating startups will gain access to a professional network and guaranteed Bim-e-Hawwa loans to fuel their ventures. The most promising startups will compete for a PKR 4 million investment to bring their startup ideas to life.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a

global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of world's population.

Sumera Abbasi, Executive Director of TiE Islamabad and a recognized leader in the Pakistani startup ecosystem, has been appointed to head the WIN incubator.

"Mobilink Bank is transforming the entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan with our WIN Incubator program," said Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, Interim CEO Mobilink Bank. "This initiative is aimed at breaking barriers for small women-owned businesses by providing essential tools and resources. Through mentorship, training, and a supportive network, we wish to empower women to turn their dreams into successful businesses and consequently play an integral role in the country's economic development."

PSX turns bullish, gains 485 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Friday, gaining 485.68 points, a positive change of 0.62 percent, closing at 78,225.98 points against 77,740.31 points on the last working day. A total of 443,483,358 shares were traded during the day as compared to 278,986,985 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 20.497 billion against Rs 13.094 billion on the last trading day.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where six ships, Maersk Cape-Town, MSC Positano, Athenian, Canopus, Ds Ocean and Lusail carrying Container, LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Terminals, Engro Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Thursday.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance & Revenue Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik was called on by the Ambassador of France to Pakistan Mr. Nicolas Galey.

Import of 100,000MT urea approved for smooth supply, price stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday chaired a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet which approved the import of 100,000 Metric Tons (MT) urea. The committee decided on a proposal submitted by the Ministry of Industries and Production aimed at ensuring sufficient supplies of urea in the market.

"This will also ensure stability of prices of fertilizer during the cropping season," a Finance Division news release said. Among others, the meeting was attended by Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Petroleum Musadik Masood Malik, Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Governor SBP, Chairman SECP, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, MD PASSCO, Chairman TCP.

Short-term inflation falls by 0.12 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.12 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on August 1st, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

As compared to the

SBP injects Rs 9.567 trillion into market

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs 9,567.25 billion into the market on Friday through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah-based Open Market Operation (OMO).

According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted an Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on August 02, 2024, for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 44 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs9,482.25 billion.

Rupee on steady recovery

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Friday continued its recovery and appreciated by 16 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.50 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.66.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.2 and Rs 280.4 respectively.

Envoy-designate sees US as 'most attractive' destination for Pakistani products

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's ambassador-designate to the United States Rizwan Saeed Sheikh on Friday said America was the 'most attractive' market for Pakistan and "we have to focus on it to explore more and more economic opportunities."

He expressed these views while talking to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari during his visit to the chamber, a news release said.

He said that, as a professional diplomat, the foremost responsibility would be to bring both countries further closer.

The ambassador-designate viewed the United States as a consumer society which was why it enjoyed the vital potential of trade and economic connectivity and "I will focus on more and more liaison to facilitate the holding of exhibitions to showcase Pakistani products."

Sheikh said he was convinced that Pakistan would successfully overcome its existing economic difficulties and would also approach the Pakistani-Americans irrespective of their political affiliations to persuade them to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan.



FAISALABAD: A labourer working in a local industry in the city.

Pakistani, Chinese experts discuss enhanced economic growth, connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Experts from Pakistani think-tanks and China on Friday participated in a seminar to discuss potential ways to enhance collaboration between the two countries in multiple fields, particularly economic growth and connectivity. The event, titled "Pakistan Economy & Growth: Learning from Chinese Experience," was organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), marking a significant step towards strengthening

economic ties between China and Pakistan.

The seminar was aimed at facilitating an exchange of knowledge and optimum practices between the two nations, according to a news release. In her opening remarks, PIDE's Pro VC Dr Durre Nayab emphasized the importance of such interactions in fostering growth and development. She highlighted the need to adopt strategies that have contributed to China's economic success, tailored to Pakistan's unique context.

Health ministers order FIRs against govt offices found with dengue larvae

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir have issued orders for registration of cases against the government offices where dengue larvae have been detected.

The directive came during the 6th meeting on dengue, infectious diseases and disaster management at the Department of Specialised Healthcare and Medical Education.

Khawaja Salman, Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, emphasised the urgency of heightened vigilance following recent rains to prevent a dengue outbreak. He urged the administration of sensitive districts to intensify their efforts,

dengue surveillance in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad and called for strict adherence to the meeting's resolutions. He assured that the health department has a robust plan to curb dengue and other diseases, highlighting that government hospitals have adequate dengue medication supplies.

Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir expressed his concerns, noting the heightened risk of dengue due to the monsoon rains. He announced the launch of a pilot volunteer service project in Shalimar Town, Lahore, aimed at bolstering anti-dengue efforts at the grassroots level. He mentioned the use of red warning stickers on homes with detected dengue larvae and underscored the importance of reporting suspected dengue cases from private hospitals and

laboratories through the Punjab Healthcare Commission. He also called for increased coordination with electric supply companies and railways and regular DERC and TERC meetings.

In the briefing, Khawaja Nazir was informed that Punjab had reported three dengue cases in the past 24 hours and nine in the past week. From January to August 2023, 15,182 cases were reported, compared to 220 cases since January 2024.

Health Secretary Ali Jan Khan provided a comprehensive briefing on infectious and epidemic diseases, supported by insights from officers of the Special Branch, PITB, and other departments.

The meeting was attended by secretaries of various departments and all commissioners and deputy commissioners via video-link.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider and a large congregation offer absentia funeral prayers for Ismail Haniyeh at Masjid Shahada.

KP govt adopts zero tolerance policy against corruption: Barrister Saif

PESHAWAR (APP): Adviser to the Chief Minister for Information, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif here Friday said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against corruption and strict action would be taken against corrupt and commission mafia.

Addressing a press conference along with Communication and Works Department's Minister Shakeel Khan here at the press club, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said that the concerned

ministers and departments would be held responsible in case of any report about financial irregularity or corruption.

He urged people and journalists to identify corruption and financial irregularity so that strict action would be taken against the responsible officials.

Provincial Minister for Communication and Works Department Shakeel Khan said that corruption was unacceptable and Secretary C&W was removed as he was not satisfied with him.

CM grieved over loss of lives in rains

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed a deep sense of sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives due to electrocution, collapse of roofs during torrential rains.

The CM expressed her heartfelt sympathies and condolence with the bereaved families over the tragic incidents.

She directed to provide the best medical treatment facilities to the injured persons due to collapse of roofs.

Governor flays attack on judges in Tank

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday strongly condemned the firing incident on judges' vehicles in Tank District.

In a statement, the governor expressed profound sorrow over the loss of two policemen who were providing security to the judges. He conveyed his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families of the slain officers. Governor Kundi also offered prayers for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and patience for their bereaved families. He extended his best wishes for the early recovery of those injured in the attack.

CM vows to complete 600 development projects by December

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Friday met with parliamentarians and party leaders from all four regions of the province. The meetings focused on resolving public issues, public welfare projects and rehabilitation of infrastructure affected by monsoon rains.

The chief minister announced that over 600 development projects nearing completion across the province, would be finished by December this year. He emphasized the importance of prioritizing

ongoing development projects and devolving project authorities to the local level. He directed the elected representatives to propose projects based on local needs and priorities, ensuring wise use of public taxes. He also announced that these development projects would only be inaugurated when they were fully completed and providing public services.

The chief minister said that he was working to strengthen local government institutions to resolve public issues locally.



LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari addressing a ceremony titled "Problems faced by women journalists: progress and solutions", organised by the National Women Journalists Forum (NWJF).

Female journalists have proven their mettle despite hardships: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said that the female journalists in Pakistan have proven their mettle despite unfavourable conditions.

She expressed these views while addressing a ceremony titled "Problems faced by women journalists: progress and solutions", organised by the National Women Journalists Forum (NWJF) here on Friday. The event was attended by NWJF President Farzana Chaudhry, Bushra Khaliq, NWJF Senior Vice Presidents Kanwal Naseem,

Sidra Asim, Darakhshanda Alamdar and senior female journalists Fakhria Tehreem.

In her address, Azma Bukhari said that the Punjab government would always stand with them to help solve their issues. "I am happy that female journalists have formed their first national organisation and it is a positive step toward women empowerment." Referring to her fake video, she said that many people advised her to keep silent, but she raised voice on the issue keeping in mind other women's social rights.

Governor KP directs Edwards College admin to address financial, medical, audit objections in 15 days

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting of the Board of Governors of Edwards College was held at the Governor House on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi.

The meeting gave 15 days to address objections related to the college's financial accounts, new discipline, medical fund, interest-free loans and audit issues of the College. The Board conditionally approved Edwards College's annual surplus budget for fiscal year 2024-25.

During the meeting, detailed briefings were provided on the College's annual budget, revised estimates and

expenditures. The Board was also updated on the College's income, resources, admissions status, pension fund, endowment fund and other financial accounts.

The College administration was directed to compile data on the performance of alumni, including those who have succeeded in CSS exams, gained admission to foreign universities, and those representing prestigious medical and engineering colleges. The Finance and Planning Committee of the College was given 15 days to address objections related to the college's financial accounts, new discipline, medical fund, interest-free loans and audit issues.

PU sets up summer camp in China

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University Confucius Institute set up summer camp in China in which a group of 19 students from various Pakistani universities embarked on a captivating two-week adventure, exploring China's vibrant culture and rich history.

Under the expert guidance of Chinese Director at Jiangxi University of Science and Technology (JXUST) Professor Cai JinBao the students experienced a grand reception in Guangzhou, high-speed train ride, Chinese calligraphy, Kung Fu classes, the essence of traditional arts, historic exploration, visits to the fish canal, Wei's Family House and local museums to get deep insights into China's storied past.

City highlights included tours of Guangzhou tower, shenzhen bay park and a full-day exploration of Zhuhai.

MPAs laud CM's public welfare initiatives

LAHORE (APP): Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb Friday held separate meetings with the Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs) Punjab in which matters pertaining to party activities, ongoing development projects in the respective constituencies and political situation were discussed. Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb apprised them about the steps being undertaken by CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif for progress and uplift of the people and the province.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the implementation of the record development

budget is being carried out in a proactive manner and funds have been allocated in the budget for the development schemes. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif is personally overseeing development works. No compromise will be made on the quality, speed and timely completion of the development projects, she added.

The Assembly Members appreciated the steps being taken by CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif for launching development projects along with reducing price-hikes and provision of relief to the people of the province.

International News

26 detainees freed in biggest post-Cold War prisoner swap

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Jailed US Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and ex-US Marine Paul Whelan were among two dozen detainees from the United States, Russia and a number of their allies freed on Thursday in the biggest prisoner exchange since the Cold War.

The White House said the US had negotiated the complex trade with Russia and other countries. It said eight prisoners held in the West were being sent back to Russia.

Germany confirmed that they included Vadim Krasikov, convicted of murdering an exiled dissident in Berlin.

Turkiye, which coordinated the exchange, said 10 prisoners, including two minors, had been moved to Russia, 13 to Germany and three to the United States. Also involved in the swap were Poland, Slovenia, Norway and Belarus.

"After the completion of the ratification procedures of the parties, the health checks ... the prisoners were placed on the planes of the countries to which they would be travelling with the approval and instructions of the MIT," the National Intelligence Agency (MIT) said in a statement. It said it had authorised the return of the aircraft.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov did not specifically confirm a swap but was quoted by the state news agency TASS as saying that, in principle, "all our enemies should stay there (abroad), and all those who are not our enemies should return".

In the last major exchange in 2010, 14 prisoners were exchanged.

In December 2022, Russia traded US basketball star Brittney Griner, sentenced to nine years for having vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her

luggage, for arms dealer Viktor Bout, serving a 25-year sentence in the US.

Krasikov is a colonel in the Russian FSB security service who was serving a life sentence in Germany for murdering an exiled Chechen-Georgian dissident in a Berlin park. President Vladimir Putin had indicated he wanted him back.

Rico Krieger, a German sentenced to death in Belarus on terrorism charges, was pardoned on Tuesday by President Alexander Lukashenko, a close Putin ally. He was also among those released, along with Russian opposition politician Ilya Yashin, Turkey said.

Reuters footage showed a Russian government plane on the ground in the Turkish capital Ankara.

Whelan and Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian-British dissident, both jailed in Russia.



Mourners shout slogans in the grounds close to the Imam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Mosque during the final prayers for Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh during his funeral in the Qatari capital Doha.

Slain Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh's funeral held in Qatar; Israel warned of revenge

Monitoring Desk
DOHA: The funeral of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh took place in Qatar on Friday following his assassination two days ago in Iran's capital Tehran — one in a series of killings of senior figures in the Palestinian group as the fighting between Israel and Hamas in Gaza rages.

Mourners at the ceremony in Imam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Mosque, the Gulf emirate's largest, just north of the capital Doha, included Khaled Meshal, who is

tipped to be the new Hamas leader. Other senior Hamas officials and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani also attended. Mourners lined up for funeral prayers inside the mosque while others prayed on mats outside in temperatures that reached 44 degree Celsius.

Haniyeh's coffin, draped in the Palestinian flag, was carried across the mosque past hundreds of people along with the coffin of his bodyguard, who was killed in the same attack in Tehran.

Turkiye blocks Nato-Israel cooperation over Gaza

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Turkiye has blocked cooperation between Nato and Israel since October because of the crisis in Gaza and said the alliance should not engage with Israel as a partner until there is an end to the conflict, sources familiar with the process said.

Israel carries the status of Nato partner and has fostered close relations with the military alliance and some of its members.

Bangladesh releases student leaders

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: Bangladesh police freed six student leaders on Thursday whose campaign against civil service job quotas sparked deadly nationwide unrest, as the government looked to calm tensions and forestall fresh demonstrations. Students Against Discrimination staged nationwide rallies last month that ended in a police crackdown and the deaths of at least 206 people, according to an AFP count of police and hospital data. The group's leadership were among thousands picked up in the police dragnet that followed some of the worst unrest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year tenure.

Excessive force leading to unlawful killings in India: UN panel

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations Human Rights Committee has expressed concern over the use of excessive force in "disturbed" territories in India, leading to unlawful killings.

The UN committee, in a report released this week, noted that certain provisions of India's Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) and counter-terrorism laws do not comply with the International

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

The committee expressed alarm over the prolonged application of these laws in "disturbed areas" such as districts in Manipur, the occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Assam.

It noted with concern that this extended enforcement has led to "widespread and severe human rights violations, including excessive use of force resulting in unlawful killings.

UN Security Council members condemn Israel's assassination of Hamas leader

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: UN Security Council members condemned the assassination of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh in the Iranian capital Tehran, while permanent representatives of the US and UK blamed Iran for destabilizing the region. The Council convened for an emergency session on the killing of Haniyeh at the request of Iran, which was supported by Russia, Algeria and China. Speaking at the session, Chinese Ambassador Fu Cong said China strongly condemns the assassination of Haniyeh.

Calling the incident "a blatant attempt to sabotage peace efforts," Cong stressed that "China is deeply worried about an exacerbation of the upheaval in the region that this incident may trigger."

Similarly, Algeria's envoy to the UN, Amar Bendjama, said: "We are on

the precipice of catastrophe," adding that Israel's attack was "an act of terror" that violated international law and the sovereignty of Iran. "This is not merely an attack on one man. It is a vicious assault on the very foundations of diplomatic relations, the sanctity of state sovereignty and the principles that underpin our global order," he said.

Bendjama strongly condemned the "terrorist act perpetrated by the Israeli occupying power."

Saying that Israel's "blotchy, scorched-earth policy" is leading to a "tide of violence flooding Gaza, the West Bank, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and now the Islamic Republic of Iran," he asked: "Where will this madness end?"

He also called on the international community not to remain silent "as innocent blood is spilled and international law is shredded to pieces."

US says strikes on Tehran, Beirut 'don't help' tensions

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: An Israeli strike that killed a Hezbollah commander in Beirut and the killing of the political leader of Hamas in Tehran "don't help" regional tensions but there are no signs of an imminent wider conflict, the White House said Wednesday.

"These reports over the last 24, 48 hours certainly don't help with the temperature going down," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters when asked about the attacks.

"We're obviously concerned about escalation," Kirby downplayed the risk of an immediate descent into the all-out war that the region has feared since Hamas's October 7 attacks on Israel and the ensuing war in Gaza.

"We don't really think that an escalation is inevitable and there's no

signs that an escalation is imminent," he said. But he said Washington was carefully monitoring developments. "It's not like we're brushing off concerns at all. We're watching this very, very closely and it's been a chief concern of the president," said Kirby.

The strikes on two of Israel's arch foes came less than a week after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the White House for talks with President Joe Biden aimed at pushing a ceasefire in Gaza. Hamas blamed an Israeli strike for the killing of its political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

Israel declined to comment on the attack but Netanyahu on Wednesday said his country had delivered "crushing blows" to its enemies, and explicitly mentioned the killing of Hezbollah leader Fuad Shukur in south Beirut.

Antony Blinken hails closer ties with Mongolia in rare visit

Monitoring Desk
ULAANBAATAR: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Mongolia at the end of a 10-day tour of Asia, hailing growing ties with the landlocked democracy sandwiched between authoritarian powers China and Russia. His long tour, which also took him to Southeast Asia and Japan, has been aimed at hammering home US support for allies and countering China's influence in the region — even if Washington insists it is not pursuing a policy of containment against Beijing.

During a meeting in the Laos capital Vientiane at the end of last week, Blinken raised the issue with Chinese counterpart Wang Yi during "frank and productive" exchanges, ac-

ording to Washington.

In Japan and the Philippines, Blinken and US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin announced closer military and defence ties with the countries in the face of what they described as Beijing's "provocations", particularly in the South China Sea.

In Ulaanbaatar on Thursday, Blinken stressed the US approach was not "against any one country". "It's for a common vision that we share for what the future should look like," he said during a press conference.

"And yes, part of that common vision is clearly the freedom... for any country to make its own decisions, to make its own choices about the future," he said.

Ex-BBC presenter pleads guilty to indecent child pictures charges

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Former BBC TV news presenter Huw Edwards, a household name in Britain, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to three counts of making indecent pictures of children. Edwards, 62, who was the BBC's highest-paid journalist and top news anchor until he quit in April, arrived at London's Westminster Magistrates' Court wearing sunglasses through a throng of photographers and camera crews. After confirming his identity, he was asked if he wished to indicate a plea to the three charges, which relate to three different categories of indecent images. Edwards said: "Guilty". Judge Paul Goldspring said Edwards would be sentenced on Sept 16.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presiding over a meeting of Economic Coordination Committee (ECC).

Ahsan announces National Task Force on Productivity, Quality and Innovation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday announced to establish a National Task Force dedicated to enhancing Productivity, Quality and Innovation (PQI) across all sectors of the economy for revitalizing Pakistan's economic landscape.

"This initiative, set to be launched in August 2024 — coinciding with the month of Pakistan's independence — signals a significant step toward addressing the nation's critical economic challenges, fostering a culture of innovation, and unlocking new avenues for growth," a news release said.

The Task Force, which initially gained widespread support from global and domestic stakeholders during its conceptual phase in the previous tenure, faced setbacks due to political disruptions in 2018.

However, with renewed determination and a clear vision, Ahsan Iqbal said he was committed to steering this initiative back on track, fostering an environment where innovation and productivity advancements can drive substantial economic progress.

The Task Force's mandate is the promotion of innovation as a driving force behind economic growth.

By encouraging creative solutions, new technologies and cutting-edge practices across industries, the Task Force aims to position Pakistan as a leader in innovation.

This includes fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, supporting research

Warns against politicising issue of electricity bill Reducing electricity prices a top priority for PML-N, allies: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated on Friday that the government was focused on providing relief to electricity consumers, as reducing electricity prices was a key agenda for PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the government, and its allies.

In his initial remarks at the Cabinet meeting, Sharif emphasized that the government needed to lower electricity prices to boost the country's exports. He pointed out that without this reduction, neither the agricultural sector nor the industrial sector could expand effectively. Competitiveness in the industry was directly linked to lower electricity prices, he remarked.

Sharif criticized the use of electricity issues for political gain, calling it disrespectful to the public. He highlighted that the nation sought a resolution to this problem. Addressing inefficiencies and corruption within the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) and the Energy Sector, and making these institutions efficient, would set the country on the right path.

He assured that the government was aware of the people's problems and doing its utmost to address them.

Shehbaz noted that the PML-N government had resolved the 20-hour daily load-shedding issue. At that time, few were willing to invest significantly in electricity production, with China being the only country showing interest in investing in power generation. In 2015, the prime minister mentioned that some of the fastest power-producing plants in history were installed. The government set up four LNG plants, each with a capacity of 500 MW and a turbine efficiency of 64 percent. Credit for these cost-effective plants went to Nawaz Sharif. At that time, NEPRA's tariff was \$8.5, and the plants were built for just \$450,000. These agreements should not be criticized, as they represented a sincere effort to address Pakistan's most pressing challenge.

He instructed ministers and government officials to inform the public about the steps taken by successive PML-N governments to eliminate load-shedding in the country.

The government had extended the last date for paying electricity bills by 10 days, said the prime minister. Likewise, the electricity tariff for the country's industry had been reduced by Rs 8.5 per unit. A Rs 170 billion subsidy was being provided to the industry in this regard.

The prime minister said that the government was making collective efforts to address electricity theft.



QUETTA: Activists of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) are holding protest rally against assassination of Hamas Leader Ismail Haniyeh, at Mannan Chowk.

CCOP approves 24 entities for privatization programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Cabinet Committee on Privatization (CCOP) Friday approved 24 entities for the Privatization Programme (2024-29) and decided that the inclusion of other State Owned Entities (SOEs) in the privatization programme will be taken upon completion of the review by the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSEs) regarding categorization of Strategic/Essential SOEs.

After deliberating on the privatization policy guidelines, the CCOP considered 84 SOEs reflected in the federal footprint SOEs consolidated report FY2020-22 in detail in light of the SOE Act and Policy.

The meeting of the committee was held here with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in the chair.

The meeting was also attended by other members of the committee including the Finance Minister, Minister for Privatization, Minister for Commerce, Minister for Power, Minister for Industries & Production, Minister of State Finance and Revenue besides Federal Secretaries of various Ministries and Divisions.

The CCOP was presented with a phased Privatization Programme (2024-29) by the Ministry of Privatization, based on the recommendations of the PC Board, in terms of Section 5(b) of the Privatisation Commission Ordinance 2000.

The CCOP recommended that priority should be accorded to reducing the federal footprint in commercial space and limiting it to the strategic and essential SOEs only. CCOP emphasized that even SOEs making profits would also be considered for privatization.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan, Khalid Magsi and Senator Abdul Qadir meeting with acting Chairman Senate Seydal Khan to condole death of his mother-in-law.

People urged to observe Black Day on August 5

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has called upon the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to observe August 5, Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir, as Black Day to send a strong message to the world that India is an illegal occupier of their homeland and that Kashmiris will persist in their struggle for the United Nations-granted right to self-determination.

The appeal was made through separate messages issued in Srinagar on behalf of the illegally detained Hurriyat leadership, including APHC Chairman Masarrat Aalam Butt and Shabbir Ahmed Shah, both of whom are languishing in New Delhi's notorious

President vehemently flays Tank terror attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday strongly condemned firing incident on a convoy of judges in Tank, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to a press release from the President's House, President Zardari expressed his condolences over the martyrdom of security personnel, offering his sympathies to the families of the deceased and praying for their strength during this difficult time.

President Zardari prayed for the martyred security personnel's elevation in Jannah and affirmed the nation's unwavering commitment to eradicating terrorism.

Mishal Malik appeals world community to 'Save Kashmir from Indian Clutches'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mishal Hussein Malik, the wife of senior Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik Friday urged the global community to intervene and 'Save Kashmir from Indian Clutches as India continuously snatching the basic rights of Kashmiris, including their right to freedom, self-determination, and even their identity.

In her message on PTV news channel related to 'Youm-e-Istehsal day she emphasized the need for global pressure to force India to reverse its illegal actions of August 5, 2019, which have led to a humanitarian crisis and egregious human rights abuses in the region. She appeal seeks to galvanize international support for the Kashmiri people's quest for justice, freedom, and self-determination. Mishal Hussein Malik question to the international community, asking when they would respond to India's blatant snatching of Kashmiris' property, social, and economic rights. She lamented that the world has remained silent as India continues to perpetrate atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), leaving the Kashmiri people vulnerable to exploitation and oppression.

Malik's query highlights the urgency of the situation, as Kashmiris face dispossession, cultural erasure, and economic strangulation, their fundamental rights trampled by India's authoritarian grip. She implores the global community to awaken to the Kashmiris' plight and demand accountability from India for its egregious violations of human rights and international law. Mishal Hussein Malik expressed her gratitude towards Pakistan for its unwavering support for the Kashmiri people, adding, Pakistan consistent stance on the Kashmir issue, saying that their diplomatic boycott and pressure tactics have helped bring international attention.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri says In the last 40 years, Hub has been reduced to ruins

The so-called and anti-people elements that have been in power for forty years are responsible for the backwardness of Hub, who has pushed Hub into stone age.

Independent Report
HUB: For more than four decades, anti-people elements imposed on Hub had turned Hub city into ruins. Those self-interested elements have always robbed the people's rights and worked for their personal interests. These views were expressed by senior leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, Spokesman of President Asif Ali Zardari, elected member from Hub of Provincial Assembly and Advisor for Industries and Crafts Balochistan Mir Ali Hassan Zehri while talking to a delegation of public representatives from Hub. He said that the city has started to change and shine has begun. The credit for this goes to the people of Hub who defeated the occupying mafia for many decades. He said that the so-called representatives imposed for forty years were responsible for the backwardness of Hub, who had pushed Hub into the Stone Age. They did not pay any attention to the development work due to which Hub district could not develop that which was its right. There was no health facility here nor did the condition of the schools improve. He said that Allah made us leaders and gave us the courage to fulfill our promises made to the people of Hub, due to which the development of Hub was not possible. The execution of works is going on rapidly.

On this occasion, the elders and citizens included in the delegation paid tribute to the efforts of Mir Ali Hassan Zehri and said that the people are very happy and satisfied with the way the development works are being done in the hub city. Repairing of streets tiles, construction of roads, supply of clean drinking water and basic facilities like health and education including drainage have never been done. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri not only provided government schemes for the hub but also took steps to provide necessary facilities in many areas at his own expense.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary Barkat Ali, MPA Rehmat Saleh Baloch and Zaid Jan Mandokhail meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Pak makes it mandatory for Afghan truck drivers to keep passports

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistani customs authorities have started enforcing a visa requirement for Afghan cargo truck drivers to enter Pakistan.

However, according to the customs authorities, as per the bilateral agreement, the visa requirement for cargo trucks has been implemented starting August 1. As a result, cargo vehicles without visas have been barred from entering Pakistan through the Torkham border crossing.

In retaliation, the Afghan security authorities have now banned the entry of all types of cargo vehicles from Pakistan into Afghanistan.

Due to this situation, bilateral trade activities have been suspended, and thousands of cargo trucks are now stranded on both sides of the border.

Previously, until July 31st of this year, Afghan cargo truck drivers were provided with temporary entry permits (TAD) to facilitate trade activities with-

Bilawal grieves over loss of lives in monsoon rains

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of lives and property caused by the ongoing monsoon rains in various parts of the country.

The PPP Chairman highlighted that the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has suffered the most significant loss of life, with ten fatalities reported in Kohat district alone. He noted that due to severe weather and lack of communication facilities, many incidents in remote areas of KP remain unreported.

He expressed regret that rain victims in KP are left helpless, with no visible government assistance.

Addressing the situation in Punjab, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed hope that the provincial government will ensure timely and indiscriminate assistance to those affected by the rains.

Hope new generations to further strengthen Pak-Turkiye ties

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ambassador of Turkiye to Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci has there exist a long historical, friendly and fraternal relationship between Pakistan and Turkiye and we hope that the new generations of both countries will further strengthen these ties.

While addressing the certificate distribution ceremony of the two-week summer camp organized by Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) in collaboration with Yunus Emre Institute, Pakistan here Friday, the Turkish Ambassador mentioned that these activities will bring the younger generations of the two countries closer, ultimately strengthening the relationship. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci also extended congratulations to the university and the Yunus Emre Institute for arranging the camp. Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir said that Pakistani and Turkish people considered each other as their second home. Turkish children are eager to learn Urdu, and Pakistani children are enthusiastic about learning Turkish, he said and added that there were similarities in the history and culture of the two countries, and the moon and star on the flags of both countries.

Fawad urges joint protest against gov't over inflated power bills

LAHORE (INP): Former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry slammed the government on Friday for burdening the salaried class with excessive taxes and reaping benefits from that.

Speaking to media outside an anti-terrorism court (ATC) after his court appearance, the former minister said that it was obvious that the government would not give any leverage to the weighed down salaried class.

He called for a joint protest by the opposition parties against the government if they want to make it a success.



QUETTA: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai offering Fatcha on sad demise of aunt of Provincial Minister for C&W Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa

Step afoot to end copying culture for interest of new generation: Abida

QUETTA (APP): Controller of Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) Abida Kakde on Friday said that the BBISE was taking measures to end culture of copying culture from the examination centers for wider interest of new generation.

She said that the copying was the curse which was pushing the new generation of the country into the darkness of ignorance saying that we all have to play role for elimination cheating culture to improve quality of education.

She expressed these views while addressing at the ceremony of cash distribution among position holders organized in the office of Controller of Examinations.

Secretary Balochistan Board Mir Azim Sajdi, Additional Secretary Finance Shamsullah Kakar, Data Processing Manager Muhammad Khalid, Additional Secretary Faridullah Shah were also present on the occasion.

Controller of BBISE addressing at the ceremony, she said that the board has always conducted fair and transparent examinations in a peaceful environment according to the national aspirations and has given the message that the Balochistan Board was always ready to fulfill its national duty.

Balochistan Board made history by announcing result before any other board in Pakistan and have won the hearts of the students of Balochistan, she noted. Abida Kakar said that Balochistan Board was trying to announce the result before other board of the province during this year which would help to save the precious time of the student. We also have to light the candle of knowledge for the construction and development of our country, she maintained. Earlier, Controller of Examinations Madam Abida Kakar, Deputy Controller FAC Result Mir Qazi Anwar Hussain and Deputy Controller SSC Result Manwar Hussain distributed 0.1 million cash prizes.



QUETTA: Director General NAB and DD FIA interacting with NAB officers during a training session arranged at NAB (Balochistan) regarding Blockchain and Cyber Security