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Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh assassinated in Tehran

Deeply shocked by timing: Pakistan condemns assassination of Haniyeh; Political leaders see Haniyeh's elimination as a blow to Palestine cause; UN Security Council to hold emergency meeting over Hamas chief killing

TEHRAN (INP): Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in the early hours of the morning in Iran, the Palestinian resistance group Hamas said on Wednesday, describing the strike as a "severe escalation" that would not achieve its goals.



ate comment from Israeli authorities.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) confirmed the death of Haniyeh, hours after he attended a swearing in ceremony for the country's new president, and said it was investigating. "Early this morning, the residence of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran was struck, resulting in his and one of his body guards' martyrdom. The cause is under investigation and will be announced soon," the Revolutionary Guards said.

There was no immedi-

escalation that aims to break the will of Hamas," senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told media. He said Hamas would continue the path it was following, adding: "We are confident of victory."

APP adds: Pakistan on Wednesday condemned the assassination of the chief of Hamas Political Bureau Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, expressing serious concern over the growing Israeli adventurism in the region.

"We are deeply shocked by the timing of this reckless act, coinciding with the inauguration of the President of Iran, an event attended by several foreign dignitaries, including the Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan," according to a Foreign Office press release.

Chairman Rana Aradat Sharif led the National Assembly Standing Committee's session, where the bill to amend the Elections Act 2017 was reviewed. Bilal Azhar Kayani provided a briefing on the proposed amendments.

Tensions flared during the meeting as opposition member Ali Muhammad Khan clashed with Parliament Affairs Minister

Azam Nazir Tarar over the bill. Tarar defended the bill, asserting that the amendments are in line with constitutional and legal standards.

In contrast, PTI members voiced strong opposition, with Shahida Akhtar Ali emphasizing the need for thorough examination and suggesting that the amendments could be detrimental.

JUI's Shahida Akhtar Ali abstained from voting, citing uncertainty about the bill's restorative effects, and no PPP members attended the meeting.

The bill is now set to be presented to the National Assembly for final approval on Friday.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Asia Internet Coalition calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

NA Body clears Election Act Amendment Bill 2024 amid controversy

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs has passed the Election Act Amendment Bill 2024 by a majority vote, despite significant opposition and absence of key parties.

Chairman Rana Aradat Sharif led the National Assembly Standing Committee's session, where the bill to amend the Elections Act 2017 was reviewed.

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PM Shahbaz vows to make Pakistan leading country in AI infrastructure

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the government was taking all-out measures to provide fast and uninterrupted Internet connectivity to the people.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a three-member delegation of Asia Internet Coalition, headed by Managing Director Jeff Paine, said that the government was implementing a strategy to attract foreign investment in the information technology infrastructure.

The meeting featured the discussion on data security, code of ethics for Internet content, and prevention of electronic crimes.

Prime Minister Shehbaz told the delegation that the government was working to promote a basic infrastructure based on artificial intelligence.

He said the government was resolved to make Pakistan achieve a distinction in AI infrastructure in the region.

He said under the Digital Pakistan Initiative, the whole system was being digitised and expressed the hope that the digitisation of Federal Board of Revenue would prove to be a milestone towards economic digitisation and automation.

During the briefing, it was informed that consultation with all stakeholders on the draft of Personal Data Protection Bill was in progress.

Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the services of Asia Internet Coalition in promoting IT and Internet infrastructure in the Asia Pacific Region.

The delegation members apprised the prime minister of the Coalition's services in Pakistan's IT sector.

Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja, IT expert Tamia Aidrus and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.



KARACHI: Karachi Jamat e Islami hold protest against Israel Government after killing of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

Govt. reaches agreement with Gwadar protesters, all arrested workers of BYC to be released

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani government has reached a successful agreement with the Gwadar protesters. The agreement was reached after negotiations between the government and the Baloch Yekjehti Committee.

According to NACTA, both organizations were banned after two years of surveillance. Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group was banned on July 25, while Majid Brigade Group was banned on July 18.

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According to the agreement, all arrested workers of the Baloch Yekjehti Committee will be released, mobile networks will be restored, and all roads will be opened by removing blockades. The Gwadar BYC has also agreed to end its sit-in protest.

The local leadership of the National Party, BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and BNP Awami played a key role in mediating the agreement.

Assistant Commissioner Gwadar, Mir Javed Zehri, spoke to a private TV channel about the agreement.

Earlier Deputy Commissioner Hamoodur Rehman has taken swift notice of a video circulating on social media regarding Mehrang Baloch and announced that she is completely safe and engaged in negotiations with the administration.

He clarified that Mehrang Baloch has not been harmed in any way, and the rumors spreading are baseless and false. The Deputy Commissioner termed the news circulating on social media, WhatsApp groups, and other platforms as propaganda aimed at creating chaos in the city.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Mussadaq Malik, Governor Sindh Kamran Tesuri, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune and others cutting cake to celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of the Accession to the throne of His Majesty of the Kingdom of Morocco at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.

JI puts forward demands before govt committee in second round of talks

ISLAMABAD (INP) - A second round of dialogue was held between Jamat-e-Islami and government on Wednesday.

The JI had put forward its demands before the governmental committee and said it was committed to prolong the peaceful protest.

Talking to the media after the dialogue, Liaquat Baloch said protest and dialogue would go hand in hand as the prime minister also wanted that the people be given relief.

We have repeatedly said the people could not afford to pay the skyrocketing power bills and therefore the government should

show some seriousness. On the occasion, Federal Minister Amir Muqam said the government, too, wanted to reduce the prices of electricity, petrol and flour.

Some of the demands of the JI are practical and needed to be implemented, he said.

Moreover, PML-N's Tariq Fazal Chaudhary said the dialogue had happened in a pleasant atmosphere and the prime minister also wanted that the people be given relief.

He said the government would serve the people more than the resources it has.

Kurram delegation calls on Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from Kurram, led by MNA Hamid Hussain called on Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday.

The delegation included Munir Hussain, Professor Shabbir Bangash, Muhammad Bashir Bangash, Rahim Gul, and Haji Noor Rahman. Federal Secretary Interior Khuram Ali Agha was also present on the occasion.

The minister expressed concern over the unfortunate incidents in Kurram and discussed a comprehensive strategy to prevent such incidents in the future. Mohsin Naqvi expressed profound grief and sorrow over the loss of precious human lives and prayed for the swift recovery of the injured. He said that the clash between two groups was given a wrong interpretation.

He emphasized that leading personalities of the area should play their positive role for lasting solution to this issue and the government will provide all possible assistance in this regard. The minister reiterated that everyone needs to play his role in maintaining brotherhood and harmony in the area. He also called a meeting with the representatives and leading personalities from both groups.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with a delegation from Kurram led by MNA Hamid Hussain.

CPEC 2.0 is making Pakistan an attractive investment destination, Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): A seminar was organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and emerging opportunities under the title, "CPEC 2.0: Prospects and Challenges".

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary was the Chief Guest on the occasion while Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed along with Minister Counsellor of Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, Yang Nuo, eminent economist Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan and other distinguished experts comprised the panel at the discussion attended by diplomats, academicians, intelligentsia and researchers, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

In his keynote address on CPEC Phase 2.0, Fed-

eral Minister Ahsan Iqbal emphasized that CPEC has been a transformative force for Pakistan's economy, shifting it from the brink of collapse to an attractive investment destination.

He highlighted the strong bond of trust and shared vision between China and Pakistan, which has enabled them to overcome initial challenges. Now, as they enter the second phase of CPEC, the focus will be on industrial collaboration, regional connectivity, and socioeconomic development.

The minister also asserted that for CPEC to be successful, it is crucial to establish peace, political stability and continuity of policies while demonstrating a continuous commitment to reforms. CPEC 2.0 aims to enhance technologies, create job opportunities, and ensure food security through agricultural mechanization. As we embark on this journey, it represents a critical opportunity for Pakistan to build a brighter future for generations to come. We must unite as one nation and one team to ensure the success of CPEC 2.0.

Earlier, in his welcoming remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of the IRS, stated that the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between Pakistan and China had reached new heights with the launch of CPEC 2.0, which focuses on high-quality development, technological innovation, and sustainable growth.

The upgraded vision prioritizes clean energy, IT, and agriculture amongst other things aligning with Pakistan's 2025 goals and China's 5Cs framework.

Govt slashes petroleum prices by up to Rs10.86 per litre

The new price of petrol is 269.43 and high speed diesel 272.77 per liter.

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The federal government on Wednesday announced a significant decrease in petroleum prices for the first fortnight of August 2024. The prices were reduced after getting an approval from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, said a notification issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The new prices will come into effect from August 1, 2024.

The petrol price was decreased by Rs6.17 per litre as new price has been fixed at Rs269.43. The price of high speed diesel was reduced by Rs10.86 to Rs272.77.

Similarly, the price of light speed diesel was reduced by Rs5.72 to Rs160.53 per litre. Similarly, the price of kerosene oil dipped by Rs6.32 to Rs177.39 per litre for first half of August.

Pakistan's stance on Kashmir issue consistent, resolute, says Gilani

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Wednesday reiterated that Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir issue has been consistent and resolute. He condemned Indian brutal use of force against the innocent Kashmiris.

He was leading a delegation of the members of Senate and National Assembly which held a meeting with UK based representatives of Jammu & Kashmir Self Determination Movement, International Lobby on Kashmir and International Students Society based in UK.

Yousaf Raza Gilani said that Indian army has blatantly violated international law by denying the people their just right. He acknowledged the efforts of the UK based platforms working for raising voice for Kashmiri people.

He said that Pakistan has highlighted the Kashmir issue at all international forums such as the United Nations, the Orga-

nization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and other global platforms to garner international support and put pressure on India to address the human rights violations in the region.

The Chairman Senate said that Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmiri cause is a central element of its foreign policy, and it continues to seek a peaceful resolution based on international law, the UN Security Council Resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

The Kashmiri delegation included Raja Najabat Hussain, Chairman Jammu & Kashmir Self Determination Movement International, Former Lord Mayor of Manchester Councillor Yasmine Dar Chairperson International Lobby on Kashmir and Zeshan Araf President International Students Society. They appreciated the remarks of Chairman Senate and thanked the Chairman for such a vocal and clear stance on Kashmir.

The PTI's lawyer adopted the stance that Mr Qureshi was not a convict person and he is in Kot Lakhpat Jail Lahore.

Policemen among three killed in terrorist attack: DPO

PESHAWAR (APP): Three persons including two policemen were killed during terrorists attack on police check point in Khyber tribal district on Wednesday.

District Police Officer (DPO) Khyber, Salim Abbas told journalists that police checkpoint was attacked at Charwazagai area in Landikotal tehsil near the Pak-Afghan border. As a result, two policemen including Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Alamzeb were martyred along with a civilian.

He said that one policeman and a civilian sustained injuries and shifted to hospital.

The terrorists fled the scene following the attack. Police started investigation after cordoned off the area.

All power companies, K-electric involved in over billing: NEPRA

ISLAMABAD (INP): NEPRA officials have submitted a report to the authority detailing incidents of overbilling from April to June 2024, implicating all distribution companies, including K-Electric.

The report reveals that all distribution companies, including K-Electric, were involved in overbilling consumers. In response, the authority has demanded explanations from these companies and decided to issue directives to address

the issue. According to NEPRA's instructions, bills charged on an estimated basis due to lower-than-scheduled readings from April 2024 to June 2024 will be adjusted to reflect actual recorded units. Consumers unable to pay bills based on estimated readings will not incur late payment surcharges, and those who have paid such surcharges will receive adjustments.



Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani while leading a delegation of the members of Senate held a meeting with UK based representatives of Jammu & Kashmir Self Determination Movement, International Lobby on Kashmir and International Students Society based in UK in London

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Extremism unbound

The state finally seems to have woken up from its slumber and, alarmed by the threats made against the country's top judge, has initiated action against the suspects.

On Monday, several federal ministers denounced the shocking threats made against the chief justice by clerics belonging to the TLP, and promised that such incitement to violence would not be allowed. The controversy stems from the recent Supreme Court judgement in the Mubarak Sani case, which has been misinterpreted by extremist elements to forward their dangerous agenda. On a deeper level, aside from the deplorable threat, the matter reflects the existential danger extremist forces pose to the nation, and the weakness of the state before these outfits. At least two TLP men have reportedly been held; hundreds more have been booked for inciting violence.

The reason that Pakistan stands at this perilous juncture today is that for decades, the state has pursued suicidal policies where extremist groups are concerned. Those at the helm have either looked away as jihadi, sectarian and extremist groups have proliferated, or in some cases have actively encouraged such violent outfits. Arguably, in no other Muslim country are vigilantes and extremists allowed such freedom to operate. But in Pakistan, these outfits can effectively blackmail the state, and issue death warrants against the highest officials of the land. The state either meekly asks them to desist, or takes belated action after these groups cross 'red lines'. On the other hand, protests by political parties or marginalised groups are met with the full force of the law. Unless firm action is taken against extremist groups — as envisioned under the National Action Plan — the day may not be too distant when these outfits have the power to set the nation alight, using emotive slogans to misguide radicalised sections of the populace.

The state's primary responsibility here is to bring all those responsible for incitement to deadly violence to justice, and in the long term shut down the outfits fuelling extremism in society. Making one or two arrests is not enough; wider action is needed. Moreover, security for the chief justice should be beefed up.

The ulama also have a major responsibility to restore sanity. Though the Council of Islamic Ideology has condemned the death threats, established scholars, particularly those belonging to the Bareilly school, need to denounce such violent vigilantism. There is religious and legal consensus about the finality of prophethood. Therefore, semi-literate clerics cannot be allowed to exploit this sensitive issue and create further anarchy in society.

The nation has lost Salmaan Taseer and countless others to assassins and raging mobs motivated by spurious accusations of blasphemy. Unless those who actually control the levers of state act with alacrity, the forces of darkness may be further emboldened.

Caracas conundrum

Mahir Ali

There was barely a peep from the self-ordained paragons of democratic virtue when Paul Kagame was returned to power in Rwanda two weeks ago with more than 99 per cent of the vote, an improvement over his previous scores across the past three decades, after effectively ruling out any serious challenge.

No such luck for Nicolas Maduro, whose claim of a 51pc edge in last Sunday's Venezuelan presidential election is being disputed both at home and abroad.

It doesn't necessarily follow, of course, that either election was credible. What it does demonstrate again is the hypocrisy of the 'international community' — its boundaries determined by the West, and mainly Washington — as it chooses between 'good' and 'bad' autocrats. Occasionally an individual such as Saddam Hussein or Manuel Noriega can serve the American empire in both capacities at various times.

Hugo Chávez never fell in that category. He was pinpointed by the West as a foe soon after he emerged as Venezuela's elected leader at the turn of the century. His several triumphs in further votes made no difference, even after a US-backed corporate coup floundered within days of a popular revolt against the would-be usurpers.

Chávez was detested because he defied North America's global hegemony and also challenged Washington's so-called neoliberal 'consensus' — incubated in Chile under Pinochet — with policies encompassing the redistribution of wealth (to some extent) alongside measures that brought education facilities and healthcare to segments with little experience of either.

Even worse from the 'Norte-Americano' point of view was the Chávez

administration's inclination to share its oil wealth with its Caribbean neighbours, particularly Cuba. After the popularly backed regime change in Havana in 1959, Washington's chief concern — as in Guatemala three years earlier, and in Chile a decade later — was to inoculate its 'backyard' against further outbreaks of social democracy. The same instinct kicked in 40 years later.

But it was a different time, demonstrated not least by huge protests against global capitalism within the US. The advent of what has become known as 'Chavismo' launched a 'pink tide' across Latin America. It was eventually reversed in several nations, partly as a consequence of Washington's opposition, reflected via economic and political pressure.

The tide turned once again. From Honduras through Brazil and down to Chile, left-leaning governments are in power. Argentina is an exception, but hopefully not for too long. Amazingly (or perhaps not), Javier Milei attracts even less opprobrium from the godfathers of democracy.

Maduro, picked by Chávez as his successor not long before he succumbed to cancer in 2013, had working-class credentials as a bus driver, but lacked his mentor's charisma and driving force.

There were, no doubt, flaws in Chávez's conduct of affairs, but nothing approaching what has occurred under Maduro's watch. According to the New York Times, hardly a fan of socialist experiments, "businessmen and foreign investors had largely made peace with [Maduro's] government in recent years. Sanctions imposed by the United States had forced Mr Maduro to ditch some extreme policies like price and currency controls. The private sector was given an in-

creasingly prominent role, public attacks against business owners had stopped and hyperinflation and rampant crime subsided somewhat".

It's only in the NYT's dream world that "price and currency controls" can be described as an 'extreme policy' without raising too many eyebrows. What's more relevant is the hyperinflation and dearth of jobs that have persuaded almost eight million Venezuelans — almost a third of the population — to flee abroad, mostly to Colombia, with many hoping to reach the US. Cue the absurd apocalyptic warnings by Donald Trump and his ilk about murderers and rapists sneaking into their country.

It is not hard to see the various ways in which Maduro has been a disaster for his nation, but it's equally difficult to perceive his chief opponent Edmundo González as a viable option. The former diplomat was reportedly surging in opinion polls after replacing María Corina Machado as the opposition candidate.

Maduro's possibly pyrrhic victory has been greeted by Russia, China, Syria, Nicaragua, Cuba and a few other states, but the likes of Brazil and Chile are wisely holding out for more complete results. It is not hard to imagine how Maduro might actually have been defeated by an equally incompetent rival, or how neither of them would concede defeat. There is little likelihood that Venezuela would prosper under a reactionary regime, and no one can say what will emerge from the current protests in Caracas. Ultimately, though, history is likely to see Chávez as a hopeful disruptor and Maduro as a hopeless successor. -- Courtesy Dawn

Elite finance ministers

Muhammad Usama Shahid

"I completely empathise and sympathise [with the people]," remarked Pakistan's finance minister as the tax-loaded Finance Bill 2024 was passed by the National Assembly. In a country where more than 10 million children are suffering from undernutrition, the finance minister was keen to observe that Pakistan is "making positive progress" before imposing a 'milk tax' on infant formula.

Such remarks beg the question what does the finance minister even mean by the word 'progress'? Is the imposition of exorbitant taxes a way of empathising with the people? To answer such questions, one has to understand the kind of people who become finance ministers in Pakistan in terms of their academic and professional credentials as well as their socioeconomic background. It is through examining these that one can understand their worldview.

Pakistan's current finance minister, Muhammad Aurangzeb, studied at Aitchison and graduated with a Bachelor's degree and an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania. He began his banking career at Citibank and later joined ABN AMRO and RBS International and led their businesses in multiple countries. Subsequently, he became a chief executive at JP Morgan and then president and CEO of HBL prior to becoming finance minister in March 2024. During his time at HBL, he was one of the highest-paid CEOs in Pakistan with a monthly salary of approximately three crore rupees.

However, he is not the only finance minister whose professional experiences mostly included working in execu-

tive positions. He was preceded by finance minister Ishaq Dar, who had a similar background though more oriented towards public institutions. Dar graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the University of Punjab and subsequently became a chartered accountant.

Dar's professional experiences included stints as director of finance at British Textiles Group, a senior auditor in the government of Libya, and a partner of a Pakistan-based chartered accountants' firm. Additionally, he was director at numerous multilateral organisations including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Though he had graduated from a domestic university, his career mostly comprised working in executive positions abroad. He became Pakistan's finance minister after Miftah Ismail resigned from the position.

Miftah Ismail holds a Bachelor's degree from Duquesne University along with a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. He initially worked as an economist with the IMF but then returned to Pakistan to work for his family's business — Ismail Industries Limited, which is one of the country's largest confectionary and snack food manufacturers.

This trend of appointing people from elite backgrounds to the post of Pakistan's minister of finance goes back even further. Asad Umar had an MBA from IBA Karachi and was the former CEO of Engro Corporation. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh had undergraduate and graduate degrees from Boston University and was the World Bank country head in Saudi Arabia. Shaukat Tarin, too, had an MBA from the University of Punjab and a

career in banking, with the names of Citibank and Habib Bank Limited on his resumé.

The question is whether such finance ministers with elite backgrounds realise what implication their economic policies have for the people of this country. At the end of the day, the decision to impose a milk tax is as much about making infant formula inaccessible to millions of impoverished babies in the country as it is about improving the country's revenues. While an increase in taxes may not have implications for someone who earned Rs3 crore per month, it definitely does for someone who has to work two jobs just to sustain their family.

A banker, accountant, or economist might analyse Pakistan's economic instability simply as a matter of manipulating numbers on an Excel sheet but for the common person, it is a matter of their standard of living.

The intention here is to neither question the professional acumen of these finance ministers nor argue that somehow having a finance minister from a non-elite background would automatically resolve Pakistan's economic issues. Instead, the aim is to analyse the analytical framework through which these finance ministers analyse Pakistan's economy and their blind spots due to their own elite background. Only when we have finance ministers who understand as well as relate to the implications their economic policies have for the common people, can we bridge the feeling of alienation in the people of Pakistan. Only then can we understand what the word 'progress' means — not to the elite, but the ordinary people of this country. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Government steers economy back on growth path: Ihsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industry, Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan said here on Wednesday that the country's economy, left reeling by the previous Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government, has been put back on track by the incumbent political dispensation. "Ever since PTI Imran Khan is in jail, the economy of the country is moving towards betterment," he said while addressing a press conference along with Spokesperson of government on legal affairs, Barrister Aqeel Malik.

Highlighting some key indicators, he said that inflation had decreased significantly, falling to 12.6 percent in June 2024 from 38 percent in June of the previous year.

Ihsan said that the government is committed to reducing the inflation rate to a single digit by 2025, and efforts were currently underway to achieve this goal.

He said that the Pakistani rupee also stabilized, and things are moving in a positive direction. Although it was challenging to stabilize the exchange rate, we've successfully achieved it.



HYDERABAD: Labourers busy in preparing the wooden boxes at his workplace.

S&P Global keeps Pak rating at 'CCC+'

ISLAMABAD (Online): S&P Global Ratings has affirmed Pakistan's long-term sovereign credit rating at 'CCC+' and short-term rating at 'C', maintaining a stable outlook. This decision reflects a balance between the challenges posed by Pakistan's external liquidity and fiscal performance, and the anticipated continued support from multilateral and bilateral partners over the next 12 months.

Despite economic challenges, international support and fiscal measures provide a degree of stability to the country's financial

The country's exports have also shown significant growth in the fiscal year 2024, with an increase of \$3 billion, reaching to a total of \$30 billion while remittances were also showing positive growth. Fitch rating has also upgraded the country's debt outlook, adding it happened only because of the restoration International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

He emphasized that the current government has a comprehensive plan to uplift every sector adding work on the privatization and rightsizing of the government was going on.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where four ships, Apollon-D, Elim Grace, Kouros Queen and Butinah carrying Container, Palm oil and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminals and Multi-Purpose Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Roma, YE CHI and Pacific Tulip carrying Container, Gas oil and Coal are also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them Gas carrier 'Epic Sunter' left the port on today morning while three more ships, Apollon-D, Endeavour and Sea Luck-III are expected to sail on today afternoon. Cargo volume of 122,590 tonnes, comprising 62,651 tonnes imports cargo and 59,939 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,470 Containers (980 TEUs Imports & 1,490 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chairing a meeting of the Committee on the issues of Gilgit-Baltistan.

KP Agriculture Minister assures assistance for agriculture development

INDEPENDENT REPORT PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture, Major Retired Sajjad Barakwal, emphasized the critical role of agriculture in the nation's economy, highlighting that "22 percent of the country's GDP is dependent on agriculture." He underscored the necessity of adopting modern technology and research in the agricultural sector to drive economic growth in both the country and the province.

Addressing the attendees as the chief guest on the concluding day of the three-day international seminar organized by Bacha Khan University Charsadda at Nathia Gali, Minister Barakwal conveyed the directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Ali Amin Khan Gandapur. The Chief Minister has mandated the utilization of all available resources and the removal of obstacles to advance the province's agricultural development.

KP-BoIT, TDAP to organize expo-investment conference in Chitral

INDEPENDENT REPORT CHITRAL: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BoIT) in collaboration with Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is organizing an Expo and Economic Development Conference in Chitral for showcasing the local economic and trading sectors to attract investors to invest in the potential sectors of the valley.

The proposed Expo & Economic Development Conference will be held during the first week of September this year. About 60 stalls regarding attractive sectors of investment wherein local potential

Rupee sheds 09 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 09 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.74 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.65.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.3 and Rs 280.5 respectively.

The price of Euro came down by 14 paise to close at Rs 301.43 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.57, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

PSX stays bearish, loses 741 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 741.82 points, a negative change of 0.94 percent, closing at 77,886.99 points against 78,628.81 points on the last working day. A total of 382,597,400 shares were traded during the day as compared to 313,085,457 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 14.638 billion on the last trading day. As many as 442 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 118 of them recorded gains and 254 sustained losses.

Finance Minister chairs meeting on issues of Gilgit-Baltistan

ISLAMABAD (Online): Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the meeting of the Committee on the issues of Gilgit-Baltistan. The meeting was attended by Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan Engr. Amir Muqam, Minister for Finance-GB Muhammad Ismail, Minister for Agriculture-GB Mohammad Anwar, Ex CM GB Hafiz Hafeez Ur Rehman, Chief Secretary GB, Member WAPDA and other officials from relevant Ministries. The meeting commenced with a detailed briefing by the



LAHORE: Paper flags of Pakistan are being printed at the printing press in preparation for Independence Day celebrations.

NEPRA launches 'NEPRA Asaan Approach' mobile app for electricity consumers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Wednesday introduced a new mobile application, 'NEPRA Asaan Approach,' aimed at improving service for electricity consumers across Pakistan.

The app is designed to allow users to quickly register complaints related to electricity issues, including power outages, fluctuations, electrical fires, line faults, and billing discrepancies. By streamlining the

complaint process, the app ensures that issues can be reported and addressed in the shortest possible time.

At the launch event, NEPRA Chairman Waseem Mukhtar emphasized that the app is a crucial component of NEPRA's strategy to offer multi-channel service delivery to electricity consumers nationwide.

He addressed criticisms regarding NEPRA's efforts to enhance consumer facilities and highlighted the app as a step towards better service.

Pakistanis has strong bond of love and respect with Irani people: Saleem

Independent Report
LAHORE: Consul General of Iran to Lahore Mehran Movahed Far called on Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan and discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations in the fields of education, culture and trade during a meeting at the Governor's House here on Wednesday. Governor Saleem Haider Khan, on the occasion, offered condolence over the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, head of the political bureau of Hamas, during the meeting with Iranian Consul General Mehran Movahed Far.

The consul general congratulated the governor on assuming office. He informed about the ease of travel facilities for Pakistani pilgrims under the new policy of travelling by road. He also thanked the Pakistani nation for their help and unwavering support for the suffering Palestinian Muslims.

Governor Saleem Haider said Pakistan and Iran are bound together by religion, culture and historical ties. He said that Iran is a brotherly Islamic country and Pakistanis has strong bond of love and respect with Irani people.

The governor said the last visit of late president Ebrahim Raisi to Pakistan was a historic and memorable visit. He paid tributes to late Raisi for his role in strengthening Pakistan-Iran relations.

The governor said the late president Ebrahim Raisi during his last visit to Pakistan laid the foundation for new projects by signing various memorandum of understanding (MoUs) between Pakistan and Iran in various fields.

He said that the Pakistani government and people were shocked and saddened by the martyrdom of late President Ebrahim Raisi. He assured Irani consul general of considering steps to promote Persian language as chancellor of public and private varsities in Punjab.

Consul General Mehran Movahed Far said the Islamic Republic of Iran is trying to facilitate Pakistan pilgrims in their travel to sacred places in Iran. He said that there is a need to expand trade relations between Pakistan and Iran. He said work was being done on the exchange of delegations of students and teachers between Pakistan and Iran.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain Presented a Memento by the Director General of Department of Plant Protection.

KPITB's MD Government committed to vision of digital KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Managing Director of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KPITB) Akif Khan on Wednesday said that the government was committed to achieving its vision of "digital Khyber Pakhtunkhwa."

He expressed these views while addressing the three-day interactive Build Entrepreneurship Skills Training (BEST) boot camp organized by Research Education Development (RED) International with the support of the US Consulate Peshawar and the KPITB.

The boot camp was held at KPITB's incubation center, Durshal Peshawar, aiming to enhance the capabilities of entrepreneurs on concepts such as design thinking, business model canvas, finance, legal, and marketing.

During the training camp, 18 startups were screened, and participants were enabled to improve their business plans and prepare their sales pitches.

Governor grieves over attack on check post in Landikotal

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday strongly condemned the attack on police check post located at Pak-Afghan road Landikotal district Khyber. In a condolence message, the Governor expressed grief and sorrow over the demise of three persons including two policemen. Governor prayed Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and early recovery of the injured and grant courage to bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.

Khawaja Salman ensures preparedness for flood risks

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Health Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Disaster Management Khawaja Salman Rafique announced that Management Authority (PDMA) on Wednesday. In the meeting, he emphasized the importance of river erosion prevention schemes which will be approved following a Dera Ghazi Khan which provided a briefing on preparations for possible flooding in hill torrents.

The minister directed district administrations to remove encroachments



comprehensive detailed model study. This study will include an assessment of the affected population, agricultural land, and the economic situation in the regions at risk. He highlighted the proactive measures taken by the administration of from river basins and channels and to educate citizens about the risks of rains and floods. He stressed the importance of using mosques and other local resources to disseminate information, urging district revenue.

While among injured, six are men, three women and six children, adds the PDMA report issued here on Wednesday.

Torrential rains coupled with speedy wind storm damaged 61 houses in the province among which 37 are partially and 24 are fully.

The damage to life and property due to extreme weather events were received in districts including Kohat, Bajaur.

19 die, 15 injured due to rains, flash floods during last couple of days in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Around 19 persons died and 15 received injuries due to rains, flash floods and wind storms during the last two days in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to a report issued by Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), among the dead around four are men, four women and 11 children.

ANF recovers 242 kg drugs in 7 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country recovered 242 kg drugs and arrested 10 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that 2.5 kg ice was recovered from a parcel booked for New Zealand at a courier office in Rawalpindi. 96 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near a restaurant in Quetta.

PDWP approves 7 development schemes worth Rs 8.974bn

LAHORE (APP): The Provincial Development Working Party Punjab (PDWP), in its 11th meeting of current financial year, approved seven development schemes of roads, and P&S HC sectors worth more than Rs. 8974.993 million [Rs. 8.97 billion], here on Wednesday. Presided over by P&D Board Chairman Barrister Nabeel Ahmad Awan, the meeting approved the following schemes: 1) Rehabilitation of Shujabad Jalalpur Pirwala Length = 48.50 Km, District Multan at the cost of Rs 2700.697 million. 2) Dualisation of Metalled Road from Thalli Chowk Rahim Yar Khan to Iqbalabad (N-5) District R.Y.Khan at the cost of Rs 1025.247 million. 3) Rehabilitation of road from Kasur to Raiwind, Length 25.48 Km in district Kasur at the cost of Rs 2095.294 million. 4) Rehabilitation of metalled road from Shoria Gilania Chowk (N-55) to Samina Sadat Length = 8.80 Km at the cost of Rs 418.345 million. 5) onstruction of Fly over at Jhal road railway crossing to Sahiwal City at Rs 914 million.



LAHORE: Iran Consul General in Lahore Mehran Movahedfar meeting with Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan.

CS takes report on price difference in districts

LAHORE (APP): Taking notice of the difference in rates of vegetables in some districts, Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman sought a report on the comparative evaluation of the prices.

The Chief Secretary chaired a video link meeting of all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners to review the prices and availability of food items. The participants discussed various proposals to improve the price control mechanism such as mapping of shops in critical markets.

The Chief Secretary ordered the Agriculture Department to prepare SOPs for correct determination of price of commodities in the auction process.

He said that there was no justification for the clear difference in the prices of potatoes, onions and other vegetables in different districts, adding that the prices fixed in the markets of the districts should be compared and the report should be sent on a daily basis. The Chief Secretary said that implementation of the notified prices was the responsibility of the administration. He directed the deputy commissioners to take action against the price magistrates who are not performing their duties.

International News

Khan Yunis in ruins after Israeli assault kills 300

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Gaza's civil defence agency said on Tuesday that an Israeli operation in and around the territory's second city of Khan Yunis killed about 300 people since it began last week, while the army claimed it had "eliminated 150 terrorists."

"Since the beginning of the Israeli ground invasion of the eastern part of Khan Yunis province, the civil defence and medical teams have re-covered and approxi-

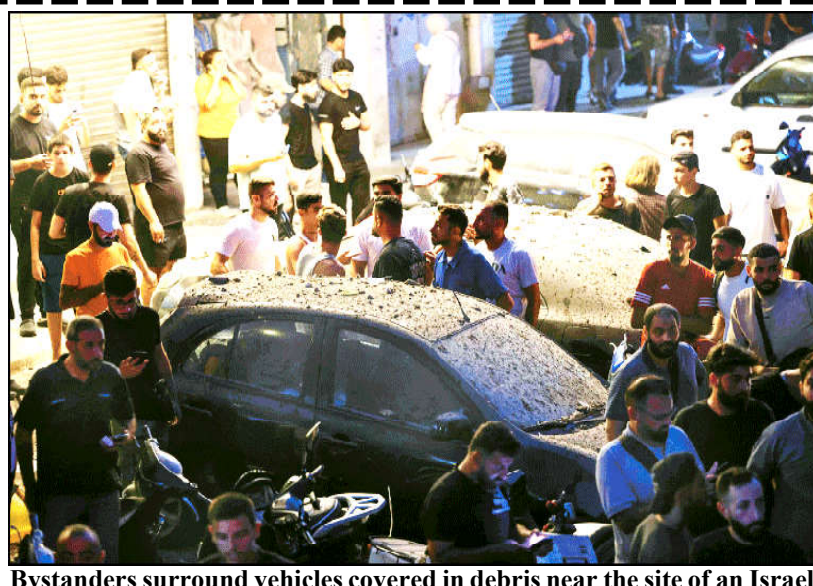
mately 300 bodies of martyrs, many of them decomposed," agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said.

The Israeli military launched the assault on July 22 to halt what it called rocket fire from the area, which already saw heavy fighting earlier this year. Last week, it said troops had retrieved the bodies of five Israelis from the area.

They had been killed during the Hamas attacks of October 7 and their bodies taken back to Gaza, the military said.

Thousands of Palestinians returned to their damaged or destroyed homes in Khan Yunis after Israeli troops ended their attack and vacated the area.

Palestinian health officials said rescue workers had so far recovered 42 bodies of Palestinians killed in the Israeli incursion into eastern Khan Yunis. Gaza's Civil Emergency Service said search was underway with 200 people still reported missing.



Bystanders surround vehicles covered in debris near the site of an Israeli strike on Beirut's southern suburbs.

Israel's atrocities 'outshine Hitler': Erdogan

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Türkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday said the Gaza Strip has become the "world's largest extermination camp," and Israel has committed an atrocity that will "outshine Hitler."

"Western leaders and organisations whose duty is to ensure international security have only watched this brutality from afar for almost 300 days," Erdogan said in a speech in the capital Ankara.

"How many more children need to die to see that Israel's invasive policies endanger the entire region? Look, this is not a path that can continue," he added. Israel has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in Gaza since Oct. 7.

The Turkish president said Israel is the only country in the region that seeks its security through "aggression, massacres and land seizure," acting like a "terrorist organization."

He said the "lawless Israeli state is a threat not only to Palestine and Lebanon but to humanity as a whole, to the entire world at this point."

"Hitler had been stopped, even if belatedly, by the alliance of the US and the Soviet Union. This genocide, savagery, and barbarism must also be stopped immediately by the alliance of humanity before it is too late," Erdogan added.

"Those pulling the strings of the Netanyahu administration must say 'stop' to this massacre network without delay. We are aware of what the murderer called Netanyahu is seeking to achieve, what kind of a catastrophe he is trying to drag our region and the entire world into," he said.

"We also know very well the true motive behind his attempts to spread the fire in Gaza to the whole region."

MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES TENDER NOTICE						
1. The office of CMES (Army)/GHQ, Rawalpindi invites sealed tenders for the following works in light of PPRA Rule 13 (1) 2004:-						
Ser	Name of Work	Cost				
a.	Misc Repair / Maint / Renov of B&R Works under CMES (A) GHQ Rwp					
b.	Misc Repair / Maint / Renov of E&M Bldgs under CMES (A) GHQ Rwp					
c.	Repair / Maint of VRF System instl in misc Bldgs under CMES (A) GHQ Rwp					
d.	Misc Repair / Maint / Renov Works at Bldg No. 15, 16, 17, 17-A & 18.					
e.	Misc Repair / Maint / Renov Works at Bldg No. 1					
f.	Misc Repair / Maint Works in Qtg & Land Dte & QMG Br					
g.	Misc Repair / Maint Works at Army Auditorium					
h.	Misc Repair / Maint / Renovation Works in CLS Sectt, Law Dte, HRD Dte, MS Br, MO Dte, AG Br, SD Dte, Bldg No. 31, C & IT Br, Sig Dte, W&E Dte at GHQ Rwp					
i.	Repair / Maint / Svcs of Gen Sets and Fire Fighting Pumps for misc Bldgs under CMES (A) GHQ Rwp					
j.	Misc Const Works (incl Roads, Footpaths) under CMES (A) GHQ Rwp					
k.	Renov / Uplifting Works at Various Locs / Dtes at GHQ					
l.	Misc Repair / Maint / Renov Works at Arty Dte, AAD Dte GHQ, DG W&E (A) GHQ, EW Dte C41 Dte, PADte, A&M Dte, CAP, S&P GHQ Rwp					
m.	Misc Const Works under CMES (A) GHQ Rwp					
n.	Misc Road Barrier / Blocker / Security Related Works under CMES (A) GHQ Rwp					
o.	Leakage / Seepage and Roof Treatment of misc Bldgs under CMES (A) GHQ Rwp					
p.	Misc Repair / Maint / Renovation Works in MI Dte, ITD Dte, OS Dte, AG Block, PP&A Dte, O&M Dte, JO Dte, S&T Dte, PEB-I & II at GHQ Rwp					
q.	Const / Prov and Elect Works of Misc Security related works at diff locs at GHQ Rwp					
r.	Misc Repair / Maint Works under Sub Head 'C' at GHQ Rwp					
s.	Misc Road Marking works at GHQ					
2. The contractors are required to submit their applications to CMES (A) GHQ Rawalpindi for issuance of tender documents alongwith their complete credential as shown at (serial-7). The applications shall be scrutinized and the tender documents will only be issued to the firms who have sufficient experience in the relevant field and satisfy other special conditions required for the job and area. Tenders will be issued to the scrutinized contractors. The tender must be received in the accepting officer by 1130 Hrs on 19 th Aug 2024 and will be opened at 1200 Hrs same date.						
Note: Contractor shall provide certificate that they are not involved in any type of litigation with Government Department in the Court of Law and that no special report of Directorate of Inspection and Evaluation (E-in-C's Branch, GHQ) is outstanding against them.						
3. All contractors, will certify in writing that they are registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), and will submit a copy of their registration. Contractors not registered with PEC are ineligible to apply.						
4. Contractor born on approved list of MES in categories 'B', 'C' and 'D' and also having experience of this type should only apply.						
5. Contractors who desire may be present at the time of opening of tenders.						
6. The accepting officer reserves the right to accept or reject the tender. Rejected tenders will be dealt with as per Para 33 (j) of PPRA Rules.						
7. The interested parties can contact to CMES concerned / authorized representative for further details from 0800 to 1500 hours on all working days.						
Ser	Name of Works executed during last two years and in hand	Amount of Works (Rs)	Time allowed (Months)	Date of Commencement	Date of Completion	%age Progress of works in Hand

Israel targets Hezbollah commander in Beirut strike

Monitoring Desk
BEIRUT: Israel struck Hezbollah's stronghold in southern Beirut on Tuesday in retaliation for rocket fire from Lebanon that killed 12 children over the weekend, saying it had targeted the commander responsible for the attack.

"The IDF (army) carried out a targeted strike in Beirut on the commander responsible for the murder of the children in Majdal Shams and the killing of numerous additional Israeli civilians," the military said in a statement, referring to the Druze Arab town in the annexed Golan Heights where the children were killed on Saturday.

A source close to the Hezbollah group confirmed that "a leading commander" was the target of the strike, which hit near the group's decision making body, the Shura Council.

The source added that two people were killed in the strike, but was unable to confirm if the commander was among them.

Minutes after the explosions rocked Beirut, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant posted on social media site X that "Hezbollah crossed the red line".

Philippines, US navy hold joint exercise in South China Sea

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: The Philippines and United States navies conducted on Wednesday a joint maritime exercise in the South China Sea, the Philippine armed forces said.

The activity, held inside the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, included two vessels and was designed to enhance communication and operational coordination between the two navies, the military said in a statement.

Russia says the Middle East is teetering on the brink of war

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia said on Wednesday that the Middle East was teetering on the brink of a major war and that key players were continuing to raise the stakes. "The region is currently balancing on the brink of a global conflict," Andrei Nastasin, deputy spokesman for the Russian foreign ministry, said. "The parties continue to raise the stakes." Russia said the "manic desire" of the United States to monopolise the process of political settlement in the Middle East had led to this situation. "We strongly condemn the murder of the head of the political bureau of the Hamas movement, Ismail Haniyeh, as a result of a rocket attack on his residence in Tehran," Andrei Nastasin, Nastasin told reporters. "It is obvious that the organisers of this political assassination were aware of the dangerous consequences this action is fraught with for the entire region."

Spanish PM files lawsuit against judge leading wife's graft probe

Monitoring Desk
MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Tuesday filed a lawsuit against a judge who summoned him to testify in a probe into alleged influence-peddling by his wife, accusing him of violating the law.

The lawsuit filed by Spain's state legal services argues the judge and others may have committed "criminal acts" in his summons by not allowing Sanchez to testify in writing as requested by the Socialist leader, according to the complaint.

Iran's Khamenei says avenging Haniyeh's killing is Tehran's duty

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Avenging Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh's assassination is "Tehran's duty" because it occurred in the Iranian capital, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said in his message on the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh.

He said Israel had provided the grounds for "harsh punishment" for itself.

Newly elected President Masoud Pezeshkian has issued a statement saying Tehran will defend its territorial integrity and dignity.

"Today, dear Iran is mourning its sharer of sorrows and joys, the constant and proud companion of the path of resistance, the brave leader of the Palestinian resistance, the martyr of al-Quds, Haj Ismail Haniyeh. Yesterday I raised his victorious hand and today I have to bury him on my shoulders."

"Martyrdom is the art of men of God. The bond between the two proud nations of Iran and Palestine will be stronger than before, and the path of resistance and defense of the oppressed will be followed stronger than ever."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will defend its territorial integrity, honour, dignity and pride, and make the terrorist occupiers regret their cowardly action," the president's statement concluded.

Hamas's armed wing said that the killing of its political leader Ismail Haniyeh takes the "war" with Israel to "new levels," warning of repercussions for the entire region.

"This assassination ... takes the war to new levels and will have enormous consequences for the entire region."

Pakistan provides remarkable job opportunities to youth: Commonwealth SG

ISLAMABAD (APP): Commonwealth Secretary General RT Patricia Scotland on Wednesday said that Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has remarkably provided opportunities, resources and support to the youth.

She expressed these views while addressing the Young Entrepreneurs Awards distribution ceremony here at the Prime Minister's office.

Under the leadership of Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan, this program is taking significant steps to empower the youth, she said.

"There is a need to empower the youth and harness modern technology for the prosperous future of the country and Commonwealth Organization is committed to providing all possible facilities to the innovators," she said.

Patricia said she is grateful to the people and government of Pakistan for their warm welcome and hospitality in the country.

"I have worn a Pakistani dress which proves that I am also a Pakistani. The efforts of the government of Pakistan under the leadership of the Prime

Minister to empower the youth are commendable," she said.

She said the Pakistani government is taking steps to highlight the potential of the youth as per the Chartered Commonwealth of Nations adding efforts to provide employment and business facilities to the youth reflect their commitment.

The Commonwealth secretary said that 60 percent of the youth in the world are below 30 years of age, while 65 percent of the youth in Pakistan are between 18 to 30 years of age.

"Pakistan can lead the country on the path of development by training the youth in modern technology and making them skilled so that they can also play an important role in the development of the world," she said.

She said that the commonwealth recognizes the courage and determination of the youth for country's national and economic development, as young people are the driving force to bring a change.

She also lauded the role of Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan for taking crucial steps for empowering

youth through various initiatives and programmes.

She said that the recipients of the Young Entrepreneurs Awards need to transform themselves in the context of a rapidly changing world through the emerging multi-billion dollar market of artificial intelligence.

Speaking on the occasion, Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan thanked the Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland for her maiden visit to Pakistan for strengthening the relations of Pakistan with the Commonwealth.

He said that Pakistan's ranked as 3rd in the employment and opportunity category of the global Youth Development Index by the Commonwealth is a testament to the incredible potential and resilience of our young entrepreneurs.

This achievement is not merely a statistic but a reflection Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision.

Under the Prime Minister's Youth Loan and Agricultural Scheme, started in 2013, as many as 186 billion had been distributed among more than two lakh eighty thousand young entrepreneurs, creating countless employment opportunities across the nation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui inaugurated a new building for the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund (PEEF).

Romina says: Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards honour collective resolve for biodiversity conservation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Wednesday said the Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards conferred upon six exemplary wildlife protectors from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan symbolise the collective resolve for biodiversity conservation.

She was addressing the Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards as chief guest to mark the World Ranger Day here at the Pakistan National Council of

the Arts (PNCA) jointly organized by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Snow Leopard Foundation, and Devcom-Pakistan with the support of Snow Leopard Trust, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, PNCA, and the provincial wildlife and forest departments of Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Romina Khurshid Alam said these individuals have shown extraordinary courage and dedication in protecting the precious wildlife and natural habitats. "Their efforts remind

us of the crucial role that each of us plays in preserving the biodiversity that sustains our ecosystems. These awards are not merely tokens of appreciation, they symbolize our collective resolve to support and honor those who stand at the forefront of conservation.

We shall not forget the challenges that lie ahead. Climate change poses a significant threat to our ecosystems and the wildlife that inhabit them. It is imperative that we continue to strengthen our conservation efforts," the PM's aide said.

Law minister chairs meeting of body for drug pricing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday chaired the first meeting of the committee formed to give recommendations for independent drug pricing in the country.

Under the directions of the prime minister, a committee has been constituted to address drug pricing in Pakistan, said a press release.

The meeting was attended by relevant stakeholders who presented an overview of the operations of independent price authorities and their functions worldwide, highlighting best practices.

The committee deliberated on the best model for Pakistan, considering various viewpoints from all stakeholders. It was decided that a detailed working paper will be prepared for the next meeting. This paper will identify the current issues related to the pharmaceutical industry,



ISLAMABAD: Embassy of Palestine in Islamabad hoisted the flag at half-mast to mourn the martyrdom of head of the Hamas movement, senior leader Ismail Haniyeh.

Khawaja Asif discuss Ethiopia, Pakistan Defence, Aviation cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence and Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Wednesday called on the Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) where both dignitaries mulled over various avenues to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation in different areas such as defence and aviation.

The matter of such utmost importance came under discussion during a meeting between Special Envoy, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of FDR Ethiopia, Jemal Bekir Abdula, and

Comprehensive plan will be made to promote sports in Islamabad: Director

ISLAMABAD (INP): The All Islamabad Junior Full Contact Martial Arts Championship successfully concluded at the Capital Arena, Mega Zone F-9 Islamabad.

This event was organized by the Islamabad Sports Board in collaboration with Full Contact Martial Arts Islamabad, boys and girls from various local Martial Arts clubs competed in different weight categories, showcasing their fighting skills and dedication.

The championship was graced by Chief Guest Madam Bushra Iqbal Rao, Director of the Sports



MUZAFFRABAD: Labourers are busy in construction work with the help of heavy machinery alongside a road in the city.

PIDE Organized Memorial of Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: A heartfelt memorial service was held today at the Islamabad Club to honor the life and legacy of Prof. Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi, a distinguished economist, prolific author, and revered academician.

The event, organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), brought together family, friends, colleagues, and former students to pay tribute to his immense contributions to the field of economics and his dedication to education.

Prof. Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi (July

11, 1935 – July 7, 2024) was a renowned Pakistani economist and scholar, known for his extensive contributions to economic theory and policy. Born in Meerut, British India, he migrated to Karachi, Pakistan in 1950. Dr. Naqvi earned his master's degree from Yale University in 1961 and his doctorate from Princeton University in 1966, followed by post-doctoral research at Harvard University.

Dr. Naqvi served as the director of PIDE from 1979 to 1995. His career also included roles as a senior economic advisor for the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and as a Distinguished National Professor and Director General at the Federal Urdu University, Islamabad. He held various prestigious positions throughout his career, including stints at international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. His scholarly work has left an indelible mark on economic theory and policy in Pakistan and beyond.

During his tenure at PIDE, Prof. Naqvi revitalized the institute's research activities, elevating its profile both nationally and internationally.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commission GB Raja Shehbaz Khan is taking his oath of office from Chief Justice Supreme Appellate Court Gilgit-Baltistan Justice Rana Muhammad Shamim Khan, Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan, Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam and other distinguished guests are also present. Chief Election Commissioner Raja Shehbaz Khan After the completion of the term, their re-appointment for the next five years has been effected.

US offers scholarships to 30,000 Pakistani students

ISLAMABAD (INP): US Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schofer said on Wednesday that US government provided support to 30,000 students to improve their English language skills across the Pakistan.

He said this while talking to journalists after attending ceremony of "Access"

Scholarship Programme, which is especially introduced for English language learning.

Andrew Schofer stated that US government was offering scholarships to students for last 20 years.

He stated that the US government was supporting in some other programmes also to develop leadership qualities and improve professional skills. About his ongoing visit to Multan, he

remarked that he was very happy to visit Multan.

In his addressing during ceremony, the US diplomat stated that he was much impressed to witness the cultural performances of the students. About English Access Scholarship programme, he hinted that the students would surely upgrade their English linguistic skills. "We want the students should succeed", he maintained.

Andrew added that the programme was being run since 2004 and so far 30,000 students got the scholarships for language learning.

Pinning high hopes on the new batch of 300 students, he stated that they would be able to speak English in near future. English Access Scholarship Program

is one of the highlights of the longstanding cooperation between the United States and Pakistan Vice Chancellor Education University Asim Saeed also spoke and it was highly beneficial programme. It will not only help educate the kids but 300 families too. He also assured of all possible cooperation for the success of the programme.

Highlighting the different features of the programme, The Coordinator Ms Rahat and some other officials informed the services of the 40 teachers were availed for the imparting language skill to students. Initially, over 100 teachers from across the region applied, however 40 were selected following a proper criteria.

Raja Shah Baz takes oath as CEC of GB

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Judge of Gilgit Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court Hon. Justice Sardar Muhammad Shamim Khan administered the oath of newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner Gilgit Baltistan Judge (R) Raja Shah Baz Khan (Tst) here at Gilgit Baltistan Council on Wednesday.

The oath taking ceremony took place here at Gilgit-Baltistan Council Secretariat was attended by distinguished guests, including Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam, Coordinator Prime Minister Shabir Ahmad

Usmani, Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan, Secretary Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry, Joint Secretary Gilgit Baltistan Council Sudheer Khan Khattak, Chief Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah Supreme Appellate Court Gilgit-Baltistan, Chairman PAC Gilgit Baltistan Iqbal Naseer, Chairman Standing Committee Gilgit Baltistan Ayub Shah, Muhammad Ali Member Gilgit Baltistan Council, Syed Shabi ul Hasnain Member Gilgit-Baltistan Council and Provincial Election Commissioner Abid Raza.

Iran Embassy pays tribute to Fatima Jinnah on birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Iran Embassy on Wednesday paid tribute to Madr-e-Millat, Mohtarama Fatima Jinnah, on her 131st birth anniversary.

The embassy, in a statement, termed her character fully inspiring as a woman and leader.

It quoted Fatima Jinnah as saying: "People of Pakistan are by nature devoted to the cause of peace and goodwill."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar chaired first meeting of the Committee to give recommendations for independent Drug Pricing Body.

Senator Sherry criticizes MoCCE's egregious lack of coordination

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairing a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman along with the Committee members expressed serious concerns about the Ministry of Climate Change's planning, priorities and preparedness in addressing Pakistan's climate and environmental policies. The meeting was attended by key stakeholders, including Coordinator for Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam, the Secretary of the Ministry of Climate Change, and officials from relevant departments.

Senator Rehman expressed her profound disappointment with the

Ministry's presentation on climate change. "I am appalled at the lack of clarity, coordination, and capacity displayed in the presentation. As the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee, I expected to see a clear strategic plan, priorities, and initiatives to address this pressing issue."

Marking the urgency and scale of the challenges Pakistan faces, Senator Rehman said that climate change is a national crisis requiring a coordinated, yet technically proficient response. "I am shocked to see an outdated last century presentation with no clear priorities, no flagship initiatives, and no strategic NDC agenda or updates."

AJK Council members call on Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Council members called on Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam at Kashmir Council on Wednesday.

During the meetings, the matters pertaining to Kashmir Council development projects and problems faced by the masses were discussed in detail, said a press release.

They also discussed preparations regarding Youm-e-Istehsal on August 5. The minister said that Youm-e-Istehsal would be observed in an effective manner on August 5. The Council members briefed the minister regarding preparations for August 5 "Youm-e-Istehsal".

The AJK Council members included Khawaja Tariq Saeed Advocate, Raja Shujah Khurshid, Sardar Adnan Khalid, Younas Mir and Hanif Malik.

New Energy Nexus, PPSE launch Cleantech forum to focus supporting ecosystem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renewables First, in collaboration with New Energy Nexus and the Pakistan Private Sector Energy (PPSE) Project, launched a Cleantech Forum on Wednesday focusing on supporting the ecosystem for cleantech startups in the country.

The Forum brought together investors, startups, academia, think-tanks, development partners, and Entrepreneur Support Organizations (ESOs) to discuss the opportunities and challenges for a thriving cleantech ecosystem in Pakistan, said a press release.

New Energy Nexus is expanding its impact in Pakistan through a partnership with Renewables First, the country's leading

think-tank for energy and the environment. This partnership aims to drive economic growth, job creation, and increased international investment in Pakistan's burgeoning cleantech sector. "Our partnership with New Energy Nexus marks a significant milestone in Renewables First's mission of accelerating Pakistan's energy transition," said Zeeshan Ashfaq, CEO of Renewables First.

Stanley Ng, Global Partnerships Director at New Energy Nexus, set the stage by highlighting global programs that support the cleantech ecosystem in various countries. He highlighted New Energy Nexus's global footprint across 15 countries and its success in creating over 8,000 jobs.

UK-funded A2D Facility launches its first funding call for proposal

ISLAMABAD (INP): The UK-funded Accelerate-to-Demonstrate (A2D) Facility, launched by the UN Industrial Development Organisation, has launched its first funding call for proposal.

The UK's funding of £65.5m is part of its commitment to delivering pragmatic and tangible action to tackle climate change. A2D aims to accelerate the commercialization of innovative clean energy technologies in developing countries, in-

cluding Pakistan, through funding pilot projects that have the potential to have transformational impacts.

The A2D Facility currently focuses on supporting pilot demonstration projects of innovative clean energy technologies in the following key thematic areas: Critical Minerals; Clean Hydrogen; Smart Energy; and Industrial Decarbonization.

For more information and to submit expressions of interest, visit UNIDO portal.

1,00,000 bikers fined over helmet violation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad Traffic Police issued more than 1,00,000 fine tickets to motorcyclists driving bikes without helmets during the ongoing year, a public relations officer said.

He said that the Islamabad Traffic Police is endeavoring to maintain an exemplary traffic system in the city and check those involved in negligence on roads.

A vigorous campaign of Islamabad Traffic police had been launched as per the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, in order to create awareness among citizens about the traffic rules.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environment, alongside Sardar Muhammad Jamal Khan Leghari, Senator and Wildlife Ambassador, presented awards to the winners of the "Wildlife in Pakistan" Photo-Exhibition during the 6th Wildlife Protection Awards Ceremony 2024 took place at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in the Federal Capital.