

# Independent

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## 38 killed, several others injured in two separate road mishaps

26 dead as passenger bus plunges into ravine on Rawalakot to Rawalpindi route; 12 zayreen dead, 33 injured in fatal road accident on Makran coastal highway

RAWALPINDI (APP): At least 26 passengers have died, several others received serious injuries when a coaster fell into a ditch in Rawalpindi's Kahuta Tehsil on Sunday.

The ill-fated coaster was travelling to Azad Kashmir. Rescue operation has been started. According to the details, the tragic accident took place near Girari Bridge, Kahuta Road Kallar Syedan where a passenger coaster en route to Palandri, Azad Kashmir went out of control and fell into a deep ditch resulting in massive casualties. Rescue 1122 spokesman, Muhammad Usman confirmed APP

that 25 people have died in the accident so far. He informed that 23 bodies were recovered from the accident spot. The bodies and the injured were shifted to THQ Hospital, Kallar Syedan, where 2 more seriously injured could not survive and died.

Meanwhile as many as 12 persons died and some 32 got injured as the passenger coach met a fatal road accident at Buzi top on the Makran coastal highway falls in the jurisdiction of Lasbela district on Sunday morning. According to the reports reaching here, the passenger coach carrying

some 70 passengers way on its way from Gwadar bordering area to Punjab when it met accident after falling into a ditch due to the brake failure.

The accident resulted in multiple injuries and fatalities of the passengers travelling in the bus. The administration and rescue teams rushed towards the spot of accident and shifted the bodies of deceased and injured persons to the nearby hospitals.

According to the spokesman of provincial government, Shahid Rind, we have reports of 11 casualties and 33 injuries caused in the bus accident.



PALANDRI: Twenty passengers killed when a coaster coming from Hawaii Kahuta to Rawalpindi fell into a ditch near Azad Paltan.

## Nation backs armed forces to foil enemy's plans: Asif

Says PTI creating fake narrative for another May 9 episode

SIALKOT (INP): Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif says nation stands by the armed forces to foil agenda of enemy against the country.

Talking to newsmen in Sialkot today, he stressed for unity and collective efforts to address all challenges.

The Defence Minister said hundreds of thousands of people witnessed conspiracy and violent actions on May 9 last year.

He said division and differences within PTI is now stand exposed due to their negative politics.

He said that the PTI founder canceled a public gathering after foreseeing its

failure. The Defence Minister said that we have to change the country's fate ourselves. He said that parliamentarians are tested in elections.

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif says the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has been planning for another incident similar to May 9 riots. He said the PTI had cancelled its Islamabad rally fearing the rejection by the masses due to the party's fake narrative against the state institutions.

Asif added that the audio leaks of Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi and Aleema Khan revealed the differences within the PTI.



SIALKOT: Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif addressing to media persons at his residence.

## PPP not interested in power sharing formula: Hassan Murtaza

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Hassan Murtaza has stated that his party is not seeking any share in power.

He expressed these views after a joint committee meeting of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and PPP was concluded at the Governor's House on Sunday.

The meeting was attended by leaders from both parties. Ishaq Dar and Raja Pervaiz Ashraf co-chaired the meeting, while Rana Sanaulah, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Malik Ahmad Khan represented the PML-N.

From the PPP side, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Hassan Murtaza attended the meeting, while Punjab

Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, Nadeem Afzal Chan, and Ali Haider Gilani joined via video link. The meeting reviewed the progress on power-sharing commitments. After the meeting, Hassan Murtaza told the media that the discussions were constructive and positive progress was made. He clarified that the PPP is not seeking a share in power.

"PPP's focus is on reducing inflation and lawlessness. A sub-committee has been formed to address these issues. It is not correct to assume that they intend to give the government a tough time, as the sub-committee will provide recommendations within a week, and there will be no political rhetoric from either side," he added.

## Tarar launches operation clean up on PTV, axes 25 shows

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar has launched a comprehensive overhaul of Pakistan Television (PTV), "shutting down 25 low-rating shows" and introducing a new policy aimed at promoting openness, professionalism and constructive criticism.

According to a news report published by a local daily on Sunday, the minister had vowed to root out "sifarishi culture, incompetence and fake news" on PTV.

Tarar said this is just the beginning of the "Operation Clean Up" initiative.

The report said the minister had faced resistance from "vested interests and mafias but remains resolute in his mission to transform PTV".

The minister has announced the recruitment of professional anchors and producers, while warning that fake and incompetent staff would be sent packing.

## Mohsin Naqvi visits Data Darbar

LAHORE (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Data Darbar here on Sunday to attend the second day of Urs.

He placed a Chadar and flowers on the shrine. Mohsin Naqvi prayed for the development of the country and the prosperity of the people.

He also prayed for the oppressed Muslims of Occupied Kashmir and Palestine.

Mohsin Naqvi also inspected the renovation project of Data Darbar, while the Secretary Auqaf Punjab gave a briefing about the project and informed about the progress.

Mohsin Naqvi welcomed the devotees coming from all over the country and the world. Saints including Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh (RA) taught peace and harmony in the subcontinent, he said.

Adding that today we need to follow the teachings of Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh and other saints.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding the closing down of the Public Works Department.

## Pakistan invites Indian PM to visit for SCO summit in October

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan on Sunday officially extended an invitation to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in October. According to diplomatic sources, the invitation was sent as part of the preparations for the SCO meeting, where the heads of state from member countries have been invited.

The sources further confirmed that formal invitation letters have been dispatched to the respective high commissions and embassies of the member states.

The SCO summit is expected to bring together leaders from member countries to discuss various regional and international issues, with the potential to pave the way for renewed dialogue and cooperation.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch already announced on July 4, 2024, that Pakistan will invite

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the SCO Summit, which Islamabad will host in October this year.

Speaking at her weekly news briefing in Islamabad, the foreign office spokesperson said Pakistan will host the SCO Heads of State summit in October.

When asked whether the Indian prime minister will be extended an invitation, the FO spokesperson said that as the rotation chair of the SCO, Pakistan will invite leaders of all member states. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is an Eurasian political, economic, international security, and defence organisation established by China and Russia in 2001.

It is the world's largest regional organisation in terms of geographic scope and population, covering approximately 80% of the area of Eurasia and 40% of the world's population.

## Two killed, nine injured in armed clashes in Karachi's Golimar

Monitoring Desk KARACHI: At least two people were killed and nine others wounded in deadly clashes between two groups in Karachi's Golimar area on Sunday, a private TV channel reported citing police personnel.

The casualties resulted when two armed groups opened fire on each other, with some angry members setting various vehicles on

fire and blocking both lanes of the main artery leading to Nazimabad from Lasbela.

Confirming the number of fatalities, Chief Police Surgeon Dr Sumaiyya Syed stated that one body was taken to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital and the other to Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital, while the injured were being treated at Jinnah Post-graduate Medical Centre (JPMC).

## IGP visits route of Chehlum procession, reviewed security arrangements

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, inspected the Chehlum Imam Hussain (RA) procession and reviewed the security measures in place.

On this occasion, DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, SSP Operations, CTO Islamabad, and other senior police officers were also present. The IGP directed all security officers to remain vigilant and emphasized that the procession routes should be completely secured and well-lit. All officers assigned to security duty were required to be present along the procession route, and those stationed on rooftops were to maintain a high state of alertness.

He further stated that no police officer should leave their assigned duty point until the conclusion of the procession. Stressing the importance of the Chehlum Imam Hussain (RA), he reiterated their commitment to fulfilling their responsibilities.

The Islamabad Police ensured comprehensive security arrangements for the main procession of Chehlum Imam Hussain (RA), deploying over 3,000 police officers and personnel from other law enforcement agencies. The procession was monitored using drones and surveillance cameras in Safe City.

Officers were instructed to maintain close liaison with peace committees and procession organizers. Cooperation from

the organizers facilitated effective collaboration with the police and law enforcement officials during the processions.

Arrangements for thoroughly checking participants using metal detectors were ensured, and strict vigilance was maintained to confirm that security measures were in place by both the police and peace committees.

Pakistan Rangers and other law enforcement agencies also assisted the Islamabad Police in ensuring elaborate security arrangements. All Zonal DPOs, SDPOs, and SHOs were directed to make proper lighting arrangements after negotiations with the relevant authorities and to clear bushes in areas around places of worship.



ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, inspecting the Chehlum Imam Hussain (RA) procession and reviewed the security measures in place.

## PM sets one-month deadline for govt offices to switch to paperless system

Reviews legal aspects, final stages of PakPWD closure

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday assigned the Ministry for Information Technology and other relevant departments, the task of implementing the e-office system in all government offices.

Directing to ensure paperless office work within a month, the prime minister warned that delay in the implementation of e-office in government offices would not be tolerated.

"There should be no file work without e-office in the government offices from next month," the prime minister said adding that implementation of e-office to speed up transparency in the system was the top priority of the government.

He further directed that all the officers in the government offices should en-

sure file work through e-offices.

On the direction of the prime minister, the staff of the PM Office has already completed the e-office training.

Last week the prime minister also received the files through e-office system.

PM Shehbaz said that the e-office was an important step towards improving governance and promoting digitization in the country. He also directed to present a report on the progress of launching e-office in next two weeks.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday chaired a meeting to review the legal aspects and final procedures regarding the closing down of the Pak Public Works Department

(PakPWD).

The prime minister directed that the financial package for employees who will be laid off due to the dissolution will not be applicable to those who have been proven guilty of serious corruption charges.

PM Shehbaz Sharif also instructed that the final plan for transferring ongoing projects under the PakPWD to provinces and relevant departments should be presented soon.

He further directed that all final recommendations regarding the closure of the PakPWD should be presented to the cabinet.

The prime minister also ordered the implementation of the age relaxation proposal to re-employ hardworking and honest individuals with short period of employment in the PakPWD.



CAIRO: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain attending an International Conference on role of women in building awareness.

## Salik Hussain highlights role of women in building awareness

CAIRO (Online): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain has emphasized the transformative role of women in building awareness across religious, cultural, societal, and familial domains.

The federal minister was addressing the 35th International Conference on the role of women in building awareness in Cairo, Egypt on Saturday.

Chaudhry Salik Hussain highlighted women's significant role in addressing contemporary issues such as religious intolerance and promoting global peace.

"As we continue to advocate for gender equality

and empower women, we must recognize their achievements, ensuring their voices and efforts are valued" he added. He asserted to empower women for leadership roles and added: we not only honour their contributions but also enhance the inclusivity and depth of religious discourse, the federal minister added.

He stated that as we gather at this forum, our exploration of conference theme will delve into four critical areas where women have been and continue to be pivotal including religious awareness, cultural awareness, societal services, and the nurturing of family and child development.

## Anti-state elements' true faces revealed: Muqam

Independent Report

ABBOTTABAD: In a scathing press conference at the Abbottabad Press Club, Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Engineer Amir Muqam, unleashed a blistering attack on anti-state elements, exposing their true faces to the public.

Muqam lambasted the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for its inability to tackle the province's worsening situation, citing foreign funding as a major contributor to the chaos. He alleged that ministers are

engaged in a bitter struggle for shares of this funding, using it to fuel protests while claiming the treasury is empty when it comes to providing relief to the people.

The Minister also took aim at a certain individual, criticizing their hypocrisy in chanting anti-American slogans during the day and supporting the country at night. He lamented the government's failure to address the pressing issues of insecurity and unemployment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Utility Stores concern

There can be little argument with the fact that many white elephants in the extensive stable of state-owned enterprises need to be privatised, as they are a huge burden on the taxpayer.

Yet some SOEs, such as the Utility Stores Corporation, although being run inefficiently, provide lifelines to millions of low-income Pakistanis in the form of subsidised groceries. In this context, reports that the state is thinking of winding up USC operations have caused concern. On Friday, addressing lawmakers at a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production, the relevant secretary said that the state wanted to "get out of non-essential businesses", and that the administration had decided on the closure of the USC. He added that the stores' employees would be transferred elsewhere. However, the next day, the government appeared to backtrack on the decision, as the industries minister said that the government would be merely 'restructuring' the Utility Stores.

The USC is no model organisation. For years, the stores have been plagued by reports of corruption and mismanagement. Embezzlement to the tune of millions of rupees has been reported, while in 2021 the AGP unearthed financial irregularities in the USC worth billions. Furthermore, consumers have complained of substandard merchandise being sold at the stores, while USC staff have been accused of vending subsidised products in the open market.

However, despite these glaring malpractices, it is also a fact that millions of low-income consumers depend on the stores for groceries at prices below market rates. In a country where price-gouging and black-marketing are common, and state regulation of the market to prevent consumer exploitation by unscrupulous traders is extremely weak, the Utility Stores have provided some relief. Lines of consumers outside the stores in cities across Pakistan are proof of this, especially during periods such as the month of Ramazan, when traders tend to jack up prices of essentials.

The state needs to clarify what restructuring it plans to carry out. The Senate committee was told that "alternative arrangements" would be made, including providing cash transfers to citizens. In these times of raging inflation, low-income citizens need to be protected from the ravages of the market. If the USC is restructured, how will the state ensure that the poor consumers are not fleeced. A workable plan, therefore, is required that details how the interests of consumers will be protected while the state disassociates itself from the USC. The cash-transfer plan might work if funds are remitted to low-income households in a transparent manner. The Benazir Income Support Programme can serve as a database for this purpose.

Moreover, the state needs to improve its price-checking capabilities so that consumers who buy from the open market are not fleeced.

## The way she wore

Muna Khan

On the day I sat down to write this piece about a PTI leader's objection to a woman's clothing, this paper's front page carried a photograph of doctors at Ganga Ram hospital protesting the administration's attempts to bury the alleged rape of a five-year-old girl. A member of the janitorial staff in Lahore has been arrested. According to the hospital's medical superintendent, the janitor "touched" the girl at 2am and was apprehended after she made a lot of noise. Young doctors, however, tell a different story of the girl's screams during the assault which alerted patients' attendants who helped nab the alleged rapist.

I wonder what the five-year-old girl was wearing as she slept with her mother in the hospital before she was attacked. I wonder what the mother was wearing.

A woman's clothes are responsible for all ills in society — she will be molested or raped or killed whether she is in aam shalwar kameez or covered head to toe or in a shroud in her grave. Her body is up for grabs the moment she steps out of her home, for whatever reason — to study, work, buy groceries etc. A woman's body is the topic of conversation whether she is being stripped of her right to wear the hijab in one country or forced into wearing one in another.

I bring up clothing because of PTI lawmaker Iqbal Afridi's recent comments about the "inappropriate" clothing worn by a woman executive at a power division's committee hearing. After the high-level executive gave her presentation and left the room, Afridi said she should not have attended the meeting in such an outfit and suggested devising a stan-

dard operating procedure for women's clothing.

My first thought was to wonder what she could have possibly worn to this meeting until I stopped myself. It isn't about what she was or wasn't wearing. No man should police a woman's body. When he does so, he dehumanises her and allows others to disrespect her too. Men fault women for their clothing which arms the 'she was asking for it' brigade. This is simply wrong.

Incidentally, the chair of the committee apologised for the incident but to my knowledge so far, Afridi hasn't. Neither has anyone from the party, including its women supporters, distanced themselves from his inappropriate remark.

This partisanship is a real hurdle to progress in society. While elected representatives have come together to pass laws against sexual crimes, it is not enough. As this paper noted some months ago, "over 80 per cent of suspected sex offenders in the country are acquitted because of deficient investigation, weak prosecution, out-of-court settlements and pending cases in the lower courts."

Data about women in this country make for a depressing read. Pakistan was ranked 145<sup>th</sup> out of 146 countries in the World Economic Forum's 2024 Global Gender Gap Index, a drop from 142 in the previous year. At least 10,201 cases of violence against women were registered last year, according to a report in this paper in March. This was up by 14.5pc from the previous year.

Lawmakers' statements matter more against this backdrop. Men have policed women since forever but when they prioritise it

over intelligence, skills and competence, it becomes problematic. Men cannot decide what is appropriate for women to wear and women must stand up to such bullies.

Perhaps a great example of challenging the police came in April when YouTuber Shaaila Khan shut down her interviewee who said the problem in the country was that women had strayed from Islamic values and then he placed a dupatta on her. She immediately removed it and asked "why does your version of Islam begin and end with a dupatta" before schooling him further on disrespecting her space, touching her without her permission and rejecting him calling her his sister. The best bit was when another woman spoke up in her support, saying Shaaila had the right to dress as she wanted. This was a great example of how even one person's support gives a woman courage and conviction knowing she is not alone.

Oh to see any collective action in parliament, where many women's clothing or appearance have also been the subject of censure or ridicule. Imagine if women parliamentarians ignored party positions and came together to say we will not work until this rapist is held accountable, this harasser is arrested for his crime, this man is held accountable for promoting rape culture and so forth. But women leaders seem to enforce patriarchal values in parliament, perhaps because they don't want to upset leadership and lose their seats. This is most disappointing. The five-year-old girl deserves more than our sympathy.

She must know she has advocates beyond young doctors who want to do right by her. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Indo-US ties

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

In the first 50 years of its existence as an independent state, India had uneasy ties with the US. India preferred in those years a close partnership with the Soviet Union. Since the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, India's relationship with the US has morphed into a strategic partnership, with unprecedented levels of politico-military cooperation. The primary dynamic behind this upswing is the US competition with China, a rising economic and military power. The US would like to see India as a counterweight to China, and has engaged it in its Indo-Pacific strategy, the Quad, and similar initiatives that are seemingly aimed at containing the further rise of China.

The Indo-US strategic partnership covers a broad range of areas of cooperation. Notably, the US is India's largest trading partner in goods and services, whose value has grown 10 times since 2000, and the third largest source of FDI for India. Americans of Indian origin have integrated well into American society, and are occupying important positions in the political, economic and technology domains. The relationship enjoys bipartisan support in the US Congress, where India is viewed as a fellow democracy. The India Caucus in the US Congress has over 150 members.

What has further cemented Indo-US ties is a consistent rise in the economic profile of India, which has come a long way from an inward-looking economy, facing a serious balance-of-payments crisis in 1991 to a broadly liberal economy, the fifth largest in 2024, with aspirations to become the third largest in the near term. India has also surpassed China to

become the world's most populous country and emerged as a lucrative market for the US-led West. Its foreign currency reserves exceed \$650 billion.

With increased wealth at its disposal, India is currently the fourth largest military spender. Its defence cooperation with the US is multifaceted, and includes a growing number of joint military exercises. Defence procurements from the US are also increasing, and major US-origin platforms are now in India's use. The two countries have signed a series of defence agreements to pave the way for access to each other's logistics, encrypted communications, geospatial intelligence, and fast-track technology exchange. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2023 visit to the US, Washington agreed to the co-production of F-414 jet engines, including significant technology transfer for India's indigenous aircraft manufacturing capabilities, and an agreement to supply India with advanced drones to enhance its intel and operational capabilities.

However, the US has serious concerns about the relationship. According to the Stimson Centre, there are hurdles to taking cooperation to the next level. Firstly, India's capacity to absorb foreign technology faces many legal, coordination, and procedural issues. Secondly, the US is 'unsure' of India's political will to deter China in the Western Pacific, because India's priority seems to be the Indian Ocean region.

Thirdly, India has not blocked its trade and investment ties with China. Fourthly, Washington is deeply concerned over New Delhi's close relations with Moscow and its independent stance on

Ukraine and the purchase of Russian oil. Fifthly, India is teaming up with BRICS to explore trade in currencies other than the dollar. Sixthly, the US has concerns over India's policy of persecuting religious minorities and sending operatives to assassinate opponents on foreign soil.

This is not to suggest that the US is having second thoughts about its relationship with India. In fact, it is going out of its way to ignore the Indian leadership's tendency to assert India's 'strategic autonomy'. Although the American ambassador to India was blunt in challenging the use of the term 'strategic autonomy', his government did waive the CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act) for India to let it buy a missile system from Russia.

Last month, Senator Marco Rubio introduced a bill in Congress calling for treating India like Japan, Israel, South Korea and Nato members, in terms of sharing advanced weaponry with it. The bill was blatantly anti-China and also echoed the Indian view of Pakistan.

The US tilt raises deep security concerns for Pakistan as it encourages the Indian leadership to act as a net security provider, ie, hegemon, in South Asia. Washington tends to view Islamabad from the lens of Sino-Pak ties, and thus maintains minimal contact with it.

It is clear that whoever wins the US presidential elections in November will continue efforts to strengthen Indo-US ties, and would be unlikely to change the low-profile trajectory of Pak-US relations, which might oblige Pakistan to explore other options. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Speakers point out Current agreements with IPPs as hindrance to economic progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers at an in-house session on Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and Capacity Payment Issues in the Power Sector on Sunday pointed out current agreements with IPPs as a hindrance to economic progress of the country.

The Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) recently hosted a Roundtable Conference on "Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and the Capacity Payment Issues in the Power Sector."

The speakers at the event included Ambassador @ Inamul Haque; Former Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce, Industries, and Production, Dr Gohar Ejaz; CEO of CPPA, Rihan Akhter; Former Chairman NDMA, Maj General Asghar Nawaz; Former SAPM CPEC, Khalid

Mansoor; Senior Partner RIAA Barker Gillette, Husnain Naqvi; Partner Orrdignam & Co., Shahid Raza; CEO Attock Oil, Adil Khattak and GM WAPDA Irfan Rizvi, a news release said.

The discussion highlighted the challenges posed by Pakistan's current energy policies, particularly the implications of the existing tariff structure is unsustainable and burdensome for the economy. The need for a comprehensive review of these tariffs was emphasized, noting that the high cost of electricity is stifling economic growth and making Pakistan's exports less competitive on the global stage.

The conversation also addressed Pakistan's continued reliance on coal power plants, a practice

that has been slowly reduced in various countries. Some speakers strongly advocated for the retirement of these plants, arguing that they are economically unviable in the long term. It was highlighted that natural gas should also not be sold in Pakistan, unless absolutely necessary. A significant portion of the discussion focused on the role of IPPs in Pakistan's energy sector.

The panellists critically examined the capacity payments being made to these producers.

These payments, they argued, have placed a considerable strain on the national economy, particularly by inflating energy costs and reducing the competitiveness of Pakistani goods in the international market.

### MCCI holds two-day training session to align skills with industrial needs

MULTAN (APP): The Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) hosted a two-day session in collaboration with the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVT) to address the alignment of skilled training programs with the evolving needs of various industries.

The event, which took place on the MCCI premises, saw participation from industry leaders, including the Chairman of PVT, the President of MCCI, and representatives from various sectors.

In his opening remarks, Mian Rashid Iqbal, President of MCCI, shared the critical need for PVT to design training courses that meet the current demands of

industries and enhance the quality of the workforce. "The industry is willing to collaborate and support PVT in every possible way," he said. "The Multan chamber is ready to provide all necessary information to PVT to ensure that the skilled workers they produce can be readily absorbed by the industry, offering our young professionals ample employment opportunities."

Chairman PVT, Khalid Masood Chaudhry, highlighted the council's efforts in providing comprehensive training opportunities to the youth. "PVT is committed to equipping our young generation with the skills required to secure a bright future," he said.

### 1.92m olive saplings distributed among farmers

MULTAN (APP): Punjab Agriculture Secretary Ifkhar Ali Sahu has said that 1.92 million olive saplings were provided to farmers to transform Pothohar region into an "olive valley."

According to official sources, 1.32 million saplings were distributed free of cost by the Punjab Agriculture Department, while an additional 600,000 saplings were supplied under a national project at a 67% subsidy. Secretary Sahu stated that every possible resource was being utilized to ensure agricultural development and the prosperity of farmers in the Pothohar region. A comprehensive transformation plan is being developed to modernize agriculture in the area, making it more aligned with contemporary practices.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain in a meeting with with Iranian Consul General Mehran Mowahidfar and Iran's major investor group at the Iranian Consulate.

### Two Chinese companies to set up plants in Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): Two leading Chinese companies have announced setting up their plants in Pakistan with one setting up a sole entity while the other in a joint venture with a local company to manufacture raw materials for the textile industry.

Both companies were expected to invest millions of dollars in both the projects with the aim of manufacturing cheap raw materials for the local industries.

Abdul Rahim Chughtai, the convener of

the 9<sup>th</sup> Colour and Chemicals Expo 2024 and the president of the Punjab Dyes and Chemicals Merchants Association, said here Sunday that Napa Chemicals and Shao Shing Chemicals would make investments in Punjab.

He said Rainbow Industries would go into a joint venture with Shao Shing Chemicals soon, adding with the Chinese investment our local dyes and chemicals industry would get the latest technology transfer and advancement.

### Railways collect Rs 79.2 mln from ticketless passengers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has collected an amount of Rs 79.2 million from ticketless passengers in a crackdown during the last seven months with the help of railway police and train staff. "Around 61,352 passengers found traveling without tickets in different trains and collected the said amount from them, which is deposited in the official bank account of the department," sources in the Ministry told APP.

They said Pakistan Railways has not the first time conducted an operation against ticketless passengers on a large scale,

adding that these types of crackdowns had taken place daily.

The sources said that ticketless traveling was illegal, and those who were caught without a ticket were charged a ticket price for the whole journey of the train besides the penalty. Those who do not pay are handed over to the railway police. To a question, they said that Pakistan Railways Police claimed to have arrested a total of 43,84 accused due to their involvement in violations of rules and laws and also registered some 3,803 cases against them in eight Railways divisions in one and half years.

### Industry minister visits Iranian Consulate, meets Consul General, investors

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain met with Iranian Consul General Mehran Mowahidfar and Iran's major investor group at the Iranian Consulate on Sunday.

The delegation was led by the CEO of Taman Petroleum and Petrochemical Investment Company Babak Afghani. During the meeting, there was a discussion on the opportunities to increase bilateral economic cooperation.

Addressing the delegation, Minister of

Industry and Commerce

Chaudhry Shafay Hussain expressed eagerness for Iranian investment in the LPG, tire industry, and other sectors, assuring that the government will provide all possible support. He stated that he would discuss the RD tax with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He emphasized the need to boost bilateral trade, noting that both countries would benefit. He also highlighted the importance of increasing people-to-people contacts to enhance trade cooperation, calling for Pakistan and Iran to

advance economic collaboration. The minister also recalled visiting Iran with former Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, noting that the memories of that trip are still vivid in his mind. Talking on this occasion, the Iranian council general said that Iran and Pakistan are brotherly Islamic countries, historical and cultural relations are established between the two, but effective measures are needed to promote trade relations between the two countries.

### Nine more gas meters severed over violations

LODHRAN (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) UFG Control Task Force raided and cut off nine more connections including two for commercial use across the region.

The teams under the directions of General Manager, continued its inspection of private hospitals and residential consumers.

According to the details, in Muzaffargarh, the task force disconnected a meter that had been relocated from one house to another.

### Global importers demand climate reporting compliance by 2026: PFC CEO

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq has said that global importers linked purchases from Pakistani exporters with reporting climate compliance Oct 2023 and now every producer needs to make sure that it adopts the reporting practices by the year 2026.

Talking here on Sunday to a delegation of women entrepreneurs led by Ms. Hafsa Abdullah,

he said this shift is part of a broader trend where multinational companies are prioritizing sustainable practices in their supply chains to meet environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria. The move signals a growing demand for transparency in how goods are produced, especially concerning environmental impacts. The CEO said that Pakistani exporters now need to align with these evolving expectations.

## Governor emphasizes importance of vocational education to address unemployment in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday stressed the role of vocational education in combating unemployment and skills development in the province.

The governor made these comments during a discussion with Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Chairperson of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) at Governor House. During the meeting, NAVTTTC presented an update on its initiatives aimed at promoting vocational education in KP.

The governor expressed his satisfaction with the progress and highlighted the importance of involving as many young people as possible in these

activities. He said that economic difficulties are a major source of unrest among youth and emphasized that empowering youth and women is among his top priorities.

Governor Kundi pointed out that while there is a global demand for skilled labour, the lack of vocational training tailored to international standards often leaves Pakistani youth unable to secure jobs abroad. He welcomed the Prime Minister's decision to increase the budget for vocational education, stressing the need for training programs that meet modern requirements and international needs.

The governor commended NAVTTTC's efforts in launching courses in agriculture, IT and other

fields, and discussed various proposals for further enhancing vocational education. He assured the NAVTTTC Chairperson of full support from the Governor House to ensure a better future for the new generation. Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi praised overseas Pakistanis and discussed social projects in a meeting at the Governor House with prominent social activist Imran Agra, a leader in the overseas Pakistani community-based in the United States. Social figures Malik Kifayat and Zahid Saleem from Islamabad were also present on this occasion.

During the meeting, Governor Kundi commended the overseas Pakistanis.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health and Chairman Cabinet Committee for Law and Order Khawaja Salman Rafique inspecting the arrangement regarding Chehlum route during his visit to Central Control Room.

## Minister promises foolproof security for Chehlum, Data Ganj urs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order Khawaja Salman Rafique said on Sunday comprehensive security arrangements had been made for the Chehlum of Karbala martyrs and the urs of Ali Hajveri Data Ganj Bakhsh.

During a visit to the central control room of the Home Department here, the minister reviewed the monitoring system in place for the chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his

## DC Mirpurkhas urges parents to join fight against Polio

MIRPURKHAS (APP): Deputy Commissioner Dr. Rashid Masood Khan has emphasized the importance of addressing concerns and persuading parents who refuse to vaccinate their children against polio.

Chairing a meeting on Sunday to review preparations for the upcoming anti-polio campaign (September 9-13), Dr. Khan stressed the need for collective effort and serious commitment to eradicate the disease.

The campaign will deploy 1070 teams, including fixed, transit and area-in-charges to ensure widespread coverage. Officials were instructed to resolve any issues promptly and review team performance regularly.

The meeting also highlighted the significance of nutrition in combating polio, with calls for integrating nutrition programs into health centers. Attendees included Additional Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali Baloch, Assistant Commissioners, representatives from WHO, UNICEF and related departments.

## Power struggle underway in PTI: Azma Bokhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari said on Sunday that after the takeover of the Zaman Park house, a power struggle is underway between Aleema Khan and Bushra Bibi for control of the party.

In a statement, she said the conflict between the sister-in-law and the wife has been ongoing since the marriage. "Barrister Saif is irrelevant; no one in the party knows him. Neither Bushra Begum nor Aleema Khan is familiar with Saif." She expressed these thoughts in response

to Barrister Saif's statement.

She added, "Barrister Saif, you might remember that a trickster who tried to split the Muslim League has already completed a 40-day Chilla. You should inform the people about the performance of your fake 'Maula Jatt' Chief Minister."

You people claimed you came to change the fate of the province.

But Ali Amin Gandapur and his associates are looting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's resources with both hands.



LAHORE: A huge number of devotees of Hazrat Ali Bin Usman Hajveri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) are gathered to attend 981th Annual Urs celebrations held at his shrine in Lahore.

## CM's Sarkain Bahal Punjab Khushal program going on in full swing

LAHORE (APP): The recently initiated Sarkain Bahal Punjab Khushal Program of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is going on in full swing in the province, including South Punjab.

Provincial Minister for Communication and Works Punjab Mr Sohaib Ahmed Bherth also inspected Adda Bootipal road (4.5 km) and directed to gear up the pace of work. He also directed the Highway team to get the technocrat opinion of LBDC Canal bridge. He also inspected old GT road in Sahiwal city and directed to work on the plan of road repair. Furthermore, he visited Okara district where he was briefed about fifteen ongoing projects.

schemes. During his visit to Sahiwal district, Commissioner and DC briefed the minister about construction of the dual carriageway from Sheik Fazal to Chichawatni (25.15 km) for which an amount of Rs3927 million has been released. Sohaib Ahmed Bherth also inspected Adda Bootipal road (4.5 km) and directed to gear up the pace of work. He also directed the Highway team to get the technocrat opinion of LBDC Canal bridge. He also inspected old GT road in Sahiwal city and directed to work on the plan of road repair. Furthermore, he visited Okara district where he was briefed about fifteen ongoing projects.



PESHAWAR: Jamal-e-Islami Peshawar Chief, Bahrullah Khan along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Peshawar press club.

## Security plan finalized for Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA)

MULTAN (APP): Police have finalized a security plan for the Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) to avoid any untoward incident here on Sunday. As per directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Sadiq Ali Dogar, the police have finalized the plan to ensure foolproof security arrangements for the Chehlum. According to police sources, a total of nine mourning processions would be taken out in the

district out of which three have been declared sensitive in category A while eight Majalis among 29 have been declared sensitive. The police have decided to deploy over 2,000 officials and a special squad has also been formed under the supervision of CPO Sadiq Ali Dogar, which conducted search operations on a daily basis at Majalis points and mourning procession routes.

## Bilal Yaseen checks milk quality at Sabeel points

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yaseen Sunday checked the quality of milk at 'Sabeel' points, set up at Data Darbar and in its surroundings in connection with the ongoing annual urs celebrations of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh.

According to official sources, the minister directed the dairy safety teams to check quality of milk at entrance points of the provincial capital besides checking the milk quality in old city of Lahore.

Bilal Yaseen said that food safety teams of the Punjab Food Authority would remain deputed in surroundings of the Darbar till the last day of urs.

He said that supervision of food items would also be carried out at food preparing centres in the surroundings of the Data Darbar and added that poor quality of food items would not be tolerated at all.

## Police to provide foolproof security for Data Ganj Bakhsh urs

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore police have made extensive security arrangements for the 981<sup>st</sup> urs of Hazrat Ali Hajveri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA). According to a police spokesman on Sunday, over 4,000 police personnel have been deployed for the three-day urs celebrations. The security force includes six superintendents of police (SPs), 22 deputy superintendents of police (DSPs), 79 station house officers (SHOs), and 297 upper subordinates,

ensuring a robust presence throughout the event.

To enhance the safety of female visitors, lady police officials have been assigned for security duties and the checking of women entering the premises. In addition, 81 checkpoints, nine check-posts, and 12 walk-through gates have been established around Data Darbar to maintain strict security protocols.

The CCPO Lahore affirmed that stringent security measures are in place to protect thousands of devotees expected.

# International News

## Hamas negotiators in Cairo; 50 killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Hamas said its negotiators arrived in Cairo on Saturday to hear about the latest round of Gaza ceasefire talks from mediators after the UN reported badly worsening humanitarian conditions, with malnutrition soaring and polio discovered.

Gaza to 338 since it launched a ground offensive in the Palestinian territory on Oct 27.

Months of on-off talks have so far failed to produce a breakthrough to end Israel's devastating bombardment of Gaza.

Israeli negotiators were in Cairo on Thursday to meet mediators from the United States, which has presented a "bridging proposal" aimed at resolving continued disputes, focused on Israel's presence in strategic areas of Gaza.

But there was no sign of any breakthrough on key sticking points, including Israel's insistence that it must retain control of the Philadelphi Corridor, on the border between Gaza and Egypt.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military said on Saturday that three reserve were killed in Gaza Strip the previous day.

The officers, two major generals and a lieutenant colonel, were killed in central Gaza, the military said.

The latest deaths bring the military's losses in

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has locked horns with ceasefire negotiators over his insistence that Israel will not pull out of the so-called Philadelphi Corridor in the south of the Gaza Strip, a person with knowledge of the talks said.

The Philadelphi Corridor, along the border with Egypt, and the Netzarim Corridor cutting across the middle of the Gaza Strip, have been two of the main sticking points in talks backed by Egypt, Qatar and the United States.

Netanyahu has repeatedly insisted that Israel will not give up control of the Philadelphi Corridor, accusing Hamas of smuggling weapons and fighters across the border with Egypt.

He has also said Israel must maintain checkpoints in the Netzarim Corridor to stop the "movement of Hamas fighters from southern Gaza into the north".



Syria's President Bashar al-Assad speaks to the Syrian parliament in Damascus, Syria.

## Ukraine marks 33rd Independence Day anniversary as war against Russia reaches 30-month milestone

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: A somber atmosphere pervaded Ukraine's 33rd Independence Day on Saturday, as the nation's fight to repel Russia's full-scale invasion reached a 30-month milestone. No fireworks, parades or concerts were planned and instead Ukrainians marked the day with commemorations for civilians and soldiers killed in the war. Ukrainians flooded social media with messages of gratitude and support, greeting each other

and thanking the soldiers on the front lines. In the outpouring of unity, there's a shared acknowledgment that the two-and-a-half years have been tough, with fatigue increasingly setting in.

"Independence is the silence we experience when we lose our people," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said to the nation. "Independence descends into the shelter during an air raid, only to endure and rise again and again to tell the enemy.

## Egypt warns visiting US general on Lebanon risk

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi warned America's top general during a meeting on Sunday of the dangers of a major conflict in Lebanon.

US Air Force General C.Q. Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Egypt hours after a significant missile exchange between Israel and Lebanese Hezbollah. Hezbollah launched hundreds of rockets and drones at Israel and Israel said it struck Lebanon with about 100 jets to thwart a bigger attack, in one of the largest clashes in more than 10 months of border warfare.

## Indian fence sparks border tension with Bangladesh

**Monitoring Desk**  
KOLKATA: Security forces from India and Bangladesh had a tense confrontation this week over the construction of a fence supposedly meant to keep cattle from straying over their shared border, officials said on Saturday.

Relations between both countries are fragile after the August 5 overthrow of autocratic Bangladeshi ex-premier Sheikh Hasina, who is now in exile in India after a student-led uprising toppled her.

Hasina's biggest patron and benefactor and many Bangladeshis have since been openly critical of their bigger and more powerful neighbour for backing her 15-year rule.

The latest dispute arose on Thursday, when India's Border Security Force (BSF) claimed they were stopped from erecting the fence by their Bangladeshi counterparts.

"Tension flared up after Bangladesh border guards sought to block the building of a cattle fence," BSF deputy inspector general A. K. Arya said.

New Delhi was

## China, Philippines clash in South China Sea despite efforts to rebuild trust

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: The Philippines and China clashed in disputed waters of the South China Sea on Sunday over what Manila said was a resupply mission for fishermen, the latest in a series of sea and air confrontations in the strategic waterway.

The incident overshadowed efforts by both nations to rebuild trust and better manage disputes after months of confrontations, including a violent clash in June, in which a Filipino sailor lost a finger.

The Philippines on Sunday accused China of "aggressive and dangerous maneuvers" to block the resupply mission. China's coast guard, meanwhile, said it had taken "control measures" against a vessel that had "illegally" entered the waters and repeatedly

dangerously approached Chinese ships. In the incident near the Sabina Shoal, the Philippine South China Sea task force said Chinese vessels rammed and used water cannons against a Philippine Bureau of Fisheries ship transporting food, fuel, and medical supplies for Filipino fishermen.

For its part, the Chinese coast guard said the Philippine ship "ignored repeated serious warnings and deliberately approached and rammed" China's law enforcement boat, resulting in a collision.

It added that responsibility for the collision lies entirely on the Philippine side. China asserts sovereignty over nearly all of the South China Sea, including areas claimed by the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Brunei.

## US expands area in Mexico to apply for border asylum appointments, hoping to slow push north

**Monitoring Desk**  
CIUDAD HIDALGO: As soon as she stepped onto Mexican soil this week, Venezuelan migrant Yuri Carolina Meléndez downloaded the U.S. government's app to apply for asylum appointments.

The CBP One app has been around, but as of Friday migrants in Mexico's southernmost states bordering Guatemala will be able to apply for appointments. Previously, they had to be in central or northern Mexico.

"I have to wait to see if it really works," the woman said while resting under a tree with her 16- and 18-year-old daughters along a border highway leading to the city of Tapachula this week.

Mexico has been asking the U.S. to expand the app's access to the south in an attempt to relieve the pressure migrants feel to continue north to at least Mexico City. In recent years, the Mexican government has tried to contain

migrants in the south farther from the U.S. border, but the lack of work opportunities and housing in southern cities like Tapachula have pushed migrants north.

Mexico hopes that if migrants can wait for their appointments in the south they might not risk getting snagged by authorities without papers or by organized crime groups that prey on migrants travelling north. With an appointment, they could, in theory, move without interference. US ambassador to Mexico calls proposed judicial overhaul a democracy "risk" and economic threat Germin Alemán, a 31-year-old from Honduras travelling with his wife and three children, planned to register as soon as they reached Tapachula.

"We're going to apply here, we're going to wait for the appointment," he said as they walked from the border toward Tapachula. Others, however, still felt the pressure to get farther north.

## Israel stages heavy airstrikes on Lebanon after Hezbollah attack over slain top commander

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: Israel launched a wave of airstrikes across southern Lebanon early Sunday in what it said was a pre-emptive strike on Hezbollah, as the group said it had launched hundreds of rockets and drones to avenge the killing of one of its top commanders last month.

The heavy exchange of fire threatened to trigger an all-out war that could draw in the United States, Iran and other groups across the region. It could also torpedo efforts to forge a cease-fire in Gaza, where Israel has been at war with the Palestinian group Hamas, an ally of Hezbollah, for over 10 months.

The Israeli military said Hezbollah was planning

to launch a heavy barrage of rockets and missiles toward Israel. Soon after, Hezbollah announced it had launched an attack on Israeli military positions as an initial response to the killing of Foad Shukur, one of its founders, in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut last month. The attacks came as Egypt hosted a new round of talks aimed at ending the Israel-Hamas war. Hezbollah said it will halt the fighting if there is a cease-fire in Gaza. Iran supports both groups as well as fighters in Syria, Iraq and Yemen who might join any larger conflict.

Air raid sirens were reported throughout northern Israel, and Israel's Ben-Gurion international airport diverted incoming flights and delayed take-offs for a time.

## Telegram messaging app CEO Durov arrested in France

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: Pavel Durov, the Russian-French billionaire founder and CEO of the Telegram messaging app, was arrested at Bourget airport outside Paris on Saturday evening, TF1 TV and BFM TV said, citing unidentified sources.

Durov was travelling aboard his private jet, TF1 said on its website, adding he had been targeted by an arrest warrant in France as part of a preliminary police investigation.

TF1 and BFM both said the investigation was focused on a lack of moderators on Telegram, and that police considered that this situation allowed criminal activity to go on undeterred on the messaging app.

## Pak, Azerbaijan discusses future prospect for bilateral economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Azerbaijan have discussed the prospect of bilateral economic and trade relations to further look at bilateral and multilateral cooperation in different sectors of the economy.

The Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov met Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan at the residence of Deputy Chairman Senate on Sunday. During the meeting, issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations and the overall situation of the region were discussed in detail.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Chairman Senate said that Pakistan values

its fraternal relations with Azerbaijan and there is a need to increase cooperation between the two countries in the fields of economic and trade, investment, energy, defence, agriculture and natural resources.

The Deputy Chairman Senate said that there is an urgent need to promote investment and trade between the two countries and it is necessary to remove the existing obstacles for the improvement of the economy. He said that Parliamentary and institutional cooperation can help promote relations at the public level.

Emphasizing bilateral and multilateral cooperation

in the meeting, the Deputy Chairman Senate said that Pakistan will further promote economic relations with Azerbaijan. Syedaal Khan said that trade and investment opportunities can be found through frequent exchanges of delegations in business sectors. He said that Pakistan, especially Baluchistan province is rich in mineral wealth and will prove to be important in changing the destiny of this region. Pakistan will prove to be the economic and trade hub of the region and Investors and businessmen from all over the world should take advantage of the investment opportunities in Pakistan, he

added. The Deputy Chairman Senate said that the relationship between Pakistan and Azerbaijan is based on religious and cultural values.

Emphasis was placed on the work of the delegations regarding the promotion of exchanges.

Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan said that the parliaments have a heavy responsibility for peace and development in the region.

He said that many lives and financial sacrifices have been made in Pakistan in the war against terrorism. Every possible measure will be taken for the peace and survival of this region, he said.



KARACHI: A view of burnt vehicles after two religious groups clash in Karachi.



LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi offering Fatcha at the shrine of Hazrat Ali bin Usman Data Ganj Bakhsh Hijveri (RA).

## Punjab healthcare reborn under CM's visionary leadership: Minister Health

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir Sunday acknowledged Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz's commitment to healthcare reform, which has been yielding lasting impacts, setting a new standard for healthcare delivery in whole Punjab.

Talking to PTV News, he said Punjab's healthcare sector has undergone a remarkable transformation under the visionary leadership of CM Maryam Nawaz. With a steadfast commitment to reform and

innovation, the CM has spearheaded a comprehensive overhaul of the province's healthcare infrastructure, policies, and services, he added.

Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir credited Maryam Nawaz's leadership for pioneering healthcare initiatives, including the 32 field hospitals and Clinics on Wheels project which are driving lasting change in the province's healthcare landscape. These state-of-the-art mobile hospitals have brought quality medical

care to the doorstep of thousands, ensuring timely interventions and saving countless lives, he mentioned.

Similarly, the 'Clinics on Wheels' project has revolutionized access to primary healthcare services, particularly for women and children, he mentioned.

He said that by leveraging technology and innovative service delivery models, Maryam Nawaz's leadership has ensured that Punjab's healthcare system is more inclusive, responsive and effective.

## 29 dead and 1384 injured in 1287 road traffic crashes

LAHORE: The Emergency Services Department (ESD) responded to 1287 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. In these RTCs, 29 people died, whereas 1384 were injured. Out of these, 571 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 813 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals.

The majority (76%) involved Motorbikes, there-

fore effective enforcement of traffic laws and lane discipline are essential to reduce the increasing number of road traffic crashes.

Furthermore, the analysis showed those 764 drivers, 54 underage drivers, 162 pedestrians, and 487 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 309 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 327 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Faisalabad 96 in with 98 victims and at third Sheikhupura with 72 RTCs and 85 victims.



Victorious cadets of Pakistan Naval Academy receiving medals and trophy from Sri Lankan Naval Chief in International Inter-Navies Sailing Championship at Trincomalee, Sri Lanka.

## PN Academy cadets win int'l inter navies sailing championship in Sri Lanka

ISLAMABAD (APP): The cadets of Pakistan Naval Academy won the Commandant Cup Sailing Regatta held at Naval and Maritime Academy Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, where teams from the Navies of Sri Lanka, Pakistan, China and India took part in the competition.

The competition was held on internationally recognized classes of boats including Laser Radial and Enterprise categories. Pakistan Naval Academy won

the competition with Silver medal in Laser Radial and a Gold medal in the Enterprise category, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

The victorious team of Pakistan Naval Academy comprised Officer Cadets Syed Sakhr Ali Shah, Saad Bin Khalid and Muhammad Abdullah Akram. Sri Lankan Naval Chief Vice Admiral Priyantha Perera was the Chief Guest of the closing ceremony and gave away medals and trophies to the winning team.

## AIOU hosts workshop on EdTech skills

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to align the teaching profession with the demands of the modern era, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice-Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), has urged teachers to transform themselves by leveraging modern technological tools.

Addressing the closing ceremony of a two-day training workshop on 'EdTech Skills for Content Development', Dr. Nasir highlighted the rapid shift from traditional education methods to online learning, emphasizing the importance of teachers mastering these new technologies to shape their students' futures effectively. Dr. Nasir called on teachers to move beyond the conventional role of mere instruction and to take on the mantle of wisdom providers.

## PM working day and night to reform national institutions: Ishaq Dar

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Sunday that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was working day and night to bring reforms in national institutions while the economy would soon be restored under his leadership.

He expressed these views while talking to the media on the occasion of participating in the urs celebrations of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh. He said when the country's economy was taking off, obstacles were created. "May Almighty Allah not let this happen this time; let us make Pakistan an economically prestigious country in the world," he prayed. Provincial Food Minister Bilal Yasin and others were also present.

The deputy PM said he had already served the country as the finance minister, and this time he had been assigned many responsibilities. He said there was no doubt that Pakistan had suffered a lot economically during the past years, adding that "it was being predicted that the country would take 15 years to come out of the severe crises. But with the grace of Allah, it took only three-

and-a-half years for Pakistan to come out of the crises." In 2013, the country was experiencing up to 18 hours load-shedding, and dozens of terrorist incidents were taking place daily, affecting the economy badly. But, the PML-N government solved all those problems in just three-and-a-half years with the grace of Allah, and the load-shedding issues was also resolved. It was admitted by major forums, and it was said that the way Pakistan was developing, it would soon join the G20. But after that, in the next four years, Pakistan was ranked at the 47th position economically and it was not a small loss, the problems of the country today are due to that duration.

Ishaq Dar said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, "we are making all-out efforts to restore economy and create ease for Pakistanis again". He said a 14 rupees per unit relief in electricity bills had been given by the provincial government to the people of Punjab, and the prime minister allocated Rs. 50 billion subsidy to electricity users of up to 200 units, with the approval of the cabinet.



ISLAMABAD: A young girl student busy in making painting at Peshawar Mor Sunday Bazaar.

## AJK President, PM, Speaker grieve over sad demise of 25 victims in Road mishap

ISLAMABAD (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq and Speaker State Legislative Assembly Ch. Latif Akbar have expressed a deep sense of shock and grief over the tragic deaths of 25 people in a coaster van mishap that plunged into a ditch near Azad Pattan-Kahota junction on Poonch-Rawalpindi road adjoining Punjab province territory early Sunday morning.

In their separate messages of condolence with the bereaved families, the AJK leaders prayed for the rest of the departed souls in eternal peace and granted fortitude to the bereaved families to bear the big loss of precious lives with courage.

A Rawalpindi-bound coaster with at least 26 passengers on board, traveling from Rawalakot, AJK, plunged into a deep ravine near Pana Pul, Azaad Pattan, resulting in the deaths of 25 of the commuters on board and the serious injury of a lone passenger of the ill-fated van, Palandri (Poonch division) officials told APP over the telephone on Sunday.

Most of the ill-fated deceased, including children, women and men, belonged to the Sadhanoti district of the Poonch of AJK.

Rescue teams were immediately sent to the location of the mishap to join work to retrieve bodies and assist the injured, who remain trapped in the wreckage. Of the injured, only one survived until last reports came in, officials said.

The accident occurred near Pana Pul, between Azaad Pattan and Kahuta, following a reported failure of the brakes.

Further investigations are in progress by the concerned area police, official sources said.

## Maryam orders PHA in every district

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a meeting on administrative matters on Sunday, made a principled decision to establish Parks and Horticulture Authorities (PHA) in every district of the province.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz directed the authorities to establish green belts along and between roads, with continuous maintenance to enhance urban aesthetics. The administration was instructed to intensify efforts for city beautification. She emphasized the importance of increasing the number of trees and ensuring that streetlights in all cities are functional.

CM Maryam Nawaz also mandated comprehensive cleanliness drives in both urban and rural areas. She stressed that residents should see a noticeable improvement in cleanliness and other municipal services.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Rahim Yar Khan presented a report on the implementation of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), utilizing Artificial Intelligence software to assess progress. The meeting was attended by Special Assistant Rashid Nasrullah, Chief Secretary Zahid Akhter Zaman, Home Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal, IG, Commissioner, RPO, and other officials.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has appreciated the police on a successful operation in Kacha to safely recover abducted constable Ahmed Nawaz.

front of my office," he said. "It's been days, and there's still no sign of recovery. The lack of security is palpable, and it's affecting all of us."

Similarly, Qasim, another employee, echoed Kamran's frustration. "It's not just a sudden loss; it's a constant worry. Every day, we're hearing about new thefts, and it's becoming unbearable."

The situation has grown so dire that Idrees, the second shift security in-charge, confirmed the daily occurrences of thefts from vehicles parked at the facility. "We're all deeply concerned," Idrees admitted. "The thefts are relentless, and our office workers are increasingly anxious about their personal property."

The problem is compounded by the slow progress of a new parking lot under construction across the road.

## Sahala Police destroys vehicle confiscated in fraud case

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sahala Police allegedly misused a vehicle which was confiscated in a fraud case, raising concerns over the department's adherence to the law.

A 2017 Toyota Grande Altis, seized as evidence in a fraud case registered under CrPC sections 420, 468, and 471 at Sahala Police Station, was reportedly subjected to unauthorized use by the officers. The sources revealed that the vehicle, instead of being secured as case property, was damaged and altered for personal and official use by the police.

## Vehicles' battery thieves target CDA facilitation centre with impunity

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) Facilitation Center in Sector G-7/2, Islamabad, found itself at the center of a growing crisis. For weeks, the facility has been plagued by a series of vehicle battery thefts, casting a shadow over its reputation and sparking outrage among employees and visitors alike.

The most recent theft, which occurred on Wednesday, highlights the severe security deficiencies and inadequate parking facilities at the Center. Victims of the thefts, including both private and government employees as well as members of the general public, are voicing their frustration and concern over the escalating situation.

Kamran, a CDA employee, recounted his distressing experience to APP. "I had my Mehran's battery stolen from right in

## Five-day anti polio drive set to launch on Sept 9

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration is set to launch a comprehensive five-day anti-polio campaign starting on September 9.

Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Sunday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for upcoming anti-polio drive.

According to an ICT spokesman, the meeting was attended by District Health Officer (DHO) Dr. Zeem Zia, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) East and others.

## DC holds weekly performance review meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon held a meeting to assess the recent activities of the city's key departments, focusing on food safety, price control and anti-encroachment operations.

The meeting reviewed the performance of the Islamabad Food Authority, Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates, said the spokesman of the ICT administration here Sunday.

The discussions centred around various initiatives, particularly actions taken by the Food Authority.

The officials also provided updates on the drainage and other operations during the ongoing monsoon season. The meeting highlighted the efforts in price control, where 478 operations led to fines totalling Rs 31,500. Additionally, 40 individuals were arrested for price list violations, and 22 shops were sealed for non-compliance.

## Significant challenges faced by women entrepreneurs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Experts highlighted on Saturday the significant challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Pakistan during the launch of a new report on financial inclusion.

According to the statement the report, titled "Advancing Financial Inclusion for Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan," was presented by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF).

Dr. Faqir Ahmad, Joint Executive Director of SDPI, emphasized that the research reveals a crucial need to improve financial literacy and shift societal attitudes towards women in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). He pointed out that while the report addresses known issues such as credit and regulatory hurdles, a broader ap-

proach involving both government and private sectors is needed to address these challenges effectively.

Birgit Lamm, FNF Country Head, said that women face unique barriers, including societal biases and difficulties in accessing capital.

She stressed the importance of policy changes and educational initiatives to support female entrepreneurs, who make up 22% of Pakistan's labor force but often encounter systemic obstacles.

Faeyza Khan from SDPI said that the report's findings, which include the limited access women have to networks, information, and mentorship compared to their male counterparts.

The study highlights that only 1% of SMEs in Pakistan are women-owned, a stark contrast to higher percentages in neighboring countries, he added.



A group photo of Consul General Malaysia Harman Hardinata Ahmad, Chairman Cape Kokh Iqbal, Nighat Mehmood and Asma Naz on the occasion of the Tunation One Fest, a joint event of the Malaysian Consulate and Consumer Association Pakistan.