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Sindh residents brace for rains as storm system intensifies into Cyclone Asna

KARACHI (Agencies): With a deep depression situated approximately 170 kilometres from Karachi on Friday, Pakistan's coastal areas are bracing for rains as the storm system has intensified into Cyclone Asna over the northeast Arabian Sea along Sindh's coast.

Zoom Earth's live radar also denoted the system as a cyclonic storm with a speed of 65 kilometres per hour.

According to an alert from the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) issued at 5:30pm today, a deep depression (a very strong low-pressure area) over India's Rann of Kutch has moved westward during the last six hours and now lies around 170 kilometres east/south-

east of Karachi. It said the system was likely to "keep moving initially west/northwestwards" and under its influence, widespread rain/wind-thunderstorms with scattered heavy/very heavy and isolated extremely heavy falls were likely in Karachi division, Tharparker, Badin, Thatta, Sajawal, Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Matiari, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Dadu and Shaheed Benazirabad districts till Saturday.

This satellite image captured at 9:30am on Aug 30 shows a deep depression over Arabian Sea, about 200km away from Karachi.

— PMD
Met officials have described the formation of a

cyclone in the monsoon season as a "rare phenomenon". "It would be a rare event as cyclones are uncommon in the monsoon season," Chief Meteorologist Dr Sardar Sarfaraz said earlier.

"There is an 80 per cent chance for a cyclonic storm's formation when the deep depression would move from land to the sea and get favourable conditions."

Sarfaraz earlier said if the storm materialised it would be the first cyclone in the Arabian Sea in August since 1976 and would get the name 'Asna' suggested by Pakistan. He added that regional cyclones were assigned names according to a list prepared by a 13-country panel, including Pakistan.



KARACHI: A view of sea waves seen from a residential apartment, following reports from the Pakistan Meteorological Department of a potential cyclonic storm that could develop over the Arabian Sea, at Clifton Beach, in the city.

Talks with enemies of Pakistan out of question No leniency to those who sow seeds of hatred in Balochistan: PM Shehbaz

Says terrorists to be made an example to accomplish journey of progress; Vows to defeat Pakistan's adversaries through collective efforts

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said talks with the enemies of Pakistan stand out of question.

"The youths of Balochistan are being lured through a narrative. Jawans of Pakistan army are chasing terrorists day in day out, he said this while addressing meeting of federal cabinet here Friday.

I reviewed law and order situation during my visit to Quetta. I met the family members of Shuhada. The family members of Shuhada were in great courage. Corps commander Quetta gave detailed briefing on situation

in the province. What happened in Balochistan it was extreme of terrorism. Khwarij and terrorists are sowing seeds of hatred in Balochistan and are being funded from abroad. But those sowing seeds of hatred will find no place.

He expressed the resolve that enemies of Pakistan will be crushed through collective efforts of the nation, armed forces and the law enforcement agencies. He said the Chief Minister launched a number of development projects in the province.

He held the announcement of global rating agency Moody's about Pakistan economic outlook reflects

that the country's economy is moving towards upwards trajectory.

He assured that the federal government would extend support for capacity building of the Levies force.

He said the Federal government will implement the proposals put forward by the provincial political leaders.

The Prime Minister said the government is also taking effective measures for development of youth. He said ten per cent additional quota has been allocated for Balochistan in the schemes like laptops and agricultural training in China.

CM approves Rs 500m to start IT certification by 3 varsities across Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has approved Rs 500 million to start IT Certificate programs to enhance IT skills of students and professionals across the province focusing on poverty reduction strategy. The CM said that the program would provide practical skills and industry-recognized certifications to stand out in a competitive job market.

To this effect, a meeting regarding the signing of memorandum of understanding (MoU) was attended by Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman HEC Prof Tariq Rafi, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Information, Science & Technology Noor Ahmad Samon, Secretary U&B Abbas Baloch, VC NED University Dr Suresh Lodhi, VC IBA Sukkur Dr Asif Shaikh, VC Mehran University Prof Tauha Hussain, IT Dept's Member Ayaz Uqaili and others here Friday.

Secretary of IT Noor Samo briefed the chief minister that the NED University would offer IT courses

in Karachi Division and Tharparkar District, Mehran Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas Divisions and Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur and IBA University would cover Larkana Divisions. The program is initially designed to benefit 10,000 youth, with the potential for scaling up. The CM has provided Rs. 500 million to the Sindh IT dept under the 'Initiative of Capacity Building' to the respective universities, he told.

The chief minister was informed that the IT Certificate program included Certified JAVA Developer, Certified Python Developer, Certified Database Administrator, Certified Graphic Designer, Certified E-Commerce Professional, Certified Digital Marketing Professional, Certified Web Developer, Certified Mobile Application Developer and Certified Data Scientist.

In response to a question, Secretary IT Noor Samo informed the chief minister that each certificate had a two-month duration.



KARACHI: Vice Chancellor of NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi Professor Sarosh Hashmat called on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori here at Governor House.

Governor, NED university VC discuss promotion of higher education in Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Vice Chancellor of NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi Professor Sarosh Hashmat called on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori here at Governor House on Friday.

Promotion of higher education in the province, the role of universities, the training of the students and other issues of mutual interest were discussed.

Governor Kamran Tessori said that the

Federal Government was determined to promote higher education in the province.

There is a dire need of preparation of curriculum, compatible with modern times, the Governor maintained.

Kamran Tessori said that NED University has a key role in promoting higher education.

The Vice-Chancellor appreciated the process of training the youth in modern IT courses under the Governor's Initiatives.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the President of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Maulana Fazal ur Rehman, in the Federal Capital.

Federal Ombudsman for improving investigation, ensuring implementation

KARACHI (APP): The Federal Ombudsman, Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, Friday emphasized on improving the quality of investigation of public complaints and further enhancing the ratio of implementation on decided cases so that maximum complainant satisfaction could be achieved. He was presiding over a meeting held here at Karachi to review performance of ombudsman's regional offices at Karachi, Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas and deliberate on issues being faced by the regional offices.

The meeting was attended by Senior Advisor and In-charge FOS regional office Karachi Syed Anwar Haider, Advisor In charge Regional Office Hyderabad Dr Syed Rizwan Ahmed, Associate Advisor In charge RO Mirpurkhas and other senior officials.

Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, speaking at the occasion,

said that federal ombudsman secretariat received over 160,000 public complaints in the year 2023 and most of the complaints were investigated and decided within the stipulated time frame of 60 days. The ratio of implementation on decisions and directives has remained above 85 percent, he added. "In the current year, the number of public complaints filed with the ombudsman secretariat is expected to cross 200,000 and we are determined to maintain the growth momentum while focusing on consolidation and quality," he emphasized. The ombudsman urged the advisors and other officials to ensure thorough investigation of received complaints, monitor the implementation status and get feedback from the complainants so that maximum possible satisfaction of the aggrieved public could be achieved.

PM meets Maulana Fazal to discuss political situation of country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday visited the residence of President of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Maulana Fazal ur Rehman.

Maulana Fazal ur Rehman warmly welcomed the prime minister.

The prime minister expressed best wishes for Maulana Fazal ur Rehman. During the meeting, the two sides discussed overall political situation of the country.

PM Shehbaz Sharif was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar.

Consul General of the UAE to Karachi Dr. Bakheet Ateeq Alreimeithi, visits ITCN Asia at Expo centre Karachi.

KARACHI (APP): Third Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) PNS HUNAIN arrived in Karachi where upon arrival, an impressive reception ceremony was held at Pakistan Navy Dockyard.

Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi was Chief Guest on the occasion, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

While addressing the ceremony, Commander Pakistan Fleet highlighted that addition of PNS HUNAIN in PN fleet will significantly enhance Pakistan Navy's capability of safeguarding Maritime frontiers of Pakistan.

He also emphasized that induction of such mul-

tipurpose state of the art platforms will provide vital support to ongoing PN Maritime security patrol in Indian Ocean.

PNS HUNAIN is a multi-purpose medium sized Offshore Patrol Vessel equipped with state of the art electronic warfare, anti-air warfare weapons and sensors, self protection and terminal defence system. The ship was built and commissioned in July this year at Damen Shipyard, Romania.

Reception ceremony of PNS HUNAIN was attended by large number of PN Officers, CPOs and Sailors and families of crew members.



KARACHI: Secretary Information Technology Noor Ahmad Samo and Vice Chancellor NED University Dr Sarosh Lodhi sign an MOU to start IT Certificate programs. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and others witnessing the signing ceremony.

Admin active to handle rain situation: Sharjeel

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that the administration is actively responding to the rain situation across the province. Addressing a press conference here Friday, he said that Mayor stayed awake all night to oversee drainage efforts in Karachi, while the Mayors of Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas were also present on the spot.

Sharjeel said that their MPs and MNAs were on the ground and as long as the situation persists, they would continue to be present. The Chief Minister is personally visiting the rain-affected areas and the Irrigation Minister is also on duty at this time, he added.

The minister said that the government machinery was functional in all districts, including Karachi. He said that when natural disasters occur, it was not the job of

governments to sit back, it was the job of governments to be in the field. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Zardari had special instructions that everyone had to be present on the field, he said and added that the entire situation was being monitored by the leader of Pakistan People's Party Ms. Faryal Talpur herself and she had assigned the duties of MPs and MNAs from Karachi to remain present in the affected areas of all districts.

Sharing the data, he said that the highest rainfall in Sindh had been recorded in Badin district. Shaheed Fazil Rahu of Badin recorded the highest rainfall of 190 mm, 168 mm in Badin, 164 mm in Matli, 190 mm in Shaheed Fazil Raho, 118 mm in Talhar. 101 mm in Hyderabad city and 96 mm in rural areas of Hyderabad.



KARACHI: Relatives of Missing persons hold placards during protest in favor of their demands outside press club, in the Provincial Capital.

Despite continuous rainfall all major roads are clear: Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab, said that all major roads were clear, with issues only in a few low-lying areas and inner streets which were being addressed.

He expressed these views during visits to various areas of the city on Thursday night and Friday, said a statement.

He was accompanied by his spokesperson for political affairs, Karamullah Waqasi, COO of the Water and Sewerage Corporation, Engineer Asadullah Khan, and KMC officers. Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab, visited Rashid Minhas

Road, Nipa Chowranghi, Tariq Road, Shahrah-e-Faisal, Shaheed-e-Millat Road, Shahrah-e-Quaideen, and other roads and drains and reviewed the situation after the heavy rains.

The Mayor said that negative propaganda was spread regarding Rashid Minhas Road, Nipa Chowranghi, Tariq Road and Shahrah-e-Faisal after continuous rains in the city, but the reality was the opposite.

He added that critics can continue their criticism and photo sessions, but all municipal representatives will remain on the streets to facilitate the public.

New US CG calls on Sindh CM

KARACHI (APP): The new Consul General (CG) of the United States of America Scott Urbom called on Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah at CM House here on Friday.

Chief Minister Shah extended a warm welcome to Consul General Urbom, highlighting Sindh's rich cultural heritage.

He said that Sindh had many places including Mohan-Jo-Dario to visit as well as Thar, Ranikot and many other places.

The US Consul General thanked the CM and said that he would explore Sindh.

The chief minister assured the new US Consul General of the Sindh government's all kind of support.

Later, the Chief Minister presents Sindh cap and ajrak to the new Consul General.

Decision makers not worried for country: Imran

RAWALPINDI (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan has said decision makers have no worries about the country while the secret agencies have been assigned to eliminate PTI. He said this in an informal talk with the journalists after hearing of 190 million pounds reference against him and Bushra Bibi in Adiala jail Rawalpindi. He cautioned there is mammoth threat of provincialism. Protest was got staged in Punjab against terrorism in Balochistan. Political parties can unite people and not the army. PTI is the only party in the country which is existing in all the four provinces.



Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi addressing the crew of PNS HUNAIN upon arrival at Karachi.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Credit rating upgrade

The decision by Moody's to upgrade Pakistan's long-term sovereign credit rating from Caa3 to Caa2 could not have come at a better time. The agency has also revised its outlook for the country's beleaguered economy from stable to positive. The rating upgrade, which comes after a similar announcement by Fitch, is inspired by Pakistan's improving macroeconomic conditions, especially liquidity and its external position, which have improved from very weak levels amidst a staff-level agreement with the IMF for a fresh \$7bn bailout. Despite the upgrade, the new rating still remains within the agency's "speculative grade" band and continues to reflect the nation's "very weak debt affordability that drives high debt sustainability risk". Yet the agency has noted that Pakistan's default risk has reduced even though the nation's interest payments would continue absorbing about half of government revenues over the (next) two to three years. The improvement in the country's investment risk profile, as reflected by the rating upgrades by two major agencies within a month, must help reduce Pakistan's country risk premium and elevate investor confidence. The stock market perked up on Thursday as Moody's elevated confidence in this economy substantially wiped clean uncertainty around the IMF loan approval delays.

More importantly, this should go a long way in facilitating the government's return to the global bond markets and commercial banks for fresh funds it aims to raise by the next fiscal year for budgetary support and covering the gross external financing hole, one of the reasons for the delayed IMF approval. With a better rating, the government would be able to negotiate less harsh terms and lower interest rates with the foreign commercial banks it is in talks with for raising \$4bn. That said, Moody's, like Fitch, has warned that uncertainty persists regarding the government's ability to maintain and implement reforms sustainably. It suspects that the coalition government led by the PML-N formed after the February elections may not have a sufficiently strong electoral mandate to continually implement revenue-raising measures without stoking social tensions. "... (The potential) slippages in reform implementation could lead to delays in or withdrawal of financing support from (multilateral and bilateral) official partners," it added. "(This could elevate investment risks) since Pakistan continued to rely on timely and sufficient disbursement of financing from official partners to fully meet its external debt obligations," it observed.

In other words, the government can ill-afford any digression from the IMF reforms, including revenue-raising measures, if it wants to ensure timely reviews of the Fund programme, continually unlock financing from official partners to meet its external debt obligations, and support further build-up of its forex reserves. Pakistan's economy has come a long way from where it was a year ago. But it still isn't in a position to hold its own without multilateral and bilateral help.

Islamic environmentalism

Muhammad Hayat Lak | Muhammad Mohad Zulfiqar

It is no secret that Pakistan faces an existential climate change crisis. Currently ranked fifth in the Global Climate Risk Index, we are at severe risk of exposure to extreme temperatures and climate-related disasters. The destructive floods of 2022 — which affected 33 million people and caused economic losses amounting to more than \$15 billion — serve as a warning of what the future might hold.

In such a state of affairs, how can one persuade the people of Pakistan to mitigate environmental degradation? Interestingly, one plausible answer lies in religion, particularly Islam. This, in simple terms, would mean proliferating a scheme of ideas based on the Quran and Sunnah aimed at the conservation of the environment.

Often dubbed as Islamic environmentalism, this idea can be traced back to a series of lectures delivered by the Iranian philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr in 1968 at the University of Chicago. Nasr employed the Sufi concept of unity of the universe to argue that all created beings are interconnected, therefore humans owe a duty to the environment, as much as they do to their fellow men. If humans do not live up to this duty, then society will face moral degradation and crises as a direct corollary of our actions. As the Quran states, "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]" (30:41).

Recently, through its judgment in Amer Ishaq and others v. Province of KPK, pertaining to air pollution caused by stone crushers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Supreme Court has placed special emphasis on Islamic environmentalism. The court — while referring to Hossein Nasr's work — has explored the idea on the basis of six fundamental principles: 1) Tawhid, that Allah is the Creator of all and hence all created are interconnected. 2) Stewardship, that man, as the khalifa, must adopt a responsible attitude towards managing natural resources. 3) Balance, that the natural balance or meezan of Earth shall not be interfered with. 4) Avoiding waste, that Islam advocates the idea of moderation, especially in relation to consumption; the Quran commands, "O Children of Adam! ... Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely, He does not like the wasteful" (7:31). 5) Justice, that climate change hurts the poor the most even though they may have contributed the least. 6) Hima, that natural resources and biodiversity shall be conserved.

In countries across the globe, Islamic environmentalism is being used for community engagement to deal with climate-related issues. In Zanzibar, for years fishermen used to dynamite coral reefs to catch fish. Despite successive attempts, the World Wildlife Fund was unable to persuade them otherwise. Eventually, Fazlun Khaled, founder of the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES), was brought in. Khaled dealt with dynamite fishing by engaging local fishermen, imams, and political leaders in community workshops. Khaled emphasised — much like

Nasr — that all of creation is connected, therefore harm incurred to one part of it necessarily affects the others. This proved to be a hugely successful exercise, and the use of dynamite fishing plummeted.

Similarly, the African Muslim Environment Network is playing an active role in dealing with the perils of climate change. It utilises zakat and other charities' money to spread environmental education and finance sustainable ventures. Malaysia also provides a practical example of Islamic environmentalism, where more than 400 mosques have joined hands to counter poaching and promote the conservation of turtles. In 2015, the IFEES launched the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change, aimed at educating Muslims across the world about the harmful impacts of climate change. The declaration stressed the moral and religious duty of all Muslims to adopt sustainable practices to counter climate change.

In order to mitigate damage and promote sustainability, the government must draw from these examples and employ Islam as the basis for wider community engagement on the environment. As a deeply religious country, the people of Pakistan will be more receptive to the idea of environmental conservation as a religious duty.

Stakeholders from across the board — academic experts, religious scholars, and socio-political leaders — must come together to form a consensus against environmental degradation. As one fisherman from Zanzibar put it: we can break the laws of government, but not of God. -- Courtesy Dawn

The Baloch question

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

It is not as if we have not been here before. Balochistan has bled for so long that the mainstream Pakistani consciousness has tuned it into the background. Yet every so often, the Baloch national question is thrust into the spotlight and everyone suddenly becomes an expert on everything Balochistan.

What has transpired after the gruesome killing of civilians in Musakhel — most of them reportedly of Seraiki and Punjabi backgrounds — is a microcosm of everything that is wrong about the way most Pakistanis, particularly in the core regions of our highly fragmented country, conceive of the Baloch question.

First came the frenzied demands for retribution. Expressing outrage at the killings is one thing, but giving the state license to crush terrorism is another thing altogether. The current insurgency in Balochistan has raged for almost two decades, and was originally triggered by the dictatorial regime of General Pervez Musharraf, who, some readers will remember, publicly announced "they won't know what hit them".

Ever since, Baloch youth have been criminalised to no end, thus providing further fuel to the insurgency. Even staunch Pakistani nationalists have, on occasion, acknowledged that insurgencies, past and present, represent a failure of state policy. Militarisation of the Baloch question has not worked before, and will not work now.

Second was the lack of knowledge about Balochistan on display. Among other things, the term 'Balochi' was bandied about in reference to the people, whereas the correct term is 'Baloch'. Then there was almost total neglect of the fact that Pash-tuns, Hazaras,

Punjabis, Seraikis and others also call Balochistan their home. They do not all hold the same political opinions just because of their ethnic backgrounds. Indeed, the Baloch people are extremely diverse — the Makran belt in the south, for instance, comprises a distinct social formation to the northeastern parts of the province, including the Bugti, Mengal and Marri heartlands as well as Balochistan's 'green belt' on the Sindh border.

Finally, there was the reduction of the entirely organic Baloch national question to great games and international conspiracies. It is certainly not implausible that there are regional and global players active in Balochistan, but the concerns that many Baloch have vis-à-vis the grand 'developmental' claims of projects like CPEC are long-standing and undeniable.

Gwadar's historic fishing communities, for example, have seen their livelihoods destroyed by corporate trawlers, while the wider population has been ravaged by state and private profiteers, who have made a killing through bogus real estate schemes.

Yet all of this seems to matter little in a social media universe where nuance, history and facts count for little. It is certainly true that social media has provided impetus to peaceful movements such as the Baloch Yakjehti Committee, but recent days confirm how the Facebook and Twitter algorithm as well as the statist trolls and bots ensure the intellectualisation of political debate.

It is also telling how supposedly broad-based consensus around matters like enforced disappearances and ethnic profiling dissipate rapidly, and so many people outside the ethnic peripheries start displaying outright racism

by calling for a boycott of Quetta cafes and banishing Baloch students from Punjab.

The obvious tensions which do exist between ethnic-nations in Pakistan should, in fact, make clear that the Pakistani state continues to fail spectacularly in addressing the Baloch and other national questions. The weaponisation of religion continues to be the calling card of choice, which is why the militants of the TLP and TTP thrive while even entirely peaceful Baloch youth who are demanding accountability of the state are called terrorists.

Thirty years ago, Eqbal Ahmad delivered a lecture entitled 'Terrorism: Theirs & Ours', which many 'experts' should listen to. In it, he meticulously outlined the manner in which the term 'terrorism' was instrumentally used by states to pursue their narrow, cynical interests. Of all the forms of political violence that can viably be called 'terrorism', it is the modern state, in fact, that has perpetrated the most terror.

There is little evidence that the master strategists who run this country are interested in genuinely resolving the eight-decade-old Baloch question. Those who claim to be on the side of the people, particularly those in the core regions of the country, must not do their bidding, and at the very least use critical analytical lenses to make sense of what is going on in Balochistan.

Working people from Punjab to Balochistan are not perpetrators of hate. They can, however, become conveyor belts for the politics of hate. It is this which must be resisted at all costs. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Zimbabwean ambassador set a target for increasing bilateral up to \$100 million

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Zimbabwe to Pakistan, Titus M.J. Abu Basutu told APP here. The Ambassador said that Pakistan's current export volume to Zimbabwe is \$20 million and Pakistan's imports from Zimbabwe are \$10 million, which is less than the bilateral economic and trade potential, which can be increased over time to strengthen economic ties. He said that Zimbabwe imports from Pakistan mainly agricultural goods including rice, tractors and other sectors like light engineering, electronics, medical equipment, sports equipment, safety tools and machinery.

While Pakistan imports from Zimbabwe including chemicals, tanning dyes and cotton from Zimbabwe. The Ambassador said that at this time Zimbabwe prioritized promoting economic and trade relations with Pakistan and increased bilateral trade volume on priority, for which, "We encourage the business communities of both sides to exchange mutual business delegations." The ambassador said that Zimbabwe is having a "Trade Expo" in April 2025, where industrialists and traders from all over the world will participate and he invites the Pakistani business community to participate in it.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan holding a virtual meeting with the Sectoral Council for Engineering, highlighting the need for strategic reforms and government support to elevate Pakistan's engineering industry to compete globally Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan holding a virtual meeting with the Sectoral Council for Engineering, highlighting the need for strategic reforms and government support to elevate Pakistan's engineering industry to compete globally Islamabad.

LCCI, PSQCA step into partnership by signing MOU

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This strategic partnership is poised to provide comprehensive support and resources to the businesses for enhancing their ability to compete on a global scale. The MOU was signed by LCCI President Kashif Anwar and Director General PSQCA Taufique Ali Abbasi. This agreement marks the beginning of a collaborative effort to streamline access to standardization and conformity assessment services for LCCI members.

A cornerstone of this partnership is the establishment of a dedicated PSQCA Information Desk at LCCI. This desk will serve as a one-stop resource center where businesses, entrepreneurs and traders can seek guidance on standards, regulations and best practices. The Information Desk will be staffed by nominated officials from PSQCA to provide expert advice and assistance. Kashif Anwar highlighted the importance of this initiative stating that this MoU is more than just a formal agreement; it is a strategic alliance aimed at empowering our members with the knowledge and resources they need to meet global standards.



FAISALABAD: Daily wages laborers unload sacks of potatoes from a delivery truck at a bustling vegetable market.

TBM achieves Rs 2.6 bln profit before tax in first-half of 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Telenor Microfinance Bank (TMB) during the first-half of the year 2024 has achieved Rs 2.6 billion profit before tax, which was up by 788 percent as compared to the corresponding period of the last year. The Board of Bank (TMB) in its meeting approved the bank's financial results for the half year ended June 30, 2024, said a press release issued here Friday. The TMB has reported exceptional financial performance for the first half of 2024, achieving a

profit before tax of Rs 2.6 billion, a staggering 788% increase compared to first half of 2023 Rs 0.3 billion and equity touching Rs 10 billion, solidifying its position as a pioneering force in Pakistan's fintech landscape. Customer deposits and advances have demonstrated remarkable growth, with deposits reaching Rs 67.0 billion up by 21% in comparison with first half of 2023 Rs 55.3 billion and advances climbing to Rs 22.9 billion, growing by 59%, Rs 14.5 billion.

SBP injects Rs9.2trln into market

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs9,218 billion in the market on Friday through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO). According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on August 30, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 32 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs9,103 billion. The central bank received 31 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs9,287.3 billion.

Macroeconomic indicators show resilience: Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the first month of the current financial year, key macroeconomic indicators demonstrated resilience, with consumer-based inflation decreasing, the current account balance improving, and revenue collection surpassing targets. According to the 'Monthly Economic Update and Outlook August 2024', issued by the Ministry of Finance on Friday, the agricultural credit disbursement recorded an increase of 24.8 percent during fiscal year 2024 to Rs 2,216 billion compared to

the last year. A significant rise in the import of agriculture machinery and implements by 122.8 percent to \$91.3 million during the period under review indicates a continued boost in investment in farming technology, paving the way for enhanced productivity and efficiency in the agriculture sector. The Large Scale Manufacturing Sector registered positive growth of 0.9 percent in fiscal year 2024 against the contraction of 10.3 percent last year. CPI inflation recorded at

11.1 percent on Year-on-Year basis in July 2024 as compared to 12.6 percent in previous month, and 28.3 percent in July 2023. On a month-on-month (M-o-M) basis, it increased by 2.1 percent in July 2024 compared to an increase of 0.5 percent in the previous month. The government managed to reduce the fiscal deficit to 6.8% of GDP in FY2024, down from 7.8% last year. The primary balance showed a surplus of 0.9% of GDP, in contrast to a deficit of 1.0% of GDP in FY2023.



Team ONIC comes together for a group photo to mark the First anniversary of digital Telco.

Short-term inflation eases further by 0.62%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed further decrease of 0.62 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on August 29, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 319.73 points as compared to 321.72 points during the past week. As compared to the

corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 15.34 percent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16=100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. Likewise, SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732, however witnessed an increase of 0.24 per cent and went up to 310.80 points from last week's 310.29 points.

PSX gains 138 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with Bullish trend on Friday, gaining 138.55 more points, showing a positive change of 0.18 percent, closing at 78,488.22 points against 78,349.66 points on the last working day. A total of 680,810,524 shares were traded during the day as compared to 599,820,775 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 21,186 billion against Rs 20,409 billion on the last trading day.

FPCCI, SECP organize seminar on new portal 'eZfile'

LAHORE (APP): The Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) organised an awareness seminar regarding SECP's new portal 'eZfile'. 'Companies Regulations 2024' and Company Regularization Scheme (CRS) at FPCCI Regional Office, here on Friday. Vice President and Regional Chairman FPCCI Zaki Ajaz highlighted that the objective of the session is to educate private lim-

ited, listed and non-listed companies about the new rules and regulations of the SECP, so that the participating companies could better fulfill their legal requirements. Vice President Zaki Ajaz said that FPCCI aims to provide a vibrant platform for its member companies and business community to enhance their knowledge and also to aware them with contemporary business techniques. He emphasised that the SECP plays a crucial role in the economic development of Pakistan.

CM leading a revolution to modernize entire health system in Punjab: Marriyum

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif is leading a revolution to modernize entire health system in Punjab, said Punjab's Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb while inaugurating, on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif's direction, a newly-constructed block at Mayo Hospital Lahore, equipped with modern facilities for the treatment of children.

She visited various sections of the newly-constructed block and reviewed various medical facilities available there for the patients.

The Senior Provincial Minister said, "Established in 1871, Pakistan's oldest and largest Mayo Hospital has been serving the public for 153 years. This 300-bed hospital at the time of establishment of Pakistan has become a 2399-bed hospital today."

Marriyum Aurangzeb said the health of women and children is the top priority of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. She added, Madam Chief Minister's vision is to make Punjab an exemplary province in terms of education, health, public service, infrastructure, environment and

governance. She highlighted that Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif, as the chief ministers of Punjab, had always set new examples of service in the province. Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique said on the occasion that Paeds Surgical Block also has a CSSD, central oxygen supply, a small operation theater, day care centre and pathology lab. He added the wards are named after legendary professors. He highlighted that the number of beds in the oncology, dengue and medical wards of the Paeds Medicine Unit has been increased from 25 to 48.



LAHORE: Employees of a local hotel rescue customer during fire in hotel at Australia Chowk in the Provincial Capital.

Experts urge focus on economic objectives for CPEC success

PESHAWAR (APP): Experts at a roundtable discussion in Peshawar have hailed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a game-changer for Pakistan's development, despite attempts by hostile forces to undermine it.

Experts at a roundtable discussion titled "CPEC: Opportunities and Challenges," organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Peshawar, in collaboration with the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, highlighted that CPEC is a project of construction and development for Pakistan. They revealed that

seven terrorist corridors are actively working to sabotage CPEC, but emphasized that China's investments in Pakistan demonstrate its commitment to the country's growth. The experts praised China's friendship, citing the 20,000 Pakistani students studying in China. They suggested focusing on economic and trade objectives, rather than security and geopolitics, and opening natural east-west corridors for trade purposes.

The discussion was chaired by Professor Dr. Zahid Anwar, former Pro-Vice Chancellor, Dean of Social Sciences.

Sonia Ashir meets Minister

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has approved the appointment of parliamentary secretaries, assigning Sonia Ashir as the Parliamentary Secretary for Human Rights and Minority Affairs.

In this regard, Sonia Ashir met with the Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs, Ramesh Singh Arora at his camp office on Friday.

During the meeting, Ramesh Singh Arora congratulated Sonia Ashir on her appointment and extended his best wishes for her future endeavours.

5 killed, 987 injured in 962 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE: Five persons were killed and 987 injured in 962 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 407 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 580 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals.



MULTAN: People navigate flooded Khuni Burj Road after heavy monsoon rain in the city.

Salman reaffirms commitment to quality, transparency in hospitals revamping project

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has emphasized that there will be no compromise on quality and transparency in the ongoing hospitals revamping project across the province.

He made these remarks while chairing a meeting at the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education on Friday.

During the meeting, the Minister highlighted the recent progress at Jinnah Hospital Lahore, where several key units, including the Paeds Emergency, Surgical Unit Two, ICU First Floor, Medical Unit Two, Eye

Ward, CCU Second Floor, and Gynecology Ward, among others, have undergone significant revamping. He reiterated the government's commitment to prioritizing the completion of these projects to enhance the convenience and care for patients at government hospitals. To expedite the completion of the revamping at Jinnah Hospital Lahore, the minister directed contractors to increase their work pace by operating in two shifts. He also instructed the concerned officers to maintain strict and continuous oversight of the ongoing projects.

IG Punjab meets police officials skilled in fine arts

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, met with talented police officers skilled in fine arts at the Central Police Office here on Friday.

Traffic Warden Imtiaz and Dolphin Officer Gul Zain presented their artwork to the IG.

Dr. Usman Anwar congratulated them on the outstanding reception of their artwork received at the National College of Arts (NCA) exhibition. He also announced commendation certificates for both officers.

PHC grants transit bail to Sanam Javed for 10 days

PESHAWAR (Online): Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted transit bail for 10 days to PTI leader Sanam Javed.

Justice Dr. Khurshid Iqbal heard the transit bail applications of Sanam Javed Friday. The court granted 10 days transit bail to Sanam Javed. Ali Zaman advocate counsel for Sanam Javed said two FIRs are registered against Sanam Javed one in Lahore and one in Mianwali. Justice Khurshid Iqbal inquired from the counsel her residence is in Lahore and what is she doing in Peshawar.

Governor Kundi grieved over demise of 12 of family members at Dir Upper

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday expressed grief and sorrow over the demise of 12 persons of a family who died after a huge landslide hit their house at Patrak village in Dir Upper district.

In a condolence message, the governor prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and grant courage to bereaved family members to bear this irripable loss with fortitude.

According to police and Rescue 1122, the families of Naushad Khan along with his two brothers were fast asleep last night when a huge avalanche fell on them at Patrak village in the mountainous region.

As result, Naushad's wife, daughters Samina, Yamin, sons Tayyab and Umar have died.

Four family members of Khan Badashah, the brother of Naushad Khan including his wife, daughter Taqwa, sons Saeed and Rohan were also expired.

Similarly wife of Wali Rehman, his sister Dua and son Nasir have also lost battle for life.

The Rescue operation has been completed and debris removed after retrieving the bodies.



LAHORE: An artist painting a motivational wall mural on the Government Kinnaird High School wall to capturing the students' attention.

PPP leadership stresses consensus in selection of new party officials

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Punjab President Raja Pervaiz Ashraf emphasized the importance of consensus and consideration of party interests in the selection of new party officials.

He made these remarks during a meeting focused on the reorganization of the PPP's Faisalabad Division and district chapters. The meeting, which was conducted via video link from the PPP Secretariat in Lahore on Friday, was presided over by PPP Central Punjab General Secretary Syed Hassan Murtaza.

In his address, General Secretary Syed Hassan Murtaza underscored the need for party unity and collaboration. He stressed that candidates proposed for new party positions should be capable of working harmoniously towards the party's goals.

He also highlighted the importance of involving youth in the party's new organizational structure, calling for committed young individuals to be given key roles.

Participants from the Jhang, Chinot, and Toba Tek Singh districts presented proposals and highlighted ongoing organizational activities.

International News

Xi says China committed to good ties with US

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping told top White House aide Jake Sullivan on Thursday that Beijing remained committed to good ties with the United States, despite "great changes."

Sullivan, the first US national security adviser to visit China since 2016, met Xi as he wrapped up three days of talks in the Chinese capital which also saw him meet Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other high-ranking officials.

Sullivan's visit comes as China is embroiled in security rows with US allies Japan and the Philippines.

But state broadcaster CCTV said Xi told Sullivan that in spite of "great changes", China and the US could still enjoy good ties. "China's commitment to the goal of stable, healthy, and sustainable development of China-US relations hasn't changed," Xi said. "We hope that the US will work with China to meet each other halfway," he added, according to CCTV.

Sullivan said US President Joe Biden is looking forward to talks with Xi Jinping in the "coming weeks".

Sullivan told Xi that Biden "looks forward to engaging with you again in the coming weeks".

"President Biden is committed to responsibly managing this consequential relationship to ensure that competition does not veer into conflict or confrontation, and to work together where our interests align," he said.

Earlier in the day, Sullivan met senior Chinese army chief Zhang You-xia at the Beijing head-quarters of the Central Military Commission, where the two discussed Taiwan and other flashpoint issues.

The two officials agreed to hold a call between the two sides' theatre commanders "in the near future", a read-out from the White House said.

Ukraine says US experts are helping figure out why a Ukrainian F-16 crashed in the war with Russia

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: U.S. experts have joined a Ukrainian investigation into why an F-16 warplane that Ukraine received from its Western partners crashed earlier this week during a Russian bombardment, the country's air force commander said Friday.

Commander Mykola Oleshchuk said on Telegram that "a detailed analysis is already being conducted" into why the fighter jet went down on Monday, when Russia launched a major missile and drone barrage at Ukraine.

"We must carefully understand what happened, what the circumstances are, and whose responsibility it is," Oleshchuk wrote in the post.

The crash was the first reported loss of an F-16 in Ukraine, where

they arrived at the end of last month. At least six of the warplanes are believed to have been delivered by European countries.

Military analysts say the planes won't be a game-changer in the war, given Russia's massive air force and sophisticated air defense systems.

But Ukrainian officials welcomed the super-sonic jets, which can carry modern weapons used by NATO countries, for bringing an opportunity to hit back at Russia's air superiority.

Russia's army is making slow but gradual progress in its drive into eastern Ukraine, while Ukraine's forces are holding ground in the Kursk border region of western Russia after a recent incursion.

Israel, Hamas agree to three-day pause for polio vaccination

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The Israeli military and Hamas have agreed to three separate, zoned three-day pauses in fighting in the Gaza Strip to allow for the vaccination of some 640,000 children against polio, a senior World Health Organisation (WHO) official said on Thursday.

The vaccination campaign is due to start on Sunday, said Rik Peepers, the WHO's senior official for the Palestinian territories.

He said the agreement was for the pauses to take place between 6:00am and 3:00pm local time.

He said the campaign would start in central Gaza with a three-day pause in fighting, then move to southern Gaza, where there would be another three-day pause, followed by northern Gaza.



Palestinians carry their belongings salvaged from the debris following Israeli strikes in eastern Deir Al Balah, central Gaza Strip.

Japan's defense ministry seeks record budget as it faces growing threat from China

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: Japan's Defense Ministry on Friday sought a record 8.5 trillion yen (\$59 billion) budget for the next year to fortify its deterrence on southwestern islands against China's increasing threat.

Defense officials were also focusing on unmanned weapons and artificial intelligence to make up for the declining number of servicemembers as a result of the country's shrinking population.

The ministry's request for 2025 marks the third year of Japan's rapid five-year military buildup plan under the government's ongoing security strategy.

Japan aims to spend 43 trillion yen (\$297 billion) through 2027 to double its annual military spending to around 10 trillion yen, making it the world's No. 3 military spender after the United States and China.

Germany deports first Afghan nationals since Taliban govt took control

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: Germany said it carried out on Friday the first deportation of Afghans back to their home country since Taliban authorities took power in August 2021, as Berlin faces pressure to crack down on migration.

"These were Afghan nationals, all of whom were convicted offenders who had no right to stay in Germany and against whom deportation orders had been issued," government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said in a statement.

Yemen's Huthis blew up stranded oil tanker

Monitoring Desk
SANAA: Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels announced Thursday they had booby-trapped and detonated the Greek-flagged oil tanker Sounion, stranded in the Red Sea after a drone and missile attack earlier this month. The group's leader said the operation took place earlier this week. Since then, the rebels have agreed to allow rescue teams to access the ship. A video shared on the rebels' media outlets showed masked men planting explosives on the vessel and then detonating them, causing several fires on board.

Czech police safely detonate World War Two bomb at oil refinery

Monitoring Desk
PRAGUE: Czech bomb disposal experts on Friday detonated a World War Two bomb found on the site of an oil refinery, causing no major visible damage to the Polish-owned plant that has halted operations since the discovery last week, police said.

Police had prepared for the controlled explosion for several days.

Israel kills 16 Palestinians in West Bank attacks

Monitoring Desk
TULKAREM: Israel on Thursday pressed a large-scale military operation in the occupied West Bank, leaving at least 16 Palestinians dead in two days despite UN concerns it was "fueling an already explosive situation".

The "counter-terrorism" operation underway across the northern West Bank since early Wednesday has killed 16 Palestinians, the Israeli military said.

The Palestinian health ministry gave the same figure, after both revised earlier tolls.

The raids on several towns and refugee camps were launched as violence raged on in the war-battered Gaza Strip, the besieged Palestinian territory separated from the West Bank by Israel.

UN aid official questions world's 'humanity' as Gaza war rages

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: A top UN aid official on Thursday questioned "what has become of our basic humanity," as the war in Gaza rages and humanitarian operations struggle to respond.

Joyce Msuya, acting head of the UN's humanitarian office (OCHA), said that "we cannot plan more than 24 hours in advance because we struggle to know what supplies we will have, when we will have them or where we will be able to deliver."

"Citizens are hungry. They are thirsty. They are sick. They are homeless. They have been pushed beyond... what any human being should bear," she told the Security Council.

Msuya's comments came after the UN had to halt the movement of aid and aid workers within Gaza on Monday due to a new Israeli evacuation order for the Deir al-Balah area, which had become a hub for its workers. "More than 88 percent of Gaza's territory has come under an (Israeli)

order to evacuate at some point," Msuya said, adding that civilians, "in a state of limbo," were being forced into an area equivalent to just 11 percent of the Gaza Strip.

"The evacuation orders appear to defy the requirements of international humanitarian law," she added.

Israel's war against Palestinian militant group Hamas has come under increasing scrutiny as the civilian death toll rises, but international powers including the United States have failed so far to help negotiate a ceasefire.

The current fighting was sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,199 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures.

Israel's retaliatory military campaign has killed at least 40,602 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry. The UN rights office says most of the dead are women and children.

Federal cabinet green lights talks on ML-1 financial agreement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The prime minister on Friday approved starting negotiations on the Financial Commitment Agreement between China and Pakistan Railways for the up gradation of the ML-1 project, a crucial component of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, instructed that the final agreement (on ML-1) be brought back to the cabinet for approval.

The prime minister briefed the cabinet on his recent visit to Quetta, highlighting ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies, such as the police and levies, in Balochistan.

The prime minister stated that the entire nation was committed to eliminate terrorism and setting an example by dealing firmly with terrorists.

He also praised the Balochistan provincial government for its commendable efforts to integrate Baloch youth into the national mainstream, aiming for their development and prosperity. The prime minister stated that the federal government will fully support the Balochistan government in offering world-class education and equal development opportunities to Baloch youth. The Cabinet also approved the decisions made by the Economic Coordination Committee on August 29, 2024.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a meeting with chairman special committee on Kashmir Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, at Parliament House, in the Federal Capital.

Balochistan attacks aimed at sabotaging upcoming SCO summit: Naqvi

Says no operation underway in Balochistan; Vows stringent actions against those who did not accept state

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Friday said that the horrific attacks in Balochistan, wherein dozens including security personnel lost their lives, was a "plot to subvert" upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit to be hosted by Pakistan next month.

"A lot of people are in anguish as they don't want Pakistan to host the [SCO] meeting," he said, adding that the August 26 incident was a "conspiracy to sabotage the summit".

Naqvi further said that no operation was being launched in Balochistan while "stringent action would be taken against those who did not accept the state and took up arms". APP adds: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Friday said that no operation was going on in Balochistan and stringent action would be taken against those who did not accept the State and took up arms. Speaking at the 342nd Senate session after Senators Jan Muhammad, Dr Zaqra Taimur, Bilal Ahmed Khan and opposition leader Shibli Faraz's different opinions over the Baluchistan issue.

Security forces kill five terrorists in Balochistan

PM Shahbaz, Interior Minister pay tribute to security forces for IBO in Panjgur

RAWALPINDI (Online): Security forces have killed five terrorists and three others injured during three intelligence based operations in Kech, Panjgur and Zhob districts of Balochistan.

According to ISPR, sanitization operations will continue until all perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of cowardly acts of 26th August are brought to justice.

Security forces of Pakistan, in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has appreciated the soldiers and officers of the Pakistan Army for sending five Khwarji to hell and arresting three after injuring them in Panjgur, Kech and Zhob districts of Balochistan.

In a statement today, the Prime Minister reiterated the resolve to continue the war against terrorism until its complete eradication from the country.

The Prime Minister said those who are trying to spread chaos in the country will not be spared.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid tribute to the security forces for the successful intelligence-based operation in Panjgur and Zhob on Friday.



KARACHI: Weakened steam tree fall down on ground during at Abdullah Shah Ghazi Mazar road during heavy storm, in the city.

Thatta islands evacuated as cyclone moves closer to Sindh coast

THATTA (INP): The authorities have ordered evacuation of people from the islands and coastal areas of Thatta District of Sindh as a powerful cyclone brewing in Arabian Sea move closer to the Pakistani coast on Friday morning.

Already battered by continuous heavy rains, many Sindh cities including Karachi have shut down all schools in view of the risk of a cyclone along the coastal strip.

Thatta Deputy Commissioner Manawar Abbas Soomro told newsmen that transport had been arranged for the relocation of people and boats have also been sent to the islanders. He said measures have been taken to avoid any major damage and people are being shifted to temporary camps.

Meanwhile, Chief Meteorologist Dr Sardar Sarfaraz while giving an update about the cyclone said the deep depression will intensify into a cyclonic storm by Friday afternoon or evening.

He said the deep depression has gradually moved further west to southwest, which is now lying 200kms south-east of Karachi.

The depression will continue to move south-west or west, Sardar Sarfaraz said and added the coastal areas of Pakistan are bracing for a 'rare' cyclonic storm likely over the north-



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

At OIC CFM Pakistan calls for united efforts to rid Palestine, IIOJK of foreign occupations

YAOUNDE (APP): As the foreign ministers of the OIC member states gathered here in the capital city of Cameroon, for a two-day 50th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, Pakistan called for unity and resolve to address the challenges confronting the Islamic Ummah including the ongoing foreign occupation of Palestine and IIOJK, terrorism and Islamophobia.

Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, who led the Pakistani delegation at the CFM, highlighted the oppressive foreign occupation of Palestine and Kashmir, and the conflicts around the world, fueled by endemic poverty, terrorism and extremist groups and external interventions.

He told the gathering that over 40,000 Palestinians, the majority of them women and children, have been martyred and nearly two million displaced by Israel's genocidal war in Gaza. The foreign secretary called for developing a clear and bold plan to secure the implementation of the goals and objectives agreed upon by the OIC leaders at the 15th Islamic Summit in Gambia and last month's extraordinary OIC Executive Committee meeting in Saudi Arabia.

"We must urgently secure an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and the West Bank; ensure unrestricted humanitarian aid to Gaza; prevent the spread of the conflict to the entire Middle East, while holding Israel accountable for its criminal assassinations and violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran, Lebanon and other States; admit Palestine as a full member State of the United Nations; and establish a viable, secure, contiguous, and sovereign State of Palestine based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital," he said.

Highlighting the Kashmir dispute, he called for its resolution for a durable peace in South Asia. He said since August 5, 2019, India initiated unilateral steps to annex occupied Jammu and Kashmir and impose what India's leaders ominously call a "Final Situation" for Kashmir.

The foreign secretary said the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) remained one of the most heavily militarized zones in the world, where the Indian occupation forces continue to impose draconian measures including extra-judicial killings, collective punishments, incarceration of Kashmiri leaders as well as demographic changes to transform Kashmir from a Muslim-majority to a Hindu majority territory. Reiterating Pakistan's rejection of all attempts to conduct any farcical "elections" in IIOJK, the foreign secretary asked India to reverse the unilateral measures taken since 5 August 2019, and accept the UN Secretary General's offer of Good Offices.

Small cut in petrol prices on the cards

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government is likely to announce a decrease in fuel prices for the third consecutive fortnight, effective September 1.

Sources indicate a potential reduction of Rs3.1 per liter for petrol and Rs2.5 per liter for high-speed diesel (HSD).

This decision is primarily driven by the falling prices of international petroleum products.

The government is in the process of finalizing the precise figures, considering the current petroleum levy and general sales tax rates.

The altered prices could be as follows:

Petrol: Decrease Rs3.1 per liter, from Rs260.96 to Rs257.86.

High-Speed Diesel (HSD): Decrease Rs2.50 per liter, from Rs 266.07 to Rs 263.57.

Kerosene Oil: Decrease Rs1.39 per liter, from Rs171.77 to Rs170.38.

Light Diesel Oil (LDO): Decrease Rs1.96 per liter, from Rs157.02 to Rs155.06.

These anticipated price reductions are directly linked to the recent decline in global oil prices.

The Prime Minister said those who are trying to spread chaos in the country will not be spared.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid tribute to the security forces for the successful intelligence-based operation in Panjgur and Zhob on Friday.

Five bogies of goods train derail near Kotri railway station

HYDERABAD (APP): Five bogies of a train transporting coal from Karachi to Punjab derailed near Kotri railway station in Jamshoro on Friday, disrupting the movement of trains on the uptrack for several hours.

An official informed that the freight train was transporting coal to a coal power plant in Yousuf Wala. Coal worth millions of rupees overturned in the incident.

He added that the passenger trains were moved from the downtrack to avoid excessive delay to the passengers in reaching their destinations.

AG directed to submit report on Mashwani's brothers in Court

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has directed the Attorney General to submit a detailed report on the missing persons related to the recovery of Azhar Mashwani's brothers. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq presided over the case, with the petitioner's lawyer, Babar Awan, and the Attorney General appearing in court.

The Chief Justice remarked that he asked about the location of the disappearance to determine the court's jurisdiction.

The Attorney General assured the court that the missing individuals are not in the custody of any agency. He further requested Dr. Babar Awan to share information with him so that further action could be taken.

Chief Justice Farooq inquired about the location from where the individuals went missing. Babar Awan responded that they disappeared from Lahore, and later, agencies contacted them, stating that the individuals were in their custody. He added that Azhar Mashwani's wife was prevented from leaving the country, and Mashwani was asked to delete certain material and refrain from tweeting in the future.

Babar Awan read documents to the court and explained that after approaching the Lahore High Court, they withdrew the application and filed it in Islamabad.

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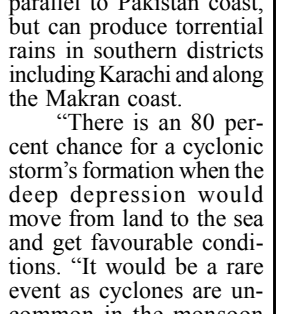
Weather badly affects flight operation at Karachi Airport

KARACHI (INP): Due to bad weather, the departure of several international and domestic flights was badly affected and many flights from Karachi Airport have been cancelled on Friday.

According to schedule, flight IF-334 from Karachi to Najaf and to Baghdad has been cancelled. SereneAir flight ER-504 from Karachi to Islamabad has been cancelled while AirBlue flight PA-402 from Karachi to Quetta has also been cancelled.

Moreover, SereneAir flight ER-524,522 from Karachi to Lahore has been cancelled and AirBlue flight PE-807 was also cancelled.

AirSial flight PF-145, 143 from Karachi to Lahore has been cancelled and PIA flight PK-310 from Karachi to Quetta was also cancelled.



KARACHI: A view of traffic jam in evening hours at Liaqatabad area, in the Provincial Capital.

Pakistan, Bangladesh agree to work closely for South Asia's progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday held a telephone conversation with Chief Adviser of Bangladesh government Professor Muhammad Yunus wherein two leaders agreed that there was a need to work closely for the progress and prosperity of the people of both countries. During the conversation, both leaders also agreed that greater regional cooperation could play a vital role in uplifting the lives of the people of South Asia, a PM Office press release said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated Professor Muhammad Yunus on assuming the office of Chief Adviser and lauded his contribution to the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. He expressed sympathies over the devastation caused by the recent floods in Bangladesh. The prime minister underscored the importance of revitalizing bilateral relations through enhanced cooperation in different domains. Noting the historical, religious and cultural bonds between Pakistan and Bangladesh, he expressed a keen desire to boost commercial relations, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts.



HYDERABAD: Relatives hold a protest for recovery of their 3 children, who can forcibly besieged in Myanmar, at HPC.

13 of family die as landslide fall on house at Dir Upper: Police

DIR UPPER (APP): At least 13 persons of a family died after a huge landslide fell on their house at Patrak village in Dir Upper district.

According to police and Rescue 1122, the families of Naushad Khan along with his two brothers were fast asleep last night when a huge avalanche fell on them at Patrak village in the mountainous region.

As a result, Naushad's wife, daughters Samina, and Yamin and sons Tayyab and Umar have died.

Four family members of Khan Badashah, the brother of Naushad Khan including his wife, daughter Taqwa, sons Saeed and Rohan also expired.

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KARACHI: A view of traffic jam in evening hours at Liaqatabad area, in the Provincial Capital.

OIC Contact Group reaffirms support for Kashmiris' right to self-determination

ISLAMABAD (APP): The OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir reaffirmed its support for the Kashmiri people's struggle for the realization of their right to self-determination, calling for an early and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute as per the UN Security Council resolutions and aspirations of Kashmiri people.

The Contact Group which met on the sidelines of the 50th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Yaounde, Cameroon, also adopted a joint communique unanimously, a Foreign Office press release said on Friday.

Chaired by OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahimi Taha, the meeting was attended by representatives from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Niger, Azerbaijan, OIC's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) and True Representatives of the Kashmiri People. The Pakistani delegation to the meeting was led by Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi.

The Contact Group underlined that a durable peace and stability in South Asia remained contingent upon the final settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with UNSC resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Foreign Secretary Qazi briefed the Contact Group on the evolving situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He outlined India's attempt to consolidate its occupation of IIOJK in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions including by creating an environment of intimidation and fear.

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Senator Tatar explained that the Thalian Interchange, located between Chakri and Islamabad Toll Plaza, provides reasonable access to the airport and nearby villages, including Thalian. He dismissed allegations of provincial discrimination, emphasizing that the federal government aims to facilitate all travelers without political motives.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori offering Fateha after condoling with Senator Raza Rabbani on sad demise of his sister.

Tarar says: Thalian interchange developed in PTI's regime providing partial relief to commuters

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice, Human Rights, and Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, on Friday addressed a calling attention notice about the Thalian Interchange, which is situated between the Chakri and Islamabad Toll Plaza. He noted that this interchange, developed during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) administration, offers partial relief to commuters traveling to Islamabad International Airport.

Senator Tarar's comments were in response to concerns raised by Senator Mohsin Aziz. Aziz had highlighted the lack of a dedicated route from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to Islamabad Airport, a route currently only available to traffic from Punjab. This issue was raised during a Senate session point of order, approved by the Presiding Officer.

Senator Tarar explained that the Thalian Interchange, located between Chakri and Islamabad Toll Plaza, provides reasonable access to the airport and nearby villages, including Thalian. He dismissed allegations of provincial discrimination, emphasizing that the federal government aims to facilitate all travelers without political motives.

12 more Khwarji terrorists killed in 'extensive' Tirah Valley IBOs

RAWALPINDI: At least 12 Khwarji terrorists were killed in ongoing intelligence-based operations (IBOs) by security forces in Khyber district's Tirah Valley on August 28 and 29, according to a statement from the military on Friday.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) stated that extensive IBOs have been underway in the region since 20 August, targeting the reported presence of Khwarji elements.

"On 28 & 29 August, our troops effectively engaged Khwarji locations, where, after intense fire exchanges, twelve Khwarji of Fitna - A-I-Khwarji [Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)] were sent to hell," the statement said.

The ISPR noted that these operations have dealt a major setback to Fitna-Al-Khwarji and its affiliates. "So far, 37 terrorists have been sent to hell, while 14 terrorists have suffered serious injuries," it added.



HYDERABAD: A woman displaced by flood, carry her children as they wade through floodwaters after heavy monsoon rains at near M-9 motorway Qasimabad.

Government has no two-third majority for constitutional amendment: Ali Zafar

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader and lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar the chapter of constitutional amendment by the government had been closed as the government had no two-third majority. Talking to media at Lahore High Court (LHC), he berated the incumbent government saying it's all efforts went in vain as it has no backing of two-third majority required in the Parliament for constitutional amendment.

He highlighted that the government had not held any consultation on constitutional amendment and PTI members couldn't cast votes cooperating with the government. Talking about speculations of PTI founder Imran Khan, he stressed to challenge the military trial of

Imran Khan as civilians couldn't be a military trial. Responding to the appointment of a new Chief Justice of Pakistan, he suggested Justice Mansoor Ali Shah must be CJF. He also clarified that the judicial system must be amended but the government should take matters with due diligence and patience.

Barrister Ali Zafar insisted that PTI founder Imran Khan would be acquitted as witnesses in the Al Qadar Trust case exposed everything. Giving his response on the election of Imran Khan as Oxford University chancellor fiasco, he reiterated that Imran Khan would be Oxford University chancellor and blamed that PML-N had conspired and showed dissatisfaction on Daily Mail story about the matter.