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

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

NA passes resolution unanimously to condemn Israeli oppression; express complete solidarity with Palestinians; Parliamentarians condemn assassination of Ismail Haniyeh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday strongly condemning the unabated bloodshed of Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation forces and the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, warned that the lava of public anger would get out of control if the Zionist state was not held accountable.

"The Zionist state has crossed all the limits of crimes... The lava of public anger is boiling... If justice does not prevail and the

Zionist state killing innocent people is not held to account, the lava of public fury will be in no one's control. It will risk the annihilation of world's peace and development," the prime minister said addressing the National Assembly after the House unanimously passed a resolution calling Haniyeh's killing a 'deliberate conspiracy to sabotage' Gaza ceasefire efforts and condemning the ongoing Israeli "state oppression and brutality" in Gaza.

The prime minister, who earlier also highlighted the issue in the cabinet meeting chaired by him a while ago and coalition parties meeting on Thursday, said the whole Muslim world including the Pakistani nation was grieved over Ismail Haniyeh's killing.

Thanking the members from both sides of the aisle for evolving a consensus on the resolution, he said the parliament's voice would resonate the world over to shock the enemies of Pakistan and strengthen its

friends.

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

"The cities have turned into cemeteries. The cries have taken over the joys and smiles of the playing children. Palestine is giving a deserted look," the prime minister said and questioned the inaction and helplessness of the world to end the Israeli oppression.

He said not only the Muslims rather every peace-loving human being, regardless of faith or creed, was questioning the non-implementation of the international laws and human rights charters for which the world bodies including the United Nations were created.

"This is a question by an infant who was killed moments after his birth. This is a question by a

Continued on page 2

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

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

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

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

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



The law minister said that the cabinet has decided to constitute a committee to prepare a mechanism for financial assistance to the affected families.

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

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

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

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PM Shehbaz seeks debt reprofiling from China to secure IMF bailout

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

In a statement issued by the President House, he conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives.

The president underscored the urgency of accelerating relief efforts to aid those affected.

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

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

BYC ends Gwadar sit-in after successful negotiations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Two cops martyred as convoy of judges attacked in Tank

TANK (INP): Two cops were martyred and two others injured when terrorists attacked a convoy of judges' squad vehicles in here on Friday.

According to details, terrorists attacked the convoy of judges' squad at Dera Ismail Khan road near Bhagwal area of district

Tank of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As a result of firing, two policemen including Abdullah and Samad were martyred while two officials were injured. The martyred cops belonged to South Waziristan.

The assailants fled the scene after retaliatory action of police.



QUETTA: Founder of Al-Hijra Residential School and College Abdul Karim Saqib meeting with Provincial Minister for Education Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani

Shafiqat Abbas appointed as Director General PID Lahore Regional Office

Independent Report

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

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

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



Service Academy, and Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Additionally, he has had the privilege of serving as PRO to former Prime Ministers Shaukat Aziz and Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, as well as Director/PSO in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Prior to this appointment, he held the position of Director General of PID Lahore Regional Office, further solidifying his reputation as a seasoned information management expert.

Senate deputy chairman calls on President

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

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

MCQ bans commercial activities in residential areas

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

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

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

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

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

PM, Parliamentarians offer Ismail Haniyeh's funeral prayer

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

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

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

They prayed for the elevation of the rank of the martyr in paradise, peace in Palestine and the betterment of the Muslim world.

FS briefs diplomats on situation in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the run up to the fifth 'Youme-e-Istehsal', Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi on Friday briefed the Islamabad-based diplomats on the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In the meeting, he underscored the grave consequences of India's actions of 5 August 2019 from the perspective of international law, human rights, and peace and security, a statement issued by the Foreign Office said.



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

20 injured in Qila Saifullah road accident

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

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

As a result, some twenty persons were injured in the incident. The Levies authorities after receiving reports rushed to the site for shifting the injured to hospital. Investigations are underway.

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

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

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

This resolve was expressed by the Committee in its camera meeting held on Friday in the Parliament House under the Chairmanship of Member National Assembly (MNA), Fateh

Ullah Khan, a news release said.

Earlier the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, briefed the Committee on the organizational structure and working of the Ministry. He informed the Committee about the role and responsibilities of the Ministry, assigned to it, under the Rules of Business 1973.

He said that the Ministry plays the role of a bridge between the Government and the Armed Forces in terms of all defence-related matters. The committee while appreciating the ministry over its comprehensive briefing, unanimously expressed its resolve to support the Armed Forces in their endeavors to make the defence of Pakistan, impregnable. Paying homage to the Martyrs for their sacrifices in the way of defence of Pakistan, the committee unanimously decided to visit the Yadgar-e-Shuhada.

The meeting was attended by MNAs: Aqeel Malik, Ibrar Ahmad, Muhammad Aslam Ghumman, Muhammad Miqdad Ali Khan, Ghulam Muhammad, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, Sadiq Iftikhar, Pullain Baloch, Sharmila Sahiba Faruqi Hashaam and Secretary and other senior officers of the Ministry of Defence.



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

PCB set to put its foot down over team indiscipline charges

Sports Desk
LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to take violations of discipline by players in the recent World Cup and other series more seriously. According to sources, the PCB has decided to further review the issues of team grouping and a lack of discipline among players in the ICC T20 World Cup 2024. The board will set up a committee, likely to be headed by a former captain, to review the report of head coach Gary Kirsten and manager Wahab Riaz (who had been shown the door as chief selector). Sources said action could be taken against the players who violated discipline and promoted grouping in the team. It should be remembered that in the world cup that was held in the USA and West Indies, there were reports of grouping in the team and alleged violation of discipline by ace bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi. According to media reports, Shaheen Shah Afridi's behaviour was not good during the world cup and team manager and chief selector Wahab Riaz ignored indiscipline. Apart from this, there were reports that during the mega event, some players were not even on talking terms and berated one another, which spoiled the atmosphere in the dressing room and affected performance on the field. According to sources, the PCB has decided to further review the issues of team grouping and a lack of discipline among players in the ICC T20 World Cup 2024. The board will set up a committee, likely to be headed by a former captain, to review the report of head coach Gary Kirsten and manager Wahab Riaz (who had been shown the door as chief selector).

IHC orders govt to remove Faraz's name from ECL

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court has ordered the removal of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shibli Faraz from the Exit Control List (ECL). The court heard a petition filed by Faraz challenging his inclusion on the ECL, which barred him from traveling abroad. Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri presided over the hearing, where Faraz appeared in court with his lawyer. Faraz's lawyer argued that his client was facing four FIRs and was already out on bail in all cases. The court questioned the government's lawyer about the justification for keeping Faraz on the ECL, to which the lawyer responded that they would comply with the court's order.



QUETTA: Opposition Leader in Balochistan Assembly, Younas Aziz Zehri along with former MPA, Naseebullah Mari and others are offering Fatcha over the sad demise of aunt of Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa, Provincial Minister for Communication and Works Department during condolence meeting held in Quetta.

Continued from page 1

mother, now in paradise, whose baby was aborted after she was killed. This is a question by a child awaiting his mother in the hospital... Finally, the answer has to be given," he remarked. He told the House that all including the resolutions of the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, decisions of the International Court of Justice, human rights declarations, protests, and appeals for peace from the world went unrecalled. Termining the killing of Ismail Haniyeh as a blow to peace efforts, he called for holding the killers to account and reiterated Pakistan's condemnation of extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings. The prime minister also recalled the recent killing of Ismail Haniyeh's three sons and four grandchildren and said the nation having rendered such huge sacrifices could not be defeated. He also apprised the House of the government's decisions to observe a day of mourning on Friday, offering Haniyeh's funeral prayer in absentia, continued dispatch of humanitarian aid and medical aid for the Palestinians, and the enrollment of Palestinian medical students in Pakistan's medical colleges. Meanwhile the National Assembly (NA) on Friday unanimously passed a resolution, strongly condemning the Israeli ongoing state oppression and brutality in Palestine. The House expressed complete solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and sis-

Public fury to boil over if zionist state not held..

ters and extended condolences to the family of Ismail Haniyeh and the people of Palestine. The resolution was moved by the deputy prime minister and foreign minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar in the House on behalf of all political parties. The House also called on the international community to take effective action to halt Israel's oppression and brutalities and deliver justice to the Palestinian people. The house called for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire the provision of sustainable and unhindered humanitarian assistance to the beleaguered Palestinians, and immediate withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from Gaza in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 2735 (2024). "This house decides that Pakistan will continue to supply aid to Palestine and take effective measures for medical assistance to the oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters, including medical treatment in Pakistan," the resolution said. The house resolved that Palestine medical students would be given admission in Pakistan's medical colleges on gratis basis to complete their education. "The House also decides to observe a day of mourning across Pakistan on 2nd August as a mark of solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters and to unequivocally condemn Israeli brutality," the resolution further said. It was also decided to hold funeral prayers in absentia for martyr Ismail Haniyeh across the country after Friday prayers today. "The House calls on the United Nations Security Council to take effective measures to impose its call for a ceasefire in Gaza to stop the genocidal war being waged against Palestinian people and hold Israel accountable for its war crimes and crimes against humanity inflicted upon the Palestinians. It also called for the immediate admission of the State of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations. The resolution said, "whereas the atrocities by Israel on Palestinians have escalated causing immense suffering and loss of over 40,000 innocent lives so far, including women and children. Whereas all parliamentary parties in the National Assembly expressed their unified grief and anger over the ongoing Israeli oppression and brutality against the people of Palestine for the past nine months, the resolution said. The resolution further said, "Whereas the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran has added to the angst and grief, and such incidents are seen as deliberate conspiracies to sabotage efforts to stop the ongoing oppression and brutality against Palestinians and to establish peace in the region." "Whereas the Israeli leadership is intent on expelling the population of Palestine from their homeland and despite clear verdicts of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, the UN Security Council, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and calls by the UN Secretary-General, Israel has not stopped the indiscriminate violence and attacks against innocent Palestinians," it further said. The House said that such incidents not only destroy the peace of the world but also constitute a dangerous escalation in an already volatile region and undermine efforts for peace. The parliamentarians in the National Assembly of Pakistan on Friday condemned the assassination of former Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Hania in an Israeli airborne guided strike in Iran on Wednesday. Leader of the opposition Barrister Gohar said that they stand with the government of Pakistan on the issue of the assassination of Ismail Hania. "We Stand as one Nation in this regard" said Barrister Gohar and added that the killing of Ismail Hania is the biggest tragedy. He said Pakistan has always been expressing solidarity with the Palestinians and Kashmiris and will continue supporting their struggle for freedom. Israel and India are two countries in the world that violated international laws without any fear but the Muslim umma failed to respond to the atrocities of these two countries. It is time to think whether the Muslims are weakest or Israel is so powerful that without any fear, continuing the genocide of innocent Palestinians.

Senate body asks Ministry to submit report on investigations conducted in RBOD-I, RBOD-III

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources on Friday asked the ministry to submit a report on the investigations conducted in RBOD-I and III. The committee which met with Shahadat Awan in the Chair reviewed the updated status of recommendations given in its previous meeting. Secretary Ministry of Water Resources, Syed Ali Murtaza informed the committee that the projects were completed on time but were damaged due to the torrential rains and floods of 2022. WAPDA has prepared PC-I and now requires concurrence from the Sindh Irrigation Department, as RBOD-I and RBOD-III are managed by the Sindh Government. Additionally, the Committee recommended that vacant posts up to BS-16 in the ministry and commission be filled as soon as possible. Minister for Water Resources Dr Musadik Malik stated that a Request was made to the Federal Public Service Commission 13 years ago to fill these vacant posts, but they have not been filled to date. The Ministry has now initiated the process

and submitted a request to the Establishment Division to fill the vacant posts up to BS-16. Furthermore, the Committee recommended that the Federal Flood Commission (FFC) update its website regularly with current data on rivers and the monsoon. The Secretary confirmed that the FFC website is reviewed regularly, with weather and flood updates uploaded daily. Additionally, the Committee unanimously ratified the nomination of Senator Saadia Abbasi as a member of the Board of Governors of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources. Moreover, the Committee hold an In Camera session to deliberate on the recent developments in Indus Water Treaty, 1960. The meeting was attended by Senator Mohammad Humayun Mohammad, Senator Saad Ahmed Hashmi, Senator Poonjo Bheel, Senator Hidayatullah Khan, Senator Khalil Tahir, Federal Minister for Water Resources Syed Ali Murtaza and other senior officials of relevant departments were also in attendance.

More rain-windstorm/thundershower likely at various parts of country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast more rain-windstorm/thundershower with chances of scattered heavy falls and isolated very heavy falls in Sindh, north-east/southeast Balochistan, Kashmir, Punjab, Potohar Region, Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan during the next 24 hours. While heavy falls are also expected in Sindh, southeast Balochistan, upper Punjab, Potohar Region, Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir. As per synoptic situation, strong monsoon currents were continuously penetrating from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal in most central/southern parts of the country and likely to enter in upper parts from today (evening/night). A westerly wave was also likely to affect northern parts of the country.

Muslim Ummah was unable to unite at one platform Israel and failed to achieve a ceasefire in Palestine. The civil societies in the USA and Europe arranged rallies against Israeli aggression but the Muslim countries kept mum, said Barrister Gohar. Muslim world shall have to come forward and make their bloc in the United Nations and strengthen the platform of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Member National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf said that the entire world and every single Pakistani is mourning the assassination of Ismail Hania. He said that Israel since its inception is continuing the killings in Palestine without any fear and in violation of International Laws. He said that Palestinians and Muslim Ummah is weak against Israel and its allies who lecture the world on Human Rights but keep their eyes closed against Israeli violations of Human Rights. He said that Israel is bombing schools and hospitals and openly violating the Geneva Convention and international norms and values, the international system of justice, the United Nations' security council and so on. He said the world cries over petty issues in their own countries but keeps mum on the killings of innocents in Palestine. He said that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu received a standing ovation at his address to the US Congress which is unfortunate.

Mashhood reveals govt's master-plan to restore national hockey glory, promote talent

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's hockey glory days are set to return as Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan Friday has unveiled the government's comprehensive master-plan to restore the national team's supremacy and promote young talent. Talking to a private news channel, Rana Mashhood emphasized that the national hockey league would be a game-changer for Pakistan's hockey landscape, offering a unique opportunity for the country's youth to compete against international teams and learn from the best. This, he believes, would not only enhance their skills but also instill a sense of pride and ownership among the players. "The government's initiative to launch a national hockey league in December is a testament to PM's vision of empowering youth and promoting sports in the country", he mentioned. By providing a world-class platform for young hockey players, the government aims to identify and nurture talent, enabling Pakistan to reclaim its rightful place among the world's top hockey-playing nations, he added. Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision and direction for the recent resurgence of Pakistan's national hockey team. He revealed that the Prime Minister had given clear instructions to revive the past glory of Pakistan's national game, which had been in decline for over a decade. He expressed optimism that this momentum would continue, and Pakistan's hockey team would soon regain its former glory and bring laurels to the country. Rana Mashhood emphasized that the government's efforts to revive Pakistan's hockey glory extend beyond the national team, with a focus on restoring departmental sports as well. He revealed that meetings are being organized with various federations to prepare a comprehensive roadmap for the future of hockey in Pakistan. This collaborative approach aims to ensure a sustainable and structured development of the sport, from grassroots to the national level, he added.

Ban on X to end once rules are made: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said the PML-N government is not against social media, but it wants rules and regulations to regulate the sector. If rules are made, then the ban on the social media site 'X' will also end, she promised. Talking to the media at Lahore High Court on Friday, she said: "Today, I am very happy and satisfied that Lahore High Court chief justice raised very important questions regarding the social media forums." To a question about the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder, she said he should apologise first over May-9 incident, he must admit that he and his party made a mistake, then his issues would be resolved under the relevant laws. There are laws for regulating social media in many countries, she said and added that laws are made to solve problems in every country. Freedom of expression must not be misused, which was being done in our society, she regretted.



QUETTA: Members of Tehreek Labbaik Islam are holding protest demonstration against Supreme Court decision in Mubarak Sani case, at Quetta press club.

Cabinet approves Rs. 5m... FBR Chairman administers oath to IRSOA office bearers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana here on Friday took oath from the newly elected office bearers of Management Board of Inquiries into Offences of Income Tax (COIED), he said. The law minister asserted that the state is committed to address this issue and would use its all resources for this. Despite heinous allegations, the state has taken laudable measures to give relief to the families, he said. Meanwhile the Federal Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, on Friday approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Trade Promotion Cooperation to enhance trade between China and Pakistan. The decision was made on the recommendation of the Ministry of Commerce. The MoU was aimed at boosting bilateral trade with focus on several key areas such as smart phone production, new energy vehicles, textiles, agricultural product processing, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and information technology. The Federal Government also okayed the enactment of legislation concerning the charter of the National University of Modern Languages, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. The cabinet also approved the bill for establishing King Hammad University of Nursing and Associated Medical Sciences being established in cooperation with Bahrain on the recommendation of the ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. The university will impart education in Pakistan to meet modern day challenges. The report of the inter-ministerial committee formed regarding the missing persons, was submitted to the Federal Cabinet. The report said that after the Afghan war, Pakistan was gripped by terrorism. Pakistan is facing many internal challenges due to terrorism. The commission on missing persons was working for the last one decade.

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EXTENSION OF DATE

The Tender published in Electronic Media (BPPRA Website) and Printed Media (News paper) vide following **PRO No. 255/14-7-2024** for TSE 242507498833 and TSE No.242507498843 which opening date was fixed on 2nd August-2024 is hereby extended due to unavoidable circumstances. New date of submission and opening are as under (Other terms and condition are same):-
Date/ Time of Submission:- 07-08-2024 at 12:00pm
Date/ Time of Opening:- 07-08-2024 at 01:00pm

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Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Jinnah Medical Complex in Islamabad

PM directs early construction of Jinnah Medical Complex

Says modern facilities should be provided to patients from all over Pakistan at the Jinnah Medical Complex

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday said measures should be ensured for early construction of Jinnah Medical Complex. While chairing a review meeting here, he said Jinnah Medical Complex should be made a modern tertiary level hospital of not only Pakistan but the region. Modern facilities should be provided to patients from all over Pakistan

at the Jinnah Medical Complex, he said adding services of prominent experts should be hired for the preparation of the master plan of the hospital, for technical assistance and medical instruments. "We established international standard Punjab Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI)," he remarked adding nefarious conspiracy was hatched to destroy PKLI by playing politics on it.

He thanked Aga Khan Foundation for its cooperation in the construction of Jinnah Medical Complex. Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan, Prime Minister's Coordinator for Health Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath and high-level officials attended the meeting. The meeting was told about the master plan of the

hospital and on progress of its construction. It was informed that Jinnah Medical Complex would be made a trust which would look after the administrative affairs of the hospital. Prime Minister would be patron-in-chief of the trust. Internationally recognized American experts were working on the project while Aga Khan Foundation was providing technical assistance.

Panel discussion on Anti-Rape Act 2021 highlights challenges in gender based violence cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Law and Justice, in collaboration with the UK-Pakistan Serious Crime and Law Enforcement (UPSCALE) programme, organized a panel discussion to increase awareness of the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial), Act 2021.

The event featured experts with experience in implementing the Anti-Rape Act and dealing with cases of gender-based violence.

The session was inaugurated by Federal Secretary for Law and Justice, Raja Naeem Akbar and chaired by Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson of the Anti-Rape Special Com-

mittee. Notable experts from law enforcement and civil society including Ghulam Sarwar Nihung, Prosecutor General ICT, Dr. Inam Waheed Khan, DIG Police and Advisor UPSCALE, Barrister Usama Malik, Director, Directorate of Legal Education Pakistan, and Nida Aly, Executive Director of the Asma Jehangir Legal Aid Cell, provided perspectives on the challenges police, prosecution and lawyers face in ensuring justice for women in gender-based violence cases.

Member of the Special Committee, and Community Protection Advisor at UPSCALE, Zainab Mustafa concluded the ple-

nary session by highlighting the government's commitment to improving the investigation and trial of gender-based violence crimes.

In his opening statement, the Secretary Law and Justice, Raja Naeem Akbar stated, "This seminar aims to create awareness on the rights of the citizens under the Anti-Rape Act, 2021. In future, I hope to see a continued commitment from the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Special Committee, and all those present today towards creating a society where fundamental human rights are protected especially for the most vulnerable groups."

Naqvi conducts surprise visits of Khanna PS

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi made a surprise visit to Khanna Police Station, where he found the investigating officers absent from their offices, while complainants were present.

The duty sub-inspector was unable to respond to any questions and the front desk room smelled of cigarettes. Around 1500 motorcycles and several cars were parked at the police station.

Mohsin Naqvi expressed displeasure at the deplorable condition of the

police station.

He visited the front desk, clerk's room, and lockup and inquired about the cases of the accused in the lockup. He ordered the release of four individuals who were arrested for parking their carts in the wrong place after completing necessary legal proceedings.

The interior minister emphasized that there is no justification for parking such a large number of motorcycles in the police station. The motorcycles belong to citizens and must be returned to them.



Senator Sherry Rehman, Chairperson of the Standing Committee Senate on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, visited the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Headquarters Islamabad

National Youth Festival to be held soon; Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, Chairman, the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) on Friday said that the National Youth Festival would be held soon to showcase the talent of future generation.

Talking to the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmed Khan, he said all possible steps were taken to empower the youth as the future of Pakistan is in the hands of the talented and intelligent youth.

Rana Mashhood also apprised the speaker about the initiatives and programmes of PMYP.

Malik Ahmed on the occasion appreciated the efforts of Chairman PMYP for providing opportunities to the youth for a prosperous future.

Kiyani urges Opposition to choose solutions over agitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to promote constructive politics and find solutions to the country's pressing issues, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Bilal Azhar Kayani Friday urged the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leadership to adopt a collaborative approach with the government, cautioning against the "politics of agitation" that could only further exacerbate the situation.

Talking to a private news channel, he said Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif has already initiated efforts to address the pressing public issues and alleviate the burden on the poor.

The government has launched several initiatives aimed at providing relief to the most vulnerable segments of society, including increased funding for social welfare programs, and measures to reduce inflation.

The government has been engaging in negotiations with the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leadership to address the shared concerns of public issues, with multiple meetings held in recent weeks, he mentioned.

These discussions have focused on finding common ground and collaborative solutions to pressing problems, including inflation, unemployment, and social inequality, he added. We are ready to work for alleviating the suffering of the common man and bring improvement in overall governance of the country, he highlighted.

The government has assured the JI leadership that their concerns will be taken seriously and incorporated into policy decisions, paving the way for a united front in tackling the challenges facing the nation, he added. Responding to a query about PTI protest call, he said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party has been accused of lacking a genuine public issue agenda, instead prioritizing the personal politics of Imran Khan.

The government is not succumbing to pressure from the PTI's agitating politics, and is instead focused on implementing its policy agenda and addressing the pressing issues facing the nation, he said.

Italy, UK embassies' delegation visits Traffic Headquarters

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Chief Traffic

and briefed on their processes and effectiveness. CTO Islamabad briefed the delegation that ITP is playing a vital role in various sections through modern technical projects



Office (CTO) Muhammad Sarfraz Virk gave a tour of Traffic headquarters to Italy and UK embassy delegation, a public relations officer said.

He said that the delegation was briefed about the Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) central system, modern technological digital one-window operational halls, and other sections,

including traffic police field operations and the e-challan system.

Moreover, the delegation was informed that ITP is deploying all resources to ensure the provision of all facilities under one roof for citizens coming to obtain driving licenses and for the protection of life and property of citizens through modern technology.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmad Khan.

Mushtaq terms August 5 very painful, tragic day in IIOJK history

ISLAMABAD (APP): All Party Hurriyat Conference Information Secretary Mushtaq Ahmed Butt on Friday said that August 5 was a very painful and tragic day in the history of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir was destroyed and the special status of the state was abolished and Article 370 and 35A were revoked, he told APP. He said that IIOJK was turned the state into an open prison where 10 millions of Indian armed soldiers with modern weapons humiliated the entire humanity by abhorrently taking away all basic, political, religious and social rights from the oppressed Kashmiris.

Mushtaq Butt said that the Narendra Modi regime has started an endless

series of atrocities and barbarism against innocent Kashmiri people while hundreds of houses were demolished and people were arrested regularly.

Freedom of expression, he said that social media, electronic media, and print media had been banned in IIOJK in such a way that everything seems to be silenced. An atmosphere of fear and terror had been established in the entire state.

He said that despite all this oppression, the Kashmiri people will continue their struggle for right to self-determination to achieve the goals.

He also appealed the United Nations, Islamic countries and all human rights organizations to play their role in ending the growing Indian oppression in Kashmir.



ISLAMABAD: Asifa Bhutto Zardari talking to MNAs during national assembly session at parliament house.

Student volunteers of CUST University visits Security Division

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the student volunteers of Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) visited Security Division Islamabad and met with SP Diplomatic Protection Unit (DPD) Raja Tahir, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the SP DPD Raja Tahir welcomed the delegation of student volunteers of CUST University and briefed them about security

division police work. The student delegation visited the Security Division under the Friends of Police Program. The SP DPD fully briefed the delegation about the procedures and advantages of the Security division. Later, the delegation also visited the CCTV control room, police mess, stable, and diplomatic enclave. Moreover, delegation was fully informed about their procedure and usefulness, patrolling of police in high Security Zone and the performance and utility of the police that are playing an important role in the security.

CTD gets one-day custody of Raouf Hassan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A local court on Friday granted the counter terrorism department a one-day physical custody of PTI leader Raouf Hassan in terrorism case.

The accused was produced before Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Tahir Abbas Supra who also heard his bail petition. Announcing its verdict, the court instructed the police to present the accused again tomorrow.

The CTD has arrested the accused on July 31, in terrorism case.

During this day's hearing, Prosecutor Raja Naveed prayed the court to grant further seven-day custody of PTI's information secretary to investigate the other names in the crime.

Court approves bail of PTI's social media coordinator

ISLAMABAD (APP): A local court on Friday granted post-arrest bail to Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI)'s international social media coordinator Ahmed Waqas Janjua in a case registered under Prevention of Electronic Crime Act (PECA).

The court granted the bail against surety bonds worth Rs 50,000 and ordered to release the accused.

The accused was produced before the court of duty magistrate Abbas Shah. He was accused of spreading information of terrorism on social media and having explosive material as well.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had registered a case against him under PECA for anti-state propaganda while the Counter Terrorism Department of the police registered an FIR regarding the recovery of explosive material.

IHC stops action against DG NADRA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday suspended the decision of the National Database Regulatory Authority (NADRA) and Higher Education Commission (HEC) related to the non-verification of the degree of Director General (DG) NADRA.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani of IHC heard the case. It may be mentioned here that the HEC had blacklisted the account of NADRA's DG for degree verification.

The court stopped the two institutions from taking any legal action against the petitioner while suspending their orders.

CDA Chairman directs setting up kiosks, desks for plant distribution

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Friday instructed setting up kiosks and desks at main markets and malls for distributing plants and flags to boost citizen participation in the monsoon tree plantation drive. The CDA Chairman who also holds the charge of Chief Commissioner Islamabad chaired a meeting to review the performance of the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration.

The meeting focused on various key initiatives, including the anti-encroach-

ment drive, price control efforts, Islamabad Food Authority's activities, land record digitization, and the ongoing plantation drive.

The Chief Commissioner was apprised on establishing embassy enclaves for various countries and major donors as part of the plantation drive.

On the progress of the anti-encroachment drive, he instructed the installation of fencing on recovered land to prevent future encroachments. He also directed the ICT Administration to release weekly data comparing fruit and vegetable prices in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Activists of Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen hold a banner during protest in the Federal Capital, to condemn the assassination of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh.

BISP pivotal role in crisis caused by climate change acknowledged

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Sherry Rehman Friday acknowledged the role of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) during the crisis caused by climate change and disasters.

During her visit to the BISP headquarters, Senator Sherry Rehman praised BISP's achievements, describing it as a success story for Pakistan.

She underscored the importance of international partnerships and maintaining strong relationships with donor organizations for the continued support and well-being of BISP beneficiaries.

Earlier, Sherry Rehman was briefed on BISP's core initiatives, with a special emphasis on its role in addressing the crises caused by climate change

and natural disasters.

Earlier, speaking on the occasion, Chairperson BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid along with Additional Secretary Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor, provided an overview of BISP's crucial interventions, particularly during the devastating floods of 2022.

They highlighted that BISP was the first to reach flood-affected communities across the country through its dynamic database, disbursing Rs. 70 billion to 2.7 million families in need.

Sensor Rubina Khalid also discussed BISP's proactive measures to handle emergencies caused by climate change.

She introduced the Hybrid Social Protection Scheme, designed to promote savings culture among beneficiaries, ensuring they are better prepared for unforeseen climatic events.



ISLAMABAD: A large banner hangs over the Zero Point Bridge in Federal Capital, observing a commemorating 5 August 2019 as a Black Day in the history of Jammu and Kashmir.

Naqvi grieved over death of IG Nasir's mother

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed grief and sorrow over the death of IG Islamabad Police Ali Nasir Rizvi's mother on Friday. The Interior Minister expressed heartfelt sympathy and condolences to Ali Nasir Rizvi and the bereaved family. Mohsin Naqvi prayed for the rest of the soul of the deceased in peace and grant of patience to the bereaved family members.

Public, tourists asked to download 'PAK NDMA-Disaster Alert' app for real-time weather updates

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the country braces for another monsoon spell of severe weather, Zahra Hassan, Team Lead Manager at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Friday urged citizens to take proactive measures to ensure their safety and asked them to download 'Pak NDMA Disaster Alert' app for real-time weather updates.

Talking to a private news channel, she explained that this app was being designed for early warning alerts and Community engagement, adding that it enables NDMA, PDMA, DDMA to provide timely risk communication through necessary information and

critical alerts before disasters.

She said it also features regular Updates during and after emergencies, adding, developed with the primary goal of enhancing public safety and awareness, this application is serving as a vital tool to keep users especially tourists informed and prepared in the face of various crises.

Responding a query, she said the NDMA alert warns that torrential rains which will continue till August 15 and can lead to urban flooding in low-lying areas including AJK, Lahore, Rajanpur, Malakand, Sheikhpura, Kasur, Sialkot, Sargodha, Hyderabad Faisalabad,

Multan, Sahiwal, Nowshera, and Peshawar. Additionally, heavy rains may further cause an increase in water levels in rivers of Chinab and Ravi, she added.

She said the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is closely monitoring the situation and issuing regular advisories to ensure public safety during the monsoon season. With the 'PAK NDMA-Disaster Alert' app, the authority is providing real-time updates on weather forecasts, flood warnings, and other disaster-related information to help citizens make informed decisions, she added.

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Proscription regime

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

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

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

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

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

Farieha Aziz

At a recent meeting of the Senate's Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication, the state minister for IT and telecom requested that a briefing on the 'firewall' be deferred to the next meeting but that it should be "in camera" as it was a "sensitive" matter.

For over a month now, news of the installation of a 'firewall' has created a storm. While it is good that there has been a lot of media attention on the issue, in the absence of any disclosure by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) or the government, and silence by telcos and internet service providers, information regarding what is being, or has been, tested, procured, deployed or its technical capability remains shrouded in secrecy and speculation.

The information minister recently remarked that the installation of a firewall had to do with cyber and data security, and not with freedom of speech. Typically, a firewall exists on devices such as laptops to enable protection against harmful network traffic.

The 'firewall' being referred to in Pakistan serves no protective purpose and seeks to restrict the flow of information as a tool of political control.

The minister further remarked that during his trip to China, not once did he hear the words 'fire' and 'wall' together. All he saw was the Great Wall. The term 'firewall', in an information-control context, is derived from 'The Great Firewall' or the 'Chinese Golden Shield'. Was the minister also using a VPN in China as he does in Pakistan to circumvent the ban on X?

The recent WhatsApp disruption was the first insight into the level of network filtering possibly being done in Pakistan. Users complained about being unable to download or transfer media via WhatsApp using mobile data. This included images, videos, stickers and audio notes. If they used a VPN or connected to broadband, this was not the case. Since media transfers and downloads worked via broadband and VPNs, this proves there was no technical glitch at the app level either. Had there been, it

would have been reported globally.

While the information minister attributed this to a global issue — specifically the CrowdStrike disruption — it had nothing to do with it. This was verified by Meta in a comment to Geo Fact Check claiming everything was working fine on Meta's end and whatever happened, was "the country's internal internet issue" and a "local fault".

What was witnessed recently with WhatsApp seems closer to the UAE model than the Chinese one where foreign apps don't work at all. In the UAE, while WhatsApp chat and media work, voice calls do not, as Voice Over Internet Protocol is restricted. The WhatsApp disruption in Pakistan was at an app functionality level. But how?

One theory is this was done by identifying WhatsApp media servers. This doesn't necessarily mean the content can be viewed but that delivery was disrupted. Disrupting the flow of information whether through throttling or reducing internet speeds fits a pattern.

A lot has been attrib-

uted to the 'firewall', perhaps too much — from blocking specific accounts and posts on platforms to tracing IPs and blocking VPNs. But what else will happen in an environment where assuming the worst is usually closer to the truth because political control and lack of transparency are the order of the day?

Technical experts seem fairly confident that with encryption getting better over the years, TLS (transport layer security) and SSL (secure sockets layer) cannot be breached — especially at scale. If specific pieces of content cannot be restricted on platforms such as X (hence the ban), Facebook, YouTube etc, the next step is company cooperation.

Companies can restrict or remove content at their end. This is not invasive though it raises freedom of expression concerns. Typically, notice-and-takedown regimes exist, which are guided by legislative instruments. Prohibited content is defined, a process is outlined and an authority identified that can make these requests to plat-

forms.

Platform compliance depends on various factors, ranging from the applicability of a country's laws to internal due diligence processes — in some instances requiring court orders — or assessing requests against company rules or guidelines. User notification is a practice some platforms, such as X, follow. A user is notified even if a request is received but no action is taken. When action is taken, the user is provided with an opportunity to appeal. Transparency reports reflect the degree of compliance.

It is assumed that no foreign intermediary is providing backdoor access or sharing encryption keys with the government. What is understood about end-to-end encryption today is that only the sender and recipient have access to chat content; even the company does not have access to encryption keys for chats. Spyware and malware on devices is another story. However, companies hold a significant amount of user data — even metadata — which, if shared under

some circumstances, can compromise user privacy.

Which is why the launch of messaging app Beep is being viewed with trepidation. To the extent it is for public sector use, that is fine. But if mandated for Pakistani citizens as a replacement for encrypted messaging apps of choice, this would be a problem.

Local apps raise concerns regarding the level of government access to user data, given the (over)compliance by the private sector in a coercive environment. If a data protection regime, which protects users rather than facilitates government access to their data and requires data localisation — as the present data protection bill does — is absent, then Pakistani citizens' data is up for grabs, enabling breach of privacy and political victimisation.

Without credible information, speculation will increase and distrust will grow. Citizens have a right to know what additional curbs are being placed on their freedom of expression and privacy. - Courtesy Dawn

What kind of 'firewall'?**Squaring circles****Faisal Bari**

Three people, who earn around Rs40,000 a month, approached me for help recently. Their electricity bills were Rs54,000, Rs24,000 and Rs23,000. I am sure there are many more facing a similar predicament.

A number of workers, from various organisations, have told me that though the minimum wage has been increased to Rs37,000, their organisations do not pay them this. They are afraid to complain as they might lose their jobs. And though they stand exploited, they cannot afford to lose their jobs.

Many people — in organisations I work for or those that I am familiar with — have asked their managements if they could work from home some days a week. Commuting costs have escalated and few organisations provide transport. Pakistani organisations are still a bit inflexible in terms of schedules, and making adjustments to facilitate working from home is still

relatively rare.

The grocery bill for most households has gone up substantially. A friend, from the upper-middle-income strata, mentioned that his monthly bill had gone up by at least 50-60 per cent over the last two years. He has started shifting away from products whose prices have risen more than the average and is substituting with mostly local products. But he does worry about quality issues. The continuing inflation of the last few years has been very testing for most.

A number of colleagues, working across a variety of organisations, have said their July take-home salaries, despite increments of 10pc-odd this year, have been lower than what they were in June of 2024. The impact of new taxation measures on salaries has been significant.

All this is squeezing incomes. And this is happening across a wide spectrum of people. It hurts more if incomes are fixed or decreasing for those who get returns on fixed deposits, for the sala-

ried — their incomes only go up once a year, if that, and usually the increase is below inflation rates — and for those who cannot pass on the price and tax increases to their customers (in some businesses it is possible to pass on the hikes, partially or fully, to customers, in others it is not). The degree of the squeeze might vary, unless you are very rich or are in an industry/area that is growing fast, and there are few of those around right now, but for most people it is likely that their income is being squeezed.

For some the squeeze has been brutal to the point that their income is no longer sufficient for covering household expenses. These people are resorting to dipping into their savings, if they have any, or have started borrowing. One colleague has borrowed a major portion of next month's salary to pay the electricity bill. She has told the employer to 'adjust' the amount in instalments over the next three to four salaries. This means she will have a reduced in-

come for some months to come. I am sure there are countless others in a similar situation. Inflation is not abating, and even if inflation goes down to the single digits, as an optimistic finance minister has predicted, it does not mean that prices will decrease but that they will increase at a slower rate. How is a reduced income going to be enough for the next few months?

Others have resorted to selling assets or household items. One colleague has sold his motorcycle. His commute to work has become much more difficult, unpredictable and time-consuming now. He is desperately hoping that he is able to hold on to his job.

Others have been asking for help from those they can. Many colleagues at organisations where I work have told me about requests for help with the payment of electricity bills and fees for children's schooling.

It is little comfort for us to hear the finance minister or other ministers say that Pakistan has been successful in getting an-

other IMF programme and that we are heading towards stability. How is the macro news, even if it is good, going to impact the micro stories of people's lives? Their incomes are not going to increase for the foreseeable future, nor are taxes and other tariffs going to come down. What should we do with the news of stability and improvements in our macro situation if it does not impact our micro conditions, or is not expected to for some years to come?

The government has increased the minimum wage from Rs32,000 to Rs37,000. But is this a livable wage? We know it is not. Even more importantly, we know other than a few documented industries and larger corporations, few give minimum wages to workers. Domestic workers, most of them security guards, office staff, sanitation workers, gardeners, delivery workers and industrial/factory workers, do not get a minimum wage. We know most teachers, especially working in private schools (other than

those in high-fee schools), do not get minimum wages. It is great that the government has raised the minimum wage, but if it is not implemented for everyone, it will only benefit a small number of workers.

What can people do under these circumstances? Not much. It is hard to get a second job or change jobs in the conditions we are in. Expenditures can only be reduced to a certain extent. The fear is that people will cut down on expenditures that are important for the future — on healthcare and education. This will hurt them and the entire country in the medium to long term. We already have 26 million five-to-16-year olds out of school. If more children are pulled out of schools, it will be a disaster for us. Forty per cent of our children are already malnourished; if people try to skimp on food and healthcare, it will impact generations to come. Unfortunately, a very large number of Pakistanis may not have any options.

The class war**Aasim Sajjad Akhtar**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

tricity bills jacked up.

While there is heroic resistance to this class war, it tends to be in isolated pockets. This is in large part because there is no shared understanding of class, nation and empire of the kind that once animated progressives across Pakistan's unevenly developed social formation.

This is not by chance. The state and its organic intellectuals have diligently cultivated hateful ideologies while clamping down on progressive political workers, artists and intellectuals. Today, a new generation of progressives is fighting for the oppressed in its own way, but there is yet to be a major breakthrough that can transcend palace intrigues and cancel culture that animates the majority of young people.

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

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

Communal richness**Jan-e-Alam Khaki**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Second, knowledge production is a process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. The title of the collection of Allama Iqbal's talks is rightly titled Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. Imam al-Ghazali wrote Tahafat al-Phalasafa (Rejection of the philosophers), a book refuting philosophers and, lo and behold, refuting his ideas, Ibn Tufail, equally an intellectual giant, wrote Tahafa Tahafat Phalasafa (Rejection of the rejection of philosophers). These are examples of deconstruction and reconstruction of Is-

lamic thought.

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

So, where does this argument take us?

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

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

Exchange of ideas gives rise to finer thoughts — thesis gives rise to antithesis and both to synthesis.

Hence, let us regard the different schools of thought as varieties of religious or historical experiences and call them, as Farhad Dagher, an Islamic scholar does, "communities of interpretation". -- Courtesy Dawn

Health ministers order FIRs against govt offices found with dengue larvae

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

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

Khawaja Salman, Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, emphasised the urgency of heightened vigilance following recent rains to prevent a dengue outbreak. He urged the administration of sensitive districts to intensify their efforts, with commissioners and deputy commissioners personally overseeing anti-dengue operations. He stressed the need for increased anti-

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

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



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah meets with the outgoing Consul General of America, Mr. Conrad Tribble at CM House. Also present in the photo are Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Principal Secretary to CM Agha Wasif, American Deputy Consul General Amy Hood and Chief Political Unit Mr. Jerrod Hansen.

Governor distributes digital technology awards among financial institutions

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori has distributed digital technology awards for excellence among financial institutions here on Thursday.

Addressing the ceremony organized by the Institutes of Chartered Accounts of Pakistan (ICAP), the Governor said the encouragement of financial institutions was commendable.

He said without modern innovation, fastest development was not possible. It is imperative to adapt the financial system to the digital age, Governor said. He commended the initiatives of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan in line with the contemporary requirements. He said that digital technology can join the race of modern development.

The governor further added that the government believes in making full use of digital technology. The youth are being

CM vows to complete 600 development projects by December

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur on Friday met with parliamentarians and party leaders from all four regions of the province.

The meetings focused on resolving public issues, public welfare projects and rehabilitation of infrastructure affected by monsoon rains.

The chief minister announced that over 600 development projects nearing completion across the province, would be finished by December this year. He emphasized the importance of prioritizing ongoing development projects and devolving project authorities to the local level. He directed the elected representatives to

propose projects based on local needs and priorities, ensuring wise use of public taxes. He also announced that these development projects would only be inaugurated when they were fully completed and providing public services.

The chief minister said that he was working to strengthen local government institutions to resolve public issues locally. Funds have been allocated for the rehabilitation of infrastructure affected by monsoon rains, and relief activities will be initiated on a priority basis, he said.

The meetings also discussed to make successful the August 5 rally in Swabi by ensuring maximum participation from the Party workers and the public.



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

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

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

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

During the meeting, detailed briefings were provided on the College's annual budget, revised estimates and expenditures. The Board was also updated on the College's income, resources, admissions status, pension fund, endowment fund and other financial accounts.

The College administration was directed to compile data on the performance of alumni, including those who have succeeded in CSS exams, gained admission to foreign universities, and those representing prestigious medical and engineering colleges. The Finance and Planning Committee of the College was given 15 days to address objections related to the college's financial accounts, new discipline, medical fund, interest-free loans and audit issues. In response, the Governor directed that the next meeting of the Board of Governors will be held in 15 days. The Governor emphasized prioritizing students from merged districts under the FATA scholarship scheme for admission to Edwards College. Governor Kundi expressed displeasure over the non-approval of the minutes from the previous Board of Governors meeting by the Governor's Office.

CM grieved over loss of lives in rains

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

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

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

PU sets up summer camp in China

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

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



RAWALPINDI: Leader of Jamaat-e-Islami Liaqat Baloch addressing a press conference during sit-in protest Dharna at Murree road in the city.

Fazal Hakeem says: KP govt to activate Cooperative Dept

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperative Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai has said that the provincial government will take steps to make the Cooperative Department more active to enable the farmers to get benefits and support in the true sense. He directed to provide details of the Cooperative Department's assets and point out where assets are leased.

He gave these instructions while chairing a meeting of the Cooperative Department here Friday. The meeting was attended by Secretary Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperative Muhammad Fakhar Alam, Registrar Cooperative Muhammad Ishaq, Director General Livestock Extension Dr. Asal Khan and others relevant officials.

During a briefing, the meeting was told that at present, there were 5200 registered societies in the province which were providing services in various sectors such as housing, handicrafts, marketing, honey bee keeping and others. The meeting was also informed about the problems faced in this regard.

The provincial minister issued instructions that a joint task force should be formed to formulate a comprehensive policy for the rehabilitation and development of the Livestock, Fisheries and especially the Cooperatives department.

KP govt adopts zero tolerance policy against corruption: Barrister Saif

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

Addressing a press conference along with Communication and Works Department's Minister Shakeel Khan here at the press club, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said that the concerned ministers and departments would be held responsible in case of any report about financial irregularity or corruption.

He urged people and journalists to identify corruption and financial irregularity so that strict action would be taken against the responsible officials. Provincial Minister for Communication and Works Department Shakeel Khan said that corruption was unacceptable and Secretary C&W was removed as he was not satisfied with him.

"We are accountable to people and every minister would present his performance report to the PTI founder," he said, adding the federal government.

Governor flays attack on judges in Tank

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

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



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi presides over the BoGs meeting of Edwards college at Governor House.

Female journalists have proven their mettle despite hardships: Azma Bukhari

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

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

In her address, Azma Bokhari said that the Punjab government would always stand with them to help solve their issues. "I am happy that female journalists have formed their first national organisation and it is a positive step toward women empowerment."

Referring to her fake video, she said that many people advised her to keep silent, but she raised voice on the issue keeping in mind other women's social rights. "I want justice not only for myself but for all other women as well," she added. The minister said that she would request Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to resolve the issues being faced by female journalists on a priority basis, including bus passes, health facilities and special quota in housing schemes for female journalists.

3 killed, 8 injured in fatal car accident in Abbottabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Three people killed and eight others injured in a tragic car accident in Abbottabad.

According to a private news channel, the incident occurred at Haddu Tandhara in the jurisdiction of Lohar Tanalo police station, a notable tourist destination in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The police arrived promptly at the scene to manage the situation and initiate an investigation into the accident.

Police officials said that the ill-fated vehicle was en route from Abbottabad to Shirwan suffered a brake failure, leading to a devastating crash.

MPAs laud CM's public welfare initiatives

LAHORE (APP): Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb Friday held separate meetings with the Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs) Punjab in which matters pertaining to party activities, ongoing development projects in the respective constituencies and political situation were discussed.

Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb apprised them about the steps being undertaken by CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif for progress and uplift of the people and the province.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the implementation of the record development budget is being carried out in a proactive manner and funds have been allocated in the budget for the development schemes.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif is personally overseeing development works. No compromise will be made on the quality, speed and timely completion of the development projects, she added.

The Assembly Members appreciated the steps being taken by CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif for launching development projects along with reducing price-hikes and provision of relief to the people of the province. Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb expressed her gratitude to the assembly members for extending their cooperation and assistance on the public welfare and development steps being undertaken by the Punjab government for the improvement and uplift of the province.



LAHORE: Opposition Leader Muhammad Iqbal Bhachar, Advocate Azhar Siddique, and other MPAs holding a press conference at Lahore High Court in Provincial Capital.

Sindh E&T dept connects tax system with One Link to facilitate people pay tax at ease

KARACHI (APP): The Department of Excise and Taxation, Government of Sindh, has taken a revolutionary step by connecting the tax system with One Link to allow people pay taxes from their homes.

In a statement on Friday, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, and Taxation, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has stated that the

new digital service has been designed to save people's time, reduce hassles, and bring convenience to their fingertips.

He said that transparency will be promoted, and people will now be able to pay vehicle taxes from the comfort of their homes.

He said that the public will be able to pay taxes in minutes in a safe and reliable manner at any time. The Excise and Taxation Department is committed to providing the best efficiency and convenience to the public, he added. He stated that checkpoints will be established at the entry and exit points of major cities to check vehicles for taxation compliance, and action will be taken against tax-defaulting vehicles.

In the first phase, a KIOSK will be set up at the Karachi Toll Station.



LAHORE: Punjab Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir chair 6th meeting on dengue, infectious diseases and disaster management at the Department of Specialised Healthcare and Medical Education.

France, Pakistan affirm commitment to deepen economic, trade ties

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

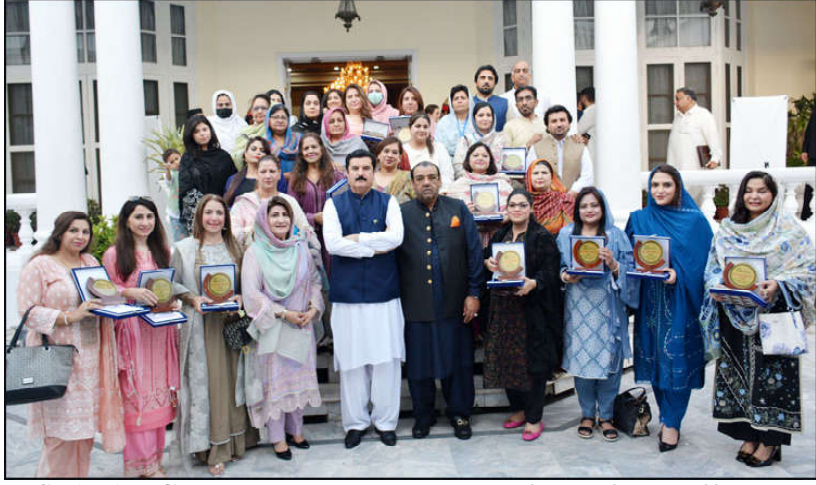
CM Sindh says: Sindh produces 70pc gas but forced to pay RLNG charges

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that the electricity generated by the Nooriabad power plant costs Rs15 per unit, however, industrial units are being charged Rs48 per unit. Additionally, despite Sindh contributing to over 70 per cent of the country's gas production, industries in our province were facing gas shortages and were forced to pay RLNG charges.

This he said while speaking at the inauguration ceremony of

"My Karachi - Oasis of Harmony Exhibition 2024 at Expo Center on Friday morning. The program was attended by provincial ministers- Sharjeel Memon, Jam Khan Shoro, Jam Ikram Dharejo and Zulfiqar Ali Shah, said a CM house communique. The CM said that he was cognizant that the electricity tariff had gone way too high, and the industries were rapidly losing their viability, therefore there were reports that the closure of industries had started taking place. "We are pursuing this matter as

well and, in this regard, 'I would like to inform the audience that we are going to have an electricity generation and distribution company in Sindh very soon and we are in the process of doing that," he disclosed. Murad Shah mentioned that the electricity being produced by the Nooriabad power plant costs Rs15 per unit, but it is being provided to the industrial units at Rs48 per unit, which has badly affected the industrial establishments, leading them to consider closing down.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi in a group photo with the Awardees during the WCCI Peshawar Division function at Governor House.

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

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

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

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

The ambassador-designate viewed the United States as a consumer society which was why it enjoyed the vital potential of trade and economic connectivity and

"I will focus on more and more liaison to facilitate the holding of exhibitions to showcase Pakistani products."

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

He described Pakistan's IT sector as the most significant and attractive area for the rest of the world because of being the cost-effective as compared to other countries. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari noted that the United States was not only the largest export market of Pakistan but also a leading investor with more than 80 companies.

Pakistani, Chinese experts discuss enhanced economic growth, connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Experts from Pakistani think-tanks and China on Friday participated in a seminar to discuss potential ways to enhance collaboration between the two countries in multiple fields, particularly economic growth and connectivity.

The event, titled "Pakistan Economy & Growth: Learning from China's Experience," was organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), marking a significant step towards strengthening economic ties between China and Pakistan.

The seminar was aimed at facilitating an exchange of knowledge and optimum practices between the two nations, according to a news release.

In her opening

remarks, PIDE's Pro VC Dr Durre Nayah emphasized the importance of such interactions in fostering growth and development. She highlighted the need to adopt strategies that have contributed to China's economic success, tailored to Pakistan's unique context.

The event featured a detailed presentation by Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of PIDE, who discussed the critical need for policy reforms, investment in human capital, and fostering an innovation-driven economy.

He advocated for learning from China's economic transformation, which provides insights into growth strategies, infrastructure development, industrialization.



ANKARA: Guests enjoying Pakistani mangoes at a mango festival organized by the embassy in Ankara.

SBP injects Rs 9.567 trillion into market

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

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

The central bank received 16 bids for a 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs982.25 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.56 to 19.62 percent while 29 bids were received for the 28-day tenor offering an amount of Rs8,807.95 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.55 to 19.62%.

The SBP accepted all 16 quotes for a 7-day tenor amounting to Rs982.25 billion at 19.56 % rate of return while 28 quotes for 28-day tenor amounting to Rs8,500 billion were accepted at 19.56% rate of return.

Rupee on steady recovery

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Friday continued its recovery and appreciated by 16 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.66. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.2 and Rs 280.4 respectively. The price of Euro came down by 20 paise to close at Rs 300.82 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.02, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.86, whereas a decrease of Rs 2.36.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday chaired a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet which approved the import of 100,000 Metric Tons (MT) urea.

The committee decided on a proposal submitted by the Ministry of Industries and Production aimed at ensuring sufficient supplies of urea in the market.

"This will also ensure stability of prices of

fertilizer during the cropping season," a Finance Division news release said.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Petroleum Masood Malik, Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Governor SBP, Chairman SECP, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, MD PASSCO, Chairman TCP.

Gold rates up by Rs.2,400 per tola to Rs.257,300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.2,400 and was sold at Rs. 257,300 on Friday against its sale at Rs. 254,900 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 2,057 to Rs. 220,593 from Rs. 218,536 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs. 202,210 from Rs. 200,324, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah cut the ribbon to inaugurate "My Karachi - Oasis of Harmony" Exhibition 2024 at the Expo Center.

CDNS to attain target of Rs 120bn in fresh bonds

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has realized a target of Rs 120 billion in fresh bonds and achieved 7.2 percent of the annual target in the first months of current fiscal year, from July 1 to July 31.

The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has set an annual target of Rs 1650

billion for the current Fiscal Year, 2024-25, which will promote the saving culture in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Friday. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs 170 billion in investment in Islamic finance for the Current Fiscal Year, which will lead to growth in the Islamic economy in the country.

Short-term inflation falls by 0.12 percent

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

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 321.56 points as compared to 321.95 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 18.41 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 = 100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732, decreased by 0.90 per cent and went down to 309.40 points from last week's 312.22 points.

The SPI for the lowest consumption groups of Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 decreased by 1.36 percent, 0.17 percent, 0.23 and 0.80 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 24 (47.06%) items increased.

PSX turns bullish, gains 485 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Friday, gaining 485.68 points, a positive change of 0.62 percent, closing at 78,225.98 points against 77,740.31 points on the last working day. A total of 443,483,358 shares were traded during the day as compared to 278,986,985 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 20,497 billion against Rs 13,094 billion on the last trading day. As many as 439 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 236 of them recorded gains and 142 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 61 companies remained unchanged.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

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

Mobilink bank launches Pak first women-led incubator program

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

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160

million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of world's population.

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

"Mobilink Bank is transforming the entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan with our WIN Incubator program," said Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, Interim CEO Mobilink Bank.

"This initiative is aimed at breaking barriers for small women-owned businesses by providing essential tools and resources.

Through mentorship, training, and a supportive network, we wish to empower women to turn their dreams into successful businesses and consequently play an integral role in the country's economic development. Starting with a cohort of 25, we plan to enable thousands of women entrepreneurs in the coming years."

Also sharing her thoughts, Sumera Abbasi, Executive Director TIE Islamabad said.



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

Exports increase by 11.83% to \$2.3b in July

ISLAMABAD (APP): Exports from the country witnessed an increase of 11.83 percent during the first month of fiscal year 2024-25 as compared to the corresponding month of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Friday.

The exports during July 2024 were recorded at \$2.308 billion against the exports of \$2.064 billion in July 2023, according to latest PBS data.

On the other hand, imports into the country also increased by 15.30 percent to \$4.256 billion during the month under review as against the imports of \$3.691 billion last July.

Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the month under review was recorded at \$1.948 billion against the deficit of \$1.627 billion last year, showing an increase of 19.71 percent.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country decreased by 9.77 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.558 billion during June 2024.

The imports also witnessed decrease of 14.27 percent when compared to the imports of \$4.964 billion in June 2024, PBS reported.

On the other hand, the export of services during the fiscal year 2023-24 increased by 2.7 percent by going up to \$7.806 billion from \$7.595 billion last year. The services imports also increased from \$8.638 billion last year to \$10.119 billion this year, showing growth of 17.14 percent.

Based on the figures, the services trade deficit was recorded at \$2.313 billion in July-June (2023-24) against the deficit of \$1.043 billion in July-June (2022-23), showing an increase of 121.76 percent.

On the other hand, the export of services during the fiscal year 2023-24 increased by 2.7 percent by going up to \$7.806 billion from \$7.595 billion last year. The services imports also increased from \$8.638 billion last year to \$10.119 billion this year, showing growth of 17.14 percent.

Based on the figures, the services trade deficit was recorded at \$2.313 billion in July-June (2023-24) against the deficit of \$1.043 billion in July-June (2022-23), showing an increase of 121.76 percent.



ISLAMABAD: A garment vendor selling a beautiful collection of children for upcoming Independence Day, 14th August, with each piece radiating patriotic spirit to captivate and attract customers.

SCCI welcomes EDF for terrorism, natural calamities-hit SMEs

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) president, Fuad Ishaq welcomed Enterprise Development Fund (EDF) for terrorism and natural calamities-affected Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The SCCI chief urged International Organization Migration (IOM) to ensure direct release of grant to SMEs under simple procedure, especially provision of maximum share for women in this grant for their economic prosperity and progress.

Fuad Ishaq made these remarks during a meeting with EDF Outreach team from IOM Manager headed by Manager Livelihood, Ozz Azzi held here at chamber house on

Friday.

Other members of the visiting team include National Program Manager Ahsan Zia, Team Lead Majida Sultana and Program Assistant Syed Awais.

On the occasion, the SCCI Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan and Secretary Sohail Anjum were present.

Ozz Azzi briefed the meeting about EDF and informed that grant up to Rs. 5 million will be given to more than 120 SMEs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Officials said funds will be available for companies and business community affected by war or natural disasters in various trades, aimed at reviving and promoting these businesses.

26 detainees freed in biggest post-Cold War prisoner swap

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Mourners at the ceremony in Imam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Mosque, the Gulf emirate's largest, just north of the capital Doha included Khaled Meshaal, who is tipped to be the new Hamas leader.

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

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

Excessive force leading to unlawful killings in India: UN panel

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

The UN committee, in a report released this week, noted that certain provisions of India's Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) and counterterrorism laws do not comply with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

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

It noted with concern that this extended enforcement has led to "widespread and severe human rights violations, including excessive use of force resulting in unlawful killings, prolonged arbitrary detention, sexual violence, forced displacement, and torture".

At least seven people died in Delhi, according to local media.

Ex-BBC presenter pleads guilty to indecent child pictures charges

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Former BBC TV news presenter Huw Edwards, a household name in Britain, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to three counts of making indecent pictures of children.

Edwards, 62, who was the BBC's highest-paid journalist and top news anchor until he quit in April, arrived at London's Westminster Magistrates' Court wearing sunglasses through a throng of photographers and camera crews.

After confirming his identity, he was asked if he wished to indicate a plea to the three charges, which relate to three different categories of indecent images. Edwards said: "Guilty".

Judge Paul Goldspring said Edwards would be sentenced on Sept 16. During the 25-minute hearing, prosecutor Ian Hope said the 41 still or moving images had been sent to Edwards by an adult male on WhatsApp between December 2020,

led to the closure of a popular walking area. "Assuming it was a wolf involved, wolf experts say that the behavior displayed is atypical and worrying," the statement said.

"The province takes seriously into account that it is the same wolf that was previously involved in incidents in Leusden with another girl and a dog."

Wolves have been spreading from east to west across rural areas of the Netherlands for years ever since arriving from Germany.

The animals were officially confirmed as having returned in 2019, two centuries after being hunted to extinction, when a pair produced a litter of cubs.

On Wednesday, a child was pushed over by a wolf in Austerlitz, the province said in a statement. The incident came two weeks after another confrontation

Turkiye blocks Nato-Israel cooperation over Gaza

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

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

Bangladesh releases student leaders

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: Bangladesh police freed six student leaders on Thursday whose campaign against civil service job quotas sparked deadly nationwide unrest, as the government looked to calm tensions and forestall fresh demonstrations.

Students Against Discrimination staged nationwide rallies last month that ended in a police crackdown and the deaths of at least 206 people, according to an AFP count of police and hospital data. The group's leadership were among thousands picked up in the police dragnet that followed some of the worst unrest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year tenure.

Southport murder suspect identified amidst rising unrest in UK

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: In a significant development, the teenager charged with the Southport murders has been identified as Axel Rudakubana following an exceptional court ruling. The revelation comes against a backdrop of increasing social unrest, reportedly fueled by a network of anonymous TikTok accounts aimed at instigating violence across the UK.

Axel Rudakubana, who is on the brink of turning 18, has been charged in connection with the brutal stabbings that left three young girls dead in Southport. His identity was disclosed after Judge Andrew Menary KC rejected a request to keep it concealed.

In a swift 20-minute hearing, Judge Menary stated that, despite the usual legal protections for minors, the severity of the case warranted the public's right to know Rudakubana's identity.

Rudakubana is currently remanded in youth custody. Sky News correspondent Martin Brunt reported from outside the court, noting the rarity of such a decision.

"Typically, minors under 18 cannot be named," Brunt explained. "However, the judge was convinced by the legal arguments presented, marking a significant departure from standard protocol."

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

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

Speaking at the session, Chinese Ambassador Fu Cong said China strongly condemns the assassination of Haniyeh.

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

Similarly, Algeria's envoy to the UN, Amar Bendjama, said: "We are on the precipice of catastrophe," adding that Israel's attack was "an act of terror" that violated international law and the sovereignty of Iran.

"This is not merely an attack on one man. It is a vicious assault on the very foundations of diplomatic relations, the sanctity of state sovereignty and the principles that underpin our global order," he said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We don't really think that an escalation is inevitable and there's no signs that an escalation is imminent," he said.

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

The strikes on two of Israel's arch foes came less than a week after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the White House for talks with President Joe Biden aimed at pushing a ceasefire in Gaza.

Hamas blamed an Israeli strike for the killing of its political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

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

Antony Blinken hails closer ties with Mongolia in rare visit

Monitoring Desk
ULAANBAATAR: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Mongolia on Thursday at the end of a 10-day tour of Asia, hailing growing ties with the landlocked democracy sandwiched between authoritarian powers China and Russia.

His long tour, which also took him to Southeast Asia and Japan, has been aimed at hammering home US support for allies and countering China's influence in the region — even if Washington insists it is not pursuing a policy of containment against Beijing.

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

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

In Ulaanbaatar on Thursday, Blinken stressed the US approach was not "against any one country". "It's for a common vision that we share for what the future should look like," he said during a press conference. "And yes, part of that common vision is clearly the freedom... for any country to make its own decisions, to make its own choices about the future," he said.

Mongolia is a vast, sparsely populated democracy of 3.4 million and held parliamentary elections in June.

Hangzhou, Shanghai broil as extreme heat engulfs eastern China

Monitoring Desk
HANGZHOU: Mega-cities on China's eastern coast are facing another spell of scorching heat as temperatures hovered around 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) on Friday and prolonged extreme temperatures were expected to run into next week.

The Shanghai Meteorological Center on Thursday issued the first red warning signal for high temperatures this year after the sprawling metropolis hit 40C, logging the 22nd day of temperatures over 40C since its Xujiabui weather station began tracking data in 1873.

In nearby Hangzhou, officials issued a red warning early on Friday, with some areas in Shangcheng district, Binjiang district, Gongshu district, and Xihu district hitting 40C. A red warning is the most severe in a three-tiered warning temperature system.

"It's so hot, like fire falling from the sky," said Li Wen, a 22-year-old tourist visiting Shanghai. "Everyone is wearing sun protection shirts, holding parasols, and taking precautions against the sunshine."



Former prisoner held by Russia US journalist Evan Gershkovich waves as he arrives at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland.

Ukraine's Zelensky says he wants Russia 'at the table' for next peace summit

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: In an interview with French reporters at a school gym in the western town of Rivne, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia should be represented at a second peace summit set for November after a first summit convened by Ukraine last month in Switzerland did not feature Russia on the invite list.

The entire world, including Ukraine, wants Russia to join global leaders at a planned second peace summit to end the war in Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky has told French media including AFP.

With Russian forces gaining momentum on the front and aid from allies ebbing or in doubt, Zelensky has launched an ambitious diplomatic offensive to end the war grinding through its third year.

He gathered leaders and top officials from dozens of countries at the Swiss mountainside resort of Burgenstock in June for a first summit, which Russia derided as a waste of time and China shunned.

While the Kremlin was not invited to the first gathering, now is the time for Moscow to take a seat at the table, Zelensky said.

"The majority of the world today says that Russia must be represented at the second summit, otherwise we will not achieve meaningful results," he said in western Ukraine on Tuesday.

"Since the whole world wants them to be at the table, we cannot be against it."

Poland's president raises new obstacle to government's judicial overhaul

Monitoring Desk
WARSAW: Poland's president asked a contested top court on Friday to decide whether reform of a body that appoints judges is constitutional, effectively blocking legislation the government says is key to restoring the rule of law.

Since coming to power in December, Prime Minister Donald Tusk's pro-European coalition has been mired in conflict with President Andrzej Duda over various bills that aim to undo reforms implemented by the previous nationalist administration that critics say undermined judicial independence.

The decision to send the bill on the National Council of the Judiciary (KRS) to the Constitutional Tribunal, a chamber

which critics say is itself emblematic of the politicisation of the courts under the previous Law and Justice (PiS) government, is just the latest example of the hurdles facing judicial reform.

Duda is a PiS ally and has opposed the Tusk government's reforms, arguing that it is unconstitutional to challenge the legitimacy of judicial appointments approved by the president.

As president, Duda can sign bills into law, veto them, or send them to the Constitutional Tribunal.

"The analysis of the adopted act shows that the provisions of the act raise doubts as to the violation of constitutionally protected values," Duda said in his submission to the Tribunal.



A demonstrator gestures as protesters clash with Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the police outside the state-owned Bangladesh Television as violence erupts across the country protests by students, in Dhaka.

12 die as heavy rains lash Delhi, other parts of northern India

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Emergency workers rescued nearly 1,000 people who were stranded in different parts of the Himalayas following torrential rainfall in northern India, which caused widespread damage and left at least 12 people dead, officials said on Thursday.

The capital Delhi received intense rainfall late on Wednesday, totalling 147 millimetres in eastern parts of the city and its suburbs, the India Meteorological Department said.

At least seven people died in Delhi, according to local media.

Venezuelan opposition says headquarters invaded as government alleges coup attempt

Monitoring Desk
CARACAS: A major Venezuelan opposition movement on Friday said its headquarters had been vandalized amid ongoing tensions over a disputed presidential election, as the country's foreign minister said the US was at the forefront of what the government says is a coup attempt.

Vente Venezuela, the movement headed by Venezuela's opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, said that six hooded, unidentified

men overpowered its security guards overnight, entering its Caracas headquarters, taking equipment and vandalizing the location. "We denounce the attacks and insecurity to which we are subjected for political reasons," the movement said on social media.

Countries around the region, including Brazil, Mexico and Colombia, have called on Venezuela's government to release detailed voting tallies after the elections board declared President Nicolas Maduro the winner of a third term.

Dutch province warns parents against taking young children to forests following wolf encounters

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: A central Dutch province is urgently warning parents not to take young children to a popular forest area near the city of Utrecht following two recent close encounters with a wolf displaying "atypical and worrying" behavior.

Utrecht province on Thursday was preparing to seek a permit to kill the wolf, which is a protected species throughout the European Union. It was seeking support and approval from the agriculture ministry for the permit.

On Wednesday, a child was pushed over by a wolf in Austerlitz, the province said in a statement. The incident came two weeks after another confrontation

led to the closure of a popular walking area. "Assuming it was a wolf involved, wolf experts say that the behavior displayed is atypical and worrying," the statement said.

"The province takes seriously into account that it is the same wolf that was previously involved in incidents in Leusden with another girl and a dog."

Wolves have been spreading from east to west across rural areas of the Netherlands for years ever since arriving from Germany.

The animals were officially confirmed as having returned in 2019, two centuries after being hunted to extinction, when a pair produced a litter of cubs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Hope new generations to further strengthen Pak-Turkiye ties

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

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



Trainee lawyers from Quetta in group photo with Hon'ble Mr Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan at the Federal Judicial Academy Islamabad.

ECP asks political parties to submit statements of accounts by Aug 29

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday reminded all the heads of Political Parties to submit their consolidated statements of accounts (Form-D) for financial year 2023-24 on or before August 29.

"In terms of section 210 of the Elections Act, 2017 read with section 204 of the Act and rule 159 & 160 of the Election Rules, 2017, thereof, that the political parties are required to file with Election Commission their Consolidated Statement of Accounts on (Form-D) for financial year, 2023-24 ended on 30th June, 2024 on or before 29th August, 2024," said a press release issued here.

It may be recalled that Section 210 of the Elections Act, 2017 provides that a Political Party shall, in such a manner as may be prescribed, submit to the Commission, within sixty days from the close of a financial year, a consolidated statement of its accounts audited by a Chartered Accountant on Form-D containing, annual income and expenses, sources of its funds and assets and liabilities.



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

Ahsan announces National Task Force on Productivity, Quality and Innovation

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

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

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

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

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

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

This includes fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, supporting research and development (R&D) initiatives, and facilitating collaboration between academia, industry, and government.

It also aims to leverage innovation and productivity improvements in the agriculture sector to significantly reduce rural poverty.

By enhancing productivity, the initiative seeks to increase yields, lower costs, and improve essential services such as healthcare, education, agriculture, and infrastructure, directly benefiting rural communities. The planning minister emphasized that elevating rural living standards was central to his government's agenda.

Under the initiative, universities will be encouraged to prioritize research and innovation that enhances productivity across various sectors.

People urged to observe Black Day on August 5

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

The appeal was made through separate messages issued in Srinagar on behalf of the illegally detained Hurriyat leadership, including APHC Chairman Masarrat Aalam Butt and Shabbir Ahmed Shah, both of whom are languishing in New Delhi's notorious Tihar Jail. Other Hurriyat leaders and parties including incarcerated Bilal Siddique have also called for the observance of August 5 (Monday) as Black Day.

The Hurriyat leaders described the illegal actions taken on August 5, 2019 as an assault on Kashmir's unique identity, status, culture, and demography. They urged Kashmiris worldwide to hold protest demonstrations on Monday to draw global attention to the suffering of the oppressed people in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. It was on August 5, 2019, when the RSS-backed BJP government of India, led by Narendra Modi, scrapped the special status of IIOJK in blatant violation of international laws and norms.



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

Pak makes it mandatory for Afghan truck drivers to keep passports

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

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

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

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

Previously, until July 31st of this year, Afghan cargo truck drivers were provided with temporary entry permits (TAD) to facilitate trade activities without the need for visas.

Before this meeting, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary stated that the government has terminated its existing policy and made passports mandatory for entry into the country. As a result, truck drivers will no longer be allowed to cross the Pak-Afghan border using temporary documents.

The Foreign Secretary also expressed concerns about the presence of terrorist groups like ISIS, the East Turkestan Movement, and the banned TTP continuing their activities from Afghanistan against Pakistan. He stated that the presence of the banned Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Afghanistan poses a persistent threat to Pakistan, and that Islamabad has repeatedly conveyed its concerns to the Afghan authorities. Furthermore, the Foreign Secretary noted that since the takeover by the Afghan Taliban, there has been an increase in anti-Pakistan activities originating from Afghanistan.



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

CCOP approves 24 entities for privatization programme

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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