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On government's plea Supreme Court removes controversial paragraphs in Mubarak Sani case

CJP Isa-led bench says expunged paras can't be cited as precedent; JUI-F to observe "thanksgiving day"

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the removal of the controversial paragraphs in the ruling of Mubarak Sani case.

The Supreme Court heard an urgent application from the Punjab government, requesting the removal of certain portions from its July 24 verdict in the Mubarak Ahmad Sani case.

A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, took up the matter. The other members were Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice Naeem

Akhtar Afghan. The bench accepted the Punjab government's application and ordered the removal of paragraphs No 7, 42 and 49-C.

On Feb 6, a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, annulled the conviction of Mubarak Sani who had been charged in 2019 under the Punjab Holy Quran (Printing and Recording) (Amendment) Act.

The court observed in its ruling that the offence for which the defendant was convicted was not ac-

tually criminalised until 2021. As a result, the Supreme Court ordered the petitioner's immediate release.

This decision sparked what was described by the government and legal circles as a "malicious and defamatory campaign" against the chief justice, leading the Supreme Court to issue a public clarification.

On July 24, the Supreme Court, after considering the appeals from the Punjab government and other parties, reportedly

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing the inaugural ceremony of Buna-Raast Connectivity Project Implementation Phase.

Will announce a five-year economic plan very soon as parameters finalised: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that he would unveil a five-year economic revival plan in the coming weeks as broad parameters had already been finalised through months-long deliberations with the stakeholders.

The prime minister, addressing the launching ceremony of the Buna-Raast connectivity project, said the "Home-Grown Economic Program" would envisage measures to boost the country's economy by uplifting agriculture, information technology, and other untapped sectors.

"Our program is under discussion and I will announce it very soon. Great work has gone into it. It involves discussions and deliberations with all stakeholders over the last many months. Recently we have finalised its broad parameters. By next week or so, we will finalise it. I will go to the people to announce

the program for the next five years," the prime minister remarked.

Highlighting the challenges of reforms in the Federal Board of Revenue and power sector, he told the gathering that he was personally monitoring the digitisation of FBR and that the government was hopeful of positive outcomes of power sector reforms.

"There is no magic band. It is all about hard work, sacrifice, blood and sweat. Our nation is robust and strong. Our people are full of hope and energy. Let us put our work together. Let us not waste time on debates as we had done in the past. Let us now use this time for actual implementation on the ground. Insha Allah, you will see we will have dividends and will find our place in the comity of nations through hard work, hard work and hard work," he said.

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CM issues orders to get Killa Saifullah patient treated from abroad at Govt's expenses

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has issued orders for treatment of a patient belonging to Killa Saifullah from abroad at the government's expenses.

According to the spokesman of provincial government, Shahid Rind, the cervical spinal cord of Muhammad Ashraf would be got treated from the proposed hospital in abroad.

In this regard, the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti issued directives for medical treatment of the patient besides directing to the Health Department Balochistan for completing necessary action.

The spokesman of Balochistan government assured that the provincial government would get Muhammad Ashraf treated from abroad.

President, PM, Interior Minister condemn 11 cops martyred as bandits attack with rockets in RYK

RAHIM YAR KHAN (INP): At least 11 policemen were martyred and seven others injured in an attack on police mobile vehicles by dacoits of Kacha near Machka police camp II in Rahim Yar Khan.

A group of dacoits launched the attack when one of the vehicles in the convoy broke down. Some of the policemen were also missing after the incident.

The culprits first attacked the police vehicles with rocket launchers before opening fire. Injured policemen have been shifted to Sheikh Zayed Hospital in Rahim Yar Khan for treatment.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the attack on a police convoy in Rahim Yar Khan.

A press release from the President's House, the President stated that the president extended his con-

dolences to the families of the police officers, who were martyred in the attack.

The president emphasised the need for strict action against criminals in the Kacha area and warned that attacks on personnel of police and law enforcement agencies would not be tolerated.

The president paid tribute to the martyred policemen and prayed for their elevated ranks. He also wished for the speedy recovery of those injured in the incident.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has strongly condemned attack on Police convoy in Rahim Yar Khan.

In a statement, he expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of police personnel in the attack.

The Prime Minister prayed for the elevation of

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RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir in a group photo along with a delegation of 44 students from Harvard Business School (HBS), at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

COAS cautions students against perils of misinformation and fake news in digital age

Gen. Asim Munir emphasises significance of education, critical thinking & innovation in addressing contemporary security challenges

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Thursday emphasized the significance of education, critical thinking, and innovation in addressing contemporary security challenges.

He said this during a meeting with a delegation of 44 students from Harvard Business School (HBS) Trek-2024, representing nine different countries, who called on the COAS here at the General Headquarters, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The interactive session

provided a platform to share perspectives on Pakistan's pivotal role in promoting regional peace and stability, its unwavering efforts against terrorism, and its commitment to upholding democratic values.

The Army Chief highlighted Pakistan's vast potential and encouraged the attendees to form their own opinions based on personal experiences.

He also cautioned against the perils of misinformation and fake news in the digital age, urging the students to

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Royal Saudi Naval Forces delegation visits Karachi

Independent Report
KARACHI: Delegation of Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) visited Karachi.

The delegation was led by the Commander Jeddah Naval Base, Rear Admiral Saleh bin Abdullah Al-amri. The delegation discussed matters of mutual interest including bilateral cooperation during their call on with Commander Coast Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz and Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi. The delegation also called on Commander 18th Destroyer Squadron, visited PN Ship SHAMSHEER and Pakistan Navy Tactical School. PN and RSNF officers also participated in table top discussions on professional matters and avenues for joint operations.

Rizwan Sheikh assumes charge as Pakistan's ambassador to US

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, assumed responsibilities of his new assignment Wednesday, saying that cementing the US-Pak relationship, strengthening economic ties and enhancing



people-to-people contacts would be his top priorities.

Speaking to the mission officers, he also underscored the importance of the Pakistani community in the U.S., describing them as the country's valuable asset.



HUB: Chairperson BISP Senator, Mrs. Rubina Khalid chairing a meeting with the members of LIEDA.

Chairperson of BISP inaugurates mobile registration service in Hub

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Ms. Rubina Khalid inaugurated the mobile registration service in Hub on Thursday.

The inaugural ceremony of mobile Registration service was attended by the Advisor to Chief Minister, Mir Ali Hasan Zehri, local personalities, government officials and workers of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

According to the concerned officials, at least four mobile vans are included for registration of the deserving women from Hub district for the BISP.

The process of registration would be easier for the deserving women belonging to the remote areas of Hub district in the BISP through the mobile service.

It was informed that some 25,000 deserving women have the facility of BISP in Hub district so far.

Achakzai says Constitution allows us to hold public meetings, processions

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief of Pashtoonkwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP), Mehmood Khan Achakzai has said that the Constitution of Pakistan allows us to hold public meetings and procession. In a statement issued here on Thursday, he said that our public gatherings were not aimed to abuse anyone but for justified rights of countrymen. Mehmood Khan Achakzai said that police have their own duty but they were employees of state and not employees of any personality of political party.

Governor urges people to develop Zhob as exemplary education city

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that we are determined to materialize the dream of making Zhob as education city.

The Governor was speaking to the delegation of Government Teachers Association (GTA) who called on him under leadership of Maulana Mashhood Shah here on Thursday.

He said that it is his mission to impart quality education to the people at their doorstep. He said it is top condition to make easy access to the educational facilities and infrastructure in remote areas, besides creating educational environment there.

He urged the people to

develop Zhob as exemplary education city. Let's change Zhob such an exemplary education city which gives importance to education, he insisted.

He stressed that we have to brighten the minds of new generation with modern knowledge so that they may lead successful life and take new strides of development.

In order to achieve the good objective, the Governor exhorted to all conscious segments of the society to come forward and play their role.

Earlier, the Governor said that the people having the vision of future and spirit of public service know that the new opportunities of development and change are created where there education grows.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) Maulana Fazlur Rehman leaving Supreme Court after attending Mubarak Sani case hearing, in the Federal Capital.

Special anti-polio campaign to be kicked off in Balochistan from September 9: EOC

Independent Report

QUETTA: The special polio immunization campaign is scheduled to be launched in Balochistan from September 9, 2024.

The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for polio eradication Balochistan sources informed that the anti-polio campaign has been planned in backdrop of the cases reported in the province during current year.

It may be mentioned here that in all 12 cases of polio have so far been reported in the province.

The sources said that the necessary arrangements are being made for the upcoming anti-polio campaign in the province.

The sources said that there have been reports about the fake finger marking by some teams engaged in the anti-polio campaign.

According to the sources, action is being taken against over 500 teams of the Quetta bloc on the charges of involvement in the fake finger marking.

The sources said that the cases of refusals are also being reported in which parents refuse to get their children administered the anti-polio vaccine.

Some people also reportedly hide their children when the anti-polio teams visit their homes for immunization, the sources revealed.

Two children killed, five injured after gunmen attack school van in Attock

ATTOCK (APP): Some unidentified attackers Thursday opened indiscriminate firing on a school van and killed at least two students and injured five others and the driver in Dheri Kot area of the district.

The police sources said a van carrying students to Malik Anwar Ul Haq Memorial School, when, the culprits opened fire and killed Ramin Akhtar, aged 2 years and Arowa, 10.

They said five other students including Mohib

Ali, Sumaira, Shazif, Haseeb Ali, Shazim and the van's driver, Afzal 48 received injuries in the firing incident.

The outlaws fled from the scene, they added. Rescue 1122 team shifted the bodies and injured to District Headquarters Hospital.

Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif took notice of the incident and directed the authorities concerned to take urgent action to nab the culprits.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Information Imran Khan and Director General Public Relations Balochistan Muhammad Noor Khetran presiding over a meeting regarding Google Work Space

Tarar for providing opportunities to youth by correcting priorities in IT, agriculture, education, sports fields

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attallah Tarar on Thursday stressed the need to provide maximum opportunities to the youth by correcting the priorities in the fields of information technology (IT), agriculture, education, and sports arena.

Addressing the National Youth Convention here he said Pakistan was a lucky country as its 60% population consisted of youth below 30 years of age who could change the destiny of the nation.

“There is a need to correct the direction and economy of the country, bring IT revolution, and promote quality education to the new generation”, the minister said.

He urged the young generation to understand the vision behind the creation of a separate state for Muslims in the subcontinent.

He remarked that Indian atrocities in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and on Indian Muslims across the border had vindicated the stance of Muslims for an independent state.

He said that Kashmiris were still struggling to be-

come part of Pakistan with great resolve, resilience, and determination despite the brutality and oppression of Indian rulers.

He told the participants of the convention that the Quaid-e-Azam was supported by a large number of youths in the Pakistan Movement.

“The youth contributed to the creation of this country, and the youth will change the destiny of this country”, the information minister remarked.

He said that Muslim migration from Makkah to Madinah and from India to Pakistan had a lesson for everyone.

He said that about 12,00,000 people sacrificed their lives during migration to Pakistan in 1947 as trains carrying Muslims were attacked and passengers butchered mercilessly.

He said countless women and girls were raped and molested during the process of migration.

He said the holy blood of tens of thousands of martyrs was in the foundations of Pakistan which was created on the 27th of Ramadan.



ISLAMABAD: The Secretary-General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Ambassador Kairat Sarybay calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif.

ADB Country Director calls on President Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Country Director of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Yong Ye Thursday called on President Asif Ali Zardari.

In the meeting, the ADB country director briefed the president about the role of the Bank in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. The president appreciated the assistance provided by the Asian Development Bank to Pakistan during the floods.

He also highlighted Pakistan's measures to deal with climate change, saying that Pakistan had planted

mangrove forests on millions of acres of land.

President Zardari also appreciated the bank's services to Pakistan in the fields of agriculture, irrigation and education.

Meanwhile, the outgoing Ambassador of Greece to Pakistan Konstantinos Moatsos paid a farewell call on President Asif Ali Zardari. He emphasized the need to further strengthen bilateral relations with Greece. The president also expressed his best wishes for the outgoing Ambassador of Greece.

PM expresses Pakistan's desire to promote global peace, regional connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary-General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Ambassador Kairat Sarybay Thursday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif at the PM House.

In the meeting, the prime minister the prime minister underlined that as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for 2025-26, Pakistan looks forward to playing an active role in

maintaining international peace and security.

He also expressed Pakistan's strong desire for enhanced regional connectivity and commended CICA's ongoing efforts in this regard.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's support for CICA's core objective of strengthening regional cooperation as well as promoting peace, security, and stability in Asia through confidence-building measures. The prime minister highlighted the importance

of addressing the root causes of conflicts, pursuing conflict prevention strategies, and developing long-term solutions to ensure lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

Secretary-General Sarybay briefed the prime minister on CICA's ongoing activities and initiatives as well as proposed vision for the future. He acknowledged Pakistan's active and constructive role within CICA and expressed hope for continued close cooperation.



Coordination meeting of Exercise between Pakistan and Royal Saudi Naval Forces during PNS HUNAIN visit to Jeddah Port KSA

11 cops martyred....

Continued from page 1

the martyrs' ranks and patience for their families.

He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured police personnel and directed that they should be provided with the best medical facilities. He instructed immediate and effective action against the attackers in the Kacha area.

The Prime Minister has also directed that those responsible for the attack be identified and brought to justice. He commended police officers and personnel for their dedication and courage in combating criminals regardless of personal risk.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday strongly condemned the attack on police vehicles by outlaws in the Kacha area of Machka, Rahim Yar Khan district, Punjab, resulting in the killing of 11 police personnel.

In a statement, Minister Naqvi expressed deep sorrow and regret over the loss of lives and paid trib-

ute to the martyred police personnel.

He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured police personnel.

The Minister extended heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the families of the martyred police personnel and stood in solidarity with them. He also saluted the police officers who have achieved the highest rank of martyrdom.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif also expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of police personnel in the Kacha area.

She paid tribute to the police official martyred in the attack and extended condolences to the grieving families. She has also ordered an operation to recover the missing police officials and instructed that the injured officers should be given the best medical care.

Supreme Court removes...

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court. During the hearing, Allama Taqi Usmani assisted the court and requested the removal of two paragraphs from the decision. He asked for paragraphs 7 and 42 to be deleted.

The chief justice also noted that the Feb 6 decision was left behind after the review, and now it's time to move forward. Fazlur Rehman's arguments.

JUI chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said, "Supreme Court should have limited itself to the matter of bail only; you [CJP] are hearing a second review in the Supreme Court."

The chief justice responded by saying that this is not a second review. Maulana Fazlur Rehman then remarked, "Then this must be a re-evaluation. I am 72 years old, and this is the first time I am standing in court."

The chief justice said, "Maulana Sahib! We are not that bad. When my father passed away, your father, Mufti Mahmood, came to our home for condolences."

As the people at the rostrum started speaking simultaneously, the chief justice asked Fazlur Rehman to guide them. Fazlur Rehman replied, "This is your court; your order prevails here."

Rizwan, Shakeel's centuries put Pakistan in command against Bangladesh

Rizwan's unbeaten 171 and Shakeel's 141 lead Pakistan to 448/6 declared, Bangladesh trail by 421 runs

Sports Desk RAWALPINDI: Pakistan took control of the first Test against Bangladesh on Day 2 at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, thanks to outstanding centuries from Mohammad Rizwan and Saud Shakeel.

The pair's remarkable 240-run partnership for the fifth wicket propelled Pakistan to a formidable 448/6 declared, with Bangladesh ending the day at 27/0 in their first innings, trailing by 421 runs.

Resuming at a precarious 158/4, Rizwan and Shakeel blunted the Bangladesh attack with a mix

of patience and aggression. Shakeel, who started the day on 57, continued his composed innings, reaching his third Test century before being stumped for 141 off 261 balls, a knock that included nine boundaries. Rizwan, who had been more aggressive, played a spectacular unbeaten innings of 171 from 239 deliveries, striking 11 fours and three sixes. Bangladesh's bowlers struggled to replicate their success from Day 1, where they had reduced Pakistan to 16/3. Express pacer Nahid Rana was particularly expensive, conceding 105 runs in his 19 wicketless

overs as the pitch eased under bright sunshine. Shoriful Islam and Hasan Mahmud, who had taken two wickets each on the opening day, couldn't break the Rizwan-Shakeel stand despite bowling tirelessly.

Pakistan declared their innings after a quickfire 29 from Shaheen Shah Afridi, who hit two sixes and a boundary in just 24 balls. The declaration left Bangladesh with a tricky 12 overs to face before the close of play. Openers Shadman Islam and Zakir Hasan managed to survive the challenging period, finishing on 12* and 11* respectively.



HUB: Spokesman of President Asif Ali Zardari for Balochistan, Advisor for Trade and Industry Mir Ali Hassan Zehri addressing a ceremony

Consumers likely to get 31 paisa per unit relief in FCA for July

ISLAMABAD (APP): The consumers of XWAPDA power distribution companies (DISCOs) are likely to get 31 paisa per unit relief in power tariff for month of the July under the monthly fuel cost (FCA) adjustment mechanism.

COAS cautions...

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students to navigate this landscape with discernment. The COAS highlighted Pakistan's vast potential and encouraged the attendees to form their own opinions based on personal experiences.

He also cautioned against the perils of misinformation and fake news in the digital age, urging the students to navigate this landscape with discernment.

The Harvard students expressed their gratitude to the COAS for facilitating a constructive and enlightening interaction.

Will announce a five-year...

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Under the Buna-Raast connectivity project, the Raast payment mechanism is being linked with the Arab Monetary Fund's Buna system to facilitate millions of overseas Pakistanis in Arab countries to send remittances through a swift, affordable, and effective mechanism.

The prime minister said that besides easing the remittance-sending process digitally, it would also help boost the country's foreign exchange and further strengthen the already cordial relations between Pakistan and the Arab world.

Calling it a great step forward in promoting financial transactions through modern techniques, he said the project would expand the reach of Pakistan's digital payment infrastructure.

"This signifies how 21st-century Pakistan is moving ahead by augmenting modern technologies in the people's lives. This is the first cross-border real-time payment system linkage that will make remittances more affordable and accessible," he said.

Moreover, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the project also held the potential to accelerate the connectivity into a future model of a wider payment system where transactions would take place from region to region with a potential of over \$20 billion in annual payments.

He thanked the Arab Monetary Fund, State Bank of Pakistan, Finance Ministry, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and

Bilawal condemn attack on school van in attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the heinous attack on a school van in the Attock district of Punjab, resulting in the tragic martyrdom of two students.

In a statement issued from the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP expressed his profound sorrow and grief, stating that the news of the innocent lives lost has left him heartbroken.

"The culprits responsible for shedding the blood of these innocent children are nothing less than monsters. They must be apprehended and brought to justice without delay," he asserted. Bilawal Bhutto extended his heartfelt condolences and solidarity to the families of the martyred students, saying, "The entire nation stands with the grieving families during this unimaginably difficult time. May Allah grant them the strength to bear this irreparable loss."

He said the government was committed to infrastructural reforms and that its efforts were bearing fruits, though a lot more was yet to be done. The remittances were on the surge with \$3 billion received in July, he added.

About the Buna-Raast connectivity project, he said the digitalisation would help bring transparency and reduce leakages in remittances, taxation and the power sectors.

He said the project would put the country on a sustainable path and the right side of the FATF.

President of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Dr Anita Zaidi said the project would link the economies of Pakistan and the Arab world digitally, boost productivity and bring efficiency to systems.

Cause behind Pakistan bus accident in Iran revealed

ISLAMABAD (INP): The bus carrying Pakistani pilgrims to Iran suffered a fatal accident due to a reported brake failure, leading to a collision and overturning of the vehicle.

According to passenger Abdul Razaq, he was seated roughly in the middle of the bus and the journey was going smoothly. He had fallen asleep but was suddenly

awoken by commotion on the bus. He saw that everyone was distressed and worried. His fellow passenger then informed him that the bus brakes had failed, and the driver was struggling to maintain control of the rapidly speeding vehicle.

Razaq is from the Sindh province of Pakistan and was part of this group of Pakistani pilgrims traveling to Iran to visit holy sites. The ill-fated bus was part of a caravan organized by a Pakistani tour operator company called Caravan Shams.

The passenger claimed that the bus was swerving erratically as the bus helper stood up and told everyone to hold on tight, as the driver was desperately trying to stop the bus and after some time the bus crashed.

Information Dept. set to become first..

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under the aegis of Directorate General of Public Relations here on Thursday.

The Director General of Public Relations, Muhammad Noor Khetrnan and other officers participated in the meeting.

The meeting discussed about the use of Google workspace and promotion of the paperless work in the department.

During the course of meeting, it was told that 30 Google accounts have so far been developed for the department under which, the business account, video conferencing, live chat and other facilities are being provided.

The Secretary Information maintained that different features of the Google workspace such as video

conferencing, live chat and live editing of the documents would be used for making the daily affairs effective.

Besides, the facility of Google drive would also be provided so as to preserve the documents.

He said that all sections of the department would be coordinated through the programme while the employees working in different districts would also be linked with DGPR under new system, he added believing that the system would not only improve performance of department but it would also promote effective coordination between all officers and staff.

He said that progress of the project would also be reviewed again so as to ensure its effective enforcement.



HUB: View of destruction after flooding due to heavy downpour of monsoon season, at Ismailyani road in Hub.



QUETTA: Members of Metropolitan Tanzeemi Ittehad are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, in Quetta.

PM Shehbaz directs better airport services, shorter wait times

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday instructed that facilities for passengers, tourists, and overseas Pakistanis at the country's airports be improved and called for an increase in the number of counters during international flights to reduce long wait times for passengers. Chairing a review meeting on aviation sector reforms, the prime minister directed that the safety audit for the current calendar year be completed as soon

as possible. He reminded that during his previous tenure as head of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government, an aviation act was enacted to facilitate reforms in the sector, according to a press release issued by Prime Minister Office. He instructed that all policy measures and reforms outlined in the Aviation Act be implemented. He noted that the aviation sector in Pakistan was moving in the right direction due to these reforms. To promote tourism,

the prime minister emphasized the need to provide top-notch facilities for passengers at Skardu International Airport and called for a detailed action plan for the expansion of both Skardu International Airport and Gilgit Airport. He expressed satisfaction that the country's aviation sector was progressing positively due to the reforms and noted that the installation of automatic immigration gates under the automated border control system would offer greater

convenience to passengers. The meeting was briefed in detail about the reforms in the aviation sector. The Aviation Act 2023, passed under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership during the previous administration, had initiated large-scale reforms in the sector. The meeting was informed that the separation of the Airport Management Authority and Civil Aviation under the Act was ensuring more efficient execution of the operator and regulator duties.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding matters relating to aviation sector.



ISLAMABAD: Activists of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan hold a protest in favor of their demands at D-Chowk, in the Federal Capital.

EU-supported program strengthens stakeholder collaboration to combat Malnutrition in Sindh

ISLAMABAD (APP): The EU-supported programme have initiated collaboration among the stakeholders to combat malnutrition in Sindh as the high rates of malnutrition continue to impact the province adversely. The situation is dire, with nearly half of the children under the age of five suffering from stunting, wasting or being underweight. The consequences of malnutrition are far-reaching and have long-lasting impact, not just on the directly affected individuals but also on the rest of the family and the nation's development. Amid these challenges, Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO), in col-

laboration with consortium lead International Rescue Committee (IRC) and partner Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation (MERF), organized a day-long Provincial Networking Workshop, a news release said. This event brought together stakeholders such as relevant departments of the Government of Sindh, including the Planning and Development Department, the Accelerated Action Plan Task Force Secretariat, and the Sindh Social Protection Authority. Moreover, representatives from the World Health Organization, PPHI Sindh, Nutrition International, HANDS, CSO networks such as the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance (SUNCSA) Paki-

stan and Sindh Climate Action Network (SCAN), and local organizations were also part of a concerted effort to combat malnutrition and address its severe impacts on the region. There is a dire need to bridge the gap between public policies and their effective implementation at the grassroots level. With decades of learning, experience, and awareness of best practices, there is ample potential to enhance developmental projects by adopting a more collaborative approach. By integrating insights from sector experts, local communities and embracing a more inclusive strategy, we can ensure the progress.

Mohsin Naqvi reviews security situation in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi presided over a high-level meeting in Islamabad to review the law and order situation late Wednesday night. He said they would not allow anyone to enter the red zone because maintaining public order is our priority. He said it is everyone's right to protest but the protest should be at a suitable place and should not disturb the daily routine of the

people, he demanded from protesters. Naqvi said that the protection of the life and property of people is the first responsibility of the government and enforcement of the law will be ensured in this regard. He said that the law will act against those who take the law into their hands. In the meeting, the situation of public order was reviewed in detail.

FIA cracks down on Hundi-Hawala, recovers over Rs 1 billion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has recovered over Rs one billion local and foreign currency in multiple raids across the country against Hundi-Hawala during ongoing year. It was disclosed in a meeting, chaired by FIA Director General Ahmed Ishaq Jahangir, on Thursday, to discuss the agency's efforts to combat Hundi-Hawala and illegal currency exchange. The meeting was told that, this year, the FIA conducted 459 raids, resulting in the registration of 468 cases and the arrest of 566 accused individuals. The agency also completed in-

vestigations into 80 inquiries. Additionally, foreign currency worth more than Rs 19.37 crores, including \$525,055, was seized. The agency's efforts were spread across various zones, with the Peshawar zone making the most arrests at 211, followed by Lahore 79, Kohat 27, Gujranwala 60, Faisalabad 45, and Multan 36. Similarly, the Karachi zone arrested 48, Islamabad 8, Hyderabad 25 and Balochistan 27. The FIA also sealed several outlets and obtained assistance from law enforcement agencies to apprehend the accused.

Senate body on IT briefed on PSEB, ECAC operations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication convened on Thursday to review the operations and performance of the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) and the Electronic Certification Accreditation Council (ECAC). The meeting was chaired by Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan. The committee was informed that the PSEB, initially established as a Private Software Export Board in 1995, operates under a seven-member Board of Directors. Presently, 26,000 IT companies are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). Despite the global IT market's staggering value of \$5 trillion, Pakistan's share remains less than 0.04%.

This year, IT products accounted for 24% of the sector's growth, matching last year's growth rate. Pakistan's IT exports are distributed across several regions: 54% to US, 21% to Europe, 10% to Gulf countries, and 14% to the Asia Pacific region. The country is home to 2,124 web design services companies, 452 network security firms, and 616 data storage and management companies. There are 3,463 IT consulting firms, 870 social media consulting companies, 465 email marketing firms, 664 IT help desk companies, 940 cloud service providers, and 81 repair service companies operating in Pakistan. Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan expressed concern over the opaque nature of the training programs, particularly

questioning the HR-ICT Internship Program, which has trained 3,500 interns over six months with a monthly stipend of Rs. 20,000. The committee demanded detailed information about the interns who completed the program, including their names, provinces, and the selection criteria. Questions were raised about the revenue generated by these programs and its utilization. The committee directed the preparation of a comprehensive report on the training programs, including quality control measures and funding sources. Senator Anusha Rehman criticized the Pakistan Software Export Board's data, pointing out discrepancies in the reporting years and demanding complete data for previous years.



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

AIOU's Phase-II admissions to begin from 1st Sept

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will begin the second phase of admissions for the Autumn 2024 semester on September 1st. The educational programs offered in this phase include Associate Degree in Arts (BA General), Associate Degree in Commerce (B. Com), BBA, Associate Degree in Education, BS (ODL) programs, 1.5-year, 2.5-year, and 4-year B.Ed programs, Postgraduate Diploma programs, and Certificate courses.

Jam highlights State Life Insurance's vital role in supporting families

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, emphasized the significant impact of State Life Insurance policies on families across the country during his address at the State Life Insurance Corporation (SLIC) Summit 2024. The event, held at a local hotel, celebrated SLIC's achievements and highlighted the contributions of its leadership and team. Jam Kamal acknowledged the longstanding support that State Life Insurance has provided, helping numerous families sustain themselves over the years. "State Life Insurance policies have been a lifeline for many, enabling families to survive and thrive," he stated. The minister commended the SLIC team, especially the executives, chairman, and board members, for their dedication to the corporation's success. He also addressed criticisms regarding the healthcare program managed by State Life, noting concerns over financial management and resource allocation. "There has been criticism about the costs and management, but overall, the services provided to the private sector and citizens are substantial. The program's scale and reach are something we often underestimate," he remarked. Reflecting on his tenure as Chief Minister of Balochistan, Jam Kamal recalled how the province actively pursued the federal-level healthcare initiative, integrating it into the provincial budget despite reservations regarding costs and auditing challenges.

Six vendors arrested in ICT for price gouging

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a decisive move to ensure fair pricing, Islamabad's district administration has launched a crackdown on vendors overcharging customers in local markets and arrested six vendors. In a recent operation led by Assistant Commissioner Pothohar, Aneeq Anwar, six traders were arrested for not adhering to the official price list in the vegetable market. The accused shopkeepers were found charging customers more than the rates prescribed by the government. During the inspection, it was discovered that many vendors had failed to display the official rate list, which is a mandatory requirement. The absence of this price list led to custom-

ers being charged higher rates, prompting immediate action from the authorities. Assistant Commissioner Anwar emphasized that all shopkeepers must prominently display the official price list to avoid legal consequences. The District Commissioner has appealed to the public to report any vendor who fails to display the rate list or charges more than the official prices. This action is part of a broader effort to regulate prices and protect consumers from unfair practices in the market. The public is encouraged to remain vigilant and report any violations to ensure that all transactions are fair and within the legal framework.



ISLAMABAD: A view of road blocked with heavy shipping containers at Islamabad Highway, in the Federal Capital.

Ayaz strongly condemns attack on school van in Attock

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Thursday, strongly condemned the tragic incident of firing on a school van in Attock, which resulted in the loss of two young children. "The attack on innocent children is heart-wrenching," the Speaker said in a statement, adding that those responsible for such heinous acts deserve no leniency. He called for the strictest legal action against the perpetrators. Ayaz Sadiq extended his heartfelt condolences to the families of the affected children, praying to Allah for the elevation of the ranks of the deceased and the swift recovery of the injured.

Parliamentarians urged to champion women's rights in reproductive health

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level seminar on reproductive health and family planning on Thursday called for increased access to contraceptives and family planning services, emphasizing the importance of women's rights and empowerment. The event, organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), brought together Sindh parliamentarians, government officials, and experts to discuss strategies for improving sexual reproductive health (SRH) and family planning (FP) in the province. Key speakers, including Dr. Rubina Ali, Assistant Country Representative for UNFPA, and Shaheena Sher Ali, Sindh Minister for Women Development, stressed the need for a rights-based approach to family planning, highlighting the link between population management and sustainable economic growth. The seminar highlighted alarming statistics, with less than one-third of women in Pakistan having autonomy over their sexual and reproductive health, resulting in 4.2 million unplanned pregnancies and 2.2 million abortions annually.

IWMB successfully releases rehabilitated female leopard

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), working under the Ministry of Climate Change, on Thursday announced the successful release of a female leopard in an undisclosed location in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). She was found injured with a wounded tail, was rehabilitated at IWMB's rescue center for five weeks. Once cleared by veterinarians, she was released into the wild of AJK forests with the assistance of the AJK Wildlife Department, a news release said. Wildlife ambassador and leopard expert Jamal Leghari accompanied the IWMB team to Muzaffarabad and onwards to photograph and monitor her release into the wild.

NCGSA to host Pakistan's first-ever workshop on Space Law and Policy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Center of GIS and Space Applications (NCGSA), in collaboration with the Institute of Space Technology (IST), is set to host Pakistan's inaugural Workshop on 'Space Law and Policy' on September 03-04. According to the NCGSA, this groundbreaking event will be the first of its kind in the country, focusing on the critical and emerging domains of space law and policy. With the increasing relevance of space activities in global geopolitics and national security, this work-

shop aims to equip participants with the knowledge needed to navigate the complex legal and regulatory frameworks governing space. Resource persons from renowned organizations including Access Partnership, Singapore; Pakistan Space Activities Regulatory Board (PSARB); National Defence University (NDU), Pakistan; Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO), China; and the National Center for Cyber Security (NCCS), Pakistan, will share their expertise and insights during the two-day event.



ISLAMABAD: A view of traffic jam due to road blocked with heavy shipping containers at Faizabad, in the Federal Capital.

Javaid unanimously elected as Chairman NA Standing body on Defence Production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly (MNA) Javaid Iqbal on Thursday got unanimously elected as Chairman Standing Committee on Defence Production of the National Assembly. MNA, Asad Alam Niazi who is a member of the committee, proposed the name of MNA, Javaid Iqbal, Chairman of the Committee while MNA, Ali Zahid, a Member seconded his candidature. The Acting Secretary congratulated the newly elected Chairman on behalf of the Honorable Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Secretary National Assembly and assured him of full support from the Secretariat for the effective and efficient functioning of the Committee. The Acting Secretary, the National Assembly

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NHMP foils liquor smuggling bid

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) on Thursday foiled a bid to smuggle liquor near Islamabad Toll Plaza link road and recovered 157 bottles of liquor from a vehicle. According to NHMP North Zone spokesman, Muhammad Saqib, the NHMP spotted a suspicious vehicle parked on Link Road while no one present in the car. On searching it, the NHMP recovered 157 bottles of liquor from the vehicle and handed them over to the Noon Police Station, for further legal action.

UAJK introduces Manual Admission Forms in response to internet connectivity issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): In response to the challenges faced by prospective students due to slow internet connectivity, the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK), Muzaffarabad, has initiated the issuance of manual admission forms alongside the existing online application process. This step aims to ensure that all applicants can conveniently apply for their desired programs, said a press release. According to a press release issued by the Public Relations Department of the UAJK, the students seeking admission can now

obtain printed admission forms directly from the Director Student Affairs (DSA) offices at both the Chella Campus and King Abdullah Campus (Chatter Klass). These forms can be submitted to apply for the program of their choice. Additionally, to assist students in completing their online admission forms, the university has established online entry facilities at the Chella Campus and King Abdullah Campus (Chatter Klass). Information desks have also been set up in all academic departments to guide prospective students.



ISLAMABAD: A view of the workers busy rebuilding the stalls at the Peshawar Mor Weekly Bazaar, which was damaged due to a fire.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Friday August 23, 2024

Signs of trouble

The state — both its civilian and military components — needs to take note of the troubling developments on the militancy front, before the country is dragged into a new cycle of terrorist violence.

The signs are not good, as an increasing number of security personnel are being targeted in the field, while militant groups have begun to make inroads in areas thought to have been cleared of the terrorist menace.

At least three soldiers were martyred in a gunfight with militants in Bajaur on Sunday, close to the Afghan border. The latest casualties indicate the grim reality that Pakistan has been losing an unacceptably high number of men in confrontations with terrorists.

Moreover, in KP's Tirah valley, there are disturbing reports that fighters belonging to the banned TTP and Lashkar-i-Islam have begun patrols in certain areas. LI had been active in the region for years; its dreaded leader Mangal Bagh was killed in Afghanistan in 2021. The TTP and LI have combined forces in the past, and the reactivation of the latter outfit is a fresh headache for the state.

Where troop fatalities are concerned, as this paper has highlighted previously, better gear and training are required to save lives. As per media figures quoting ISPR, at least 139 troops have been martyred while confronting terrorists up till July 2024. Militants employ asymmetrical methods, which are difficult to counter for traditional militaries. Even the American and Soviet militaries could do little to defeat foes using asymmetrical methods. Therefore, perhaps crack new units need to be trained in such methods to outsmart the militants in the field, while intelligence-based operations should neutralise terrorists before they can strike.

Regarding the patrols of terrorist groups, this development should not be taken lightly by the state. Locals in the Tirah area told this paper that while TTP and LI fighters were moving around with freedom, the police and Levies had 'vanished'. Moreover, residents said militants were demanding food and shelter from them, which the locals could only refuse at their own peril.

The administration cannot leave people in the affected areas at the mercy of terrorists. The writ of the state must be established forthwith as no violent non-state actor can be allowed to set up parallel governance structures. It should be remembered that militants started taking over territory in Waziristan and Malakand in similar fashion. These developments morphed into full-blown insurgencies that required the state to invest much blood and treasure to quell.

The same mistake must not be repeated. Perhaps the powers that be should redirect their attention from 'digital terrorists' and hone in on the actual terrorists who have risen up against the state in the past, and appear intent on doing so again.

Ahmed Bilal
Mehboob

In stark contrast to the controversies emanating from the general elections in February, the allocation of reserved seats to political parties in the assemblies had always been smooth sailing. However, after the general election, the controversy over the allocation of reserved seats has turned out to be a major bone of contention between parliament and the Supreme Court. The positions held by the two key pillars of state are so diametrically opposite and the adherents of these positions so emotionally charged that there is a serious risk of a showdown that may threaten the current democratic order.

While the Supreme Court had pronounced its majority short order on July 12 and set a clear timetable for its implementation, the progress on implementation has been seriously impeded, in fact, suspended.

The Election Commission of Pakistan sought a written clarification on July 25 from the eight

judges about the bona fide leadership of the PTI which could certify the party affiliation of 41 MNAs as the ECP did not recognise the party's internal election and the resulting office-holders. The Supreme Court order had allowed the ECP to approach the eight judges in the chambers and seek an explanation from them if there was any question about the order. Since some of the eight judges have apparently proceeded on summer vacation after delivering the order, the response to ECP queries supposedly cannot be provided until they resume duty in September and assemble in the chambers to consider the ECP's questions.

Although the Supreme Court announced its majority short order, it did not give detailed reasons, which could provide the needed interpretation of the Constitution and the laws in support of the order. The three-member committee formed under Supreme Court (Practices and Procedures) Act, 2023, also deferred the hearing of the review petitions. The writing of the

detailed reasons and the hearing of the review petitions were both put off because the judges proceeded on summer vacation. Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, who heads the committee, disagreed and stressed that the right to review, as provided by the Constitution, should take precedence over the convenience of judges on leave or on vacation.

Chief Justice Isa also argued that if the review petition was not fixed in the court before the expiry of the stipulated 15 days, as granted by the majority judgement to 41 members who contested the Feb 8 general elections as independent candidates, it would become infructuous.

The PML-N, PPP and many independent legal experts also criticised the majority verdict and the decision to defer the detailed judgement and the hearing of the review petition. In an important case as the one dealing with the allocation of reserved seats and its grave potential political and legal fallout, the least that can be said is that the Supreme Court should have

authored its detailed reasons and disposed of the review petitions before proceeding on summer vacation, even if it entailed rescheduling or cancellation of their vacation.

Despite the fact that the majority short order of the Supreme Court upheld the spirit of the law, many legal minds were of the view that it did not expressly conform to the letter of the law and some constitutional provisions. A kind of legal vacuum was, therefore, created because of the absence of detailed reasons to support the order.

It was in this vacuum that the ruling coalition decided to act through parliament in an apparent bid to neutralise the effect of the Supreme Court short order. A member of the ruling PML-N introduced the Elections (Second Amendment) Act, 2024, in the National Assembly on July 30 and it received presidential assent on Aug 8 after receiving approval in the committee, the National Assembly and the Senate. It is a unique law in the sense that it does not bring in any new legal provision to the statute books;

rather, it emphasises existing laws and makes it explicit that these laws will remain valid and applicable in spite of any court order, including that of the Supreme Court. Unless this act of parliament is overturned by the Supreme Court, it remains a valid law and the ECP, apparently, cannot act upon the Supreme Court order of July 12.

In the meantime, on Aug 3, two judges of the Supreme Court, Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Naem Afghan, who had dissented from the majority verdict, issued hard-hitting detailed reasons. Besides stating that "the majority short order does not in any way come within the ambit of the jurisdiction vested in this court or in the Constitution", it gives the most alarming call to action: "Any order of the court which is not in consonance with the constitutional provisions is not binding upon any other constitutional organ of the state." Despite the fact that it is a minority opinion which is not implementable, it has provided much-needed ammunition to

those contesting the majority short order. In this highly combustible environment, when the Supreme Court resumes work next month, there are bound to be fireworks. Will the ECP implement the majority short order even if the Supreme Court overturns the Elections (Second Amendment) Act and parliament does not accept the overruling of the law passed by it?

Since denying the reserved seats to PTI, or Sunni Ittehad Council, is expected to result in giving the ruling coalition a two-thirds majority and hence the power to amend the Constitution, and because the government had indicated its intention to amend the Constitution to give a fixed term to the chief justices of Pakistan, the issue of reserved seats has become a game of very high stakes even for some of the judges who may be directly affected by such an amendment. The stresses this game is likely to generate may suck in powers outside the judiciary and parliament and put the democratic order at grave risk. - Courtesy Dawn

Trouble at the start line

Khurram Husain

Rarely have I seen things as scattered and messy as they are today, in the realm of economic management in any case. At the epicentre of the mess is the IMF programme, all dressed up with nowhere to go. A staff-level agreement (SLA) was announced by the Fund on July 12, more than five weeks ago. Then on July 23, on the eve of his departure for China, the finance minister assured the country during a televised interview that board approval for the programme should be done by end August.

On his return from China, we learned that the government raised the question of rescheduling some payment obligations to sponsors of Chinese power producers, as well as advance rollover guarantees for maturing obligations on debt owed to Chinese commercial banks among others. We were also told that the process of getting all this had begun during the visit. Meaning we had, after a long and fraught journey, finally reached the start line of where we

needed to be.

Now comes the hard part. Getting the Chinese to actually agree to these guarantees and rescheduling requests is probably a tougher sell than originally anticipated. Meanwhile, the Executive Board calendar of engagements for the remaining days of August was released last week, and Pakistan was not featured in it. Yesterday (Aug 21) the same finance minister assured a parliamentary committee that the approval would come in September, and mentioned something about a 'Deposit Protection Bill' that must be passed by October, as one possible item still under discussion with the Fund's staff before the programme can be forwarded for board approval.

Here is what it looks like. They were asked by the IMF to get certain conditions approved by the Chinese before the programme could be expected to get board approval. They went to the Chinese, who were most likely unhappy with the request, and urged their Pakistani friends to stand firm against Western pressure

and attempts to drive a wedge between the 'Iron Brothers'. If rescheduling or other such treatment is required for Chinese debt obligations, they were told, then it will be necessary to take that up with the firms to whom this debt was owed.

This is not what the Pakistani side wanted to hear. Chasing up individually with each project sponsor, and each commercial bank, and each state-owned entity to whom the debt obligations were owed would be a cumbersome and sprawling task. What they had most likely hoped was that they could just speak with someone high up enough in the state who could simply issue the necessary orders to get all this done. But the Chinese state is not a monolith, despite being a one-party state.

It seems there was no way around it. So on their return it was solemnly, and reluctantly, announced that a consultant was going to be retained and a large form was going to be opened up with the many categories of Chinese creditors

to get the assurances necessary to forward the SLA for board approval.

Meanwhile, the prime minister had announced, with some fanfare, the formation of a task force to be led by Stefan Dercon, the celebrated Oxford academic who has written an influential book on how countries embark on the process of economic reform. But when the first draft of the report being prepared by the task force was presented to the PM, he was left unimpressed, disbanded the task force, and appointed a new one under the leadership of former finance minister and PML-N stalwart Ishaq Dar.

Back to square one. Dar is one of the oldest members of the party; he has been there since their first stint in power back in the early 1990s, and has served as finance minister on at least three occasions.

Each time he set the stage for the country to approach near default levels of a balance-of-payments crisis. His thinking on economic affairs is strange. He seems to think Pakistan has un-

limited borrowing capacity, and its economy can afford to grow in a way that depletes its foreign exchange reserves, provided he can keep replenishing these reserves with borrowed money.

What sort of a vision is he going to produce that he has not already produced in the past? And if every stint of his as finance minister ended with the country either drifting dangerously towards default, or on the very edge of it, what is the sense of bringing him back for a fourth time to develop the overall vision this government intends to follow?

Meanwhile, the ruling party is already reeling from the power tariff increases it has had to pass.

Even now, some of the tariff hikes have been withheld in an effort to mitigate the impact on the citizenry, so another hike has to come in the months ahead.

Meanwhile, electricity bills on the new tariffs have started coming in and across the country there is an outcry. In one case that I have seen, of an individual whose con-

sumption is always slightly below or slightly above 200 units, the charge per unit increased from Rs20 in the bill received in July to Rs51 in the bill received in the month of August.

The ruling party reacted by announcing a "temporary relief package" by diverting development sector funds towards a power subsidy to be funded by the Punjab government. This is fine, but power tariffs are actually rising due to the kinds of macroeconomic policies that Mr Dar usually implements, which create massive pressures in the economy that ultimately have to be released by a massive devaluation, spiralling taxes and power tariff hikes.

So what is the sense of putting Mr Dar in charge of the government's economic vision, while scrambling to arrange 'temporary relief' for consumers from debilitating power tariff hikes? This government is now clearly in reactive mode, and has lost the initiative when it comes to economic matters. It has run into trouble at the start line.

A golden buffalo

F.S. Aijazuddin

The Summer Olympics 2024 are over. The victors have returned to savour their spoils, the vanquished to count their losses.

These Olympics had 10,714 athletes competing before a worldwide audience of 30.6 million viewers — truly a global spectator sport.

None but Olympians know the price they have had to pay — for full-time training, co-a-ching, medical, travel and other costs, apart from being deprived of a regular income.

The International Olympic Committee does not grant any awards beyond the medals themselves. It believes that the spirit of the Olympics is enough: "It is not to win but to take part; it is not the triumph but the struggle."

Before the Paris Olympics began, the World Athletics Federation announced that \$2.4m (\$50,000 each) would be given to each gold medalist in the 48 athletic events.

National Olympic committees supplement this with incentives to their own nationals. Hong Kong topped the list with \$768,000. (It won two golds.) Singapore offered \$745,000, but that was clearly not enough. It won only one bronze. The lowest incentive (\$13,000) came from Australia, whose athletes won 18 golds. But as one Olympian put it: "A gold medal is a wonderful thing, but if you're not enough without it, you'll never be enough with it."

Each country honours its Olympians in different ways — some with victory parades, others with cash rewards, a few with national awards. Far-sighted nations support their athletes on their way up Mount Olympus. The myopic wait until they have succeeded, and then

applaud them on the way down.

Pakistan's Olympian Arshad Nadeem has been smothered with garlands and suffocated with banquets ever since his triumphant return. The cornucopia of gifts emptied upon him have included cash of Rs280m, plus cars and other gifts.

In Punjab, the governor gave him cash of Rs2m and a car. The chief minister Punjab presented a cheque of Rs100m and the key to a Honda Civic car '92.97'. The chief minister also presented Nadeem's coach Salman I. Butt with a cheque of Rs5m.

In Sindh, the chief minister awarded Nadeem Rs50m. The Karachi mayor announced a Rs50m cash award for Nadeem and promised to establish an athletics academy named after the Olympian. The Sindh sports minister gave a cheque, both from his department and personal funds. The local government minister declared that an important road in Karachi would be named after Arshad Nadeem. The planning and development minister gifted a car to Arshad Nadeem's mother.

Army Chief General Asim Munir annou-need the allotment of a residential plot at DHA Multan (once a huge mango orchard).

Wapda has awarded Rs1m to Nadeem while his employer Lesco has proposed his promotion to the 19th grade. And President Zardari promised to award him the country's highest civilian honour — the Hilal-i-Imtiaz.

It is proposed to grant the Sitara-i-Imtiaz to Salman Butt (Nadeem's coach), and also to Nadeem's mother. While her efforts, like Nadeem's, were a solo achievement, some might cavil whether a SI award should be distributed so freely. They might say it demeans its stature.

Prince Philip visited Lahore in the 1990s to raise funds for the World Wildlife Fund (of which he was president). He attended an auction of paintings by local artists. As soon as the auction ended, he took the Pakistani auctioneer aside and advised him to collect the money before the successful bidders left the event. "Be quick. They tend to change their minds once they have had their photographs taken with me."

The ancient Greeks rewarded their victorious Olympians with a crown woven from fresh laurel leaves. They found it cheaper than cash, and handy the morning after as fodder for the buffalo. -- Courtesy Dawn

Apartment, that is, from it being regarded as a rebuke to shared parenthood. Surely, Nadeem's father Muhammad Arshad deserves acknowledgement too. He supported his son from his modest, honest earnings for 36 years as a construction labourer.

Nadeem has asked the government for a modern track and field stadium and a university for women in his hometown — Mian Channu.

In all this maelstrom of flattery, Nadeem has retained his se-nse of humour. When asked about the buffalo gifted to him by his father-in-law, Nadeem re-plied: "I was a bit surprised. I wondered since my father-in-law is a very rich person and has a lot of land... if only he had given me four to five acres of farmland instead of the buffalo."

The rustic father-in-law may feel miffed. Having given Nadeem first his daughter and now a healthy buffalo, in Mian Channu that is regarded as largesse enough.

Hopefully, all the promises made to Arshad Nadeem will be honoured. He should heed the advice of the late Prince Philip who had experience in such matters.

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The ancient Greeks rewarded their victorious Olympians with a crown woven from fresh laurel leaves. They found it cheaper than cash, and handy the morning after as fodder for the buffalo. -- Courtesy Dawn

Governor Punjab calls on Karbala Governor in Iraq

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Thursday called on his counterpart in Karbala Engr. Naseef Al-Khattabi during his visit to Iraq. According to the information shared by the Punjab Governor's media cell here, both the dignitaries discussed matters of mutual interest, provision of facilities to Pakistani pilgrims and promotion of bilateral relations in the fields of trade, culture and education during the meeting. Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan said that Pakistan and Iraq have deep brotherly relations due to common religion and culture. He said that Pakistan and Iraq are determined to increase

relations in every field, especially trade. He said that there are many opportunities to increase bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Iraq in the fields of trade, tourism, culture and education. Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan also invited Karbala Governor Engr. Naseef Al-Khattabi to visit Pakistan. Karbala Governor Engr. Naseef Al-Khattabi said that both countries enjoy fraternal relations. He reiterated his determination to take the trade, tourism and cultural relations between Pakistan and Iraq to new heights. The Governor Karbala presented a commemorative shield to the Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider.



BHIT SHAH: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah addresses during the 28th Annual Urs of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai festival held in Bhitt Shah.

KP govt, Save the Children International inaugurate new girls model school in Swat

PESHAWAR (APP): The Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Khan Tarakai and Muhammad Khuram Gondal, Country Director, Save the Children International officially inaugurated the newly constructed Government Girls Model School in Karira Jambli, Swat on Thursday. The school was developed through a collaborative effort between Save the Children International (SCI) and the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), in partnership with the Elementary and Secondary Education Department KP and the District Education Office (Female), Swat. The project was completed with a financial investment of PKR 58.526 million.

The newly constructed double-story building includes eight rooms, comprising six classrooms, a head teacher's office, a staff room, and a storeroom. The school is equipped with an 8 kV solar power system, a water tank, a separate inclusive toilet block, and an assembly ground. Accessibility has been prioritized with the inclusion of ramps. This facility will serve approximately 150 students, both girls and boys, from the nearby hamlets of Serai and Sakhra in Karira village. Construction of the school commenced in mid-October 2023 and was completed in an impressive seven and a half months, with the school ready for students by June 2024.

SACM directs to expedite work on Jehangira-Swabi highway

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries, Commerce, and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher has directed the acceleration of the pace of construction work on the expansion project of Swabi-Jehangira highway here on Thursday. The project is being executed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Highway Authority (PKHA).



LAHORE: Punjab Ministers for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazeer inaugurate Early Disease Warning Centre at Institute of Public Health.

New museums to be set up in Multan, Harappa

LAHORE (APP): The Department of Archeology Punjab has decided to establish two new museums in Multan and Harappa. In this regard, a meeting was held on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Director General Archeology Zaheer Abbas Malik, in which progress on the project of new museums was reviewed. The consultant firm gave a detailed presentation in the meeting. Director Conservation Anjum Qureshi and Deputy Director South Salman

Tanveer shed light on the process of construction and exhibition of museums and provided details regarding various aspects of the project. Addressing the meeting, DG Archeology Zaheer Abbas Malik said that existence of museums is very important to protect the archeology of Punjab and create awareness among the people about their historical heritage. "Under this strategy, effective measures are being taken to protect and restore the historical places in Punjab," he said.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the meeting to review performance of Police Officers.

Kundi highlights importance of funds transparency for good governance

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday highlighted the importance of ensuring transparent use of funds for good governance in the province. The Governor said this in a meeting with Nasiruddin Sarwar, the Accountant General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here at Governor House. During the meeting, Sarwar briefed the Governor on the performance of his office. The discussions focused on financial matters, emphasizing the correct and transparent use of public funds. The audit systems for public sector universities and provincial institutions were also discussed. Governor Kundi on this occasion said that transparent use of funds

for good governance in the province is need of the hour for the uplift of all sectors. He acknowledged the significant role of the Accountant General's Office in maintaining transparency in the province's economic affairs. Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in a meeting with a four-member delegation from the Nagham Ultralight Club and Sports Flying Club, led by pilot Qazi Tufail, included Qazi Sajjad, Azad Khan, and Babar Khan. During the meeting, Governor Kundi praised the club for its positive activities and expressed that the club's promotion could attract global attention to the province. He acknowledged the club's efforts to continue its activities despite

challenging conditions, noting that such initiatives could present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a new and positive light to the international community. The Governor assured that every effort would be made to address and resolve the club's challenges. The delegation briefed the Governor on the club's history, explaining that it was established in 2009 and operated from the Peshawar University Botanical Garden in Aza Khel until 2012. They mentioned that the club currently has 35 members and 8 to 10 aircraft. Governor Kundi assured the delegation that he would ensure solutions to their problems are found. Similarly, Prof. Engineer Javed Farooqi, CEO of Professional Education Foundation Karachi, and Prof. Mala Khan Haidri Educationist from Punjab called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi here to discuss issues and potential solutions related to the promotion of education across the country. During the meeting, Governor Kundi emphasized the need for attention not only to universities in Peshawar but also to those in southern and northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He highlighted the importance of providing modern education to students from merged districts and suggested that scholarships should prioritize students who completed their matriculation and intermediate education in these areas.

Constable martyred, dacoit killed in police encounter

FAISALABAD (APP): A police constable was martyred while a dacoit was killed and his accomplice managed to escape after an encounter in the area of Thikriwala police station. Police spokesman Talish Abbas Jutt said here on Thursday that eagle squad of Thikriwala police station witnessed a suspect motorcycle carrying two persons after noon and signaled them to stop near Gordawara Chowk Jhang Road but the motorcyclists opened fire which caused serious injuries to the constable Abid Ali. In the meantime, constable Bilal in retaliation also returned fire which caused instant death of one accused while his accomplice managed to escape from the scene on his motorcycle.

11 dead, 1319 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 11 people were killed and 1,319 injured in 1,242 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 560 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 759 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams. The data analysis showed 756 drivers, 42 underage drivers, 154 pedestrians, and 420 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. The statistics showed that 271 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 283 people, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Faisalabad with 91 accidents and 90 victims, and at third Gujranwala with 75 accidents and 74 victims.

Two killed as trailer ran over them

LODHARAN (APP): Two motorcyclists were killed when a trailer ran over them near Chak 100 here on Thursday. According to Rescue officials, two persons were travelling on motorcycle when a speeding car hit them and they fell down on the road. Meanwhile, a trailer crushed them and they died on the spot. The rescue team rushed to the spot and shifted the bodies to District Headquarters (DHQ) hospital. The deceased were identified as 38 years old Hashim s/o Sharif and Muhammad Nadeem s/o Muhammad Hanif residents of Masoomabad.

Safe Journey, Safe Punjab: Maryam Bring down crime rate in every district under any circumstances

LAHORE (INP): "Bring down crime rate in every district under any circumstances," Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed police officers while chairing a special meeting to discuss their performance. She added, "Immediately stop road dacoity incidents in the province." She reviewed the proposed KPIs for evaluating performance of police officers. She directed to undertake necessary measures to ensure safe journey on roads besides launching a crackdown to eliminate criminal hot spots across Punjab. She also directed to eradicate dacoity incidents to ensure protection of traders and shopkeepers. Maryam Nawaz asserted, "Dacoity and other crimes on roads of small and big cities are unacceptable under any circumstances." She directed to make every road and street safe besides undertaking strict legal action against the criminals. She said,



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Thursday called on his counterpart in Karbala Engr. Naseef Al-Khattabi during his visit to Iraq.

High-level meeting reviews security measures for Chehlum

KARACHI (APP): A high-level meeting was convened at the Pakistan Rangers Sindh Headquarters under the chairmanship of Director General Pakistan Rangers Sindh Major General Azhar Waqas. According to a news release on Thursday, the meeting focused on the law and order situation in Karachi, with a particular emphasis on security arrangements for the upcoming Chehlum Imam Hussain (A.S) processions. The meeting was attended by senior officials, including the Additional IGP-Karachi, Joint DG Intelligence Bureau, DIGPs from CTD, Special Branch, East, West, South, CIA, and Traffic Police, along with Rangers and intelligence agencies. DIGPs from Sukkur and Hyderabad also participated via video link. During the session, detailed discussions were held to assess the security measures for ensuring the safe passage of Chehlum processions across the province. It was decided that joint flag marches and snap-checking by Rangers and police would be further intensified. Additionally, the security of entry and exit points for gatherings, processions, and religious events of various sects will be strictly ensured. The meeting underscored the need for strict adherence to existing laws and the code of conduct issued by the provincial government. Any violations will be dealt with firmly. The DG Rangers praised the cooperation extended by religious scholars in maintaining peace and order across the province during Chehlum.



KARACHI: Activists of Human Rights Council of Pakistan hold a banner during protest in favor of their demands outside press club.

No religion permits violence: Ramesh Singh

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora said on Thursday that no religion permitted violence. In his special message on the International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, he said there was no religion that encouraged violence against people of different beliefs. The minister condemned violence on the basis of religion and belief. He emphasized that people around the world, including Muslims, are being targeted due to their religion, with the rise in Islamophobia being a prime example. For decades, Muslims in Kashmir and Palestine have been subjected to violence based on their beliefs. Ramesh Arora highlighted that Pakistan gives equal respect to followers of all religions and beliefs. The white color in Pakistan's flag represents different religious communities, signifying that all Pakistanis are equal and no discrimination is made. Any hand raised against minorities is dealt with firmly. The Government of Punjab is committed to promoting religious harmony and tolerance. He further stated that discrimination or violence based on one's religion or belief must be stopped. It is our collective responsibility to promote love, tolerance, and brotherhood in society. It is essential to defeat those who attempt to fuel religious discrimination and hatred. The minister appealed to the public to stand against violence and prejudice and to play their role in creating a peaceful and secure society.



PESHAWAR: Accountant General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Naseeruddin Sarwar meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House.

LDA, TEPA & MCL seal 70 properties in operation

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA), Traffic Engineering & Transport Planning Agency (TEPA) and Metropolitan Corporation Lahore joined hands to clean the city from encroachment, parking violations and illegal constructions and sealed over 70 properties and demolished structures in the city on Thursday. Under the directives of DG LDA Tahir Farooq, the TEPA launched a mega operation against parking violations in the city. Early in the morning, TEPA's Director of Parking and Enforcement II sealed over 70 properties. The TEPA Enforcement Wing conducted operations on Faisal Town Main Boulevard, Abu Al Sufhani Road, PIA Road, Shadiwal to Khokhar Chowk, and in Johar Town. The sealed properties included well-known brands, tire shops, showrooms, private offices, private schools, shops, and food outlets. Additionally, private banks, restaurants, clinics, bakeries, coffee shops, and other properties were also sealed during the operation. These properties had violated parking regulations by encroaching on designated parking spaces. The operation was carried out under the supervision of Chief Engineer TEPA Iqbal Hussain and Director Enforcement TEPA II Jawad Kamran. In another operation in Pine Avenue, the LDA teams successfully removed encroachments from the road stretching from Chhatri Chowk to Valencia Town.



KARACHI: Paramedical staff prepare an isolation ward set up as a preventative measure at a hospital, following Pakistan's health ministry has confirmed a case of m.pox in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, in the Provincial Capital.

Regional Director (Ombudsman) holds khuli kachehri at district Accounts office Nawabshah

HYDERABAD (APP): On the special instructions of Provincial Director General of Sindh, Muhammad Suhail Rajput (Sitara-e-Imtiaz), Regional Director of Director General of Anti-Corruption, Shaheed Benazirabad, Khan Muhammad Zardari, held an open court (khuli kachehri) at the District Accounts Office, Shaheed Benazirabad, where retired and serving employees presented their issues related to pension, family pension, LPR, gratuity, GP Fund, and other problems. Regional Director Khan Muhammad Zardari and District Accounts Officer Habib-ur-Rehman Arain resolved some of the issues on the spot and issued instructions to the officers of the District Accounts Office to resolve the remaining issues immediately. Regional Director Khan Muhammad Zardari said that the purpose of holding the open court was to identify and resolve the treasury-related issues of the retired employees, and to ensure that their pensions and other funds are paid on time. District Accounts Officer Habib-ur-Rehman Arain informed that due to the old identity card, the pensions of 224 pensioners and the salaries of 89 serving employees were temporarily stopped, and Regional Director Khan Muhammad Zardari took notice of this and instructed the District Accounts Officer to contact the employees and pensioners immediately and update their new identity cards in the system so that their pensions and salaries can be restored. On this occasion, the pensions of 50 pensioners and the salaries of 61 serving employees were restored. District Accounts Officer Habib-ur-Rehman Arain appealed to the employees and pensioners to update their identity cards immediately so that their pensions and salaries.

Digitization of E-commerce sector, government's top priority: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Arab Monetary Fund Dr. Fahad M Alturki Thursday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed matters relating to mutual concerns.

The prime minister highlighted that Pakistan and Arab countries enjoy long standing brotherly relations that were further strengthening with the passage of time.

He said the Government of Pakistan was taking steps to legally bring the foreign remittances to the country.

"The digitization of E-Commerce sector and the

economy is top priority of the government," he said adding that a large number of Pakistanis were residing in the Gulf countries who send a large amount of foreign remittances to Pakistan.

The prime minister said that setting up a digital connection between Pakistan and the Middle East with the cooperation of Raast and Buna was a welcoming sign.

Buna-Raast connectivity project will make the digital transactions in the country more effective, PM Shehbaz said adding that "this important step would help regularizing the flow

of foreign exchange reserves in the country and improve the digital governance system".

Transfer of the foreign remittances from abroad to Pakistan would become easier with the help of Buna-Raast project, he said adding that "Buna-Raast project reflects our joint vision".

Chairperson Arab Monetary Fund Dr. Fahad M Alturki said that Pakistan was the first country outside Arab World that had connected with the Arab Monetary Fund project Buna. He said with the help of Buna-Raast, the economy of both sides would further develop.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a virtual meeting with Dr. Adnan Chihwan, Group CEO of Dubai Islamic Bank to discuss Pakistan economic trajectory and explore potential avenues for increased investment in the country.

Enhanced efforts propel Pakistani agricultural exports to China

ISLAMABAD (APP): Many Pakistani seed companies have cooperated with Chinese counterparts to carry out hybrid rice breeding on a large scale, and have cultivated a variety of hybrid rice that adapts to the planting conditions in different regions, and their export competitiveness continues to increase.

In addition to rice, vegetables such as onions, peppers, tomatoes, and fruits such as mangoes and cherries that come from the south Asian country, are also quite competitive in the international market.

"The government is closely following the trends in the international agricultural product market as well as actively coordinating relevant measures with exporters. With the active promotion of various departments, Pakistan's agricultural product exports will further grow," noted Waheed Ahmed, chairman of All Pakistan Fruit & Vegetable Exporters and Merchants Association.

At present, China and Pakistan have signed a protocol on the export of high-class agricultural products such as onions, cherries, and dried peppers to China.

In December 2023, the first consignment of Pakistani dried chili peppers were exported to China; at the beginning of this year, the first consignment of 500 kilograms of Pakistani frozen boiled beef entered the Chinese market after passing the inspection of Tianjin Customs; in June this year, the first consignment of Pakistani cherries transported by cold chain entered the Chinese market.

In recent years, Pakistan's agricultural product exports to China have showed a sustainable growth, especially high-quality agricultural products such as rice, sesame, mango and nuts, which are extremely favored by consumers in the largest market of the globe.

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Provincial Minister emphasizes modernization of agriculture, empower women farmers

HYDERABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Sports, and Anti-Corruption, Muhammad Bakhsh Mehar has emphasized the significance of adapting agriculture to modern technology demands, highlighting the need for training students, particularly female students, in the latest technology.

Addressing the concluding ceremony of a training workshop on tractor operation and maintenance for women at Tando Jam Agricultural University, he underscored the government's efforts to provide employment opportunities to women in agriculture.

He announced that trained female students would be provided with tractors, acknowledging the private sector's role in this initiative.

Minister praised the increasing participation of women in agricultural departments, attributing

this progress to the vision of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto. He stressed the need for modern research and education in agriculture, highlighting the department's work on providing subsidized agricultural machinery and introducing the Kisan Card.

In response to media queries, Mehar defended the Sindh government's performance, urging critics to reflect on their responsibilities.

He assured strict action against negligent officers and praised Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah's capabilities.

Regarding sports, Mehar announced the upcoming Sindh Olympics initiative, aiming to train youth in Olympic sports and tap into the country's talent pool. He cited Arshad Nadeem, a talented athlete, as an example of Pakistan's potential in sports. Later, addressing the event the Sindh Agriculture Secretary Rafiq Ahmad Burro.



LAHORE: Punjab Women Protection Authority (PWPA) Chairperson, Hina Parvez Butt inaugurating the Fancy Dress and Jewelry Exhibition organized by Govt. APWA College for Women in Lahore.

PSX stays bullish, gains 532 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 532.56 more points, showing a positive change of 0.68 percent, closing at 78,793.41 points against 78,260.86 points on the last working day.

A total of 804,261,249 shares were traded during the day as compared to 552,564,507 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 16,975 billion against Rs 14,590 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 473 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 261 of them recorded gains and 138 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 74 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 140,914,417 shares at Rs 1.31 per share, Kohinoor Spinning Power Cement with 91,356,461 shares at Rs.11.99 per share, and Power Cement with 51,625,456 shares at Rs 6.03 per share.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships, CMA CGM Pelleas, Maersk Cairo, Bitumen Kosei, Antares, New Apex and Navig-8 Constellation scheduled to load/offload Container, Bitumen, Palm oil, LNG and HSD, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Elengy Terminal and FOTCO Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile another bulk cargo carrier 'Kavita' is also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today morning.

A total of twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, MSC Positano, CMA CGM Pelleas, Maersk Cairo and Horizon-1 left the port on today morning while two more ships, Navig-8 Constellation and Madison Eagle are expected to sail on today afternoon.

Foreign reserves stand at \$14.66bln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at US\$ 14,667.4 million as of August 16, 2024, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported Thursday.

According to the breakup figures, the foreign reserves held by SBP stood at US\$ 9,291.8 million whereas net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were recorded at US\$ 5,375.6 million.

During the week ended on August 16, SBP reserves increased by US\$ 19 million to US\$ 9,291.8 million.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Arab Monetary Fund Dr. Fahad M Alturki calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Pakistan achieved 'Macroeconomic stability,' economic indicators showing positive trends: Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday said that the countries achieved micro-economic stability and all the economic indicators showing positive trends.

He said that currently, the country is going through a phase of economic stability and the government will be led on the path of sustainable economic growth with a good economic foundation.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said this while addressing the Inaugural

Ceremony of Buna-Raast Connectivity Project Implementation Phase here.

He said that all economic indicators, including foreign reserves, workers remittances, policy rates, exchange rate, revenue collection and twins deficits including Current Account are going positive, leading towards growth and adding that foreign investors are showing confidence on the Pakistan economy.

Aurangzeb said that "We have two months import cover and the exchange rate is also stable".

He said that during

the last two months, foreign companies and potential investors are showing their interest to make investment in the different sectors of the economy.

The minister said that the government is working on the digital economy and through the digitization of the economy, "We prioritize documenting the local economy."

He said that because of prudent economic policies of the government and through reforms and administrative measures the country received the \$3 billion workers' remittances in the last month of July 2024.

Jam Kamal chairs feedback meeting on FoodAg-2024

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan chaired a feedback meeting on the 2nd edition of the FoodAg exhibition, which was held from 9th to 11th August 2024.

Briefing the Commerce Minister, Chief Executive TDAP Zubair Motiwala informed that 320 companies participated in the event and 873 buyers from 73 countries attended the 3 day event.

TDAP also arranged 6500 sector-specific B2B meetings of foreign buyers with local exhibitors leading to an expected business generation of USD 1.2 Billion. Furthermore, Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) of US\$ 100 Million were also signed during the events. 13 Regulatory Authorities from different

countries also attended the event to resolve quarantine and certification issues. TDAP also organized G2G meetings with their counterparts.

The Commerce Minister appreciated the efforts of TDAP and resolved to provide all possible assistance to TDAP in enhancing agro-export to the world. The meeting decided that the 3rd edition will be held in September 2025 and it will be a day's event.

Provincial Agriculture Departments will be provided space for showcasing the potential to foreign buyers.

The 2nd edition of FoodAg 2024, the flagship event of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and Ministry of Commerce was inaugurated by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Rains good for paddy and sugarcane crops

LAHORE (APP): Recent rains have left positive impact on paddy and sugarcane crops while cotton and vegetables growers must follow the Agriculture Department's guidelines to protect their crops from negative effects of rains.

A spokesman for the Agriculture Department said here on Thursday that paddy crop had been cultivated on more than 6 million acres of land in Punjab. He said recent rains had left positive impact on rice crop. In Punjab sugarcane had been cultivated on more than 2 million acres of land, he said and added that ongoing weather pattern was very favourable for sugarcane crop as well.

Regarding cotton the spokesman said that it had been cultivated on 3.4 million acres in Punjab and in prevailing weather conditions the crop needed special attention.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Coco Ushiyama, Representative and Country Director for WFP Pakistan called on Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain.

Export of sports goods increases 12.51% in July 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The export of sports goods from the country witnessed an increase of 12.51 percent during the first month of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding last year.

The country exported sports goods worth US\$ 29,358 million during July 2024 as opposed to the export of US\$ 26,093 million during July 2023, showing growth of 12.51

percent, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Among the sports products, the exports of footballs rose by 14.20 percent, surging from US\$ 15.565 million to US\$ 17.775 million during the month under review.

The gloves exports also increased 24.24 percent by going up from US\$ 3,707 million last year to US\$ 4,606 million, the PBS data revealed.

SCCI delegation meets minister for industries

SIALKOT (APP): A detailed meeting between a delegation of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SCCI) and Minister for Industries, Commerce, Investment and Skills Development Punjab Chaudhry Shafay Hussain was held on Thursday, which discussed issues of restoration of cancelled plots of SEPZ, waiver of late construction and maintenance charges, execution of Sialkot Industrial Zone and allocation of funds for sustainable operations of Business Facilitation.

Pre-CEO summit held at Indonesian embassy in 'Balinese Vibes'

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a move to foster deeper business connections and enhance bilateral trade relations, the Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires Mr. Rahmat Hindiarta hosted an exclusive Pre-CEO Summit Dinner for Pakistani CEOs, Business Leaders, and their spouses at the Embassy of Indonesia in Islamabad.

The event was in collaboration with the CEO Club Pakistan and World CEO Forum.

This distinguished event precedes the much-anticipated CEO Summit Islamabad scheduled to

take place on 5 September 2024, and Trade Expo Indonesia, to be held on October 9 - 12th, 2024.

The dinner has brought together prominent business leaders from Pakistan, providing a unique opportunity to discuss key topics related to the upcoming summit and trade expo.

The evening served as a platform for networking, collaboration, and the exploration of new avenues for economic cooperation between Indonesia and Pakistan. At his remarks, the Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires said that

Indonesia is offering opportunities to the Pakistani business communities to participating in the Indonesia - South and Central Asia (INASCA) Business Forum 2024 and Trade Expo Indonesia 2024 and to bring fruitful results for the benefits of two brotherly countries, as the more concrete actions of Indonesia and Pakistan existing close bilateral relations. "Indonesia will proudly host the CEO Summit in Bali and warmly welcome Pakistani business communities in Jakarta and Bali.

EU's GSP-Plus status to Pak significant for increasing trade in both sides: Kionka

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka on Thursday said the European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus status (GSP+) to Pakistan is an exemplary step for increasing economic and trade cooperation between the two sides.

"Pakistan and the European Union are major trading partners and Pakistan's annual exports with the EU are 30 percent of its total exports, which is far below its potential and needs to be increased", the Ambassador said.

Talking to APP, the Ambassador to Pakistan said that after getting GSP-Plus status trade between Pakistan and the European Union has increased manifold and the role of the private sector is significant for increasing the trade volume on both sides.

She said that the private sector, including the Chambers of

Commerce, should play its due role in this regard, and there is a need to increase both economic and commercial activities on both sides.

She said that as a major trading partner, the European Union is playing its due role in growth in Pakistan's economic, trade, and tourism sectors added that work is ongoing on the promotion of tourism, micro Hydel energy projects, and many other projects in Gilgit-Baltistan region.

The envoy said that some new development projects are also coming for sustainable development in the region.

She said that in Gilgit-Baltistan, "We are running several projects, especially in the tourism and hospitality sectors."

She informed that for technical and skilled education, the EU has established a Center for Excellence to develop human capital resources in GB.

FPCCI & GIZ signed MoU setup to RBH at FPCCI

Jam & German Minister for Economic Cooperation witness ceremony

Independent Report KARACHI: Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI and Ms. Maria Jose Poddey, Country Director, GIZ Pakistan, have signed the MoU between FPCCI & GIZ to establish Responsible Business Helpdesk (RBH) at FPCCI in the esteemed presence of

responsibility. Mr. Jam Kamal Khan, Honorable Federal Minister for Commerce, Pakistan, elaborated that the government of Pakistan is committed to promote international best practices and human rights standards in Pakistan to enable swift growth in Pakistani exports. Underscoring the



Mr. Jam Kamal Khan, Honorable Federal Minister for Commerce, Pakistan and Ms. Svenja Schulze, Honorable Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ), Germany. Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, apprised that the business community of Pakistan deeply appreciates the unwavering support of German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for its substantial contribution to Pakistan's economic development. The RBH platform, supported by BMZ, is instrumental in helping textile sector of Pakistan to adapt to the new EU regulations; ensuring that Pakistani exporters meet international standards of human and environmental

importance of FPCCI and GIZ initiative, Mr. Jam Kamal Khan added that there has been a growing recognition of the importance of human rights in business globally. Voluntary standards on human rights and business; such as, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; the International Labor Organization Conventions or the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, establishing the international framework to ensure that companies respect human rights is of utmost importance. Ms. Svenja Schulze, Honorable Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ), Germany, highlighted that the general objective of this memorandum of understanding (MoU).

Ufone 4G offers Samsung Smartphones at attractive prices

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Ufone 4G, a leading telecommunications provider in Pakistan, has forged a strategic partnership with Samsung, a South Korean technology

subscriber can now conveniently avail doorstep delivery of their preferred mobile devices, further enhancing customer convenience. Samsung, a prominent technology brand renowned for its



giant, to offer smartphones to customers at competitive prices via Ufone 4G's new sales platform.

This collaboration aims to create a comprehensive solution by developing a dedicated webpage by Ufone 4G, where customers can conveniently access smartphones, voice and data bundles, and other Ufone services. By leveraging this partnership, Ufone 4G subscribers will gain enhanced accessibility to top-quality devices, fostering an improved digital lifestyle experience. Notably, Ufone 4G

cutting-edge and reliable smartphones, synergizes with Ufone 4G's expeditious data speeds and sophisticated digital services. This strategic partnership aims to elevate the digital experience of Ufone 4G customers by enhancing accessibility and providing exclusive benefits.

The strategic alliance between Ufone 4G and Samsung not only facilitates the digital transformation of users but also reinforces Ufone 4G's unwavering commitment to fostering innovation and enhancing connectivity nationwide.

Putin accuses Ukraine of trying to strike Russia's Kursk nuclear power plant

Kursk nuclear plant is one of Russia's top atomic power stations

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin on Thursday accused Ukraine of trying to strike Russia's Kursk nuclear power plant in an overnight attack and said Moscow had informed the U.N. nuclear safety watchdog about the situation.

Putin, who did not provide further details about the incident or provide documentary evidence to back up his assertion, made the comments at a meeting of senior officials.

There was no immediate comment from Ukraine whose lightning incursion into Kursk, the biggest into Russia by a foreign power since World War Two, saw thousands of Ukrainian troops punch through Russia's western

border on Aug. 6, apparently catching Moscow by surprise.

The Kursk plant is one of Russia's top nuclear power stations. It supplies about half of the electricity used in the Black Earth region of southern Russia.

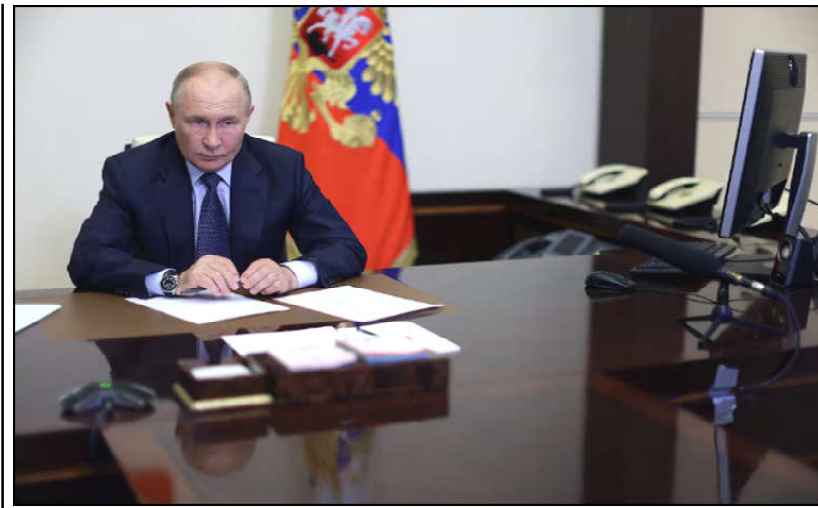
It is located on the Seym River near the town of Kurchatov, named after Soviet nuclear physicist Igor Kurchatov, in Russia's western region of Kursk. Ukrainian forces launched a cross-border incursion in the Kursk region on Aug. 6.

The plant has four Soviet graphite-moderated RBMK-1000 reactors - the same design as those at the Chernobyl nuclear plant which in 1986, when part of the Soviet Union,

became the scene of the world's worst nuclear disaster.

Reactor Number 1, which dates from 1976, was shut down at the Kursk plant in 2021 to operate in non-generation mode. Reactor Number 2, which dates from 1979, was shut down in 2024. Reactor Number 3, from 1983, and Reactor Number 4, from 1985, are both operational. Construction of Kursk-2, essentially new reactors of the VVER-TOI type, was begun in 2018. The two reactors are not operational yet.

Alexei Smirnov, acting governor of the Kursk region, told Putin at the same meeting that the situation at the Kursk nuclear power station was stable.



Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting on situation in Belgorod, Kursk and Bryansk regions following an incursion of Ukrainian troops in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict, via video link at the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence outside Moscow, Russia.

Biden speaks with Netanyahu as US prods Israel and Hamas to come to agreement on cease-fire deal

Monitoring Desk

BUELLTON: President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday as the United States presses Israel and Hamas to agree to a "bridging proposal" that could lead to a cease-fire in the war in Gaza.

Hamas and Israel have signaled that challenges remain amid significant differences over the presence of Israeli troops in two strategic

corridors in Gaza and other issues, dimming Biden's hopes that a deal can soon be reached. Vice President Kamala Harris, who is in Chicago this week to accept her party's nomination at the Democratic National Convention, also joined the call.

Biden "stressed the urgency of bringing the ceasefire and hostage release deal to closure," the White House said in a statement.

15 killed in blast at pharmaceuticals factory in India

Monitoring Desk

HYDERABAD: At least 15 people were killed in an explosion on Wednesday at a pharmaceuticals manufacturing plant in southern India's Andhra Pradesh state, a district government official said.

"Death toll as of now is 15 and is likely to go up. Nearly 40 people have been injured. Rescue operations under way," District Superintendent of Police M Deepika said. The fire broke out in the afternoon at privately held Escientia Advanced Sciences' 40-acre manufacturing unit that

was operational since 2019 in the state's Anakapalli district, according to district collector Vijaya Krishnan.

"The injured have been shifted to nearby hospitals...it appears that there could have been a blast at the chemical reactor," Krishnan's office said, adding that the blast occurred during lunch time at the unit.

Escientia did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The state government has ordered an inquiry into the incident.

At least 24 killed as Congolese boat overturns

Monitoring Desk

BENI: At least 24 people died after an overloaded boat capsized on a river in Congo's Mai-Ndombe province, and the death toll is expected to rise as many passengers are missing, a local official said on Wednesday.

The boat carrying about 250 to 300 passengers overturned on Sunday night after it hit tree trunks underwater, Kutu territory administrator Jacques Nzenza told Reuters.

Overloading was the main cause of the accident, he said.

Australia greenlights world's 'largest' solar hub

Monitoring Desk

SYDNEY: Australia approved on Wednesday plans for a massive solar and battery farm that would export energy to Singapore, a project billed as the "largest solar precinct in the world".

Authorities announced environmental approvals for SunCable's US \$24 billion project in Australia's remote north that is slated to power three million homes.

Ukraine attacks Moscow in one of largest ever drone strikes on Russian capital

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Ukraine attacked Moscow on Wednesday with at least 11 drones that were shot down by air defenses in what Russian officials called one of the biggest drone strikes on the capital since the war in Ukraine began in February 2022.

The war, largely a grinding artillery and drone battle across the fields, forests and villages of eastern Ukraine, escalated on Aug. 6 when Ukraine sent thousands of soldiers over the border into Russia's western Kursk region.

For months, Ukraine has also fought an increasingly damaging drone war against the refineries and airfields of Russia, the world's second largest oil exporter, though major drone attacks on the Mos-

cow region - with a population of over 21 million - have been rarer.

Russia's defence ministry said its air defenses destroyed a total of 45 drones over Russian territory, including 11 over the Moscow region, 23 over the border region of Bryansk, six over the Belgorod region, three over the Kaluga region and two over the Kursk region. Some of the drones were shot down over the city of Podolsk, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said. The city in the Moscow region is some 38 km (24 miles) south of the Kremlin.

"This is one of the largest attempts to attack Moscow using drones ever," Sobyanin said on the Telegram messaging app in the early hours of Wednesday.

Iran lawmakers approve new president's cabinet

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iran's conservative-dominated parliament on Wednesday approved reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian's proposed cabinet, which includes one woman and a foreign minister open to dialogue with the West.

Lawmakers voted in favour of all 19 ministers chosen by Pezeshkian - who was inaugurated in July after his predecessor Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash - during a session broadcast on state television. In a speech in parliament ahead of the vote, Pezeshkian said he initially "had ideal (candidates) on my mind". "But when I saw that there was no mutual agreement on them, I backed down," said Pezeshkian, who later held his first sessions with the newly approved cabinet.

"Because agreement was more important to me than ideal (candidates)," he added, vowing "to move forward with unity".

Wednesday's vote was the first time in 23 years that Iran's parliament granted confidence to all ministers proposed by a president since the term of reformist Mohammad Khatami, according to the reformist daily Etemad. Following the vote, Pezeshkian posted a photo of himself on social media platform X alongside Iran's conservative parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and chief justice Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, with a caption reading "consensus for Iran". "The parliament will be with the government on the way to solving the problems of the country," Ghalibaf wrote on social media platform X after the vote.

Democratic convention ends Thursday with the party's new standard bearer, Kamala Harris

Monitoring Desk

CHICAGO: Vice President Kamala Harris closes out the Democratic National Convention Thursday night when she accepts her party's historic presidential nomination and seizes one of her few remaining opportunities to appeal to an audience of millions.

Harris will lay out her vision for the country and prosecute her case against Republican Donald Trump, capping a whirlwind month that began when President Joe Biden ended his reelection bid and endorsed her to replace him atop the Democratic ticket.

Harris has three objectives for her speech, according to a campaign official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive speech preparations. She'll share her background rising from a middle-class family to protect others as a prosecutor, contrast her "optimistic" vision with Trump's "dark" agenda and evoke a sense of patriotism, the official said. Harris spoke briefly to the convention on

Monday, when she thanked Biden and celebrated his record as president, and again on Tuesday, when the beginning of her rally in Milwaukee was streamed into the convention hall after Democrats reaffirmed their nomination of her with a state-by-state roll call.

Harris will be the first Black woman and the first person of South Asian descent to accept a major party's presidential nomination. She'll speak a day after Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, her choice for running mate, thanked the packed Chicago arena for "bringing the joy" to the election.

"We're all here tonight for one beautiful, simple, reason: We love this country," Walz said as thousands of delegates hoisted vertical placards reading "Coach Walz" in red, white and blue.

Many Americans had never heard of Walz until Harris made him her running mate, and the speech was an opportunity to introduce himself.

Body of British tech entrepreneur Lynch retrieved from yacht, source says

Monitoring Desk

PORTICELLO: The body of British tech magnate Mike Lynch was retrieved on Thursday from the wreck of his family yacht that sank earlier this week off the coast of Sicily during a violent storm, a source close to the rescue operation said. Lynch's 18-year-old daughter Hannah is still unaccounted for, the source said. The bodies of the other four people who vanished when the boat went down were recovered from the yacht on Wednesday.

The British-flagged Bayesian, a 56-metre-long (184-ft) superyacht carrying 22 passengers and crew, was anchored off the port of Porticello, near Palermo, when it disappeared beneath the waves in a matter of minutes after the bad weather struck.

Lynch, 59, was one of the UK's best-known tech entrepreneurs and had invited friends to join him on the yacht to celebrate his recent acquittal in a major US fraud trial.

His body was brought ashore in a blue body bag and driven in an ambulance to a nearby hospital morgue.

Besides Lynch and his

daughter, the other people who failed to escape from the boat were Judy and Jonathan Bloomer, a non-executive chair of Morgan Stanley International; and Clifford Chance lawyer Chris Morvillo and his wife, Neda Morvillo.

Fifteen people, including Lynch's wife, managed to get to safety, while the body of the onboard chef, Canadian-Antigua national Recaldo Thomas, was found near the wreck hours after the disaster.

Specialist rescuers have been searching inside the hull of the sunken yacht for the past three days, but operations have been challenging due to the depth and the narrowness of the places that the divers are scouring, the fire brigade said. It compared the efforts to those carried out, on a larger scale, for the Costa Concordia, the luxury cruise liner that capsized off the Italian island of Giglio in January 2012, killing 32 people. The disaster has baffled naval marine experts who said such a vessel, built by Italian high-end yacht manufacturer Perini and presumed to have top-class fittings and safety features, should have been able to withstand such weather.



Palestinians stand at the site of an Israeli strike on a house, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip.

Democratic VP pick Tim Walz accepts nomination at party convention

Monitoring Desk

CHICAGO: Tim Walz formally accepted his nomination to be the Democratic Party's vice presidential candidate in a keynote address on Wednesday, professing his love for his country.

"It's the honor of my life to accept your nomination to vice president of the United States. What all we're all here tonight for one beautiful, simple reason. We love this country," Walz told the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The relatively unknown Minnesota governor brings an earthy, Midwestern vibe to Harris's surging campaign against Donald Trump that was expected to be central to his speech at Chicago's United Center.

Taking the stage ahead of Harris's big night on

Thursday, the former teacher and National Guard soldier Walz began outlining his life story in a speech that was expected to focus on safeguarding Americans' freedoms and building for the future.

A highlight of the undercard was former president Bill Clinton, who delighted the crowd with his 12th appearance at the Democratic convention and said Harris had "knocked it out of the park" by picking Walz as her running mate.

"Two leaders with all-American but still improbable life stories - it could only happen here," Clinton said. "If you vote for this team, if you can get them elected, and let them bring in this breath of fresh air, you will be proud of it for the rest of your life."

Kenya police offer reward for escaped serial killer suspect

Monitoring Desk

NAIROBI: Kenyan police offered a cash reward on Thursday for information leading to the arrest of a suspected serial killer who escaped from a Nairobi police cell.

Police launched a manhunt on Tuesday after Collins Jumaisi, who is accused of murdering and dismembering dozens of women, broke out of a police station in an upmarket area of the Kenyan capital along with 12 Eritreans.

Five officers appeared in court on Wednesday suspected of aiding Jumaisi's escape and have been freed on a 200,000 Kenyan shilling (\$1,500) bond, despite prosecutors seeking an order to keep them in custody for 14 days.

India's Assam state plans law for Muslim marriages and divorces

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Indian authorities in Assam state have introduced a bill that would require Muslims to register their marriages and divorces, with the chief minister claiming the measure will help stop child marriage.

The bill is seen as a state-level step towards the government's proposed common civil code of law, which Muslim activists bitterly oppose as an attack on their faith.

India's 1.4 billion people are subject to a common criminal law, but, personal matters such as marriage, divorce and inheritance are governed by varying rules based on the traditions of different communities and faiths.

Taiwan sentences eight soldiers for spying for China

Monitoring Desk

TAIPEI: Eight Taiwanese military servicemen were sentenced on Thursday to up to 13 years in prison for spying for Beijing, with the court saying they did it for the money.

China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its territory and has ramped up military and political pressures on the democratic island in recent years.

The two sides split in 1949 after a civil war and have been spying on each

other since.

The defendants in Thursday's sentencing were active-duty soldiers "willing to collect intelligence for China that caused the leak of important secrets," a Taiwan High Court statement said. "They were seduced by money."

Among them was a man surnamed Hsiao, who was the key to recruiting soldiers to join "a network for China" to gather and hand over information, the court said.

Bangladesh floods strand nearly three million people, kill two

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: Relentless monsoon rains and flooding have stranded nearly three million people in Bangladesh and killed two, submerging vast areas and damaging homes and infrastructure, officials from the country's disaster management ministry said on Thursday.

Bangladesh residents were seen evacuating with their belongings by boat and other makeshift transportation as knee-deep water entered their homes.

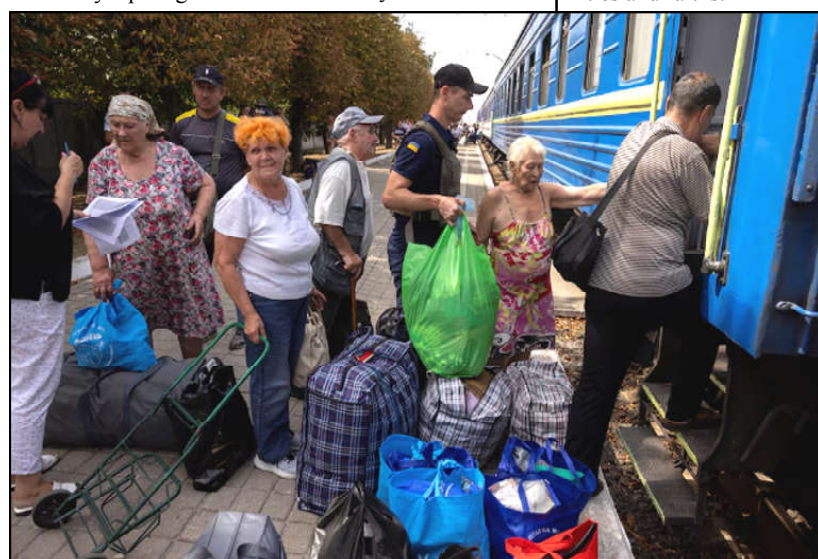
The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) has warned that with the rains continuing, water levels could rise further over the next 24 hours, raising concern about addi-

tional flooding and displacement.

Road connectivity in several regions were severed, isolating communities and hampering relief efforts, disaster management and relief officials said.

The most affected districts in Bangladesh included Feni, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Comilla and Chittagong, where five major rivers were flowing above danger levels, the FFWC said.

"I haven't seen so much water in the last 20 years. Everything in my house is wrecked because the water has risen to waist level," said Mohammad Masum, a resident of Feni district.



Local residents board an evacuation train as they flee Russian troop advances in Pokrovsk, Ukraine, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine.

ECC accords conditional approval to 0.1m sugar exports

Approves Rs. 1951.995m for payment of security charges—Reko Diq Project to Frontier Corps Balochistan (South) and Rs. 20 billion as a special allocation for Operation Azm-e-Istehkam

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet on Thursday gave conditional approval to the export of an additional 0.100 million metric tons of sugar, the summary for which was submitted by the Ministry of Industries and Production.

According to press release issued by finance ministry, the ECC put condition that in view of procedural delays encountered during export of sugar, the period allowed for export of sugar from the date of allocation of quota by respective Cane Commissioner should be extended from forty-five (45) days to sixty (60) days.

In addition, it said, export proceeds should be received in advance in case of Afghanistan only through banking channel however, export proceeds in case of LC may be allowed within a period of 60 days of opening of LC for export of sugar to other destinations.

It said, the benchmark for retail price of sugar may be delinked from the permission to export sugar as retail price is not directly under the control of sugar mills.

The condition of revoking of export quota in case of non-payment of dues of the growers from proceeds of export of sugar should be applicable only to the non-compliant mills rather than PMSA as a whole, it added.

Moreover, the ECC decided to monitor the market situation on a monthly basis and review its decision as per emerging needs, and instructed the Sugar Advisory Board to develop a comprehensive sugar policy within two months to address the sector's challenges and ensure sustainable growth.

Meanwhile, the ECC also considered and approved the following Technical Supplementary Grants including Rs. 276.250 million in favor of the Ministry of Interior to

HQ Frontier Corps KP (N) TSG for Project Implementation Letters (PILs).

It also approved Rs. 1951.995 million on account of payment of security charges—Reko Diq Project to Frontier Corps Balochistan (South) and Rs. 20 billion as a special allocation for Operation Azm-e-Istehkam during CFY 2024-25.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Minister for Industries & Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain; Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan; Minister for Privatization, Abdul Aleem Khan; Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhry; Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahmad Khan Cheema; Minister for Petroleum, Mussadiq Masood Malik; Minister for Power, Sardar Awaiz Khan Leghari; Dy Chairman Planning Commission, Federal Secretaries, and other senior officials of the relevant ministries.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Ms. Svenja Schulze, at the Prime Minister's House, in the Federal Capital.

Pakistan desires to revive partnership with Germany back to its glorious past: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met with German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Svenja Schulze here wherein he expressed Pakistan's strong desire to revive its partnership with Germany back to its glorious past.

In the meeting, the prime minister appreciated Germany's longstanding support for Pakistan's socioeconomic development, according to a PM Office press release.

He said that Pakistan and Germany had a history of mutually beneficial commercial and economic ties

and lauded Germany's role in Pakistan's industrial development.

Prime Minister Shehbaz highlighted Pakistan's commitment to sustainable development, climate change mitigation, and economic growth while sharing his government's priorities including structural reforms for the country's economic revival.

Minister Schulze conveyed the greetings of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to the prime minister and reaffirmed Germany's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Pakistan, particularly in trade, investment, and development cooperation.

She also shared that

Pakistan urges 'new thinking' to effectively prevent conflicts, build peace

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called for "new thinking" to shape effective approaches to prevent conflicts, resolving disputes—such as Kashmir & Palestine—and building peace in conflict-hit countries. "What is required is a comprehensive and integrated strategy which offers regional and international support to national efforts for conflict prevention and dispute resolution", Ambassador Munir Akram told the UN Security Council which held a high-level debate centred on preventing conflict and building and sustaining peace.

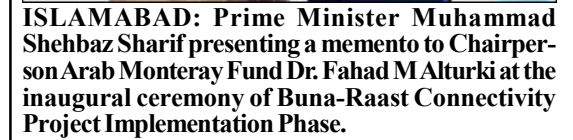
local populations. He also called for an end to external exploitation, which fuels violence and terrorism; good faith efforts at resolution of conflicts—at the local and regional levels; regional and international support for security and counter-terrorism operations; and a review of ill-considered sanctions that mostly punish the poor.

The meeting - convened by Sierra Leone, the Security Council president for August - was held against the backdrop of a rise in conflict globally.

"The root causes of these conflicts range from the legacies of colonialism, internal struggles for scarce food, water and pastures, external competition for precious national resources and interventions designed to suppress the struggle of peoples to reclaim their own political and economic destinies.

Such a strategy, the Pakistani envoy said, must include: economic and financial support to the States in distress - to create employment and generate trust and hope; capacity-building, to enable governments to provide the basic services needed by

the meeting - convened by Sierra Leone, the Security Council president for August - was held against the backdrop of a rise in conflict globally.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presenting a memento to Chairperson Arab Monterey Fund Dr. Fahad M AlTurki at the inaugural ceremony of Buna-Raast Connectivity Project Implementation Phase.

AJK PM says Ideology of accession to Pak most important spiritual ideology for Kashmiris

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that the ideology of accession to Pakistan is the most important spiritual ideology for him and the entire population of Jammu and Kashmir state.

"Whoever will try to sabotage it then the law will take its course," the PM stated.

PM Anwar ul Haq

said he had inherited this ideology from his father and would pass it on to the next generation.

"Our parents, us, and our future generations have always advocated for this ideology and we will continue to do so in the future until it is translated into reality."

Anwar expressed these words while talking to various public representative delegations here late on Wednesday.

PNS HUNAIN visits Jeddah, participates in bilateral exercise

ISLAMABAD (APP): The newly commissioned Pakistan Navy Ship HUNAIN, during maiden voyage from Romania to Pakistan, visited Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and participated in bilateral exercise with Ship of Royal Saudi Naval Forces.

Upon arrival at Jeddah port, the ship was received by senior officials of Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) and officials of Pakistan Embassy, a Pakistan Navy

news release on Thursday said.

During stay at port, Commanding Officer PNS HUNAIN called on RSNF Navy Western Fleet Commander Rear Admiral Mansoor Bin Saood Al Jayyad and Commander King Faisal Naval Base Rear Admiral Saleh Bin Abdullah Al-Amri. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation between both the navies were discussed.



QUETTA: Students exhibiting their skills obtained in 18 months technical training program, under Balochistan Education Support Program II in collaboration with UNICEF and European Union.

Women parliamentary caucus to meet in Quetta on 26th August

Independent Report QUETTA: The women parliamentary caucus Balochistan is scheduled to meet at 03:00 PM on August 26 in the committee room of the provincial assembly. This was announced in an official notification issued here by the special secretary (Legislation) on Thursday. According to the notification, the amendments in the rules and regulations of the women parliamentary caucus would be considered in the meeting. It may be mentioned here that the Deputy

Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms. Ghazala Gola was elected as chairperson of the women parliamentary caucus Balochistan.

Member Provincial Assembly, Ms. Shahida Rauf was elected as vice chairperson of the caucus with Ms. Farah Azeem Shah as its General Secretary. Other office bearers and members of the women parliamentary caucus are included: Ms. Salma Bibi, Ms. Hadia Nawaz, Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi, Ms. Safia, Ms. Umme Kalsoom, Ms. Shahnaz Umrani.



QUETTA: Advisor to PM, Syed Feroz Shah along with representative of European Union (EU), Ehtisham Adil and others inaugurating the ALP Graduation ceremony held in Quetta.

Ahsan terms Pak students at Harvard University as pride of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of 10 Pakistani students enrolled in the MBA program at Harvard University met with Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday.

The students, who have experience working with top companies in Pakistan and abroad, were briefed on the ministry's affairs by Member Social Sector Rafiqullah Kakar. He informed the students that the ministry was a key center for all development-related planning and initiatives in the country.

The minister asked the students that they were the future stars of Pakistan, and universities like Harvard were always on the lookout for future leaders. He said that the doors of the public sector in Pakistan were always open to young people like them.

Ahsan Iqbal shared his own political journey, from his time at the University of Pennsylvania's Business School in 1983 to his election as a member of the National Assembly in 1993.

He highlighted key policies he had been involved in, including the first IT policy in 1998, the Overseas Scholarship Scheme, and the launch of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project in 2013.

The minister stressed that stability and continuity in policies are crucial for the country's development, citing the need for a five-year development plan under the 5Es framework.

He acknowledged the current economic challenges facing the country, including a debt crisis, but expressed optimism about Pakistan's potential, saying,

Punjab govt could not end problem with two-month relief: Hafiz

LAHORE (INP): Hafiz Naeem has said that Punjab government could not diffuse the problem with two months relief in electricity bills. Talking to media in Lahore, the Jamaat Islami chief said, "They are trying to make the people fool with this charity." "You have to give relief to whole Pakistan," JI Ameer said.

He demanded permanent relief to people in electricity bills. JI chief also demanded forensic audit of the IPPs. He said that August 28 will see an extremely successful protest strike. "The 'Tajir Dost Scheme' has been a scheme to destroy traders," he said.

He said Jamaat Islami also wants expansion in the tax net. "There is corruption in the FBR," he further said.

Hafiz Naeem said that promised relief amount has been lower than the capacity payment to the IPPs of the people close to the Sharif family.

IDSP holds Youth Skills event in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): IDSP University for Community Development on Thursday organized an event, International Youth Skills Day, in Quetta.

The purpose of the event was to empower young people with skills for a better tomorrow.

In this regard, IDSP University for Community Development involves various educational institutions and skilled workers. This event is part of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) project "Restoring Social Services and Climate Resilience".

The Chief Guests included Commissioner

PM greets 5-year-old Sufiyan on setting Guinness world record

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday extended congratulations to five-year-old Sufiyan Mehsum from Dera Ismail Khan on setting Guinness world record. Sufiyan Mehsum has made his parents and the country proud by achieving this remarkable feat at a tender age, the prime minister said in a message.

He praised Sufiyan's exceptional talent, saying that such gifted children are a guarantee of a bright future.



QUETTA: A delegation led by district President GTA Zhub Maulana Mashood Shah Akhuzada meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

BFA cracks down on adulterated milk and substandard food items

Independent Report QUETTA: The Balochistan Food Authority (BFA) has launched a crackdown on those involved in supplying adulterated milk and other substandard food items, as well as those operating without licenses.

On the directives of Director General BFA, Atiqullah Khan, the authority's operation teams have imposed fines on over 50 centers in Quetta, Chaman, Chaghi, and Turbat for violating the laws. A large quantity of adulterated milk and other expired and banned products has been confiscated

and disposed of.

In Quetta, two milk suppliers involved in supplying adulterated milk on Qambrani Road were seized and eight maunds of milk were confiscated and disposed of. Tests revealed water, dry powder, and natural nutrition deficiencies in the milk samples.

In Chaman, special teams were sent after reports of a cholera outbreak, where water and food samples were collected from the affected areas and sent to the laboratory for analysis. During an inspection in Chaman market, fines were imposed on 18 food centers.

Cabinet 'okays' privatization of Petroleum division depts

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal cabinet has approved the privatization of two departments under the Petroleum Division. According to sources, the cabinet has given the green signal for the privatization of the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation and the Saindak Metals Limited (SML). As part of the privatization process, the Petroleum Division's department, ENAR Petrotech Services Pvt Ltd will be dissolved.

7 die in rains incidents in KP: PDMA

PESHAWAR (APP): At least seven persons died in rains related incidents during last 24 hours in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to Provincial Disasters Management Authority, these people had expired in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Two sisters namely Saima and Naima daughters of Bakhtullah died at Domail Bannu when roof of a house collapsed.

Similarly, one person each expired at Tank, Mohmand and Dera Ismail Khan while two in Mansehra.

FC continues rescue, relief operation in flood-hit areas

QUETTA (INP): Frontier Corps Balochistan continues its massive rescue and relief operation in areas of the province which was adversely affected due to floods caused by monsoon rains.

The flashfloods caused heavy damages to properties resulting in displacement of the residents of the affected areas.

In district Dera Bugti, Suhbatpur, Sui, Dera Allah Yar, and nearby areas, a large number of residents remained stranded and without shelter.

The Frontier Corps continues rescue and relief operations in the flood-hit areas besides organizing a free medical camp for flood victims, providing them with essential medical care.



NASEERABAD: Provincial Minister Irrigation Mir Sadiq Umrani along with Secretary Irrigation Hafiz Abdul Majid presiding over a meeting regarding measures taken for monsoon rains and progress on developmental projects

Loralai Administration evacuates 21 primary schools, starts educational activities

QUETTA (APP): The District Administration Loralai has evacuated 21 primary schools from the possession of local people during the ongoing drive to retrieve the public buildings established in the area.

The Deputy Commissioner Mehran Baloch presiding over a monthly meeting of the District Education Group was briefed by the District Education Officer regarding the efforts taken for the promotion of education in the district.

District Education Officer said that around 17 closed government boys primary schools have been functional and educational activities have been started in them, besides 18 teachers have been suspended for continuous absences so far, according to a news release.

He added that as many as 4 closed girls' primary schools have been functional to utilize the public buildings for the promotion of education in the area and the salaries of four teachers have been deducted over absent from their duties.

The DEO said that 18 more schools have been reopened with the support of BRSP and resumed the learning process to ensure free education to out-of-school children.

The education department has found 14 teachers absent from their duties and their salaries will be deducted.

In the meeting, many other important issues were discussed including taking strict action against the absent teachers and taking all possible steps to open the non-functional schools.

Dacoit cuts off elderly woman's ears in Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): In a horrific incident, a dacoit cut off ears of an elderly woman in the Surbandar area of Gwadar, Balochistan.

According to police, the woman was wearing gold earring when the robber attacked her and cut off her ears, taking the earrings with him.

The police have arrested the robber and recovered the severed ears, gold earrings, and a knife from his possession. The elderly woman is currently in a critical condition and under treatment at hospital whereas the robber has also confessed to the crime.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding implementation on reforms on the directives of Chief Minister