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

Reviews legal aspects, final stages of PakPWD closure

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

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

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

ment. He further directed that all the officers in the government offices should ensure file work through e-offices.

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

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

PM Shehbaz said that the e-office was an important step towards improving governance and promoting digitization in the country.

He also directed to present a report on the progress of launching e-

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HUB: View of passenger bus fell into ditch after traffic accident due to over speeding and brake failed, at Makran Coastal Highway at Bazi Lak near Hub.

## CM expresses deep grief over accident of zayreen bus on Makran coastal highway

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has expressed deep grief over the accident of a bus carrying zayreen on way to Iran from Punjab on the coastal highway.

According to an official hand out issued here on Sunday, the Chief Minister expressed grief over the loss of precious human lives in the bus accident.

He said that he is grieved over the bus accident and is with the bereaved families in the painful time.

He issued directives to the concerned authorities to provide quick and best medical treatment to those injured in the fatal bus accident.



QUETTA: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh enquiring about the health of injured of Pishin bomb blast.

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

Monitoring Desk

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

The casualties resulted when two armed groups opened fire on each other, with some angry members setting various vehicles on fire and blocking both lanes of the main artery leading to Nazimabad from Lasbella.

Confirming the number of fatalities, Chief Police Surgeon Dr Sumaiyya Syed stated that one body was taken to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital and the

other to Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital, while the injured were being treated at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC).

Taking notice of the matter, Sindh Home Minister Zia Lanjar has sought a report on the incident from the Sindh Inspector General of Police (IGP) and Additional Inspector General (AIG), directing law enforcement agencies to bring the situation under control immediately.

Saying that no one would be allowed to take the law into their own hands or disturb the law and order situation, Lanjar also instructed the authorities to arrest the perpetrators as soon as possible.



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

## Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) being observed today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his companions is being observed today (Monday) in Quetta as elsewhere in the country.

In Quetta, the processions would be taken out marking the Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA). The main procession of chehlum would be taken out from Alamdar road and terminate at Bahisht-e-Zainab graveyard passing through Alamdar road, Toghi road, Taj Muhammad Road and Sara-e-Namak.

The other procession would be taken out in Hazara town area.

Extraordinary arrangements have been made for security of the processions to be taken out in the metropolis.

The roads and passages leading to the route of processions would be sealed for routine movement of the traffic in the relevant areas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The report said the minister had also engaged multiple experts to revamp PTV's programming, aiming to make it comparable to private channels.

## Two khawarij killed in Taunsa encounter

TAUNSA (INP): Two khawarij were killed and two cops injured in exchange of fire with police here on Sunday.

According to details, the police on an intelligence tip-off regarding presence of a group of Fitnah al-Khawarij launched a crackdown near City Food Club in Taunsa.

An exchange of fire took place in which two khawarij were killed while two cops including an SHO and a Sub-Inspector got injured.

The bodies of killed khawarij and injured policemen were shifted to hospital.

The security forces and law enforcement agencies have reiterated the resolve to eliminate terrorism from the country.

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

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

Independent Report

QUETTA: As many as 12 persons died and some 32 got injured as the passenger coach met a fatal road accident at Buzi top on the Makran coastal highway falls in the jurisdiction of Lasbela district on Sunday morning.

According to the reports reaching here, the passenger coach carrying some 70 passengers way on its way from Gwadar bordering area to Punjab when it met accident after falling into a ditch due to the brake failure.

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

Independent Report

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

He said that the district administration was engaged in making the rescue activities effective.

The spokesman said that seven seriously injured passengers were shifted to the district headquarter hospital Uthal while 26 injured shifted to Jam Gulam Qadir hospital Hub.

He said that condition of few injured is stated to be critical. However, all the injured are being provided necessary medical treatment.

According to the DHO Lasbela, seven critically injured were transferred to specialized trauma centers in Karachi for further treat-

ment.

Meanwhile President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday expressed his grief and sorrow over loss of lives in a bus accident on Makran Coastal Highway, carrying Zaireen.

The president expressed condolences with the bereaved families and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls. He also wished quick recovery of the injured passengers, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The president directed for prompt assistance and caring of the injured in the accident.

According to media reports, a bus carrying Zaireens fell into a ravine on the Makran Coastal Highway, resulting in a number of deaths and inju-

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

## Salik Hussain highlights role of women in building awareness

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

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

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

"As we continue to advocate for gender equality and empower women, we must recognize their achievements, ensuring their voices and efforts are valued," he added.

He asserted to empower women for leadership roles and added: "we not only honour their contribution but also ensure they have the necessary support and resources to thrive."

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## DC bans movement of zayreen from Jiwani, Gabd to Gwadar in view of safety, safe travel

QUETTA: The district administration of Gwadar has imposed complete ban on the movement of zayreen (pilgrims) from Jiwani, Gad to Gwadar.

According to an official hand out issued here on Sunday, the Deputy Commissioner Gwadar, Hamoodur Rehman has imposed ban on the movement of zayreen in view of their safety and safe travels.

According to the district administration, the ban has been imposed on entrance of zayreen in Iran as well, therefore, they have been asked to avoid travel in the meantime.

The district administration Gwadar said that the initiative has been taken to

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

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan on Sunday officially extended an invitation to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in October.

According to diplomatic sources, the invitation was sent as part of the preparations for the SCO meeting, where the heads of state from member countries have been invited.

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

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

Needless to mention here is that a passenger coach carrying some 70 zayreen from Gwadar bordering area to Punjab met fatal accident that claimed lives of 11 and left some 33 injured, on Sunday morning.

The pilgrims were not allowed to visit Iran for certain reasons could not be known immediately. As a result, they were returning back to their hometowns in Punjab as most of them belong to Lahore and Gujranwala.

## We have capability to come out of every type of crises & determined for bright future with new spirit: Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that we have the excellent history of undergoing dangers and have the capability of coming out of every type of crises.

We are determined for the bright and sovereign future with new spirit and valour.

The Governor said that there comes the ups and downs in the life of individuals, institutions and nations.

He stressed that we have to prove with participation of youth that we have strong nerves. We have the excellent history of experiencing dangers and as such also have the capability to come out of the crises.

He said that he fully realizes the prevailing economic mess, chaos, unem-

ployment and lack of mutual unity and consensus. But we are united in search of the bright future even in the unfavourable circumstances and hardships, he added.

He said that we all know that life is not a straight line at all, but it is a tough journey at the individual or level of nation, which is affected from the ups and downs.

However, as a nation, we have faced the challenges and hardships of our own part.

Therefore, it is necessary that we should use our political and economic crises as the opportunities of moving forward and taking all along.

The Governor made it clear that we can get guarantee of the economic and political stability after increasing the public rights and authority.



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

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

Says PTI creating fake narrative for another May 9 episode

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sardar Khetran, Bakht Kakar, Dr. Rubaba grieved over bus accident on Makran highway

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Ministers, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran and Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Advisor to Chief Minister for Women Development, Dr. Rubaba Buledi have expressed deep grief over the fatal bus accident occurred on Makran coastal highway.

In their separate condolence messages issued here on Sunday, the Provincial Minister and Advisor to Chief Minister expressed grief over the loss of lives of zayreen in the bus accident. They also expressed sorrow over the injuries caused to some 33 passengers travelling in the bus.

Dr. Rubaba Buledi said

that loss of lives of people is an irreparable loss. She expressed empathy with the bereaved families and said that we share the grief with them in the hard time.

He prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul into its eternal peace and give enough strength and patience to the bereaved families to bear the tragic loss of lives of their dear ones.

Similarly, the Provincial Minister for PHE and Minister for Livestock also expressed heartfelt condolence over death of 11 persons in the road accident.

They also prayed for the departed souls and prayed for early recovery of the injured passengers.



QUETTA: All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran Central President, Ajmal Baloch, Balochistan Provincial President Abdul Rahim Kakar and others addressing a Press conference at Quetta press club.

## Bangladesh stun Pakistan, win first-ever Test match against Green Shirts

Mehidy Hasan, Shakib Al Hasan bag four and three wickets each to dismantle Pakistani batting line

### Sports Desk

RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh outclassed Pakistan win the first Test match at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium courtesy of a brilliant performance by their bowlers who ran through Pakistani batters on the fifth day on Sunday.

After bowling out the hosts at 146 in the second innings, Bangladeshi openers Zakir Hasan (15\*) and Shadman Islam (9\*) eased past the 30-run target set by the Shan Masood-led side in mere 6.3 overs.

With today's win the Najmul Hossain Shanto's men have made their way to history books as this is Bangladesh's first-ever win against Pakistan in red-ball cricket.

Earlier in the day, while kicking off their second inning from 23-1 today, Pakistani batters failed to put up much resistance against visitors with Shan Masood (14), Babar Azam (22), Saud Shaqueel (0), Abdullah Shafique (37) and Salman Ali Agha (0) losing their wickets in quick succession.

Though Mohammad Rizwan (51) made a valiant effort, he lost his wicket after being bowled out by Mehidy Hasan.

Nasheem Shah (3), Shaheen Afridi (2) and Mohammad Ali (0) couldn't hold off the Bangladeshi bowlers for long

and the national side was eventually bowled out at 146.

On Saturday, the visitors dominated the fourth day taking a lead of 117 runs as they scored 565 in reply to Pakistan's 448/6 with incredible Mushfiqur Rahim starting with 191 off 341 balls.

The day began with the visitors batting at 316-5 in 92 overs with Rahim (55 off 122) and Litton Das (52 off 58) on the crease.

Soon after the play resumed, Shah removed Das with Rizwan taking a catch.

However, Rahim stood tall and ended up scoring a brilliant century, becoming the third batter to score a ton in the ongoing Test.

Rahim and Hasan made a stunning partnership to put Pakistan on the back foot. Rahim was on course to score his fourth double-century but fell short of nine runs as Ali removed him.

Pakistan wrapped up Bangladesh's innings after Rahim's dismissal. Afridi removed Mahmud and Mehidy while Shah got the wicket of Islam who blasted 22 off 14 balls. The Test matches between Pakistan and Bangladesh are being played as part of the World Test Championship (WTC) 2023-25 as both teams are eager to perform and strengthen their position on the WTC points table.



RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh's players celebrates after taking the wicket of Pakistan's Salman Ali Agha during the fifth day of first cricket test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh, in the city.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sindh CM takes notice of Golimar firing incident

### Independent Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has taken notice of the firing incident in Golimar, Karachi, and expressed deep sorrow and condemnation over the loss of life.

The CM directed the authorities to immediately arrest those responsible for the firing on the rally. He warned that no one would be allowed to disrupt peace in the city.

CM Shah instructed the citizens to remain peaceful and advised the district administration and police to resolve the matter amicably. He also directed senior officers to personally oversee the situation.

The CM's statement comes after a firing incident in Golimar, Karachi, resulted in loss of life and sparked tension in the area. The authorities have been tasked with bringing the perpetrators to justice and maintaining law and order in the city.

## Arif Alvi heads PTI committee to resolve internal differences

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a bid to resolve the ongoing internal conflicts within the party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has formed a committee led by former President Arif Alvi.

According to sources, the committee has been tasked with addressing the internal rifts and submitting recommendations within a week.

Arif Alvi will chair the committee, which will hold meetings with party leaders and stakeholders to listen to their concerns and grievances.

## Commissioner recommends action against CEO WSSC Kohat for poor performance

### Independent Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah on Sunday made a surprise visit to different areas of Kohat, Hangu and Orakzai districts under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda".

Commissioner Kohat on this occasion, recommended action against the Chief Executive of WSSC Kohat to the higher authorities for the piles of garbage and poor cleanliness in the areas under the supervision of WSSC Kohat. However, the piles of dirt were removed by TMA Kohat on the orders of Commissioner.

Similarly, Motasim Billah, in his surprise visit to Orakzai Agency, deducted one day's salary from 22 employees of Agriculture Extension for not cultivating more than 50,000 cultivable plants in the nurseries of Agriculture Extension and poor sanitation, while Secretary Agriculture was contacted for departmental action against the Director Agriculture Extension Kohat for his poor performance.

Commissioner Kohat also ordered an audit of all government nurseries of Kohat division. It is expected that 1 to 2 lakh cultivable plants will be available in these nurseries, but they have not been cultivated. Commissioner Kohat also directed to ensure cultivation of cultivable plants in government nurseries within 2 months.

## Pakistan Shaheens, Bangladesh A teams gear up for Cricket Series

ISLAMABAD (APP): The trophy for the upcoming One Day Series between Pakistan Shaheens and Bangladesh A was unveiled by both captains Mohammad Harris and Towhid Hridoy here at the Islamabad Club on Sunday.

The three-match series, comprising three one-day matches, is set to begin on Monday here at the Islamabad Club. The second and third 50-over matches will take place on 28 and 30 August, respectively.

Ahead of the series, both teams conducted training sessions on Sunday.

The Pakistan Shaheens squad, comprising 13 players, participated in batting, bowling, and fielding drills under the supervision of coaches. Wicketkeeper-batter Haseebullah Khan has also joined the Pakistan Shaheens squad.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh A team also engaged in batting, bowling, and fielding practice, preparing themselves for the upcoming matches.



QUETTA: Heavy machinery busy in construction works of road carpeting, at Western Bypass road in Quetta.

## Special ward for monkeypox patients set up at BMC

QUETTA (APP): Medical Superintendent Bolan Medical Complex (BMC) Quetta, Dr. Muhammad Afzal Zarkoon here on Sunday inaugurated a 15 bed special ICU Ward in view of the possible spread of monkeypox.

The special ward has been established on the directives Health Minister Sardarzada Faisal Khan Jamali and Secretary Health Department Saleh Muhammad Baloch, to ensure treatment for patients affected with monkeypox and deal with any emergency situation.

MS Bolan Medical Complex Dr. Muhammad Afzal Zarkoon said that due to the possible spread of monkeypox in the province, a special ward equipped with all facilities had been established in the Hospital.

In the opening ceremony, Head of Department Medical Unit 4B Dr. Siraj, Provincial Head of EPI Balochistan Dr. Kamalan Gichki, AMS Bolan Medical Complex Quetta Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, Nursing Supervisor Zahid Baloch and other staff were also present.

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

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

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

The deputy PM said he had already served the country as the finance minister, and this time he had been assigned many responsibilities. He said there was no doubt that Pakistan had suffered a lot economically during the past years, adding that "it was being predicted that the country would take 15 years to come out of the severe crisis. But with the grace of Allah, it took only three-and-a-half years for Pakistan to come out of the crisis." In 2013, the country was experiencing up to 18 hours load-shedding, and dozens of terrorist incidents were taking place daily, affecting the economy badly. But, the PML-N government solved all those problems in just three-and-a-half years with the grace of Allah, and the load-shedding issues was also resolved. It was admitted by major forums, and it was said that the way Pakistan was developing, it would soon join the G20. But after that, in the next four years, Pakistan was ranked at the 47th position economically and it was not a small loss, the problems of the country today are due to that duration.



QUETTA: Director General Health Services Balochistan Dr. Aminullah Khan Mandokhail enquiring about health of injured of Pishin bomb blast.

## PM set one-month...

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fice in next two weeks.

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

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

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

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

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

## Salik Hussain highlights...

Continued from page 1

tributions but also enhance the inclusivity and depth of religious discourse, the federal minister added.

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

He said each of these domains highlights not only the invaluable contributions of women but also the potential for further growth and impact as we continue to champion gender equity.

The minister said the role of women in building awareness, particularly in spreading knowledge, promoting good, and upholding justice, is well-recognized in Islam.

"Religious awareness is fundamental in fostering mutual respect and understanding among diverse communities. Women have played a transformative role in this arena, acting as custodians and communicators of faith", he added.

He noted historically and across cultures, women have been at the heart of religious education, guiding families and communities in spiritual matters.

He said today, women continue to lead and innovate in religious spaces. They are breaking barriers to become prominent voices in theological scholarship, interfaith dialogues,

and grassroots religious movements.

He said women through their role as creators, preservers, and educators, have been pivotal in shaping and expanding cultural awareness.

He said in literature, art, and media, women have made indelible marks. Moreover, women play a crucial role in cultural preservation and education.

He was of the view that in modern times, women are also leading efforts to celebrate and educate others about diverse cultural heritages through museums, cultural festivals, and educational programs.

"Encouraging women to continue their work in these areas ensures a richer, more inclusive cultural narrative. Their insights and creativity not only preserve cultural heritage but also promote intercultural understanding and respect", the minister added.

He said women's involvement in societal services like healthcare, education, social work, and advocacy, is essential for the well-being and development of communities.

The minister asserted to enhance and protect the future of our societies by investing in women's well-being and providing them with resources and support.



QUETTA: Central President of All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran, Ajmal Baloch is addressing the traders during meeting regarding the shutter down strike held at Quetta press club.

## 38 killed, several others injured...

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ries to other passengers.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the death of Zaireen in a bus accident on Makran Coastal Highway.

The prime minister prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with fortitude, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He also directed for timely treatment and caring for the injured in the accident.

According to media reports, a bus carrying Zaireen fell into a ravine on the Makran Coastal Highway, resulting in a number of deaths and injuries to other passengers.

The ill-fated coaster was travelling to Azad Kashmir. Rescue operation has been started.

According to the details, the tragic accident took place near Girari Bridge, Kahuta Road Kallar Syedan where a passenger coaster en route to Palandri, Azad Kashmir went out of control and fell into a deep ditch resulting in massive casualties.

Rescue 1122 spokesman, Muhammad Usman confirmed APP that 25 people have died in the accident so far.

He informed that 23 bodies were recovered from the accident spot.

The bodies and the injured were shifted to THQ Hospital, Kallar Syedan, where 2 more seriously injured could not survive and died.

"The dead include 20 men, 4 women and 1 child", he said.

He said that rescue personnel from Tehsil Kahota, Kallar

Syedan and Rawalpindi were engaged in the rescue operation in which more than 25 rescue personnel and 12 emergency services vehicles are participating.

The spokesperson further informed that the condition of one more injured was still critical.

The reason for the accident is still not known.

During the identification process, 14 deceased persons have been identified as Muhammad Bashir, Ali, Asghar, Gul Azam Khan, Muhammad Riaz, Fareed Ahmed, Kamran Sati, S a m i u l l a h , Mohammad Farooq, Manzoor Ahmed, Jawad, Israr, Shafiq and Muhammad Qaiser.

The identity of the four deceased women and one minor child could not be ascertained yet.

Further investigation of the deceased was underway.

## Empowering journalists: British High Commission team visits NPC

ISLAMABAD (APP): A team from the British High Commission, accompanied by senior journalists, visited the National Press Club in Islamabad to empower the journalism community and enhance their careers.

The initiative aimed to guide journalists on Chevening applications and the South Asian Journalism Programme (SAJP), highlighting the benefits and opportunities these programs offer.

During the visit, Deputy Communications Officer Senah Lala briefed the journalists on the Chevening programme, encouraging them to seize this opportunity to advance

their careers.

She emphasized how the programme spotlights mid-career journalists, providing them with a chance to excel in their field.

Shumila Noreen, a senior journalist and SAJP alumna, shared her personal experience, describing it as a "wonderful chance to advance your career." She explained the course structure and the challenges one faces while visiting the United Kingdom.

Another SAJP alumna, senior journalist Shabbir Hussain, elaborated on how to become part of the programme and its benefits for one's career. He detailed the process of the

one-year Chevening fellowship programme and the requirements candidates must keep in mind while applying.

Both journalists assured their full support regarding the application process and guidance for the journalists. They also agreed to continue visiting the National Press Club to provide guidance and mentorship to fellow journalists, ensuring the initiative's sustainability.

On the occasion, President of the National Press Club Azhar Jatoi thanked the team and emphasized the need for such initiatives to continue at the club for the betterment of

journalists.

Similarly, Secretary of the NPC Nayyar Ali endorsed the president's views, requesting the British High Commission team to continue their support for journalists.

This collaborative effort between the British High Commission and the National Press Club in Islamabad aims to uplift journalists and provide them with opportunities to grow professionally. By sharing their experiences and expertise, the team hopes to inspire and motivate journalists to take advantage of these programs and enhance their careers.



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



ISLAMABAD: District administration opened the spillways of Rawal Dam on August 25 at 6 am, and is actively monitoring the situation at rivers and bridges and has completed preparations for potential flood scenarios.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## DFP concerned over plight of Kashmiri prisoners

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) has expressed serious concern over the plight of Kashmiri prisoners languishing in Indian jails outside Kashmir.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the DFP spokesman Advocate Arshad Iqbal said that hundreds of Kashmiri prisoners lodged in prisons outside Kashmir have been suffering terribly due to highly unfavourable weather conditions and lack of basic amenities including access to clean and drinkable wa-

ter, hygienic food and medicines. "Many of them have developed acute ailments due to limited access to food, sunlight and medical care", Iqbal said, adding that it was quite unfortunate that the Kashmiri detainees have now been barred from their rightful weekly phone calls with family members.

The new restrictions imposed on the Kashmiri prisoners, he said, have further exacerbated depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder among prisoners living thousands of kilometres away from their families.

## DC holds weekly performance review meeting

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

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

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

The officials also provided updates on the drainage and other operations during the ongoing monsoon season.

The meeting highlighted the efforts in price control, where 478 operations led to fines totalling Rs 31,500. Additionally, 40 individuals were arrested for price list violations, and 22 shops were sealed for non-compliance.

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

**Independent Report**

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

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

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

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

Officers were instructed to maintain close liaison with peace committees and procession organizers. Cooperation from the organizers facilitated effective collaboration with the police and law enforcement officials during the processions.

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

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

Processions followed fixed routes, and timings were strictly observed. Police officials were instructed to conduct effective patrolling and use commando vehicles for this purpose.

## Sahala Police destroys vehicle confiscated in fraud case

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## MoHR to review implementation of laws, policies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) is working with mandate to review human rights and protection of labour rights situation in the country including implementation of laws, policies and measures.

Talking to APP, an official said that the Ministry was also formulating various programmes for teaching of human rights at educational institutions.

He said that the Ministry was also working to implement the "Rules and

Regulations for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Senior Citizens Act, 2021".

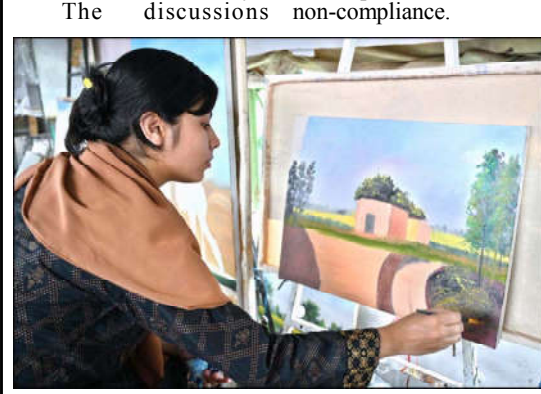
The development of the Rules and Regulations for the ICT Senior Citizens Act is an important step in this process.

Number of senior people is exceeding. It is thus critical to create an enabling and healthy environment to ensure that every human being, irrespective of age, was able to fulfill their potential with dignity and equality.

## Ahmed Faraz's timeless legacy remembered on his death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Iconic Urdu Poet Ahmed Faraz's timeless legacy was being remembered on his 16th death anniversary when fans and fellow poets through media platforms paid rich tribute to his immense contribution to the world of literature on Sunday.

As the literary world mourns the loss of this poetic genius, his fans are celebrating his legacy, recalling the impact of his powerful and evocative poetry on Urdu literature, PTV news channel reported.



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

Ahmad Faraz was born on January 12, 1931 in Kohat. The real name of Ahmad Faraz was Syed Ahmad Shah.

He started his career as a script writer with Radio Pakistan Peshawar and later joined Peshawar University as a lecturer.

Tanha, Be-away Gali Kuchon mian, Sab Awazain meri hai and Shab-e-Khoon are among his literary works. He was a member of the Progressive Writers Movement.

## AIOU hosts workshop on EdTech skills

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

Addressing the closing ceremony of a two-day training workshop on 'EdTech Skills for Content Development', Dr. Nasir highlighted the rapid shift from traditional education methods to online learning, emphasizing the importance of teachers mastering

these new technologies to shape their students' futures effectively. Dr. Nasir called on teachers to move beyond the conventional role of mere instruction and to take on the mantle of wisdom providers. He stressed the need for educators to stay updated with contemporary technical and social demands, as well as the latest trends, to enhance both their personal growth and teaching effectiveness. In response to a proposal for another workshop on EdTech skills, Dr. Nasir assured that AIOU was committed to the professional development of both teachers and students.



ISLAMABAD: A labourer shifting wooden fruit boxes at Fruit and Vegetable Market in the Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: IESCO worker busy in repairing street light at Fruit and Vegetable Market in the Federal Capital.

## Climate shift sowing seeds of uncertainty in Pakistan's fields

ISLAMABAD (APP): In Pakistan, where agriculture is not just an industry but a way of life and cornerstone of the economy, climate change is disrupting traditional patterns. Increasingly severe droughts and erratic monsoons are jeopardizing food security, rural livelihoods, and the economy. With agriculture employing nearly 45% of the population and contributing 24% to GDP, the sector's vulnerability to climate change is imminent.

The agricultural sector in Pakistan is facing significant challenges due to rising temperatures, shifting precipitation patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events. These factors are transforming agriculture, leading to reduced yields and heightened uncertainty. Prolonged droughts, heatwaves, and floods further threaten the livelihoods of those dependent on farming.

Pakistan's diverse cropping systems, includ-

ing Rabi and Kharif crops, are heavily reliant on stable water availability and temperature. Major crops such as wheat, rice, sugarcane, and maize are increasingly at risk. A study by Craddock-Henry (2020) predicts an 8% to 10% decline in agricultural production by 2040 due to these changes. The data shows a 0.9°C rise in average temperature from 1980 to 2021.

Dr. Lubna Ansari, an agricultural and climate expert, talking to APP noted that higher temperatures disrupt cropping seasons and reduce grain quality, particularly for wheat and mangoes. Recent reductions in wheat and rice production—14.7% and 20.5% respectively—reflect these impacts, contributing to higher market prices.

Water scarcity is adding to these problems. Pakistan relies heavily on the Indus River system for irrigation, drinking, and industrial use. However,

changing precipitation patterns and increased evaporation are straining this vital resource. The reduced flow in the Indus Basin affects irrigation, while Pakistan's low wastewater treatment rate and high water withdrawals further stress the system. Without improved water management and conservation, severe shortages could threaten productivity.

Dr. Noman Latif Sadozai, Senior Director, Climate Energy & Water Research Institute, National Agricultural Research Centre, talking to APP said, erratic monsoon rains result in droughts followed by intense flooding, complicating water management. During droughts, water shortages force reductions in crop areas or shifts to less water-intensive crops, leading to lower yields and financial losses. Conversely, excessive rainfall damages crops and causes soil erosion, further impacting productivity.

Climate change also promotes the spread of pests and diseases, which thrive in warmer, more humid conditions. Crops like cotton and sugarcane are particularly vulnerable, leading to significant losses and threatening both food security and farmer livelihoods.

Shamraiz Akhtar, a farmer from Baharwal village in Gujrat, describes the harsh reality of climate change. Excessive heat destroyed 80% of his maize crop, and excessive monsoon rains have swept away his pearl millet and rice. He laments, "The effects of climate change have been severe for poor farmers like me."

Similarly, farmer Junaid Ali, from Amra Kalan town known for its rich agriculture fields in Kharian, has faced devastation. Hailstorms and heavy rains ruined his vegetables, resulting in significant losses. "Fields that once grew ladyfinger and

chili are now barren," he reports, with 80% of his crops damaged.

Muhammad Arif Goheer, head of the Agricultural and Coordination Section at the Global Climate Change Impact Studies Centre Islamabad, stresses the urgency of adopting climate-resilient practices and overhauling water management strategies. Without robust intervention, Pakistan's agricultural sector could face severe productivity declines, endangering its economy and rural communities. Immediate action is crucial to preserve the nation's agrarian heritage and secure the future of millions who depend on it.

Quaratulain, an Agriculture Officer at the Punjab Agriculture Extension Department Rawalpindi, adds that a 1.5°C to 2.0°C rise in temperature due to global warming is severely affecting food production. High temperatures impact rice

grain filling, sowing, soil moisture, seed germination, and harvesting. Changing rainfall patterns also harm wheat crops, with insufficient rain during critical periods and excessive rain in March and April reducing yields.

In conclusion, the agriculture and climate experts have advised Pakistan to urgently adopt climate-resilient agricultural practices, enhance water management strategies, and implement robust early warning systems to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. Without these critical measures, Pakistan's agricultural sector faces a severe risk of productivity decline, which could devastate rural livelihoods and undermine a key pillar of the national economy. It is imperative for policymakers and relevant authorities to act swiftly and strategically to safeguard the future of agriculture and the millions who depend on it.

## Significant challenges faced by women entrepreneurs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**  
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**Utility Stores concern**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Farieha Aziz**

There has been no let-up in the woes of digital users in Pakistan as the internet continues to operate at a snail's pace. To add insult to injury, at a press conference, the state minister for IT, Shaza Fatima, attributed the slow internet speeds to a surge in Virtual Private Networks (VPN) usage affecting Content Delivery Networks (CDN), while claiming that the government had done nothing to cause this.

What the minister failed to say is why the need for VPNs arose. Typically, VPNs are used as a data privacy measure. In Pakistan, internet users have turned to VPNs primarily to circumvent the blockades they are experiencing, especially the inability to transfer and download media over WhatsApp.

A VPN masks a user's Internet Protocol address. Think of it as your home address. When you connect to a VPN, rather than the IP assigned to you by your internet service provider, the VPN assigns you a new address, but in another country. This allows users to circumvent geographical

blockades instituted at the IP level.

Cloudflare defines CDNs as a "geographically distributed group of servers that caches content close to end users". It defines caching as "storing copies of files in a cache, or temporary storage location, so that they can be accessed more quickly". Distance affects latency — the time it takes to get to you. Food delivery orders are usually made from the closest branch to your address. If the order is routed from a branch further away the time it takes to get to you will increase. Similarly, if you have placed an order for the delivery of a product from outside the country, shipping will take longer than to those in the geographical area the store is located in.

Faults in submarine cables and increased VPN usage don't explain WhatsApp media disruptions, which exist at an app functionality level. The chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority conceded before the National Assembly's Committee on Information Technology that the web management system, also

called the national firewall system — in existence since 2019 — was being upgraded. There is no disclosure as to what this system upgrade entails.

A recent article in this paper by Ramsha Jahangir quotes industry sources hinting at "gateway-level deployment at the two largest CDN providers ... to control and monitor internet traffic in Pakistan". The internet gateway, ie the Pakistan Internet Exchange, is where all international internet traffic comes in from and goes out of the country.

It appears that since content on global platforms cannot be removed directly, the ability to block and/or restrict access is being enhanced. One part of this is restricting access but the second component linked to VPN registration is to enhance the ability to trace the source from where it originates. Even if content data is protected thanks to encryption, traffic data provides a lot of information about a user. Section 32 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, requires service providers to retain traffic data of subscribers for up to a

year. Traffic data is defined in Peca as "data relating to a communication indicating its origin, destination, route, size, duration or type of service".

It's not merely about placing containers to create diversions along a route or setting up a check-post to bar entry to the Red Zone. Once the vehicle arrives at the check-post, the next step would be to make a note of the type of vehicle and its number plate, to identify who it belongs to and determine the route the vehicle took to get to the check-post and where it had embarked from, ie, its point of origin.

During advocacy against Peca, the retention of traffic data was flagged as a privacy concern. The example of a high court in the Philippines striking down similar provisions in their cybercrime law was cited. Pakistan enacted Peca soon after. Other than a portion of Section 20 being struck down by the Islamabad High Court (IHC), no significant reading down — forget striking down — of unconstitutional provisions has taken place.

The apprehension to

take such challenges to court is also reflected in the recent order by a two-member bench of the Supreme Court, which has restored the surveillance regime under the Lawful Intercept Management System, which was stayed conditionally by the IHC. The privacy rights of citizens remain hostage to the doctrine of necessity routinely applied by the legislature and judiciary in response to unqualified claims of national security. There exists an acceptance of executive overreach, a view that the government 'can' do this without adequately subjecting executive power to scrutiny against the letter of the law or the constitutional scheme.

The 'everyone does it' argument is not tenable. Specifics matter. A search for countries with a national 'firewall' to information control throws up results such as China and North Korea. While the de facto here prevails over the de jure in practice, there still exists a Constitution, and on paper, Pakistan is still a democracy. Tech tools and regulations in a democratic dispensation versus those under an authoritarian re-

gime chart a different path. Of course, it's not always a neat divide; so-called large democracies have justified surveillance and policing regimes in the name of national security. However, these come with significant local critique, judicial checks and congressional oversight, which have led to reform, but this is never mentioned when the subject is brought up here.

The damage that has been done to individuals and businesses is irreversible. Pakistan is being viewed as an unstable, unviable market where investment will lead to losses and there is no guarantee of service or data privacy. Whether you are an individual or a business, the highest public officer-holder or an average citizen who does not participate in political activity, centralised network filtering and monitoring affects everyone — judges, politicians, journalists, entrepreneurs — personally and professionally. What's at stake is the livelihood of citizens and their right to do business as well as the fundamental rights of expression, access to information, and privacy. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Digital check-post****Gaza and the Muslim world****Abbas Nasir**

Today, a new round of peace talks begins in Cairo but all indications are that Israel's genocidal Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is setting conditions that Hamas will find impossible to accept, such as a continued Israeli military presence in Gaza.

The main pressure for a peace deal is coming from the Biden administration, which in its final months in office, wants some sort of foreign policy success on its report card that may also boost the chances of Vice President Kamala Harris in the presidential race.

But committed as the US administration is to supporting Israel come what may, it is not clear what leverage it may have in order to exert pressure on Tel Aviv to agree to a deal acceptable to all parties. So far, billions of dollars of military supplies such as bombs, missiles and equipment are flowing freely from the US to Israel. It is abundantly clear that that lever will not be used.

So far, of the 40,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza since October last year, some 14,000 are children.

The number of wounded children, which include many multiple amputees, is no less. An even greater tragedy is reflected in the term 'wounded child with no surviving family'. There are countless numbers of WCNSF as they are called.

Images of Palestinian children murdered in the most brutal of ways land in the US via social media and sections of the traditional media every day, every hour but even those horrific photos and footage do not seem to move the political decision-makers.

Israel's scorched earth military campaign that has destroyed most of Gaza and its infrastructure, including the water/power supply system, roads, schools, universities and many hospitals besides thousands of homes, has not drawn any adverse reaction from the US, UK, Germany and other Western powers.

In fact, the US and Germany have tried hard to use law-enforcement forces to crush domestic pro-Palestinian protests and many people around the world who live under oppression must only have reacted in shock at the brutality with which German and Ameri-

can police personnel have laid into the protesters in these so-called bastions of democracy and free speech.

The reasons for this softly-softly policy towards Israel may have less to do with historical factors such as the Hitler-perpetrated Holocaust and more to do with security concerns, the need for a dependable military ally in the face of Arab domination in the oil-rich Middle East and Gulf. (Many of these despotic Arab rulers are diehard US allies anyway.)

An equally important, perhaps even more significant, factor is how, for example, politicians' campaigns in the US and UK are funded by pro-Israeli big-money individuals and organisations that often tread a fine line when it comes to being 'distanced' from the government of Israel to comply with foreign-funding restrictions; nonetheless they work zealously for the interests of the state of Israel.

Just google organisations such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee to learn the extent to which they fund the campaigns of pro-Israel politicians in the US. They are spending literally mil-

lions of dollars in primaries and congressional elections, besides the presidential race, to have a say in policy. Most recently it has taken out high-profile pro-Palestinian candidates in Democratic primaries for the Congress, with one or two exceptions.

The UK story is not dissimilar. Both mainstream Labour and Conservative parties' candidates receive campaign contributions from Labour Friends of Israel (LFI) and Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI).

In a country whose system mandates that all elected officials file declarations of interest in the register held in parliament and most regularly do, the source of funding of LFI and CFI is not clear, but this lack of transparency does not bother anyone. Little surprise that all 'concern' that UK government leaders expressed about Gaza has not translated into an arms embargo.

While it's right to look at the duplicity of the compromised Western leaders and politicians, it is also incumbent on commentators, analysts and even activists to examine the response of the ummah, the Muslim countries, towards

the genocidal Israeli campaign in Gaza.

From the oil-rich Muslim states with trillions of dollars invested/deposited in Western economies and fuelling their growth and prosperity, to Muslim countries with ostensibly formidable militaries, none have exerted pressure; they have largely indulged in lip service that Israel has not even considered worthy of a contemptuous reaction.

What was once an effective guerrilla force, the Palestine Liberation Organisation has now been eviscerated and is incapable of defending Palestinians under the umbrella of its Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, what to talk of Gaza where its rival Hamas evicted it after a bloody fight a decade and a half ago.

However, just like the US and Germany, most Muslim countries, represented in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation have very diligently and ruthlessly quelled any street protests against Israel's genocidal war in Gaza. Who knows if it is lack of empathy or fear that anti-Israel protests could snowball into demonstrations against despotic rule at home.

While protesters in the UK have been defying their past and present pro-Israel governments, countries such as Spain, Norway, Ireland and even tiny Slovenia have seen large demonstrations almost every weekend for the past 10 months where government and people have joined hands against the Gaza outrage.

Among the ummah, the only defiant stand against Israel, even if limited, has been taken by what the allies in the grouping call the Axis of Resistance comprising Iran, Lebanon's Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthis. But years of sanctions have meant that those in the resistance have denuded capability and resources to offer 'effective resistance'. This is where the ummah stands today.

While Gazans are being butchered with callous abandon, in a sad reflection on Israeli society, Netanyahu who was facing corruption allegations and possibly prison before the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct 7 last year, is now leading in the opinion polls. His Likud party's fortunes have been revived by his murderous campaign.

**The way she wore****Muna Khan**

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

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

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

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

outfit and suggested devising a standard operating procedure for women's clothing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry**

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

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

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

**Indo-US ties**

the near term. India has also surpassed China to become the world's most populous country and emerged as a lucrative market for the US-led West. Its foreign currency reserves exceed \$650 billion.

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

However, the US has serious concerns about the relationship. According to the Stimson Center, there are hurdles to taking cooperation to the next level. Firstly, India's capacity to absorb foreign technology faces many legal, coordination, and procedural issues. Secondly, the US is 'unsure' of India's political will to deter China in the Western Pacific, because India's priority seems to be the Indian Ocean region. Thirdly, India has not blocked its trade and investment ties with China. Fourthly, Washington is deeply concerned over New Delhi's close relations with Mos-

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

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

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

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

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

## CM Sindh approves Rs 502m for replacement of Sukkur Barrage gates

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has approved Rs 502 million for the Irrigation Department to meet the expenditure on account of work done in connection with the repair and replacement of damaged gates of Sukkur Barrage.

He approved the funds while presiding over a meeting at CM House here Sunday. The meeting was attended by Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Irrigation Zarif Khoro and other concerned officers.

Secretary Irrigation Zarif Khoro briefing the CM, said that at the Sukkur Barrage damages were detected in Gate Nos. 44 and 47 on June 20, 2024. Preliminary assessment

revealed that Gate No. 44 twisted but intact in full section (geometry) but Gate No. 47 was substantially damaged.

To avoid further damages and to facilitate the emergency repair works of Gates No. 44 and 47, all Sukkur Barrage Gates were fully opened to evacuate the upstream pond. Consequently, the supply to all Canals off-taking from the Left and Right Side of Sukkur Barrage, such as Nara, Rohi, Khairpur East, Khairpur West, Northern Dadu, Rice and NW Canal was reduced until the restoration of Gates No. 44 and 47 of Sukkur Barrage on an emergency basis, he told.

The Secretary told that after the day-night efforts, the Engineers of the Irrigation Department

rebuilt and maintained the Sukkur Barrage Pond level on June 26, 2024, two days ahead of schedule. They also restored the supplies of water in Irrigation Canals off-taking from the Sukkur Barrage, he added.

The chief minister appreciated the efforts and hardwork of Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, Secretary Irrigation Zarif Khoro and their engineering team.

The Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro thanked the chief minister for his appreciation and mentioned that Sindh was saved from unimaginable financial loss and the resulting unrest.

The Secretary Irrigation informed the CM that Gate No. 44 had been fabricated and brought to Sukkur, placed in the Mechanical Workshop.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the meeting to review Administration matters. Special Advisor to CM Rashid Nasarullah, Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Home Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal, IGP Usman Anwar, Commissioner Nadir Chatta and other high ups are also present.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Maryam orders PHA in every district

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

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

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

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

## Power struggle underway in PTI: Azma Bokhari

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

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

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

You people claimed you came to change the fate of the province. But Ali Amin Gandapur and his associates are looting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's resources with both hands.



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

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

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

During a visit to the central control room of the Home Department here, the minister reviewed the monitoring system in place for the chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his companions. He was briefed by the relevant officers on the security measures.

Khawaja Salman Rafique stated that the processions and gatherings are being closely monitored

across the province, with officers from the Home Department working round-the-clock to ensure safety. He highlighted that extraordinary security measures have been implemented for 514 processions and 917 assemblies throughout Punjab. Additionally, 43 companies of the Pakistan Army and Rangers have been deployed to ensure peace during the chehlum.

The minister emphasised that all security personnel must remain vigilant and on duty until the safe return of all mourners. Accompanying the minister were Special Secretary Home Fazlur Rehman, Additional Secretary Usman Khalid, and other provincial officers.

## Bilal Yaseen checks milk quality at Sabeel points

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

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

Bilal Yaseen said that food safety teams of the Punjab Food Authority would remain deputed in surroundings of the Darbar till the last day of urs. He said that supervision of food items would also be carried out at food preparing centres in the surroundings of the Data Darbar and added that poor quality of food items would not be tolerated at all.



HYDERABAD: Sarwari Jamaat Head and Peoples Party (PPP) MPA, Makhdoom Jameel-uz-Zaman addresses to media persons during press conference held at Hyderabad press club.

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

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

Provincial Minister for Communication and Works Punjab Mr Sohaib Ahmed Bherth also inspected Adda Bootipal road (4.5 km) and directed to gear up the pace of work. He also directed the Highway team to get the technocrat opinion of LBDC Canal bridge.

He also inspected old GT road in Sahiwal city and directed to work on the plan of road repair. Furthermore, he visited Okara district where he was briefed about fifteen ongoing projects.

During his visit to Sahiwal district, Commissioner and DC briefed the minister about construction of the dual carriageway from Sheik Fazal to Chichawatni (25.15 km) for which an amount of Rs3927 million has been released. Sohaib Ahmed Bherth also inspected Adda Bootipal road (4.5 km) and directed to gear up the pace of work. He also directed the Highway team to get the technocrat opinion of LBDC Canal bridge.

He also inspected old GT road in Sahiwal city and directed to work on the plan of road repair. Furthermore, he visited Okara district where he was briefed about fifteen ongoing projects.

## Governor attends Nikkah ceremony of Edhi's grand son

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori attended the Nikkah ceremony of the grand son of eminent social worker late Abdul Sattar Edhi here on Sunday.

According to the spokesman, Governor Kamran Tessori participated in 'Dua-e-Nikkah' of Saad Edhi and extended best wishes for the couple and congratulated Faisal Edhi on his son's wedding.

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

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore police have made extensive security arrangements for the 981<sup>st</sup> urs of Hazrat Ali Hajveri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA).

According to a police spokesman on Sunday, over 4,000 police personnel have been deployed for the three-day urs celebrations. The security force includes six superintendents of police (SPs), 22 deputy superintendents of police (DSPs), 79 station house officers (SHOs), and 297 upper subordinates, ensuring a robust presence throughout the event.

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

The CCPO Lahore affirmed that stringent security measures are in place to protect thousands of devotees expected to attend from across the country. Visitors are subjected to thorough searches upon entry, with walk-through gates, metal detectors, and electric barriers being employed to ensure no security breach occurs. The CCPO also stated that security would be on high alert at all entry and exit points of the city during the event.

Senior police officers have been directed to maintain constant communication with Darbar administrators and ensure heightened security during the distribution of milk and food at the 'Sabeels'. Moreover, the CCPO has ordered that no vehicles or motorcycles be parked outside the designated parking areas to prevent any potential security risks.

## Home Minister takes notice of killings in Khairpur

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar Sunday took notice of the killing of two persons and five others, who got injured in a firing incident in Khairpur area of Sindh province.

A rickshaw driver was also killed in the firing. The minister had sought a detailed report from SSP Khairpur of the incident. He said that strict steps should be taken to establish the writ of law.

Lanjar said that Police patrolling and security measures should be made effective in the area.

The arrest of the culprits involved in the incident should be ensured as soon as possible, he directed. All possible medical facilities should be provided to the injured persons, he added.



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

## Health minister visits injured policeman at PINS

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique visited the Punjab Institute of Neurosciences (PINS) on Sunday to check on the condition of Bilal Javed, a policeman who was seriously injured in the Kacha area. The minister presented a bouquet to the injured officer as a gesture of solidarity and support.

The visit was attended by senior medical staff, including Medical Superintendent Dr. Umar Ishaq, Dr. Zubair3.

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

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



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

## DI Khan vulnerable to various climate-related natural hazards

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Dera Ismail Khan district is one of the districts of Pakistan that is most vulnerable to the effects of climate change which is evident from the recent flash floods and rising temperature.

The district is vulnerable to various climatic hazards like extreme high temperature, flash Flood, Riverine floods, urban flood, landslides, avalanches and heavy rainfall in the mountainous regions along Hindu Kush Range. The heavy rainfall in Baluchistan and Afghanistan generates heavy floods that travel through the mountains and enter plains of District DIKhan through different Zams.

The flood channels under different Zams have badly been deteriorated due to non-maintenance by the Rodh Kohi Department as they are silted up; embankments are breached and natural plants are grown on beds of the channels with the result they cannot take the pressure of unusual floods and the flood water overflows and makes its own way damaging infrastructure, destroying agriculture, killing livestock and human beings.

Under future climate change scenarios, DIKhan is expected to experience increased variability of river flows due to increased variability of precipitation and the melting of glaciers. Demand for irrigation water may increase due to higher

evaporation rates. Yields of wheat and rice are expected to decline subject to water availability. Mortality due to extreme heat waves may increase. Urban drainage systems may be further stressed by high rainfall and flash floods.

While talking to APP, Ahmad Zeb Khan the climate expert associated with Serve organisation suggested that to achieve the goal of sustained economic development, we have to work on these objectives. First, To pursue sustained economic growth by appropriately addressing the challenges of climate change. Second, To focus on pro-poor gender-sensitive adaptation, while also promoting mitigation to the extent possible in a cost-effective manner.

Third, To ensure water security, food security and energy security of the area in the face of the challenges posed by climate change. Fourth, To minimize the risks arising from the expected increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and tropical storms. and Fifth, To establish a proper mechanism of early warning system to minimize damages and loss of life, he added.

In 2022, the 233 villages of five Tehsils of District DIKhan were hit by hill torrents due to climate change, at almost mid night. The flood entered the houses and damaged them totally or partially. The main reason was choking of flood drains



LARKANA: View of stagnant sewage water creating problems for residents and commuters due to the worst sewerage system showing negligence of Municipal Corporation at Miro Khan Chowk in Larkana.

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

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

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

The speakers at the event included Ambassador @ Inamul Haque; Former Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce, Industries, and Production, Dr Gohar Ejaz; CEO of CPPA, Rihan Akhter; Former Chairman NDMA, Maj General Asghar Nawaz; Former SAPM CPEC, Khalid Mansoor; Senior Partner RIAA Barker Gillette, Husnain Naqvi; Partner Orridignam & Co., Shahid Raza; CEO Attock Oil,

Adil Khattak and GM WAPDA Irfan Rizvi, a news release said.

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

The conversation also addressed Pakistan's continued reliance on coal power plants, a practice that has been slowly reduced in various countries. Some speakers strongly advocated for the retirement of these plants, arguing that they are economically unviable in the long term. It was highlighted that natural gas should also not be sold in

Pakistan, unless absolutely necessary. A significant portion of the discussion focused on the role of IPPs in Pakistan's energy sector.

The panellists critically examined the capacity payments being made to these producers. These payments, they argued, have placed a considerable strain on the national economy, particularly by inflating energy costs and reducing the competitiveness of Pakistani goods in the international market. It was pointed out that the existing agreements with IPPs need to be revisited to ensure that they do not continue to hinder economic progress. It was discussed that investors must be held accountable for the high prices being charged and that there is a pressing need to renegotiate these contracts to align them with current economic realities. It was stressed that the issues in Pakistan's energy sector.



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

## Two Chinese companies to set up plants in Pakistan

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

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

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

He said Rainbow Industries would go into a joint venture with Shao Shing Chemicals soon,

adding with the Chinese investment our local dyes and chemicals industry would get the latest technology transfer and advancement.

Chughtai said the federal government has already announced a 10-year tax holiday, duty-free import of machinery and setting up units in the Special Economic Zones for foreign investors.

He was of the view that the law and order and energy tariffs are real challenges in the way of foreign investment in the country.

The Organiser of the Expo, Rashidul Haq, said that the two-day 9<sup>th</sup> Color & Chem Expo attracted more than 300 exhibitors representing the dyes, chemicals, and allied industries. They also included companies and their representatives from China, Malaysia, Turkey and Iran.

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

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

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

Addressing the delegation, Minister of Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain expressed eagerness for Iranian investment in the LPG, tire industry, and other sectors, assuring that

the government will provide all possible support. He stated that he would discuss the RD tax with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He emphasized the need to boost bilateral trade, noting that both countries would benefit. He also highlighted the importance of increasing people-to-people contacts to enhance trade cooperation, calling for Pakistan and Iran to advance economic collaboration.

The minister also recalled visiting Iran with former Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, noting that the memories of his trip are still vivid in his mind.

Talking on this occasion, the Iranian council general said that

Iran and Pakistan are brotherly Islamic countries, historical and cultural relations are established between the two, but effective measures are needed to promote trade relations between the two countries. He expressed resolve to increase cooperation with Punjab in agriculture, industry, energy and all sectors. The Iranian consul general inquired about the well-being of former Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain from the provincial minister and said that the Iranian Consulate had the honour of hosting Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

The head of the delegation, Babak Afghani, said that there are 93 companies in the group



ISLAMABAD: People busy in selecting and purchasing second hand shoes from vendor at Weekly Bazaar Peshawar Mor in Federal Capital.

## Railways collect Rs 79.2 mln from ticketless passengers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has collected an amount of Rs 79.2 million from ticketless passengers in a crackdown during the last seven months with the help of railway police and train staffers.

"Around 61,352 passengers found traveling without tickets in different trains and collected the said amount from them, which is deposited in the official bank account of the department," sources in the Ministry told APP.

They said Pakistan Railways has not the first time conducted an operation against ticketless passengers on a large scale, adding that these types of crackdowns had taken place daily.

The sources said that ticketless traveling was illegal, and those who were caught without a ticket were charged a ticket price

for the whole journey of the train besides the penalty. Those who do not pay are handed over to the railway police.

To a question, they said that Pakistan Railways Police claimed to have arrested a total of 43,84 accused due to their involvement in violations of rules and laws and also registered some 3,803 cases against them in eight Railways divisions in one and half years.

"Around 688 cases were registered in Peshawar Division, 584 in Rawalpindi, 11,03 in Lahore, 369 in Mughalpura workshops, 378 in Multan, 238 in Sukkur, 365 in Karachi, and 78 in Quetta Division," they added.

They said the Railways Police Help Desks had been established at all the major railway stations across the country.



QUETTA: A vendor displaying mangoes to attract the customers.

## PCMEA anticipates major export windfall from Int'l Carpet Expo

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf here Sunday appreciated the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) for providing crucial financial support to the upcoming international exhibition of handmade carpets, scheduled in Lahore from October 9 to 11, 2024.

He said that the upcoming 40<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition of Handmade Carpets will yield substantial export deals, bolstering the industry and generating valuable foreign exchange for Pakistan. He noted that numerous foreign buyers from regions like the US and

Europe have expressed interest in participating in the global event, with a final list of attendees to be compiled shortly. During a review meeting on preparations for the exhibition, held at the association's office, Usman Ashraf urged relevant government institutions to issue special instructions to commercial attachés at Pakistani embassies abroad, ensuring seamless support for the international event.

The representatives of TDAP also participated in the meeting and discussed various issues regarding the preparations of the exhibition. Senior central leader Abdul Latif Malik, senior member Riaz Ahmed.

## 1.92m olive saplings distributed among farmers

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

According to official sources, 1.32 million saplings were distributed free of cost by the Punjab Agriculture Department, while an additional 600,000 saplings were supplied under a national project at a 67% subsidy.

Secretary Sahu stated that every possible resource was being utilized to ensure agricultural development and the prosperity of farmers in the Pothohar region. A comprehensive transformation plan is being developed to modernize agriculture in the area, making it more aligned with contemporary practices.

The Pothohar region is considered highly suitable for cultivating high-value crops. In line with this, efforts are being made to promote the cultivation of avocados. Additionally, the region will see the introduction of organic farming practices in their true essence.

## Nine more gas meters severed over violations

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

The teams under the directions of General Manager, continued its inspection of private hospitals and residential consumers. According to the details, in Muzaffargarh, the task force disconnected a meter that had been relocated from one house to another. Another private hospital was found using a domestic connection for commercial purposes, and its meter was also disconnected.

In Multan city, seven meters were disconnected during various operations. One residential consumer's meter was being used in a hospital, leading to its disconnection. Additionally, two consumers had relocated their meters.

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

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

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

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



LAHORE: Consumers buying food items, vegetables and fruits at the Shadman Sunday Market in the provincial capital.

## Beggars' Influx unnerv shoppers ahead of school season in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The arrival of numerous beggars from various cities has created significant problems for shoppers in Peshawar, as residents prepare for the upcoming school season starting next month in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Despite begging being illegal under national laws, the city is experiencing a noticeable increase in beggars, including men, women, children, and individuals with disabilities on Sunday. These beggars are prominently visible at key locations such as crossing points, mosque entrances, and busy public areas, making shopping increasingly difficult.

On Sunday, areas such as Hashtnagri, Gantagar, Firdus, Nothia, Tehkal, Gulbahar, Faqirabad, Meena Bazaar, Karimpura, Shafi Market, Saddar Road, University Town, City Tower, Jawad Tower, and Deans Trade Centre were flooded with professional and non-professional beggars.

The surge in beggars is linked to high foot traffic at commercial hubs like Dean's Trade Centre and various bustling bazaars of Peshawar. Both professional and amateur beggars are employing a range of tactics to solicit donations, targeting shoppers and drivers at key intersections and near public facilities.



HYDERABAD: Laborers are packing bangles for selling at a workshop, during the hot weather of summer season, in Hyderabad.

## Price control task force chairperson inspects markets

SARGODHA (APP): Chairperson of Chief Minister's Task Force on Price Control, Salmi Butt, visited the main vegetable market and inspected the auction process in the presence of officers of the market committee.

She stressed the monitoring of the bidding process and instructed that the rate list should be issued in the morning and delivered to all shops and vendors. She said that shopkeepers should sell food items at fixed rates so that there is no need of action in the markets and bazaars.



FAISALABAD: A girl filling petrol at a petrol pump at Jail Road.

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

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

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

In his opening remarks, Mian Rashid Iqbal, President of MCCI, shared the critical need for PVTC to design training courses that meet the current demands of industries and enhance the quality of the workforce. "The industry is willing to collaborate and support PVTC in every possible way," he said. "The Multan chamber is ready

to provide all necessary information to PVTC to ensure that the skilled workers they produce can be readily absorbed by the industry, offering our young professionals ample employment opportunities."

Chairman PVTC, Khalid Masood Chaudhry, highlighted the council's efforts in providing comprehensive training opportunities to the youth. "PVTC is committed to equipping our young generation with the skills required to secure a bright future," he said. "So far, thousands of young men and women have received training from PVTC and are now contributing to various sectors. We aim to work closely with industries to introduce on-the-job training programs and improve workforce standards. This two-day session was organized to develop such collaboration."



HYDERABAD: All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tahir Provincial Sindh, Haji Abdul Majeed Memon addresses to media persons during press conference held at Hyderabad press club.

## Entrepreneurs crucial amid 22pc labour force share Financial literacy, change in mindset towards women SMEs,

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers at a report launch on financial inclusion for women entrepreneurs underscored the critical need to enhance financial literacy and awareness towards projecting women-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs as positive players of the market and end biases and uncondusive environment hampering their growth in trade as women comprise 22 percent of the total labour force in Pakistan.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) organised the Launch of the Report titled "Advancing Financial Inclusion for Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan" here on Sunday.

In his opening remarks, Joint Executive Director SDPI, Dr Vaqar Ahmed said the report is the third research conducted in collaboration with the FNF that sheds light on financial inclusion in the context of women

entrepreneurs. However, there would be other women stakeholders apart from the female entrepreneurs who needed deeper research so that their inclusion could be prioritized, he said and added, the SDPI's past research evidence shows that women's financial inclusion is directly correlated to the household level financial literacy. In this regard, this research becomes very important. Dr Vaqar noted that the issues around credit, taxation.

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

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

Israeli military strikes across Gaza killed 50 people on Saturday, Palestinian health authorities said. Victims of bombings over the past 48 hours remain lying on roads where fighting continues or trapped under rubble, the authorities said.

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

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

The latest deaths bring the military's losses in Gaza to 338 since it launched a ground offensive in the Palestinian territory on Oct 27.

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

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

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

Hamas has accused Israel of going back on issues it had previously agreed to in the talks. The group says the United States is not mediating in good faith.

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

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

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

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



Palestinians gather to receive aid outside a UN distribution centre at Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip.

## Putin is 'very rational', says ex-Iraq weapons inspector

**Monitoring Desk**  
STOCKHOLM: Former UN weapons inspector Hans Blix told this news agency he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin will not risk a catastrophe at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant amid mounting international concern over its safety.

The Kremlin leader is "very rational" and "knows what he's doing", said the former Swedish foreign minister, who repeatedly insisted that Iraq was not developing nuclear weapons before the Gulf War of 1990.

Blix, 96, who headed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from 1981 to 1997, spoke on a range of issues in an hour-long interview at his apartment in central Stockholm.

Blix later headed a team of UN inspectors tasked with determining whether Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. He was never able to confirm that.

His findings contradicted claims made by US president George W. Bush, who ordered the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

"It was a terrible mistake on the part of the US, based on erroneous information and a hubris that the US intelligence knew better than what we did," Blix said. "The Iraq War was an aberration." At the time, the US was not at risk of Russia or China intervening, Blix said, and the US and Britain took it upon themselves "to be the world's sheriffs".

## Meta claims unearthing Iran-linked hacking attempt

**Monitoring Desk**  
SAN FRANCISCO: Meta said on Friday it had warned US presidential campaigns to be wary after it claimed discovering an Iran-linked hacking attempt using the WhatsApp messaging service.

The statement is the latest from a tech giant of hacking threats ahead of the November election between Vice President Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump, after Google and Microsoft earlier claimed uncovering similar attempts attributed to Iran.

WhatsApp accounts linked to an Iranian "threat actor" sent messages pretending to be technical support for AOL, Google, Yahoo or Microsoft, according to Meta.

"This malicious activity originated in Iran and attempted to target individuals in Israel, Palestine, Iran, the United States and the UK," Meta said in a post.

"This effort appeared to have focused on political and diplomatic officials, and other public figures, including some associated with administrations of President Joe Biden and former president Donald Trump."

Accounts involved in what appeared to be "social engineering" — duping people into providing access to networks or vital data — were blocked, according to Meta.

An investigation linked the attempts to the same hacking group responsible for similar attacks aimed at political, military, diplomatic and other officials reported by Microsoft and Google, Meta said.



A member of the Bangladesh army directs trucks carrying relief supplies for flood-affected people in Feni, Bangladesh.



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

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

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: A somber atmosphere pervaded Ukraine's 33rd Independence Day on Saturday, as the nation's fight to repel Russia's full-scale invasion reached a 30-month milestone. No fireworks, parades or concerts were planned and instead Ukrainians marked the day with commemorations for civilians and soldiers killed in the war. Ukrainians flooded social media with messages of gratitude and support, greeting each other and thanking the soldiers on the front lines. In the outpouring of unity, there's a shared acknowledgment that the two-and-a-half years have been tough, with fatigue increasingly setting in.

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

## Indian fence sparks border tension with Bangladesh

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

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

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

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

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



Rohingya refugees gather to mark the seventh anniversary of their fleeing from neighbouring Myanmar to escape a military crackdown in 2017, during heavy monsoon rains in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

## Investigators consider manslaughter charges over yacht sinking

**Monitoring Desk**  
TERMINI IMERESE: Sicilian prosecutors said on Saturday they were investigating possible manslaughter after a superyacht sank killing seven people, as it emerged that trapped passengers scrambled for air pockets after it went down.

UK tech tycoon Mike Lynch, his 18-year-old daughter Hannah, four friends and the yacht's cook died when the British-flagged Bayesian sank in a storm before dawn on Monday.

"The Public Prosecutor's Office of Termini Imerese has registered a file with the state against unknown persons, hypothesising the crimes of negligent shipwreck and multiple negligent manslaughter," state prosecutor Ambrogio Cartosio told reporters on the Italian island.

But he said he was only announcing the probe due to the huge international interest in the case, stressing.

## Adani's Mumbai slum revamp struggles to secure land

**Monitoring Desk**  
MUMBAI: A joint-venture led by billionaire Gautam Adani is struggling to secure land to rehabilitate poor residents of one of Asia's largest slums in Mumbai, a government official said, posing a fresh challenge for the ambitious reconstruction plan. The Dharavi slum, about three-quarters of the size of New York's Central Park, featured in Danny Boyle's Oscar-winning 2008 movie "Slumdog Millionaire". Its open sewers and shared toilets, close to Mumbai's international airport, stand in contrast to India's development boom.

After winning the \$619 million bid last year, Adani Group plans to convert the 240 hectare (594 acre) slum into a modern city hub, but it has already faced protests from opposition political parties who say it received undue favours from the state government in awarding the contract. The group has denied the allegations.

Only those who lived in Dharavi before the year 2000 will get free homes in the redevelopment and a lot of the land needed to rehabilitate people - at least 580 acres for now - will be provided housing to the roughly 700,000 people considered ineligible. To build homes for those ineligible people, the Adani joint venture applied to various local and federal agencies.

## Egypt warns visiting US general on Lebanon risk

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

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

## Floods kill 13 in Indonesia's North Maluku, two injured

**Monitoring Desk**  
JAKARTA: Thirteen people were killed and two injured in Indonesia's North Maluku province on Saturday after floods in the east of the sprawling archipelago, authorities said.

The country's disaster management agency BNPB said the floods, caused by heavy rain since Saturday, also badly damaged 10 houses in Ternate city.

## South Africa plans to 'bomb' mice that eat albatrosses alive

**Monitoring Desk**  
JOHANNESBURG: Conservationists said on Saturday that they plan to bomb a remote South African island with tonnes of pesticide-laced pellets to kill mice that are eating albatrosses and other seabirds alive.

Hordes of mice are devouring the eggs of some of the world's most important seabirds that nest on Marion Island, about 2,000 kilometres southeast of Cape Town, and have started eating live birds, leading conservationist Mark Anderson said.

This includes the iconic Wandering Albatross, with a quarter of the world's population nesting on the Indian Ocean island.

"The mice have now, for the first time last year, been found to be feeding on adult Wandering Albatrosses," Anderson told a meeting of BirdLife South Africa, the country's leading bird conservation organisation.

Grotesque images presented at the meeting showed bloodied birds, some with flesh chewed off their heads.

Of the 29 species of seabirds that breed on the island, 19 are threatened with local extinction, the Mouse-Free Marion Project said. Mouse attacks have escalated in recent years, but the birds do not know how to respond because they evolved without terrestrial predators.

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

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

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

The Philippines on Sunday accused China of "aggressive and dangerous maneuvers" to block the resupply mission. China's coast guard, meanwhile, said it had taken "control measures" against a vessel that had "illegally" entered the waters and repeatedly dangerously approached Chinese ships. In the incident near the Sabina Shoal, the Philippine South China Sea task force said Chinese vessels rammed and used water cannons against a Philippine Bureau of Fisheries ship transporting food, fuel, and medical supplies for Filipino fishermen.

For its part, the Chinese coast guard said the Philippine ship "ignored repeated serious warnings and deliberately approached and rammed" China's law enforcement boat, resulting in a collision. It added that responsibility for the collision lies entirely on the Philippine side. China asserts sovereignty over nearly all of the South China Sea, including areas claimed by the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Brunei.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mexico has been asking the U.S. to expand the app's access to the south in an attempt to relieve the pressure migrants feel to continue north to at least Mexico City. In recent years, the Mexican government has tried to contain migrants in the south farther from the U.S. border, but the lack of work opportunities and housing in southern cities like Tapachula have pushed migrants north.

Mexico hopes that if migrants can wait for their appointments in the south they might not risk getting snatched by authorities without papers or by organized crime groups that prey on migrants travelling north. With an appointment, they could, in theory, move without interference.

US ambassador to Mexico calls proposed judicial overhaul a democracy "risk" and economic threat

Germin Alemán, a 31-year-old from Honduras travelling with his wife and three children, planned to register as soon as they reached Tapachula. "We're going to apply here, we're going to wait for the appointment," he said as they walked from the border toward Tapachula.

Others, however, still felt the pressure to get farther north. Many migrants often carry big debts and need to start paying them off as soon as possible.

## Venezuela opposition candidate issued summons over vote dispute

**Monitoring Desk**  
CARACAS: Venezuelan prosecutors have summoned opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia for questioning Monday as part of a criminal investigation following the country's disputed presidential election claimed by strongman Nicolas Maduro.

"Citizen Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia" is summoned "on August 26 at 10 am for an interview," prosecutors said Saturday, as part of an investigation into the opposition's publishing of electoral records which it claims Maduro was defeated.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab, a Maduro ally, had foreshadowed the summoning Friday, saying Gonzalez Urrutia would have to explain his "disobedience."

Saab said the opposition's website, which posted a detailed breakdown of election results, had "usurped" the powers of the Maduro-aligned CNE electoral council.

Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado was defiant, calling in a post on X for Venezuelans to take to the streets again on Wednesday.

"One month after our glorious victory, in which Edmundo Gonzalez was elected President, Venezuelans again take to the streets," she said, calling for supporters to come "with family, with your children, with your grandchildren and with your voting record in hand."

The CNE declared Maduro the winner of the July 28 election with 52 percent of votes cast but has refused to publish detailed results, claiming hackers had corrupted the data.

An observer mission from the US-based Carter Center said there was no evidence of a cyber attack.

The polling station-level results published by the opposition show that Gonzalez Urrutia, a 74-year-old retired diplomat, defeated Maduro with 67 percent of the vote. Maduro has called for the arrest of Gonzalez Urrutia, who has not been seen in public since he led a march on July 30 with Machado. Machado, banned from running in the election, is also in hiding.

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

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

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

Meanwhile, the Deputy Chairman Senate said that Pakistan values its fraternal relations with Azerbaijan and there is a need to increase cooperation between the two countries in the fields of economic and trade, investment, energy, defence, agriculture and natural resources.

The Deputy Chairman Senate said that there is an urgent need to promote investment and trade between the two countries and it is necessary to remove the existing obstacles for the improvement of the economy. He said that Par-

liamentary and institutional cooperation can help promote relations at the public level.

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

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

Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan said

that the parliaments have a heavy responsibility for peace and development in the region.

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

The Deputy Chairman briefed that the Indian government has set the worst example of cruelty and violation of human rights in occupied Kashmir. He said that the whole world should take strict measures against the ongoing cruelty and brutality in Palestine and for the freedom of the Palestinians Islamic countries need to adopt a common plan of action. He said that Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N Leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif are working for the development and prosperity of Pakistan. The Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov, agreed with the views of the Deputy Chairman of the Senate and said that Azerbaijan is keen to further develop its relations with Pakistan.



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

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

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

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

The meeting was attended by leaders from both parties. Ishaq Dar and Raja Pervaiz Ashraf co-chaired the meeting, while Rana

Sanaulah, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Malik Ahmad Khan represented the PML-N.

From the PPP side, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Hassan Murtaza attended the meeting, while Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, Nadeem Afzal Khan, and Ali Haider Gilani joined via video link. The meeting reviewed the progress on power-sharing commitments. After the meeting, Hassan Murtaza told the media that the dis-

cussions were constructive and positive progress was made. He clarified that the PPP is not seeking a share in power.

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

## BISP committed to uplifting downtrodden; a symbol of hope for millions of vulnerable individuals, families: Rubina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Rubina Khalid Sunday reiterated the BISP programme is committed to uplifting the downtrodden, saying it has become a symbol of hope for millions of vulnerable individuals and families nationwide.

Talking to a private news channel, Chairperson Rubina Khalid attributed the programme's success to the dedication and hard work of BISP's team and the support of the government and stakeholders.

She reiterated the programme's commitment to continuing its vital work and expanding its reach to even more vulnerable populations. Rubina Khalid announced the launch of a unique skill development program aimed at empowering deserving women and their family members.

She highlighted the significance of skill development in today's fast-paced economy, adding that empowering women with skills is essential for their socio-economic uplift.

This program will not only enhance their employability but also enable them to start their businesses, breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence, she added.

Rubina Khalid highlighted the introduction of a computerized system in BISP, aimed at ensuring transparency and efficiency in the program's operations.

This technological advancement has revolutionized the way BISP functions, enabling real-time monitoring and tracking of beneficiary data, payment disbursements, and program impact, she added.

The computerized system has also minimized the risk of errors and fraud, ensuring that benefits reach the intended recipients, she highlighted.

The Chairperson also emphasized that this technology-driven approach is a testament to BISP's commitment to innovation and excellence in serving the most vulnerable populations. Replying to a query, she said with the new banking system in place, BISP beneficiaries will have greater control over their finances enabling them to make informed decisions about their economic well-being. This enhanced financial autonomy is expected to have a positive impact on their overall quality of life, empowering them to break the cycle of poverty and build a brighter future for themselves.



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

## JI urges PML-N, PPP to tackle IPPs or face consequences

LAHORE (INP): Amir Jamaat-e-Islami's Hafiz Naem ur Rehman, has issued a stern warning to the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and its ally, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), declaring that they have 28 days to address issues with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) or face serious repercussions.

Speaking at a press conference in Mansura, Hafiz Naem criticized political parties for engaging in self-serving and interest-based politics, while neglecting critical issues like electricity and gas bills. He accused the parties of focusing on personal and political gain rather than addressing public concerns.

Naem highlighted the financial burden imposed on the public, revealing that the government had allocated 2 trillion rupees to IPPs without generating electricity. He called for a nationwide strike on August 28, supported by the business community, and criticized the government's tax

relief to IPPs while ordinary citizens face escalating taxes.

He also condemned the contracts with IPPs, alleging that agreements were made under false pretenses and that those responsible should be held accountable. Naem argued that the elimination of IPPs favored by the Sharif family could significantly reduce electricity costs. Further, he addressed the issue of corruption, citing a Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) report that exposed 1.2 trillion rupees in annual corruption, with tax evasion and bribery undermining the tax system. Naem drew a parallel with the situation in Bangladesh, mentioning the historical persecution faced by Jamaat-e-Islami there, and emphasized the party's enduring role in Pakistan's political landscape since its pre-independence days.

He concluded by asserting that Jamaat-e-Islami's contributions to national defense, legal reforms, and public service are well-documented.

## President, PM flay terrorist attack on Police check post in Kurram

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a police check post in Kurram.

In a message, he paid tribute to the police personnel who embraced martyrdom in the attack.

He offered his heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family members, praying for grant of courage for them to bear the loss with equanimity.

He also prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the attack.

President Zardari also prayed to Allah Almighty to grant high ranks to the martyred in Jannah.

## Thirteen new campuses to be established in Karachi: Dr. Khalid

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training and MQM-Pakistan Convener Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Sunday said that after the 18th amendment, only campuses could be established in Karachi instead of erecting any new university buildings here.

The minister witnessed the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the National College of Arts (NCA) and Preston Institute of Management Science and Technology (PIMSAT) for the provision of space to establish the NCA campus.

Talking to media persons after that MoU, he said that thirteen new campuses would be established in the city.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool

## Mohsin Naqvi visits Data Darbar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The competition was held on internationally recognized classes of boats including Laser Radial and Enterprise categories. Pakistan Naval Academy won the competition with Silver medal in Laser Radial and a Gold medal in the Enterprise category, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

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



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

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

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## Faisal Jamali chairs meeting Govt. taking emergency measures in wake of monsoon rains

Independent Report USTA MUHAMMAD: A meeting was held in the office of Deputy Commissioner Usta Muhammad, chaired by Provincial Minister for Health, Sardar Zada Faisal Khan Jamali. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Usta Muhammad, Jaleel Ahmed, and other district heads and their representatives. The meeting discussed the monsoon rains and pre-emptive measures in detail. Addressing the meeting, Provincial Minister for Health Sardar Zada

Faisal Khan Jamali said that the provincial government is working to take emergency measures in all districts to address the monsoon rains and potential flood situation. He emphasized that all district heads should remain at their posts to take immediate action in case of any unpleasant situation and ensure the safety of life and property. The Minister directed the officers of the Irrigation, Communications, and Construction Department, Municipal Corporation to keep their machinery and staff ready.

## Weather alert: Low pressure system expected to enter Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Regional Meteorological Center has issued a weather alert, predicting a strong low-pressure system to enter the eastern and southern regions of Balochistan.

The system is expected to enter the province by tomorrow evening and may remain in the area for the next week. The low-pressure system may bring heavy rainfall with strong winds to areas including

Nascerabad, Kalat, Lasbela, and Loralai. Additionally, scattered thunderstorms and heavy rainfall are also expected in Harnai, Ziarat, Kachi, Sibi, Jhal Magsi, and Khuzdar. The heavy rainfall may pose a risk of flash flooding in these areas. The Regional Meteorological Center has warned of a high risk of flooding in districts including Awaran, Lasbela, Hub, Khuzdar, Kohlu, Dera Bugti, Loralai, Barkhan, Musakhel.



QUETTA: Children filling their canes with clean water at Rehmat Colony Sakri road due to shortage of clean drinking water in the city.

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

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

Muqam lambasted the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for its inability to tackle the province's worsening situation, citing foreign funding as a major contributor to the chaos. He alleged that ministers are engaged in a bitter struggle for shares of this funding, using it to fuel protests while claiming the treasury is empty when it comes to providing relief to the people.

The Minister also took aim at a certain indi-

vidual, criticizing their hypocrisy in chanting anti-American slogans during the day and supporting the country at night. He lamented the government's failure to address the pressing issues of insecurity and unemployment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a positive note, Muqam announced that the long-awaited Abbottabad Interchange will be formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in September, fulfilling a long-standing demand of the people.

With his characteristic candor, Muqam's press conference sent a strong message to anti-state elements and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, promising a new era of accountability and transparency.

## Speaker BA condoles death of passengers in bus accident

Independent Report QUETTA: The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai has expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives of zayreen in the fatal road accident occurred on Makran coastal highway.

In a condolence statement issued here on Sunday, the Speaker Provincial Assembly said that he condoles death of the passengers with their bereaved families and share grief with them.

He said that he is standing with the bereaved families in the time of grief. The speaker also prayed for early recovery of those injured in the bus accident.

## PTA announces new list of SIMs to be blocked

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has announced that all SIM cards issued in the names of deceased individuals will be blocked effective October 15, 2024.

The PTA has urged citizens who wish to transfer such SIMs to their own names to complete the necessary documentation at the relevant SIM provider's franchise or service center to avoid disruption.

This move is part of

## Police rescue abducted cop in Kacha operation

SADIQABAD (INP): Sadiqabad police successfully rescued Constable Ahmed Nawaz, who had been abducted by bandits in the Kacha area, in exchange for a prisoner.

The constable was taken captive two days ago after the bandits killed 13 policemen in an attack on police vehicles with rockets in Rahim Yar Khan.

Sources revealed that a deal between the police and the bandits led to the constable's release, with convicted murderer Jabbar Lolai reportedly freed from jail in exchange.

The police spokesperson confirmed the safe recovery of Constable Ahmed Nawaz following the operation in Kacha. The rescue has brought immense relief and joy to his family.

DPO Sadiqabad Rizwan Umar Gondal emphasized that the safe recovery of Constable Ahmed Nawaz was the police's top priority.

## DC Harnai opens Zarghoon Ghar Road after clearing debris

Independent Report HARNAI: Thanks to the special interest and efforts of Deputy Commissioner Harnai, Arif Khan Kakar, the Zarghoon Ghar road, which was closed due to heavy rainfall, has been reopened for traffic from Harnai to Tor Shor.

Recently, the road was severely damaged at various points due to landslides and rockfalls, causing difficulties for the public in transporting goods and traveling. To address these issues, the Deputy Commissioner worked tirelessly to clear the road and restore traffic flow, utilizing heavy machinery to remove debris and smooth out the road.



QUETTA: Director General Health Services Balochistan Dr. Aminullah Khan Mandokhail presiding over a meeting regarding safety from monkey pox and screening at borders.