

# Independent

dailyindish@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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## Sends birthday wishes to PM Shehbaz President Xi reaffirms time-tested Pak-China ties

PM thanks President Xi for "gracious gesture" of birthday greetings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday sent a congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, extending his warm birthday wishes and reaffirming the promotion of China-Pakistan strategic cooperation and the construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The letter received by Prime Minister Shehbaz on his 73rd birthday from President Xi is an extraordinary development in solidifying the diplomatic relationship between both countries, according to a PM Office press release.

Conveying his good wishes to the prime minister, Xi said that Pakistan and China had been enjoy-

ing a strategic partnership through thick and thin marked by mutual trust and support which remained unaffected by any changing international scenario.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for extending the warm wishes on his 73rd birthday.

"I am grateful for this gracious gesture that reflects the iron brotherhood and All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Pakistan and the People's Republic of China," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline in response to a congratulatory letter he received from President Xi.



President Asif Ali Zardari, Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al-Malkiy and Chief Minister Punjab and Governor Sindh are cutting cake on the National Day of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), in Islamabad.

President Zardari says

## Pakistan committed to further strengthening ties with KSA

PM reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to collaborate with KSA to promote peace, stability, development in region

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in the areas of economy, trade, defence, culture, education and people-to-people contacts.

The president expressed these views while addressing the National Day Reception of KSA, hosted by Saudi Embassy to celebrate the 94th Anniversary of the National Day of the KSA here. The event

was attended by the federal ministers, diplomats, dignitaries, and civil and military officers.

While extending heartfelt felicitations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud and the people of Saudi Arabia on their National Day, the president highlighted that both brotherly countries enjoyed excellent relations in various fields and had always sup-

ported each other during challenging times.

The president expressed deep appreciation for the vision of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the significant progress achieved by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He remarked that the bold initiatives taken by the Crown Prince would propel the country towards greater progress and prosperity. The president wished Saudi Arabia continued success on this transformative jour-

## SC's detailed verdict declares PTI eligible for reserved seats Election authorities denying major political party recognition infringes electorate's rights: SC

Constitution doesn't prevent any party from fielding candidates; Judgment nullifies ECP's decision to allocate seats to other parties.

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Monday released its detailed verdict on the July 12 order in the reserved seats case, which had declared the PTI a parliamentary party.

The 8-5 majority July order had declared ex-premier Imran Khan's PTI eligible for seats reserved for women and minorities, dealing a major setback to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's ruling coalition.

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah had announced the majority verdict, which was supported by seven other judges: Justices Munib Akhtar, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Ayesha A Malik, Athar Minalah, Syed Hasan

Azhar Rizvi, Shahid Waheed and Irfan Saadat Khan.

The case had been heard by a 13-member bench — Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail had penned a minority judgment; Justices Aminuddin Khan and Naeem Akhtar Afghan in their ruling had rejected the pleas for reserved seats; and Justice Yahya Afridi had also dismissed the Sunni Ittehad Council's petitions.

Despite the 8-5 split, all 13 judges had declared the PTI a parliamentary party as they ruled that out of a list of 80 MNAs, 39 belonged to the PTI while

41 were given the chance to resubmit their party affiliation.

The 70-page judgement released today, available on the SC's website, was authored by Justice Shah, who is set to succeed incumbent CJP Isa as the top judge in October.

The verdict states: "When election authorities engage in actions [...] such as unlawfully denying the recognition of a major political party and treating its nominated candidates as independents, they not only compromise the rights of these candidates but also significantly infringe upon the rights of the electorate and corrode their own institutional legitimacy."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addressing an important press conference.

## Lt Gen Asim Malik appointed new DG ISI



Asim Malik is currently serving as Adjutant General in GHQ who has previously commanded the Infantry Division in Balochistan and the Infantry Brigade in Waziristan.

He has also received Sword of Honor in his course, whereas apart from this, he has also been posted as Chief Instructor National Defence University (NDU) and Instructor Command and Staff College Quetta.

Lieutenant General Asim is also a graduate of Fort Leavenworth and Royal College of Defence Studies and has also served in the Military Operations Directorate before his current assignment.

## GoB taking serious steps to provide better medical facilities to masses, says Minister Health

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Health, Bakht Muhammad Kakar has stated that the government is taking serious steps to provide better health facilities to people in the province.

Health was speaking on occasion of his visit to the Health Ministry in the Civil Secretariat on Monday.

He said that the government is endeavouring to ensure departmental reforms for provision of quality services of health in the province.

It may be mentioned here that it was the maiden visit of Bakht Muhammad Kakar after his appointment as the Minister Health.

The Secretary Health Saleh Muhammad Baloch briefed the Minister about the provision of services and ongoing projects of the Health department.

He thanked the Saudi Government and ambassador for their cooperation during difficult times, saying, "Saudi Arabia has always stood by Pakistan, whether during floods, earthquakes, economic or other challenges."

## Chairman PkMAP stresses need on imparting basic education to kids in respective mother languages

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chairman Pashtoonkhaw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Mehmood Khan Achakzai has underlined the need to impart basic education to the children in their respective mother languages.

He stressed that basic education should be imparted to the children in their mother languages so that they are able to understand better.

He said that the whole world is agreed on that human being learns better in one's mother language and progresses.

These and similar other views were expressed by the Chairman PkMAP while speaking to the media persons on occasion of his participation in the Pashtun Culture Day programme arranged by the PkMAP at Sadiq Shaheed Football ground on Monday.

The leaders of party, workers and other people belonging to different walks of life participated in large number.

Their support has been unparalleled."



QUETTA: Different delegations meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

## Naqvi visits Saudi Embassy on National Day of Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday visited the Saudi Embassy on the occasion of National Day of Saudi Arabia in the diplomatic enclave.

He was received by the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia's National Day and expressed good wishes for the Saudi Royal Family and the people of Saudi Arabia.

The Interior Minister congratulated Ambassador Al-Maliki on Saudi Arabia's National Day and expressed good wishes for the Saudi Royal Family and the people of Saudi Arabia.

He thanked the Saudi Government and ambassador for their cooperation during difficult times, saying, "Saudi Arabia has always stood by Pakistan, whether during floods, earthquakes, economic or other challenges."

Their support has been unparalleled."

## Azam Tarar says Lot of questions still unanswered in SC reserved seats judgement

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Monday said that a lot of questions were still unanswered in the detailed judgement announced by the Supreme Court in the reserved seats case.

peets, the law minister said while addressing a press conference.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), he said, had not been a party in the reserved seats case at any forum, including the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Peshawar High Court (PHC) or the SC.

He said courts were used to give decisions on principles that who had filed the case and what relief was prayed by the petitioner.

Such questions were not answered in the reserved seats case as the apex court seemed to have not examined those as-

pects, the law minister said while addressing a press conference.

Azam Tarar said that independent candidates had joined the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) fully and that their move was irreversible as per the law.

He said that the ECP was an independent institution working under constitutional oath and it had to render its responsibility under the law.

Similarly, he said, that the legislation was the sole prerogative of the Parliament. The judgement had not commented on the amendments in the election law, he added.

The minister said that the review petition had not become ineffective after the announcement of detailed judgment in the reserved seats case.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti in a group photo with Provincial Ministers Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Parliamentary Secretary Nawabzada Zareen Magso on eve of Pashtun Culture Day

## Provincial Ministers greet CM on Pashtun Culture Day: National solidarity can be promoted by highlighting cultures at national level, maintains Chief Minister

Mir Sarfraz Bugti says all nationalities living in Pakistan are playing role in country's development & prosperity with national spirit; vows to improve service delivery by making departments efficient; urges Provincial Ministers & Parliamentary Secretaries to play effective role in solving public issues

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the national solidarity can be promoted by highlighting cultures at the national level.

are playing their role in its development and prosperity. The Chief Minister was speaking to the Provincial Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries who met him and extended greetings of Pashtun Culture Day here at the Chief Minister's secretariat on Monday.

The Provincial Ministers discussed with the Chief Minister about the performance of their respective departments besides taking up the issues being faced by the people.

He said that culture plays key role in highlighting identity of every area. He said that there is a lesson of love, respect, harmony and compatibility in the Pashtun culture.

Those who met the Chief Minister were included Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Mir Sadiq Umrani and Parliamentary Secretary, Nawabzada Zarin Khan Magso.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that it is our priority to bring improvement in the service delivery through departmental reforms in the province so as to resolve the issues being faced by general public.

## Governor withdraws order about summoning of BA's session

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has withdrawn order regarding summoning of session of Balochistan Assembly.

According to the notification of provincial assembly's secretariat, the Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has withdrawn his order regarding the session of assembly, which was summoned at 03:00 PM, on Tuesday (today).

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Maliki.

## Pashtun culture day celebrated in style in Quetta, different other parts of Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pashtun Culture Day was celebrated in style in Quetta and different other parts of Balochistan province on Monday.

Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail was the chief guest.

Different colourful and cultural programmes and activities were organized to mark the celebration of Pashtun Culture Day.

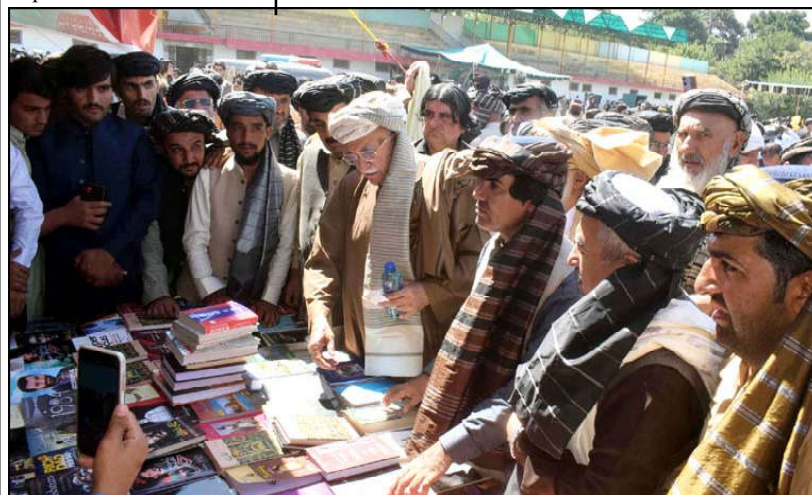
Clad in the beautiful typical Pashtun attire, Jaffar Mandokhail participated in different programme.

These events were organized by different political parties and independent groups marking the celebrations on the Culture Day.

Similarly, the Pashtun Culture Day programmes were also arranged at Sadiq Shaheed football ground and Quetta Metropolitan Corporation lawn the same day.

The Pashtun National Network organized the colourful Pashtun Culture day event at the Darbar Marriage Hall where the Governor Balochistan,

The Pashtun Culture Day programme was arranged by Pashtunkhaw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) at Sadiq Shaheed football ground while at QMC lawn, the event was organized by Pashtunkhaw National Awami Party (PKNAP).



QUETTA: Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Chairman, Mehmood Khan Achakzai take keen interest at a stall during ceremony on the occasion of Pashtun Culture Day, at Sadiq Shaheed Ground in Quetta.

# Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Tuesday September 24, 2024

## Fancy tax scheme

Governments propose, bureaucrats dispose — often relegating 'plans' to an existing pile of schemes gathering dust. The 'drastic measures' suggested by the country's tax bureaucracy to strengthen 'enforcement and compliance' are no different from similar, discarded strategies to boost revenue collection. To begin with, the new tax enforcement mechanism goes against the very objective of broadening the tax net and documenting the economy, as it is squeezing middle-class taxpayers further while letting tax evaders off the hook.

That is not surprising, since the new measure perpetuates a tax policy that burdens compliant taxpayers, instead of bringing tax evaders into the net. The enforcement scheme, approved by the prime minister, stops those who do not pay their income tax from purchasing assets such as cars, immovable property and financial instruments, and from opening bank accounts. However, it does not propose any step to abolish the category of non-filers that exists only in Pakistan. Likewise, FBR proposes penalising unregistered and non-compliant businesses — manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, etc — hoping that the new steps against non-filers and non-compliant businesses will force them to eventually become taxpayers. The scheme divides active taxpayers into two distinct classes: those who declare their annual income as less than Rs10m, and those who report an income above this threshold. The proposed tax enforcement and compliance project assumes, without any evidence though, that every taxpayer falling in the first category must have underreported their incomes and should be treated as tax thieves and at par with those who do not file their taxes.

Thus, they are also liable to face the same restrictions when they go shopping for cars and immovable property or invest their money in financial instruments, unless they can explain their 'source of income'. They, nevertheless, are allowed to maintain bank accounts. However, no questions will be asked of those whose declare an annual income that is greater than Rs10m. For them, everything will be kosher.

More importantly, the mechanism increases the discretionary powers of the taxmen and opens new avenues of corruption for them, while simultaneously overriding the provisions contained in the laws to selectively and randomly audit the accounts of a certain percentage of taxpayers every year to detect underreporting of incomes. Similarly, the tax laws also provide for punitive actions against those who under-declare their incomes in their annual tax statements or do not pay taxes at all. If there are any legal loopholes, those should be plugged forthwith. We do not need new fancy mechanisms or schemes to tax those who do not pay their taxes or punish those who steal taxes. What we need is an equitable and just tax system, an efficient and honest machinery, and, above all, strong political will to broaden the base and boost revenues.

Maleeha Lodhi

At a time when the country is facing mounting economic, political and security challenges, the government has been expending most of its energy on either countering the opposition or trying to arbitrarily amend the Constitution. This has become a fatal distraction from governance. It is also counterproductive. Far from weakening the opposition, it is injecting greater resolve in opposition ranks to push back against the government's actions.

On the constitutional amendment, the government beat a hasty retreat as it failed to muster the necessary parliamentary numbers for the sweeping changes it sought.

Earlier this month, the PML-N government and its allies made a frantic attempt to push a controversial constitutional package through parliament in a politically motivated move. It kept the contents of the amendment under wraps, allowed no debate, yet expected lawmakers to blindly support what they had not even seen.

The aim of the judicial

re-engineering was to undermine the independence of the superior judiciary and subordinate it to the executive. Members of the legal fraternity rightly condemned this as an assault on the Constitution. The proposed establishment of a constitutional court packed with judges and headed by a judge chosen by the prime minister will denude the Supreme Court of its jurisdiction in constitutional cases.

Another provision was designed to ensure the continuance of Qazi Faez Isa, who is due to retire in October, as chief justice. The move came after a series of clashes between the government and judiciary and official frustration with judgments seen as advantaging the opposition. But for all its frenetic efforts, the government faced a setback and was compelled to 'postpone' tabling the constitutional amendment for lack of the needed two-thirds majority. But it is now set to defy the Supreme Court order on reserved seats.

Meanwhile the government's efforts to contain Imran Khan's PTI have continued. It was ex-

## Fatal distraction

emphised by the restrictions and obstacles placed in the path of the party's public rally in Islamabad and arrests of several of its leaders. Its Lahore jalsa encountered similar impediments. This was only the latest coercive measure taken against PTI, which over the past year has involved innumerable cases against its leaders.

Aggression, however, begets aggression. The opposition sought to resist such actions by becoming more combative. PTI lawmakers are adamant on continuing their protests in parliament and outside.

The PML-N-led government has failed to see it has more to lose from unremitting confrontational politics. The political calm needed for the country to solve its fundamental problems is obviously being upended by escalation in political tensions. This has fuelled uncertainty and left the public in a state of despondency. No surprise, then, that a recent opinion survey conducted by Ipsos found 89 per cent of people felt the country was headed in the wrong direction. Nine out of 10 Pakistanis lacked confidence in the country's

future.

Parliamentary proceedings have been reduced to theatrical displays of unseemly conduct and slanging matches between the treasury and opposition benches. Instead of debating the issues that confront the country and worry the public, parliamentarians on both sides of the aisle seek to demonise each other. Talk of a dialogue between the government and opposition has remained just that — talk about talks, with neither side showing any seriousness.

Every so often, statements in parliament by government leaders about a dialogue have not led to any outreach to the opposition. For their part, PTI leaders have reiterated they will only talk to the establishment as they see the government lacking any power or legitimacy. In any case, the constitutional amendment attempt, vigorously opposed by PTI, only widened the government-opposition divide.

All this has familiar echoes of the past — a government unwilling to engage with the opposition, jailing opposition leaders, trying

to steamroll legislation and a desperate opposition in constant protest mode against a backdrop of economic gloom, weak governance and ubiquitous establishment pulling the strings from behind the scenes.

This seems like the rerun of an old movie. But it doesn't minimise the risks for the country's stability. The risks are even greater than in the past because of the intensely polarised state of the country and unprecedented confluence of challenges.

The economic challenge is, of course, the most consequential. The government might think that with the IMF expected to soon approve a \$7 billion bailout package, the worst of the country's economic troubles will be over. But the real task lies ahead to implement a tough Fund programme and take other difficult measures to stabilise an economy that is not yet out of the woods.

What the government seems unwilling to acknowledge is that political turmoil and uncertainty puts any sustainable economic recovery at risk. It also makes it harder to implement necessary but

unpopular measures. An economic rebound can only be sustained by building a high level of confidence which requires a stable and predictable political environment.

The country's deteriorating internal security situation also merits greater attention from the government. In the first eight months of the year, 757 people were reportedly killed in violent incidents. August was a particularly deadly month, with over 100 people killed in a fresh wave of militant attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On one day alone — Aug 26 — terrorist violence claimed the lives of over 50 people across Balochistan as militants stormed police stations, executed passengers on a bus, blocked roads and blew up railway tracks.

This should have prompted an urgent meeting of the National Security Committee. But the government did not convene one, while the interior minister made the astonishing claim that only one SHO (station house police officer) was enough to handle terrorism in the province. — Courtesy Dawn

Shahid Kardar

The task of the country's population has been reduced to keeping power sector entities afloat, by bearing unaffordable tariffs. And yet the sector's financial viability remains in doubt. How did we get here? The reasons include incompetence, misgovernance and unadulterated theft. The terms were poorly negotiated with investors.

Agreements with private IPPs were drafted with limited professional input, stained by issues of patronage and lack of transparency. The issues include currency mismatch — payments to them were denominated in dollars against revenue streams in rupees — generous concessions (for example, sovereign guaranteed returns on equity of 15 per cent in dollar terms and income tax exemptions during the contracted period), and the government covering all risks.

What's more bizarre is that government-owned power plants, managed by non-professionals, were established on the same terms as those bestowed on privately owned ones. 'Circular debt' is the outcome of these fundamental issues

that have rendered the economy uncompetitive and thus a huge constraint to sustainable growth.

Examples of incompetence include the slow pace of expansion of transmission and distribution (T&D) systems compared with the installed capacity of generation. Their capacity today is merely 22,000 MW (add to it the Lahore-Matari transmission line operating at 40pc of its designed capacity), resulting in 50pc of the generation facility being utilised but still receiving capacity payment. This liability has become excruciating, with the idle capacity payment increased from 60pc to 85pc under the 2015 policy.

The currency mismatch has induced tariff increases following the sharp adjustment in the rupee's value — from the rate when agreements were signed — and higher interest rates. This contributed to reduced demand, for reasons including the closure of several textile units and the shift off-grid by some with their own power arrangements. Sluggish growth and subdued demand necessitated that obligations for capacity payments be discharged by raising the rate per unit for

recovery from fewer consumers, a subject of widespread debate, if not anger. The burden is made more painful by taxes of almost 30pc of the electricity price.

The result is that whereas capacity utilisation costs are 30-35pc globally, ours are now 62-70pc. More importantly, 50pc of capacity payments are to government-owned generation plants. Of the remainder, 35pc goes to Chinese-imported, coal-fired, dollar-indexed projects, with the unit cost much higher than that of local coal-based plants. Other sectoral issues have been over-invoicing by IPPs, with the Central Power Purchasing Agency looking the other way, supplemented by Nepra's lack of regulatory oversight. Several public sector Gencos are old and outdated plants, resulting in inefficient fuel consumption, with low utilisation (2.7pc in the case of Jamshoro) but with a bloated idle workforce.

To address the issues, the starting point should be the Gencos commissioned by the public sector. The old ones should be quickly phased out, thereby not only minimising the payout on capacities but also enabling the operation of efficient units. The terms should be renegotiated for the remaining, with lending banks (contract period, invoicing currency considering that even local resources are being priced in foreign currency, the dollar-indexed rate of return on equity, etc.). Public sector Gencos being dollar-based and dollar-indexed, the government cannot expect to negotiate different terms for privately owned IPPs. In fact, the government should take the entire associated debt onto its balance sheet to be serviced through general revenues, instead of burdening the economy's competitiveness through high tariffs.

The decision to extend the tenure of the contracts of IPPs set up under the 1994 policy was a poor one. The sustainable choice is to persuade them — the contracted period having been completed and the debt paid off — that generated energy would be procured in rupees, and only if it is at competitive rates.

The units established under the 2002 and 2006 policies, mostly by Pakistanis, should be persuaded to accept upfront a significant percentage — not the full dues — of capacity-related commitments for the

remaining contracted period of roughly two to three years, with their debt obligations discharged. Thereafter, their contracts should be renegotiated along the lines proposed for the 1994 policy.

However, for Chinese IPPs launched in 2016-17 (guaranteed 20pc in dollars), a different treatment will be required as they would resist any revision in the contracts, arguing that their contracts factored in the lessons learned from the projects commissioned under the 1994 and 2002 policies. Two possible options could be: a) extend the contract period, and b) the release of some capacity to be freely traded in the market. Finally, taxes on bills should be lowered, employing several other options to control the fiscal deficit. These interventions will enable, in the medium (three to five years) term, full exploitation of rapid technological developments in renewable energy options.

These efforts should be complemented by adequate and timely investments to address the technical inadequacies and governance issues of T&D systems.

To this end, several reforms are required in service delivery, including: a) simplification of the tariff structure, which is littered with several bands for each consumer category and encumbered by a host of cross-subsidies; b) examining the potential to outsource Discoms' management and installation of smart meters (the prepaid variety) to tackle the 17pc technical and distribution losses, corruption, consumer theft of electricity and the weak effort to collect bills amounting to some Rs600 billion (factors constraining this option, especially the single-buyer, single-seller in the value-chain, were discussed in the 'Privatisation of Discoms' in these columns); c) pricing energy on a marginal cost basis to stimulate demand and contribute to capacity payments (the scope will depend on the transmission system's capacity); d) forcing public sector defaulters to pay up or get disconnected; e) withdrawing concessional electricity provisions; and f) adopting transformer-based load-shedding, instead of the present feeder-based one. — Courtesy Dawn

## Unsustainable demand

Waqas Bin Najib

Pakistan's energy problems are broader than those in the electricity sector. Our domestic natural gas reserves are depleting. We import liquefied natural gas (LNG) to meet the country's increasing demand.

The demand for natural gas, like electricity, is becoming increasingly unsustainable. Households account for 35 per cent of the country's total gas consumption. The power sector consumes 30pc, while industry uses only 15pc for various processes. The fertiliser industry consumes 8pc of the total.

Some industries use natural gas to generate power for self-consumption. These captive power industries, around 1,200 in number, account for 11pc of gas consumption. This equals 10,000 GWh of annual electricity consumption and roughly 3,000 MW of power capacity.

Transitioning this industry to the power grid will improve the electricity consumer mix, reduce transmission and distribution losses, and help lower electricity costs. The power sector can see a positive annual impact of over Rs350 billion. An estimated one per cent reduction in the average transmission and distribution (T&D) loss and improved revenue can reduce the average power tariff by 10pc.

However, like electric utilities, the industry is also a critical consumer of gas utilities. The industry's transition will negatively affect the gas consumer mix and increase gas utility losses. Essentially, we will be transferring the issues of the electricity sector to the gas sector. If the transition is planned correctly, the gas sector could be in a better position

to manage risks than the electricity sector.

In terms of implementation, the main challenge for shifting the captive industry is the electric grid interconnection for independently operating industries. It is estimated that about 40pc of captive industries, particularly larger ones, do not have a grid connection. To shift these industries, they must be connected to the grid. Industry must provide land and pay the interconnection cost, which varies depending on the industry's size. Smaller industries (less than 5 MW) will need an 11 kV feeder connection requiring substations, while larger industries will require a dedicated high-voltage grid station.

Electric utilities must assess the capacity of their T&D networks to supply power to industries moving to the electric grid. They must also guarantee a reliable and high-quality electricity supply, free from outages or fluctuations, especially for the continuous process industry, which cannot afford interruptions. This will necessitate improved asset management and operations. Utilities should also provide compact grid station options to minimise the land requirement and interconnection costs.

Most captive industries already have a grid connection, so they can be immediately shifted if grid capacity is available. However, a transition plan must be developed in consultation with the industries, especially those that do not have existing connections. Building the interconnections and enhancing the transmission and distribution grids will require careful planning and may take up to two years.

Gas utilities must also adapt to the changing

landscape to manage its impact. The government's gas allocation policy significantly affects their financial viability. With reduced industrial consumption, losses will increase if the gas is redirected to domestic consumers. The policy should target lowering domestic gas consumption and transitioning the residential sector to LPG, a more efficient alternative. Any surplus gas should be allocated to the power and processing industries rather than the residential consumers.

Natural gas pricing will play a crucial role in managing the transition and reducing losses for gas utilities. Currently, the industry subsidises domestic gas consumption while paying for imported LNG. Like the electricity sector, the gas sector faces a 'circular debt' build-up due to unrecovered service costs.

The gas tariff should be based on the actual cost of service. Therefore, it is critical to move to a pricing model based on the Weighted Average Cost of Gas, which covers the total cost of gas procurement, including domestic and imported LNG. Some provinces with sufficient gas reserves have opposed the WACOG so far. However, in a policy framework aiming for uniform national pricing for all energy sources (petroleum, electricity, natural gas), it is logical to implement WACOG pricing for natural gas.

Without a planned transition, improved gas allocation, and change in gas pricing, the industry's transition from gas to the electric grid will not be beneficial. Policymakers should consider all factors and develop a plan to improve service delivery to citizens, lower the industry's energy costs, and stimulate economic growth. — Courtesy Dawn

## Climate under siege

Masood Lohar

Following extreme heatwaves in almost every corner of the world, heavy rains and floods shocked the global community. This is becoming a pattern.

The recent past witnessed an unprecedented series of extreme weather events across South Asia and neighbouring regions, with devastating impacts on lives, infrastructure, and economies. A powerful monsoon system wreaked havoc, triggering catastrophic floods, landslides, and storms across India, Bangladesh, China, and Pakistan.

Not too long ago, a thunderstorm-laden monsoon swept into southern Sindh after causing significant damage in India's Gujarat and Rajasthan regions. The monsoon, which has been unusually intense this season, brought with it torrential rains, strong winds, and widespread flooding across large parts of the country.

Millions were reported to have been affected, with many residing in low-lying areas submerged and infrastructure damaged. We saw people being displaced due to rising water levels, with power outages and road blockages hampering rescue and relief efforts. An emergency was declared in parts of the country, as the authorities urged residents to stay indoors. The disaster follows a broader pattern of extreme weather that has gripped the region. Lately too, heavy rainfall has been predicted in certain areas in the week ahead.

In India, the monsoon's fury and torrential rains, especially in Gujarat and Rajasthan, also led to flash floods that engulfed villages and towns, resulting in significant loss of life and property, with thousands rendered homeless. Emergency services were

stretched to their limit, and conducting rescue operations in flooded areas and providing relief to affected populations was difficult.

Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, too, felt the impact, with landslides triggered by the relentless rains. Entire villages were buried under mud and debris, with rescue efforts hampered by treacherous conditions. Further rains were also forecast for the current month, raising fears of additional inundation.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh is already prone to flooding due to its low-lying geography, and it was no surprise that it was severely affected by this year's monsoons. Incessant rains caused the major rivers — the Brahmaputra, Ganges, and Meghna — to overflow, leading to widespread flooding across large parts of the country.

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and Yellow River swelling to dangerous levels. In some areas, entire cities were submerged, leading to massive evacuations.

The extreme weather events in South Asia and China are stark reminders of the growing impact of climate change. Scientists have long warned that global warming is leading to more intense and unpredictable weather patterns, with monsoons becoming more erratic and storms more powerful. The consequences are devastating for countries in the region, many of which are densely populated and heavily reliant on agriculture.

As the region grapples with the recent disasters, the urgency for robust climate adaptation strategies is clear. Governments must prioritise investing in resilient infrastructure, strengthening early warning systems, and enhancing community-level disaster preparedness to better withstand extreme weather events.

If mitigation efforts are not significantly scaled up, these extreme weather events could become even more frequent and severe, making large parts of the world increasingly uninhabitable. Rising sea levels could inundate coastal cities, displacing millions and leading to unprecedented migration crises.

Agricultural systems, already under stress, could collapse, leading to widespread food shortages and economic instability. Without concerted global action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changes already underway, the future could see a cascade of environmental, social, and economic disasters. The time to act is now, as the cost of inaction is far too great. — Courtesy Dawn

## Maryam emphasizes CPEC's importance for Pak-China ties

*Attends 75th National Day of People's Republic of China*

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif said on Monday the significance of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a vital indicator of the robust and enduring relationship between Pakistan and China.

The CM views CPEC as a crucial development initiative that not only enhances economic ties but also reflects the deep-rooted partnership and mutual cooperation between the two nations. She expressed her views while participating in the 75th National Day ceremony of the People's Republic of China, where she met Chinese Consul General Zhao Shirin to convey her congratulations on this significant occasion. The CM expressed greetings on behalf of the Pakistani people, stating, "On the occasion of

China's 75th National Day, I extend my warm wishes to the Chinese people." She conveyed that the people of Punjab also send heartfelt congratulations to their Chinese brothers and sisters, expressing pride in attending the event.

She lauded the Chinese nation for achieving remarkable heights in development and innovation while extending a hand of friendship to the global community. Maryam Nawaz emphasized that China's greatness lies in its unwavering commitment to peace, cooperation, and humanitarian well-being.

Highlighting the deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan and China, she remarked that their relationship was built on trust, respect, and a shared vision for a bright future. "Our bond is not merely based

on strategic interests; it is a connection of hearts and souls," she asserted. The CM acknowledged China's significant achievements in lifting millions out of poverty and praised its role as a model for the world in technology, infrastructure, and industry. She noted China's indispensable contribution during global crises, affirming its commitment to providing resources to countries in need.

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, China has consistently promoted peace and development, exemplified by its Belt and Road Initiative, she said and added that the fruits of China's economic development are benefiting people around the world and that China is emerging as a leader with a vision that transcends borders.



**KARACHI:** Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Abdul Qadir Patel and MPA Asif Khan during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

## CM KP directs to expand Sehat Card program

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Monday chaired a meeting on Sehat Card program and took important decisions aimed at improving healthcare accessibility in the province.

The meeting was attended by Health Advisor Ehtisham Ali, Finance Advisor Muzammil Aslam, administrative secretaries, officials from the health department, and representatives from State Life Insurance. Chief Minister agreed in principle to include life insurance for citizens under

the Sehat Card scheme. He directed concerned officials to prepare a detailed plan for its formal approval at the earliest.

He also addressed complaints regarding the lack of heart surgeries at the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC) due to reduced rates under the Sehat Card.

He ordered Sehat Card officials to ensure these surgeries continue, assuring that all costs related to heart operations would be borne by the provincial government, leaving no financial burden on the patients.



**LAHORE:** Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmed Khan and Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider along with Chinese Consul General Zhao Shirin and his wife cutting the cake to celebrate 75th National Day of the People's Republic of China.

## Mashhood says: Awareness drive on thalassemia to be launched across country

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan said on Monday that a vigorous awareness campaign was being launched across the country to spread awareness about thalassemia and hemophilia diseases.

During his visit at Sundas Foundation here, he commended the foundation's work as a shining example of selflessness and compassion, adding that the foundation was doing great services for humanity.

He praised the Sundas Foundation's dedication to providing free medical care and support to deserving patients.

The chairman also met with children undergoing treatment for thalassemia and other blood disorders and distributed gifts among patients. He termed the foundation work as a "beacon of hope" for underprivileged individuals suffering from deadly diseases.

The Sundas Foundation's mission was truly admirable, and their commitment to serving humanity was unparalleled, he added.

Rana Mashhood appreciated the foundation's administration for bringing advanced and latest medical equipments to fight with thalassemia and hemophilia, saying that government was committed to provide all possible facilities to such institutions as serving the humanity was the motto of their government.

He emphasized the importance of promoting pre-marital thalassemia testing to prevent the spread of the disease.

"We will work together with the Sundas Foundation to create awareness about thalassemia and the importance of pre-marital testing.

## ANF unearths drug factory

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) unearthed a factory engaged in the production of drugs and intoxicated tablets, said ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that ANF in a successful operation against a factory manufacturing chemical drugs and intoxicated tablets managed to arrest two suspects.

Acting on a tip-off, a raid was conducted in Danishabad area, Peshawar and the factory was sealed while the ANF team recovered chemical drugs, intoxicated tablets and other equipment. A thorough search of the factory led to the seizure of a tablet punching machine, various equipment such as punches, dryers, mixers and scales. During the operation, both the accused were caught red-handed while preparing intoxicated tablets at the site.

## Governor Kundi attends Bilawal's birthday celebration

KARACHI (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi attended a grand celebration in Karachi to mark the birthday of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

The event was well-attended by senior party leaders, activists, and distinguished guests. During the celebration, a birthday cake was cut for Bilawal, and Governor Kundi offered heartfelt congratulations. He praised Bilawal as a leader for the younger generation and highlighted how under his leadership, the PPP has introduced new dimensions to Pakistani politics.

Kundi commended Bilawal's commitment to democratic principles and public service, stating that he is successfully carrying forward the legacy of his grandfather, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and mother, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed. Kundi said that the influence of former President Asif Ali Zardari's political acumen is evident in Bilawal's approach to politics.

He emphasized that Bilawal is actively working towards realizing the true vision of Bhutto Shaheed, focusing on public service and the stability of democracy.

## Ghandapur's software updated: Azma bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has said that KP Chief Minister Ghandapur's software has been updated in Lahore.

Talking to the media at the Lahore High Court, she said that her case was adjourned because the FIA DG was not available. "Falak Javed's indecent remarks reflect her flawed upbringing.

Her parents portray themselves as innocent whenever the law takes its course. Lawyer Azhar Siddique has been caught submitting fake affidavits and forging signatures for three times," she added.

Azma Bokhari noted that Advocate Azhar had accompanied the father of Falak Javed, who again discussed her fake video. She said that Falak encouraged other women to follow her lead. Bokhari said that the language used about the Punjab Chief Minister during the Islamabad rally was inappropriate. She questioned why Falak had deleted the fake video if she had done nothing wrong. "The PTI has a team that engages in such activities," she added.

## Court proceedings badly hampered as prosecutors' strike continues in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The strike of public prosecutors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for their demands of raise in salaries, incentives and establishment of the Prosecutor General Office, has entered its fifth day on Monday here badly hampering the court proceedings.

In the wake of the strike, public prosecutors were not appearing before the courts in hearings and police were unable to submit challans. The situation on one hand has badly affected the court proceedings while on the other hand public prosecutors were not ready to step back from their demands. President Public Prosecutors Welfare Association, Sangin Shah has said that till acceptance of all their demands and provision of needed facilities to the female prosecutors at all the district court and offices were not ensured, the strike will continue across the province.

The litigants when asked said that the demands of the public prosecutors should be accepted by the provincial government as the strike was further adding to their problems.

## Sindh crackdown: Top officials suspended over encroachment scandal

**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: In a surprise move, Sindh's top bureaucrat, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, has suspended two senior officials over rampant encroachments and mismanagement in the President's area.

During an unscheduled visit, Shah expressed dismay at the poor state of roads and widespread encroachments. Municipal Commissioner President Noor Hassan Jokhio and Deputy Director Sindh

Solid Waste Management Board Manzoor Hussain Sheikh were promptly suspended.

Shah vowed to tackle encroachments head-on, stating: "We will not tolerate any encroachments in the city. The sanitation system will be overhauled to provide better services to citizens."

The suspensions signal a crackdown on inept officials and underscore Shah's commitment to effective governance.

# International News

## 274 dead, over 1,000 wounded in Israeli strikes on Hezbollah strongholds in Lebanon

**Monitoring Desk**  
TYRE: Lebanese Health Minister Firass Abiad said the death toll in Israeli strikes Monday rose to 274, including 21 children, the bloodiest daily toll in nearly a year of cross-border clashes.

The toll stood at "274 dead, including 21 children and 39 women — that's who we know about until now", Abiad told reporters, adding "thousands of families from the targeted areas have been displaced".

The dead also included two rescuers, with 16 other emergency workers wounded, he said, adding that "two ambulances, a fire truck and a medical centre were targeted".

The attacks wounded 1,024 people who were treated in 27 hospitals, Abiad said.

About 5,000 people had been wounded "in less than a week" of Israeli attacks, he said, after

Hezbollah pagers and walkie-talkies exploded and an Israeli strike on Beirut's southern suburbs.

That number accounts for about half of the overall wounded toll of "10,000 to 11,000", he said, referring to nearly one year of cross-border clashes between the Iran-backed Hezbollah group and Israel after the eruption of the Gaza conflict. The conflict began when Hamas attacked Israel, with Hezbollah and other Iran-backed groups around the region drawn into the violence.

The Israeli military said it had struck around 800 Hezbollah targets on Monday.

"Since this morning, the IDF [military] has conducted proactive and extensive aerial strikes against Hezbollah terrorist targets in Lebanon," a statement said, adding that the strikes hit "approximately 800 Hezbollah terror targets in

southern Lebanon and in the area of Bekaa deep inside Lebanese territory".

World powers have implored Israel and Hezbollah to pull back from the brink of all-out war, with the focus of violence shifting sharply in recent days from Israel's southern front with Gaza to its northern border with Lebanon. "We sleep and wake up to bombardment ... that's what our life has become," said Wafaa Ismail, 60, a housewife from the southern Lebanese village of Zawtar. Israeli military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari told people in Lebanon to avoid potential targets linked to Hezbollah as strikes would "go on for the near future".

Hagari said Israel's military "will engage in [more] extensive and precise strikes against terror targets which have been embedded widely throughout Lebanon".

Millions of Sri Lankans had voted for the opposition parliamentarian, putting faith in his graft-fighting pledge and vow to bolster a fragile economic



**NEW YORK:** President of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva speaks during 'Summit of the Future' on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

## UN adopts pact to tackle volatile future for mankind

**Monitoring Desk**  
UNITED NATIONS: UN members adopted a blueprint for the future on Sunday to tackle the myriad wars, environmental threats and technological challenges facing humanity that was hailed by the organisation as "groundbreaking" but panned by critics as unambitious.

Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who championed the "Pact for the Future" and its components, billed them as "landmark agreements — a step-change towards more effective, inclusive, networked multilateralism."

As an opener for the annual high-level week of the UN General Assembly,

which begins on Tuesday, dozens of heads of state and government gathered for the adoption, which faced last-minute opposition from Russia and its allies.

Leaders pledged to bolster the multilateral system to "keep pace with a changing world" and to "protect the needs and interests of current and future generations" facing "persistent crisis."

"We believe there is a path to a brighter future for all of humanity," the document says.

The pact outlines 56 "actions," including commitments to multilateralism, upholding the UN Charter and peace-keeping.

## Sri Lanka's new President Dissanayake promises change

**Monitoring Desk**  
COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's leftist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake took office as president on Monday, promising change in the island nation long led by powerful political families which is emerging from its worst economic crisis in more than seven decades.

Millions of Sri Lankans had voted for the opposition parliamentarian, putting faith in his graft-fighting pledge and vow to bolster a fragile economic

recovery.

"I pledge ... to demonstrate dedication to protecting and upholding democracy," Dissanayake, 55, said in inauguration remarks at the president's office, saying he was taking office at a challenging time in the Indian Ocean nation.

"Our politics needs to be cleaner, and the people have called for a different political culture," he added. "I am ready to commit to that change."

## Tehran ready for nuclear talks in New York 'if other parties are willing', foreign minister says

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iran is ready to start nuclear negotiations on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York if "other parties are willing", Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Monday in a video published on his Telegram channel. The United States, under then-President Donald Trump, withdrew in 2018 from a nuclear accord signed in 2015 between Iran and six world powers, which restricted Tehran's nuclear programme.

## Iran walls off part of border with Afghanistan: state media

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iran's military has built a wall along more than 10 kilometres of its eastern border with Afghanistan, the main entry point for immigrants, local media reported Monday.

"More than 10 kilometres of walls have been built on the border and another 50 kilometres are ready to be walled off," ISNA news agency said, citing General Nozar Nemati, deputy commander of army ground forces.

Iran shares a more than 900km border with Afghanistan, and the Islamic republic hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world.

This comprises mostly well-integrated Afghans who arrived over the past 40 years after fleeing conflict in their home country.

The flow of Afghan immigrants has increased since the Taliban took over in August 2021 after US forces withdrew.

Tehran has not given official figures for the number of Afghan immigrants,

but member of parliament Abolfazl Torabi has estimated their number at "between six and seven million".

The authorities have recently increased pressure on "illegal" refugees, regularly announcing expulsions through the eastern border.

"By blocking the border, we want to control the country's entries and exits" and "better increase the security of border areas", General Nemati said.

In September, Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni said Iran would employ other methods including barbed wire and water-filled ditches in addition to the wall to block the border.

On September 13, the spokesman for the parliamentary National Security Committee, Ebrahim Rezaei, said police plan to "expel more than two million illegal citizens in the near future".

According to the official IRNA news agency, Afghans represent "more than 90 percent of foreign nationals" in Iran.

## China 'testing us', says Biden in hot mic remarks to Quad allies

**Monitoring Desk**  
WILMINGTON: US President Joe Biden was caught on a hot mic on Saturday telling the leaders of Australia, India and Japan that an aggressive China is "testing us," in remarks that risked undercutting a summit declaration that carefully avoided mentioning Beijing by name.

The comments came as Biden opened a farewell summit in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

"China continues to behave aggressively, testing us all across the region," Biden was heard in what were supposed to be behind-closed-doors remarks to the so-called "Quad".

Biden said that while Chinese President Xi Jinping was focusing on "domestic economic challenges" he was also "looking to buy himself some diplomatic space, in my view, to aggressively pursue China's interests".

But he insisted that recent "intense efforts" by Washington to reduce tensions, including a call with Xi in April, were helping to prevent conflict.

The hot mic blunder risked undermining careful diplomatic efforts by all four countries during the summit to insist that their grouping is about more than just providing a counterweight to China. In their joint statement after the summit, the four leaders made no direct mention of China, even as they expressed concern over tensions on its borders.

## Ukraine says it hit two Russian munitions depots overnight

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Ukraine said on Saturday it had hit two Russian munition depots overnight, in attacks that illustrated its growing capability to strike targets deep inside Russia.

Russian officials acknowledged the Ukrainian attack on one of the depots in southern Krasnodar region, saying it was carried out with drones. They introduced local emergency measures to mitigate the effects of the assault.

A statement by Ukraine's military general staff said the munitions depots were at Tikhoretsk in Krasnodar region and Oktyabrsky in the western region of Tver.

"The (Tikhoretsk) facility is in the top three largest munitions storages of the occupiers.

## Six dead after floods in central Japan: media

**TOKYO (AFP/APP):** Heavy rain that triggered floods and landslides on a Japanese peninsula recovering from an earthquake this year killed at least six people, local media reported Monday. Public broadcaster NHK and other outlets said six were dead, while a fire department official told AFP that one had died and five were "in a state of cardio-respiratory arrest", a term used in Japan before a feared death can be confirmed by a doctor.

The regional government in Ishikawa on the Sea of Japan coast said two were missing and the

status of eight people was unknown.

Heavy rain pounded Ishikawa from Saturday, with more than 540 millimetres (21 inches) recorded in the city of Wajima over 72 hours, the heaviest continuous rain since comparative data became available. The region is still reeling from a magnitude-7.5 quake at the start of the year, which toppled buildings, triggered tsunami waves and sparked a major fire. Floodwaters inundated emergency housing built for those who had lost their homes in the New Year's Day quake.

## Son of Uganda's president ends 2026 election bid

**Monitoring Desk**  
KAMPALA: The son of Uganda's long-serving leader Yoweri Museveni said on Saturday he had abandoned plans to run for presidency at the next election in 2026, urging his supporters to endorse his father instead. President Museveni, who has led the country for 38 years, is widely expected to run for re-election even though he has not yet confirmed his candidacy. "I would like to announce that I will not be on the ballot paper in 2026."

## Pak should embrace materials suited to environment: Inam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General, Inam Haider Malik on Monday said Pakistan should embrace not only traditional infrastructure but also materials suited to the country's environment.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) hosted a seminar focused on "Disaster Resilient Infrastructure," in collaboration with Bahria University, aiming to address the pressing need for climate adaptation and infrastructure resilience in Pakistan.

Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik led discussions on the country's preparedness for future disasters, highlighting the critical threats posed by climate change and the steps being taken to mitigate its impact. "Resilience won't come solely from the type of construction but from adapting to what we have," he emphasized. He lauded NDMA's technological efforts, including simulations of the 2022 floods and advanced weather forecasting, noting that "technology to-

day can not only address present needs but future ones as well."

In his keynote address, Lieutenant General Malik warned that if global temperatures exceed the 1.5°C threshold, countries like Pakistan would face unprecedented climatic disasters. "From glacial melting to recurring floods, we are already witnessing severe climate impacts," he said.

He cited the 2022 floods, which caused massive devastation, with over 8,000 miles of roads and 480 bridges damaged, leading to significant economic losses. Recovery and rehabilitation remain ongoing challenges.

The seminar featured experts from various fields, all underlining the importance of infrastructure resilience in combating climate change. Dr. Shafiqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), pointed out that it is not the disasters themselves but inappropriate infrastructure that leads to high mortality. "Pakistan is one of the ten countries most impacted by climate change.



Qatar Emiri Naval Forces delegation offering Fateha at Mazar-e-Quaid during visit to Karachi.

## Tajikistan to import 40,000 metric tons of sugar from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tajikistan will sign an agreement to import 40,000 metric tons of sugar from Pakistan, while the Trade Corporation of Pakistan will facilitate Pakistan Sugar Mills Association and Tajikistan's State Reserve Material Reserve for materializing the agreement. The consensus to this effect was developed in a meeting between Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain and Director of State of Tajikistan Ahmadzoda Nurmuhamad Ato, who called on the minister and discussed matters relating to mutual interest and promotion of bilateral trade and investment. Head of Department of International Cooperation Tolibov M u h a m m a d j o n , Abdulatovovich and Agha Mullah Amounullah Representative General of Logistics Company ZFA General

Trading were also presented in the meeting, said a press release issued here Monday.

Saif Anjum, Secretary Ministry of Industries and Production also attended the meeting, it said adding that the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet had approved to export about 40,000 metric tons of sugar to Republic of Tajikistan.

Both the sides also agreed for establishing joint working group to promote bilateral trade relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan and agreed for initiating trade partnership in edibles goods, besides developing storage facilities along the boarder sides and taking measures for trade facilitation. Speaking on the occasion, Rana Tanveer said that Pakistan was ready to help the Tajikistan for fulfilling its requirements of edibles goods.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Madokhail in a group photograph with Parliamentarians, Bureaucrats, Member Civil Societies and Students on occasion of Pashtun Culture Day.

## Poor governance, law & order in KP increase people's problems: Muqam

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam here Monday categorically stated that the deteriorating governance and law & order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have negatively impacted the lives of people besides marred development works.

He strongly indicated that if the situation does not improve in KP, the imposition of Governor Rule may be considered as a last resort for the sake of people.

Addressing a press-conference here, Engr Amir Muqam, who is also the Provincial President of the Pakistan Muslim League-N, maintained that Governor Rule was a constitutional provision that would

be considered as a last option if the ongoing grim situation in KP becomes uncontrollable. Expressing his deep concern over the deteriorating law and order situation, particularly in the southern districts and merged areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engr Amir Muqam referred to the recent IED blast in Malam Jabba Swat district that resulted in the death of one policeman and injuries to four others.

Muqam described the Malam Jabba blast was a deep-rooted conspiracy aimed at damaging the country's image. He accused the Chief Minister KP of focusing on agitation and leading public rallies rather than addressing governance and law and order issues in his province. Muqam claimed that

for the first time, policeman in KP had been incited to protest, making it unsafe for people to leave their homes after night, especially in southern districts and merged areas of the province.

Strongly criticizing the KP government's poor performance especially in higher education sector in the province, where about 25 public sector universities are operating without Vice Chancellors, marring education standards and research works immensely.

Instead of appointing VCs, the Chief Minister KP had announced plans to sell university properties, which Muqam argued would lead to economic collapse for these cash-starved educational institutions in the province.

## Jaffar participates in Pashtun Culture Day celebrations: Culture is thread that binds together our past, present and future, Governor Balochistan

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandukhel has said that the dignity and honour of the "Shawl" is also necessary along with "Shimla" just because the Shawl represents half of the population of the Pashtun society.

The Governor added that Shimla and Shawl can reach new heights only with the joint efforts. He said that culture, being the collective memory of a nation, spans thousands of years.

Values, experiences and history, which serve as the basis of our common identity and future progress. Culture is the thread that binds together our past, present and future. He expressed these views while addressing the participants of the prestigious ceremony held at Durbar Hall located

near Quetta Railway Station here on Monday.

Present on the occasion were the Provincial Minister for Health, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Advisor to Chief Minister for Environment, Naseem ur Rehman Mulakhail, Member Provincial Assembly Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai, a large number of women and youths including DG of Iranian Cultural Centre Abu ul Hassan Amiri, Nazam Mohammad Barech and Dr. Tahir Barech besides others.

On this occasion, students of Pamir Foundation and Pamir Grammar School dressed in Pashtun cultural clothes presented various items and cultural dance. Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandukhel said that culture has its own historical background and the roots of culture are in agri-

culture, which is known and popular as the Latin term cultura. He said that the history of the Pashtun nation is thousands of years old and the Pashtun language is among the forty major languages of the world.

Even today, the Pashtun nation is proud of its wonderful traditional clothes, delicious food, cultural dance, Jirga system, philanthropy and hospitality. Governor Balochistan congratulated the organizer of the event regarding the Pashtun Cultural Day, Nazam Muhammad Barech and his entire team for organizing a successful function.

The governor of Balochistan also announced to give one lakh cash rupees to the boys and girls who perform traditional dances and skits on the stage.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, GB, SAFRON and President PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engr. Amir Muqam addressing a press conference.

## PTI challenges practice and procedure ordinance in SHC

KARACHI (Online): PTI has challenged practice and procedure ordinance in Sindh High Court (SHC).

The petition said practice and procedure ordinance is sheer violation of Supreme Court (SC) decision.

The bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa had maintained ordinance can come only in the event of emergency.

It was further said in the petition it is decision of SC that no ordinance can be promulgated immediately after parliament session. CJP is violating his own decision. Government is involving the judges in the politics through ordinance. Ordinance is declared null and void and its implementation be stopped till the final decision of this case.

## Students, faculty members of cadet college Mastung visit parliament house

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 21-member delegation of students and faculty from Cadet College Mastung visited Parliament House on Monday.

The delegation was welcomed by senior officials of the Upper House.

During their visit, the delegation toured the Senate Museum and watched a documentary on the history of the Senate, said a news release.

The students and faculty showed keen interest in the statues of prominent political figures and historical photographs displayed in the museum.

## 30 vehicles damaged in Clifton fire

ISLAMABAD (APP): More than 30 vehicles were damaged in a fire broke out early Monday morning at a plot in Clifton's Block 1, Shireen Jinnah Colony, Karachi.

According to a private news channel, the fire erupted near Qurtaba Mosque in a building in the Boat Basin police jurisdiction where several abandoned vehicles were parked. Upon receiving the alert, local police arrived at the scene and promptly called in the KMC Fire Brigade and Rescue 1122 teams.

## BRICS Moscow Seminar: Mushahid welcomes 'winds of Change in South Asia'

MOSCOW (APP): Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said "Pakistan looks forward to joining BRICS" & welcomed "winds of change blowing all across South Asia which reject hegemony, status quo and seek change", referring to recent radical changes in the Maldives, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

He expressed these views during a keynote address at BRICS seminar.

As a consequence, he said the so-called "Indo-Pacific Strategy is now drowning in the waters of the Indian Ocean", a news release said. BRICS (Brazil, India, China and South Africa) is an intergovernmental organisation comprising various nations including the BRICS and Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Senator Mushahid criticised the recent US sanctions against Pakistan and China, terming these "immoral, unjust, unacceptable and illegal" as sanctions under International Law can only be imposed by the UN

Security Council. He also condemned "Western hypocrisy and double standards on Palestine". Senator Mushahid Hussain said the Global Order was marked by turbulence and transformation, with two contrasting narratives. China and Global South are focused on connectivity and trade and economic cooperation.

Senator Mushahid urged the BRICS Seminar to define a new narrative based on emerging ground realities to counter propaganda, fake news and disinformation. For the future, Mushahid put forward a 3-D Strategy for

BRICS: Democratisation of the world order based on multipolarity, multilateralism, UN Charter and International Law, Demilitarisation of international relations, rejecting any new military alliances like "Asian NATO", QUAD or AUKUS, Dedollarisation of the world economy and greater trade in non-dollar currencies as dollar was being weaponised.



KARACHI: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief, Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman exchanges views with Former Pakistan Captain and All-Rounder, Shahid Khan Afridi during meeting held in Karachi.

## Kurram clashes claimed 12 lives, injured 22 in 3 days

PESHAWAR (APP): Clashes between the rival tribes in different areas of Kurram district have so far claimed at least a dozen lives and injured 22 others, said a police report on Monday.

Heavy and light arms were used by the tribesmen involved in the ongoing conflict that started after construction of trenches by the rival tribes in villages Boshhehra and Ahmadzai.

Police informed that the firing took place over construction on a disputed land, which intensified into exchange of heavy fire in the Balishkhel area. The clashes resulted in losses from both sides.

The rival tribes were engaged in heavy firing and shelling in Balashkhel, Khaar Kali, Trimanal, Baghki, Maqbal and Kanj Alizai.

Meanwhile, a bazaar in Sadda market, Kurram that belonged to one of the tribes involved in the con-

flict was blown up and fortunately, no casualty happened in this incident. Residents of the Bhagan tribe reportedly blocked the main Parachinar-Peshawar artery, creating troubles for commuters.

Elders of Turi-Bangash tribes urged the authorities to take quick action to resolve the issue amicably. They urged the government to take action against the violence mongers and restore law and order in the district.

Meanwhile, member of the National Assembly (MNA) Engineer Hamid Hussain and parliamentary leader of the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) staged a protest sit-in outside the Parachinar Press Club.

He said that the sit-in was meant to draw attention of the high-ups towards the repeated outbreaks of violence in Kurram district.

## Whole nation holds Pashtun culture in high regard, maintains Sardar Khetran

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran has stated that the whole nation holds the Pashtun culture in high regard.

In his message on Pashtun culture day, the Provincial Minister congratulated the whole Pashtun and Pakistani nation on the Culture Day and said that Pashtun tribes

have always promoted brotherhood by following harmony, tolerance, patience and moderation.

He said that Pashtun culture is based on peace, love and tolerance and it is message of peace and love for all nations on the region.

Sardar Khetran also said that hospitality and patriotism of Pashtun nation is identity of Pakistan all over the world.



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola presenting shield to Company Secretary Islamabad of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Foundation Narjis Tahira

## New reference of acquiring jewelry: PTI founder, Bushra Bibi to be indicted on Sep 26

RAWALPINDI (Online): Special Judge Central Shah Rukh Arjumand has provided to PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi copies of case in new reference of acquiring expensive Bulgari jewelry from Toshakhana.

The proceedings regarding arguments on bail pleas of both the accused has been adjourned till September 26 due to expiry of court's time.

The accused will be indicted in next hearing.

Both the accused were present in the court along with their counsels counsel Barrister Suleman Safdar. FIA presented challan

of the case in the court. List of 24 witnesses was also attached with it.

It has been said in the supplementary challan presented by FIA solid evidence is available against PTI founder and Bushra Bibi and the evidence proves that both the accused were involved in misconduct. Both the accused gained financial benefit through illegal sources and corruption. Former chairman PTI while misusing his position obtained Bulgari jewelry set at lower prices. Therefore, the court should summon the witnesses and move forward the trial.

## Fawad demands immediate notification for Justice Mansoor Ali Shah as CJP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Federal Minister Fawad Chaudhry has called for the immediate issuance of a notification appointing Justice Mansoor Ali Shah as Supreme Court Chief Justice. Speaking to the media outside the Islamabad High Court, Chaudhry stated that lawyers were united against the constitutional amendment.

He warned that if Jus-

ice Mansoor Ali Shah's notification was not issued, a long march would be organised. He urged the lawyers, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), and Jamaat-e-Islami to join the march. He described the attempt to bring about a constitutional amendment as alarming.



QUETTA: Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar presiding over a high level meeting of Health Department

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