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ORAKZAI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir is saluting to pay tribute at Yadgar e Shuhada after laying floral wreath at Yadgar e Shuhada at Orakzai District.

COAS vows to comprehensively defeat hostile terrorist nexus

Army Chief visits troops in Orakzai District conducting counter-terrorism activities in Tirah; Commends efforts of police and LEAs in K-P and highlights importance of further enhancing their capabilities

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Friday visited troops in the Orakzai District who had participated in the recent counter-terrorism actions in Tirah Valley and surroundings.

The COAS was given a comprehensive briefing on the overall security situation, ongoing intelligence-based counter-terrorism actions and multi-prong measures being undertaken to ensure stability in the merged districts, an Inter Services Public Relations news release said.

In his interaction with officers and troops, the COAS appreciated their high morale and readiness to give an effective response against all types of threat.

He reiterated the resolve to comprehensively defeat hostile terrorist nexus and eliminate activities in illegal spectrum.

Paying rich tribute to Shuhada and Ghazis of the Army, and LEAs, the COAS said that the hard earned

peace achieved with the nation's great sacrifices would be maintained at all costs.

"The sacrifices of our martyrs strengthen our resolve to fight with utmost dedication and spirit of sacrifice."

The Army Chief lauded the contributions being made by the police and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"The Pak Army will continue to provide all-out support to the KP Police and other LEAs in enabling them to perform their duties in the newly merged districts."

The COAS emphasised the need of continued capacity building of the LEAs.

He also appreciated the support of local population in assisting security forces, noting that their positive role was essential in sustaining peace in the area.

Earlier upon his arrival, the COAS laid the wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada and was received by the Corps Commander Peshawar.

PM Shehbaz stresses Int'l cooperation to address global challenges ahead of key UN summit

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday joined 48 world leaders virtually, to outline their expectations for this month's Summit of the Future in New York, underscoring "effective" international cooperation to address global challenges, including the developing nation's rising debt burdens.

"The Summit of the Future represents a great opportunity. We must not lose it," the Pakistani leader told the virtual live event as part of a global call to action to support the once-in-a-generation UN summit, which begins on 22 September at UN Headquarters.

Over 130 Heads of State and Government are expected to attend the landmark event, which will be held just ahead of the annual high-level debate in the UN General Assembly, which opens on Sept 24.

The Summit brings together countries from around the world, marking a critical opportunity for far-reaching agreements on international collaboration for a safer, more sustainable and more equitable world.

At Thursday's live event, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was joined by the President of Namibia, Nangolo Mbumba, and the Chancellor of Germany, Olaf Scholz, as co-facilitators of the preparatory process.

During the two-day Summit, member states are expected to conclude negotiations ahead of adopting the Pact for the Future,

FIA to probe posts from PTI founder's social media accounts against national security: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday said the Federal Investigation Agency would probe into the handling of the PTI founder's social media accounts which were being used to create chaos and anarchy in the country, and undermining the national security.

"He (the PTI founder) should be ashamed of undermining the national security, inciting people for anarchy and committing the sedition," said the minister while talking to the media.

Tarar said the FIA had decided to investigate into the handling of the social media accounts of the jailed PTI founder. It would be ascertained that who is the handler of his social media accounts, and whether such posts were being made on his behalf or it was done on directives of someone else, he added.

He said a botch attempt had been made to conspire against the sitting chief justice and heads of other institutions. Through these posts, he tried to mobilize the people against two major state institutions which is highly condemnable.

The minister said this conspiracy is destined to fail as his accusations against the interior minister and others had nothing to do with the reality.

The PTI founder had all the facilities like a presidential suit in the jail, but yet he still resorted to attack the state institutions, he said, adding nobody would be allowed to do so at any cost.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Monkey Pox.

We want to connect Quetta with big cities of country and abroad: Governor pleased with PIA's initiative of increasing number of flights from Quetta to other big cities of country

INDEPENDENT REPORT

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has expressed pleasure over increase in the number of flights from Quetta to Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

In a statement issued here on Friday, the Governor said that he is pleased to know that PIA is going to increase the number of flights from Quetta to other big cities of the country including Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore as a result of his struggle and wholehearted attention.

He said that the number of flights are being increased to existing four to six between Quetta to Islamabad from September 17, 2024 every week. Similarly, the weekly flights are being increased to four from two for Karachi from Quetta while for Lahore, the flights are being increased from two to three every week.

The Governor maintained that it was in addition to the direct Umrah flights operated from Quetta to Jeddah recently.

He said that we want to connect Quetta with big cities of the country and abroad through continuous flights on cheaper fares, and for the purpose, we are making endeavours.

He said that the basic objective behind his constant coordination with the federal and provincial authorities to provide relief to the people of Balochistan besides reducing the air fares.

The Governor said that the passengers would get double advantage of the launch of flights from Quetta to other big cities of the country.

They would not only get travelling facilities but it would also help save their precious time and energy, the Governor maintained.

He also said that we are determined to make air travel accessible and easier for the people of Balochistan.



KARACHI: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti and central President BNP Awami Mir Israrullah Khan Zehri holding meeting. Provincial Ministers Haji Ali Madad Jattak, MPA Nawabzada Mir Zafarullah Zehri and Mir Sajid Dashti are also present

Mir Sarfraz Bugti Ahmed meets Mir Israrullah Zehri

INDEPENDENT REPORT

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti held meeting with the central President of Balochistan National Party (BNP-Awami) and former Federal Minister, Mir Israrullah Zehri in Karachi on Friday.

Also present on the occasion were the Provincial Minister Agriculture, Mir

Ali Madad Jatak, Member Provincial Assembly, Mir Zafarullah Zehri, Mir Sajid Jan Dashti.

The Chief Minister inquired from Mir Israrullah Zehri and Mir Zafarullah Zehri about the health of their mother.

During the course of meeting, the political and overall situation of the province were also discussed.

Ahsan Iqbal highlights delays and cost escalation in Diamer Basha Dam Project

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Planning Minister said that during the tenure of the previous government, the cost of the project was estimated at Rs600 billion and even Rs750 billion in various meetings of the standing committees, while on paper, an estimate of Rs480 billion was being shown till date.

Ahsan Iqbal maintained that the responsibility for the increase in the project cost lies with the previous incompetent government, and due to lack of funding and delays, the cost has now increased from Rs. 479 billion to Rs1400 billion. Expressing regret, Ahsan Iqbal said that even today, a complete financing plan for the project is not available.

He suggested that the dam and power projects be separated and the financing of the power project be obtained from private sector.

He further said that even after six years, the revised PC-1 of the project has not been prepared. I had proposed in a standing committee meeting during the previous tenure that work on a project whose PC-1 is more than two years old should not be started.

PM chairs high-level review meeting on Mpx situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the current situation and precautionary measures being taken to prevent the spread of Monkeypox (Mpx) in the country.

The prime minister emphasized the importance of vigilance and preparedness, directing authorities to adopt all necessary measures to prevent the virus from spreading within the country.

Balochistan's Fisheries dept delegation meets Sindh CM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a meeting with a Fisheries department delegation of Balochistan government led by its parliamentary secretary Barkat Rind discussed collaborative projects aimed at boosting the fisheries sector to improve the livelihood of local fishermen. The delegation members included the Secretary of Fisheries Govt of Balochistan Javed Shehvari and the Director

Mobile phone service to remain suspended on 17th: Security arrangements finalized for Eid Miladun Nabi (SAW) in Quetta

EMERGENCY TO REMAIN ENFORCED IN PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES; LEAVES OF QMC & DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES CANCELLED; SHOPS & BUSINESS CONCERNS TO BE SEALED ON ROUTES OF PROCESSION

INDEPENDENT REPORT

QUETTA: The security and other necessary arrangements were reviewed and finalized for the processions and gatherings of 12th Rabiul Awwal, Eid Miladun Nabi (SAW) in Quetta city. In this context, a meeting was held with Deputy Commissioner, Lt. (Retd) Saad bin Asad in the chair the other day.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), SP Security, officers of the Frontier Corps (FC), high ups and representatives of the Quetta Metropolitan Corporation, WASA, Health Department, traders as well as the religious leaders and representatives of the civil society. The Deputy Commissioner was briefed about the security of the processions and gatherings to be organized marking the Eid Miladun Nabi (SAW) celebrations in Quetta.

It was informed that the ambulances would be made available by the Health Department along the route of main Eid Miladun Nabi (SAW) procession.

Moreover, a medical camp would also be set up at the Bacha Khan chowk,

CM greets Makhdoom Tahir on winning bi-poll of NA-171

INDEPENDENT REPORT

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has congratulated the candidate of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Makhdoom Tahir Rasheed on his victory in the bi-election of election constituency of NA-171, Rahim Yar Khan.

In a felicitation statement issued here on Friday, the Chief Minister said that the victory of Makhdoom Tahir Rasheed is actually the success of jiyalas of President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and those who believe in democracy.

He said that the people not only strengthened democratic process by voting to Makhdoom Tahir, but they also reposed confidence on policies of the party. The Chief Minister expressed the hope that Makhdoom Tahir Rasheed would continue to play his role for resolving the issues of people.

Swat Police nab 3 TTP terrorists

SWAT (APP): Swat Police and the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) on Friday arrested three Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists linked to the August 28 bombing of the Nawakaly Banr Police post, which martyred one officer and injured two others.

Imran Khan should have been out of jail by now: Omar Ayub

LAHORE (INP): Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan said on Friday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan should have been released by now as all cases against him were bogus.

Speaking to reporters outside an anti-terrorism court (ATC), Lahore, the opposition leader said that if the PTI founder's stay was prolonged in jail, his life would become more endangered, pointing out that the PTI leaders were whisked away from inside the parliament which also merited an inquiry.

He said he used to study in Lahore where people rejected the government on Feb 8 and voted for the PTI.

"The PTI founder was not involved in any case. The agreements with the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) were finalised during the PPP and the PML-N's tenure. According to these agreements, you are given capacity payments whether you produce electricity or not. When I was the energy minister, we brought the rate down to 2.5 cents," he reiterated.



HUB: Secretary Law Kaleem Ullah in a meeting with Additional Deputy Commissioner General Ali Raza Khosa regarding revenue affairs during his visit to Hub

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Monetary easing

Continuing ongoing monetary easing, the State Bank has slashed its key policy rate by 200bps from 19.5pc to 17.5pc for the third time since June. Cumulatively, the bank has sliced the interest rates by 450bps from the decade-high of 22pc in three months.

The fresh reduction in the borrowing costs shows the central bank's confidence over recent economic stability amid hopes that the IMF Board would approve the new loan programme by the end of this month. The rate cut was widely anticipated amid a sharp drop in headline inflation to a single digit in August, and growth in the delta between the current CPI reading and the SBP's policy rate to 10 percentage points.

The surprise in the policy decision was the quantum of the rate reduction. The bank said its decision was informed by the sharp fall in both headline and core inflation. The faster disinflation, resulting from a delay in the implementation of the planned increase in the administered domestic energy prices, as well as the decline in global oil and food prices has somewhat exceeded SBP expectations.

Additionally, the rate cut is driven by a sharp fall in global oil prices despite market volatility, stable SBP forex reserves at around \$9.5bn in spite of weak official inflows and continued debt repayments, and improvement in inflation expectations and business confidence. Still, the quantum of the latest rate cut is believed to have been dictated by a large decline in the secondary market yields of government securities.

While there is no uncertainty about continued monetary easing over the next few reviews, experts are divided on the extent of future rate cuts and the pace at which these should be done. The delta between inflation and policy rate suggests another couple of sharp rate cuts in November and December. But if future monetary policy is to continue focusing on maintaining positive real interest rates to lower inflation to the 5pc-7pc target by the end of next September and ensure macroeconomic stability, the pace of future rate cuts would have to be slowed down.

The SBP itself has underlined that the near-term inflation outlook is susceptible to risks. Core inflation is still high and consumers' inflation expectations increasing further. Also, there is uncertainty stemming from the timing and magnitude of adjustments in administered energy prices, the future course of global commodity prices, and any additional taxation measures to meet the shortfall in revenue collection. On balance, the bank's view is that average inflation will fall below the forecast range of 11.5pc-13.5pc for FY25. But this will depend on targeted fiscal consolidation and the timely realisation of planned external inflows. Thus, it would be prudent to first evaluate how enduring the plunge in inflation is before slashing the rate further.

Privatisation myth

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Beyond sensational late-night arrests of opposition MNAs, impunity for abductors and unending intrigue, there is a remarkable degree of continuity and consistency in how the Pakistani ruling class rules.

Working people and ethnic peripheries are of secondary importance to all who occupy the corridors of power; their primary concern is to appease big creditors and foreign investors.

Which is why former finance minister Ishaq Dar's unveiled dig at the IMF is somewhat amusing. Let's be honest: all bourgeois parties seek only to secure a share of the piece in the debt-ridden, militarised structure of power, so much so that policymaking is akin to farce. Whoever is in the seat of government reproduces the same tired economic policy prescriptions. There is no bigger example of this than the privatisation mantra.

The present turbo-charged hybrid regime has followed the previous one in depicting privatisation of 'sick' state-owned enterprises as a panacea for our economic woes, an initiative, Mr Dar should be reminded, is entirely consistent with the IMF's agenda.

The argument is simple: SOEs offer poor quality services while draining the public exchequer, so sell them off to the private sector and all will be well.

PIA is at the top of the chopping block. But there are many government departments either slated for sale or touted for a rechristening. Take PWD for example, which is to be abolished and replaced by a new infrastructure authority which will likely be a handmaiden of FWO. There are dozens of other public institutions that

will, to use established policy-speak, be downsized or rightsized.

Let's start with big fish like PIA. While airline travel is not the best example of truly public transport, it is nevertheless true that PIA used to offer highly subsidised fares to destinations like Gilgit and Gwadar.

Did this represent a burden on the public exchequer? It did, but then public services are not supposed to be subjected to the logic of profit-maximising capitalist firms. More generally, PIA's performance and finances have not nosedived because it is state-owned; it can be argued that its financial plight is at least partially explained by the short-termism of the highly paid foreign consultants and executives hired over the past two decades precisely to fix the airline's woes.

In the case of Pakistan Railways, financial woes are even easier to trace: until the 1980s, PR had a monopoly on freight traffic. In 1982, the National Logistics Cell was created, and a road-building frenzy was initiated that continues to this day. The NLC has now totally displaced PR in freight. The Railways' passenger service was always subsidised by its cargo revenues.

Moving on to PTCL: when the enterprise was forcibly privatised under the Musharraf dictatorship, it was one of the most profitable enterprises in the country. In almost 20 years since, there has neither been a marked improvement in PTCL's services, nor has its share value recovered to what it was in 2005. Arguably, the most notable fact is that it was sold to Etisalat, the UAE's state-owned telecom company.

I could give more examples — of private sector IPPs that have run riot in the power sector,

or local commercial banks that dole out cheap credit with reckless abandon, fuelling conspicuous consumption in cars and real estate, thus reinforcing jobless growth that accompanies the 'privatise everything' mantra loved by both our own economic czars and omnipotent creditors.

But I will save the last word for the long-suffering ethnic peripheries, where a hybrid privatisation of land, forest, water and minerals — a true enclosure of the commons — takes all manner of hybrid forms, depriving indigenous populations of even a modicum of the benefits of what our rulers call 'development'.

Reko Diq, Saindak, Gwadar, Sindh's coal-stal islands, Thar, the mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan, the Pakhtun tribal districts, Swat, Dir, Kohistan and so many more are literally up for grabs: the nexus of foreign firms, the establishment and local big men pillage at will, sometimes by signing formal contracts and at other times through sheer gangsterism.

The case of Reko Diq is astonishing — a reckless contract award to one multinational company resulted in a fine of \$6 billion, only for the government to turn around and promise a concession for the mine to another multinational company. They call it privatisation to make it sound like the state and private sector are somehow at odds. In fact, both are engaged in what Marx called primary accumulation, an inherently violent process that is becoming more brazen by the day. Neither our own ruling class nor its foreign patrons have any interest in taming the particularly exploitative and brutal nature of the beast that is Pakistani capitalism. -- Courtesy Dawn

Community service

Amin Valliani

Throughout Pakistan's history, we have experienced numerous crises. We have fought wars on different fronts, and faced natural calamities, political upheavals, displacements and economic meltdowns. During these crises, the nation as a whole has come forward to help those affected directly and indirectly. The nation has shown an immense sense of community service during these trying times. However, this spirit remains transitory and limited; we lack the sense of community service in more 'normal' times.

Community service is one of the fundamental requirements of Islamic teachings. Islam enjoins believers to remain active in serving the community. The Holy Quran mentions "...And do not forget liberality between yourselves. Truly, Allah is All-Seer of what you do" (2:237). Therefore, there remains a constant need to inculcate a sense of community service.

The Holy Quran exemplifies the role of Hazrat Yusuf when Egypt faced a long-term famine situation. Hazrat Yusuf distributed food to his people. This example underlines the importance of social service. Life is admittedly difficult and busy nowadays, with everyone trying to make two ends meet. But one can spare a few moments for community service. Working for the welfare of others is a sure key to improving oneself.

We can address many problems through community service. One such problem that needs immediate attention is the problem of climate change. Human activities are the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil

and gas, etc. We can mitigate the effects of climate change by growing more and more trees in all the big and small cities of Pakistan under the umbrella of community service.

Growing more trees and making our land greener is a fit answer to climate change. Trees provide safety in heatwaves and harsh weather. They are amongst the greatest signs of nature. They protect creatures from extreme heat, while providing essential ecosystems. Trees release large amounts of oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide, reduce risks from floods and landslides, and increase environmental resilience to climate change. Beyond sequestering greenhouse gases, they offer multiple services vital for planetary health and human well-being, including water, clean air, food, biodiversity habitats, and recreational spaces.

Tree plantation can be linked to the education system of the country. The federal government has recently launched the Green Pakistan Initiative to mitigate the adverse effect of climate change. If students are engaged and assigned a role to make the country greener by planting more and more saplings everywhere, it would be a great service to Pakistan. They may be encouraged with an award or extra marks appreciating their efforts in nation-building. This needs to be made a permanent feature of the curriculum.

Our students spend a number of years in school, college and university, where they learn about many subjects. Along with theoretical knowledge, they need to be involved practically in nation-building. It is obvious that many students are under pressure during examinations and

are made to run behind marks and grades, leaving little or no room for community service. In essence, academic learning must be interwoven with meaningful community service so that classroom knowledge can be implemented in a real-world setting.

On a visit to rural Sindh, I found a school where students were busy in a plantation drive. Each student has been allocated a particular space to plant coconut palm trees. All students wholeheartedly participated in the drive. I was told that once the trees are mature and fruit-bearing, the school will reap sufficient funds from them.

Such schemes can be tailor-made and replicated as a part of the state-sponsored Green Pakistan Initiative in all schools. Schools may be assigned certain areas, streets or localities to plant trees with care till they are fully mature and self-supportive. At the end, the schools may be declared successful if they have achieved their target of plantation. In this way, the students would become a part of the plantation drive.

This is one form of community service which students can offer under the patronage of their respective schools. This will make students realise that they are caretakers of the earth and are responsible for safeguarding its beauty.

They will also be mobilised against environmentally unsound and unhealthy practices that are detrimental to the planet. Planting trees will prove a memorable feature of these students' lives. This will also be an opportunity for schools to declare the exercise a part of extra-curricular activities, thus creating a lasting impact on the minds of students. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM calls for SMEs capacity building to enhance profitability

Also briefed about the measures to make SMEs profitable, their access to easy loans, promotion of SMEs exports, facilitation of women in SMEs and their cohesion with the climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the authorities concerned to take measures for the capacity building of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to enhance their profitability. The prime minister, who chaired a meeting of the steering committee of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, said that steps to boost SMEs exports was inevitable for national economy, according to a

PM Office press release. The prime minister, who was briefed about the strategy for uplifting the SMEs, called them the engine of national development and instructed the immediate operationalisation of the SMEDA Board. Prime Minister Shehbaz highlighting the role of women in national economy, asked the authorities concerned to include women entrepreneurs in the decision making related to the SMEs. He also called for raising the standards of

export products at par with international practices and engage the experts of international repute to uplift the SMEs sector.

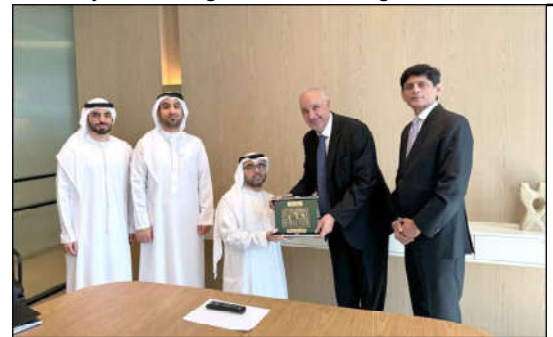
The prime minister was also briefed about the measures to make SMEs profitable, their access to easy loans, promotion of SMEs exports, facilitation of women in SMEs and their cohesion with the climate change. It was told that climate change would be tackled by introducing technology of manufacturing textile

products using the recycled material. The government would assist the SMEs to have an access to easy loans to make them start new business. The meeting was told that the new policy for uplift of SMEs institutions would be formulated on the basis of latest statistics.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema and Rana Tanveer Hussain, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, State Bank governor, FBR chairman.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the first session of the steering committee of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA).



UAE: Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi held a productive meeting with H.E. Mohamed Al Hawa, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Investment, UAE. They reviewed the progress of seven MoUs signed between Pakistan and UAE across various sectors, noted positive momentum from recent high-level exchanges, and discussed ways to further enhance bilateral trade and investment ties.

SPI witnesses nominal increase of 0.01%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a nominal increase of 0.01 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on September 12, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 319.28 points as compared to 319.24 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 14.36 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 = 100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. Likewise, SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed increase of 0.58 per cent and went up to 312.14 points from last week's 310.35 points.

SBP injects Rs11.77 trillion into market

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs11,772.55 billion in the market on Friday through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO).

According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on September 13, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 51 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs11,647.55 billion.

Rupee gains 28 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Friday appreciated by 10 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.16 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.44.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.00 and Rs 280.85 respectively.

Ali Pervaiz says: Economic reform agenda underway to bring stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Finance, Revenue, and Power Ali Pervaiz Malik said on Sunday that the government chalked out economic reforms to seek long-term stability in the country. Talking to a private news channel, he said that the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) government worked hard to

resolve economic problems. Through the positive and consistent economic policies, the inflation was brought down from 40 percent to a single digit, he added. Today, all the economic indicators were on a positive trajectory, as Fitch and Moody's were also given positive ratings to the economy of the country, he added.

PARC introduced 10 high-yielding pulses seed varieties during current year

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Variety Evaluation Committee of the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) during the current year has approved ten high-yielding pulses varieties to boost the output of pulses in the country and reduce the reliance on imported leguminous vegetables.

"The pulses play a crucial role in global food security and nutrition of the country, whereas

Pakistan needs 1.56 million tons of pulses annually," said an official of the council. Talking to APP here on Friday, he said, "The country has become self-sufficient in mung production during 2021-22 which was 0.263 million tons against the total requirement of 0.180 million tons."

"These ten high-yielding pulse varieties are poised to revolutionize the pulses output."

Shaza Fatima says: Pak inclusion in top tiers of Global Cybersecurity Index good news for IT industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): State Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on Friday that Pakistan's inclusion in the top tiers of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) 2024 Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) report is good news for the country's IT industry.

Addressing a press conference she said that Pakistan position in ITU-2021 Global Cyber security was at 79 while in the current report, Pakistan ranked among the Top-tier 46 countries. She said that the report indicated that Pakistan's legal, technical, capacity development, skill development and organizational advancement are role models. "The Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 shows significant improvements by countries that are implementing essential legal measures, plans, capacity building

initiatives, and cooperation frameworks, especially in strengthening incident response capabilities," the report said.

The report placed 46 countries in Tier 1, the highest of the five tiers, reserved for "role modelling" countries that demonstrate a strong commitment in all five cybersecurity pillars.

"Pakistan has performed exceptionally well in the latest ranking and has been placed in Tier 1, alongside countries like the United States, Japan, Singapore, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia," she said. She said, "It is an honor for the nation and the IT industry that Pakistan is now included in the top tiers of cybersecurity."

Shaza Fatima also acknowledged the collective efforts of various departments, including Pakistan Telecommunication, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the Ministry of Planning Commission, the Ministry of Defence, law

enforcement agencies, and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), in achieving this milestone.

She expressed gratitude to the provinces and all stakeholders for their contributions and support in strengthening Pakistan's cybersecurity infrastructure and promoting digital advancement across the country.

Shaza Fatima Khawaja expressed her gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for his pivotal role in achieving the historic goal. She highlighted his unwavering support and keen interest in the IT sector, emphasizing that his leadership has been instrumental in advancing Pakistan's position in the global cybersecurity landscape.

She also acknowledged his efforts in ensuring policy continuity, which played a crucial role in this remarkable achievement. She noted that the continuity of policies during both the PDM and interim governments.

Governor KP emphasizes agriculture's role in provincial development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday highlighted the crucial role of agriculture in the development of the province.

The Governor said this during dinner organized by the All Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Market Association here, that was attended by President Malik Sohni, MPA Arbab Zarak, and other notable guests.

Governor Kundi said that fruits and vegetables are not only beneficial for

health but also play a significant role in the country's economy.

He emphasized that Pakistan, being an agricultural country, relies heavily on its agricultural sector, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where a diverse range of fruits and vegetables are grown. Unfortunately, Kundi remarked, those in charge of the province seem more concerned about their own interests rather than the welfare of the agricultural sector.

He further said that the integration of traditional farming

practices with modern techniques could enhance agricultural productivity and stabilize local markets. This diversity is also vital for local culture and food security.

The Governor assured that he would play a key role in addressing the issues raised.

Earlier, President Malik Sohni presented several demands, including the need for development work in markets where traders and commission agents are paying taxes without seeing corresponding improvements.



PESHAWAR: A health worker administers polio vaccine drops to a child during anti-polio immunization campaign, at a School in Peshawar.

Cybercrime case: Court confirms interim bail of Swati, others

LAHORE (APP): A sessions court on Friday confirmed the interim bail of Azam Khan Swati, Ali Zaidi, and Mussarat Jamshed Cheema in a cybercrime case registered by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and ordered them to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each to avail the relief.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Salman Ghuman conducted the proceedings on three separate bail petitions for Azam Swati, Ali Zaidi, and Mussarat Jamshed Cheema, who also appeared upon the expiry of their interim bail.

The defense counsel argued that the FIA had registered a baseless case against his clients, adding that the agency failed to submit any evidence. He submitted that the sections of the PECA Act included in the FIR were bailable and requested the court to confirm his clients' interim bail. However, the FIA's prosecutor opposed the plea and requested the dismissal of the bail petitions. The court, upon completion of arguments by both parties, confirmed the interim bail of all three and ordered them to furnish surety bonds for it.

LHC acquits murder accused

LAHORE (APP): A Lahore High Court (LHC) division bench on Friday acquitted a condemned prisoner for lack of evidence in a murder case against him.

Mamu Kanjan police had registered a case against Zafar Iqbal under Section 302 of the PPC on charges of stabbing his brother-in-law to death. A Tandlianwala sessions court had handed down death penalty to the accused in 2021. He had filed an appeal in the high court, challenging the trial court's verdict.

PDWP approves 2 development schemes worth Rs 4.48b

LAHORE (APP): Planning and Development Board Chairman Barrister Nabeel Ahmad Awan chaired the 27th meeting of the Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) for FY 2024-25 in which two development schemes worth Rs 4487.543 million were approved. The approved schemes are: 1- Induction of Eco-Friendly Buses in Cities of Punjab (DLI-6 PGDP) at the cost of Rs 3,534 million.



JEHLUM: Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja offers dua following the curtain-raising and inauguration of the District Election Commission Office in the city.

Quality of food prepared for Eid Milad to be checked: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yaseen has said that the food which will be distributed at 12th of Rabiul Awwal procession, congregations and Mehfilis will be checked. Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Director General (DG) Muhammad Asim Javaid met Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yaseen and discussed checking of centres where 'Langar' [free food] is prepared for distribution at Eid Milad processions and congregations. He said that

complete focus was on traceability of available items at food preparing centres, and a ban had been imposed on the use of prohibited items.

Bilal Yaseen directed the relevant authorities to ensure checking of food as per laws before its distribution among the Eid Milad participants. Milk should be checked with modern lacto-machines, he said and added that no compromise would be made on the quality of food for Eid Milad participants.

FIA arrests 3 for fraud, human-trafficking

LAHORE (APP): The FIA Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Lahore has arrested three proclaimed offenders involved in fraud and alleged human-trafficking.

According to a spokesperson, two proclaimed offenders were arrested in major operations of FIA Anti-Human Trafficking Circle. The accused were identified as Akhtar Cheema, Abdul Qadir and Muhammad Usman. Akhtar Cheema was arrested from Gujrat in a raid for illegally sending people abroad. He received Rs 200,000 from the victim in 2015. The arrested accused was wanted by FIA Lahore Zone since 2015.

KP waiting for Center's reply on regularization of NCP vehicles: Saif

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor on Information Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif on Friday said the province was waiting for a reply from the Federal Government over suggestions to regularize the non-custom-paid (NCP) vehicles.

In a statement issued to the media, he said the matter of regularization of NCP vehicles in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was waiting for a decision from the Federal Government adding that as soon as the suggestions forwarded by the KP government was approved, work on

regularization of NCP vehicles will start in the province. Saif further said that there were proofs that NCP vehicles have also been used in terrorist activities, adding that with the registration of these vehicles the owner of the vehicle, used in subversive activity, will easily be identified. The registration of these vehicles, he added, will also generate a hefty revenue for the provincial government.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had approved the suggestions for the regularization of NCP vehicles before sending them to the Center for approval.

ANF recovers 419 kg drugs in 10 perations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 419 kg drugs worth Rs 190 million and arrested 10 accused including two Afghan nationals and two women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that 70 grams ice was recovered from two suspects going on a motorcycle near a university on Lahror Road Islamabad. 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Wapda Town Peshawar and an accused was arrested.

Khawaja Salman says: Foolproof security arrangements finalized for Eid Milad-un-Nabi

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Health Minister, Khawaja Salman Rafique chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order on Friday said that foolproof security arrangements have been finalized for Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH).

Provincial Finance Minister, Mujtaba Shujaur Rahman; Sports Minister, Faisal Ayub Khokhar; Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik and the parliamentarians from Rawalpindi Division attended the meeting. The meeting reviewed the law and order situation and the arrangements for Eid Milad-ul-Nabi in detail.

Interior Secretary

Punjab, Noor ul Amin Mengal and Inspector General of Police, Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar gave a briefing on law and order.

On the occasion, Chairman Cabinet Committee and Provincial Health Minister, Khawaja Salman Rafiq said that the Punjab government had made arrangements to provide drinks and sweets to the people on Eid Milad un Nabi across Punjab. Eid Milad un Nabi (PBUH), the birth of the Holy Prophet would be celebrated with full devotion, Khwaja Salman Rafiq said adding that no innovation would be allowed for the peaceful celebration of Eid Milad, he added.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi presenting Sponsorship Cheque amounting Two Million Five Hundred & Fifty Thousand to Asian Boxing Champion Shoaib Khan Zehri in ceremony at Governor House.

Protection and promotion of culture top priority: Shazia

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parliamentary Secretary Information and Culture Punjab, Shazia Rizwan on Friday reiterated government's resolve to protect and further promote the culture and information. She visited Public Relations Department Rawalpindi during which she was given a detailed briefing about the performance of the department and under construction Information Complex Rawalpindi.

Speaking on the occasion, Shazia Rizwan said that it is the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to align information and culture with modern demands and a comprehensive strategy has been made to strengthen DGPR, its field offices and arts councils across the province. She said that the protection and promotion of the great and historical culture of Punjab is the top priority of CM Maryam Nawaz.

International News

North Korea gives a glimpse of a secretive uranium-enrichment facility as Kim pushes for more nukes

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea offered a rare glimpse into a secretive facility to produce weapons-grade uranium as state media reported Friday that leader Kim Jong Un visited the area and called for stronger efforts to "exponentially" increase its number of nuclear weapons.

It's unclear whether the site is at North Korea's main Yongbyon nuclear complex, but it's the North's first disclosure of a uranium-enrichment facility since it showed one at Yongbyon to visiting American scholars in 2010. While the latest unveiling is likely an attempt to apply more pressure on the U.S. and its allies, the images released by North Korean media of the area could provide outsiders with a valuable source of information for estimating the amount of nuclear ingredients that

North Korea has produced. During a visit to the Nuclear Weapons Institute and the facility producing weapons-grade nuclear materials, Kim expressed "great satisfaction repeatedly over the wonderful technical force of the nuclear power field" held by North Korea, the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

KCNA said Kim went around the control room of the uranium enrichment facility and a construction site that would expand its capacity for producing nuclear weapons. North Korean state media photos showed Kim being briefed by scientists while walking along long lines of centrifuges. KCNA didn't say when Kim visited the facilities or where they are located. KCNA said Kim stressed the need to further augment the number of centrifuges to "exponentially

increase the nuclear weapons for self-defense," a goal he has repeatedly stated in recent years. It said Kim ordered officials to push forward the introduction of a new type of centrifuge.

Kim said North Korea needs greater defense and preemptive attack capabilities because "anti-(North Korea) nuclear threats perpetrated by the U.S. imperialists-led vassal forces have become more undisguised and crossed the red line," KCNA said.

South Korea's Unification Ministry strongly condemned North Korea's push to boost its nuclear capability. A ministry statement said North Korea's "illegal" pursuit of nuclear weapons in defiance of U.N. prohibitions is a serious threat to international peace. It said North Korea must realize it cannot win anything with its nuclear program.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un tours facilities during a visit to the Nuclear Weapons Institute and the production base of weapon-grade nuclear materials at an undisclosed location in North Korea.

14 killed in Afghanistan attack; IS claims responsibility

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: Gunmen killed at least 14 people in central Afghanistan on Thursday, the interior ministry said, in an attack that was claimed by the local chapter of the militant Islamic State group.

"Fifteen Shias were killed and six others wounded in an attack carried out by the soldiers of the caliphate in central Afghanistan," the group's Amaq media wing said in a statement.

Attacks in Afghanistan have declined markedly since the Taliban came to power in 2021, but a number of armed groups, including the regional Islamic State-Khorasan, remain a threat.

"Unknown gunmen opened fire and killed civilians," Abdul Matin Qani, spokesman for the interior ministry, said.

A source in Daykundi province said 14 people had been killed and four wounded.

Trump rules out another debate with Kamala

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Donald Trump said on Thursday he would not participate in another televised debate with his Democratic rival Vice President Kamala Harris.

"There will be no third debate!" the Republican candidate wrote on his Truth Social platform, including in his tally the earlier debate with US President Joe Biden in June and his Tuesday showdown with Kamala Harris.

Sweden offers immigrants \$34,000 to leave country

Monitoring Desk
STOCKHOLM: Sweden plans to boost payments to up to \$34,000 to immigrants who leave the nation that has been a haven for the war-weary and persecuted, the right-wing government said on Thursday.

The Scandinavian country was for decades seen as a "humanitarian sup-erpower", but over the years has struggled to integrate many of its newcomers. Immigrants who voluntarily return to their countries of origin from 2026 would be eligible to receive

up to 350,000 Swedish kronor, the government, which is propped up by the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats, told a press conference. "We are in the midst of a paradigm shift in our migration policy," Migration Minister Johan Forsell told reporters, as the government presented its latest move to crack down on migration.

Currently immigrants can receive up to 10,000 kronor per adult and 5,000 kronor per child, with a cap of 40,000 kronor per family.

India's top court frees jailed Modi opponent Kejriwal on bail

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: A top political opponent of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was granted bail on Friday after months behind bars on accusations in exchange for liquor licences.

Arvind Kejriwal, chief minister of the capital Delhi and a key leader in an opposition alliance that battled Modi in national elections earlier this year, was first detained in March over the long-running corruption probe.

UN chief says lack of accountability on UN staff killings in Gaza 'unacceptable'

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: A lack of accountability for the killing of United Nations staff and humanitarian aid workers in the Gaza Strip is "totally unacceptable," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told Reuters in a wide-ranging interview. Guterres also said that establishing a UN peacekeeping force would not be the "best solution" for Haiti, where armed gangs have taken over much of the capital and expanded to surrounding areas, fueling a humanitarian crisis with mass displacements, sexual violence and widespread hunger. Ahead of the annual meeting of world leaders at the UN General Assembly later this month,

Guterres summed up the past year as "very tough, very difficult."

It has been dominated by the war in Gaza, which began just two weeks after leaders left New York following last year's assembly when Palestinian Hamas militants killed 1,200 hostages and took about 250 hostages in a cross-border rampage into Israel, according to Israeli allies. Describing Israel's retaliation against Hamas in Gaza — where local health officials say some 41,000 Palestinians have been killed since the war began — Guterres said there have been "very dramatic violations of the international humanitarian law and the total absence of an effective protection of civilians."

EU's ticking demographic timebomb to focus minds at Budapest talks

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: An inexorable decline in the number of working age Europeans will put a huge strain on welfare systems and public finances in coming decades, according to a report that will form the basis of EU discussions later this week on the demographic timebomb.

The presentation, prepared for senior finance ministry and central bank officials from the EU's 27 member states by the Bruegel think tank, said Europe's ageing society will cut the number of people with jobs and paying taxes while boosting the number of those drawing pensions and needing more health care.

Even allowing immigration to continue at current rates — already an unacceptable solution for many Europeans, as shown in growing support for far-right parties — will not be enough to offset the decline in the working-age population, it said.

Hungary, which holds the EU's rotating presi-

dency and will host the discussions on Friday and Saturday, is strongly opposed to increasing immigration and is expected instead to propose remedies such as raising fertility rates through more support for families and boosting labour force participation.

Bruegel said that in the absence of net immigration, the number of people in the 20-64 working age bracket in Europe will fall by about a fifth to 207 million in 2050 from 264 million in 2022.

Even if the 450-million-strong European Union accepted slightly more than one million immigrants a year — broadly the average from 2016-2020 — this would make up for less than half of the decline in the working-age population, Bruegel said.

Other possible actions to help alleviate the impact of an ageing population include better management of healthcare and long-term care costs as well as reform of the pension and health systems, according to the documents under discussion.

Russia expels 6 British diplomats it accuses of spying but the UK calls it 'completely baseless'

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Russia on Friday accused six British diplomats of spying and said it decided to expel them. The U.K. said the "completely baseless" move came weeks ago and was linked to its action in May to revoke the credentials of an attaché at the Russian Embassy and limit Moscow's diplomatic activities in London.

The latest East-West tensions unfolded as British Prime Minister Keir Starmer visits Washington for talks that will include Ukraine's request to use Western-supplied weapons to strike targets inside Russia. President Vladimir Putin has warned that Kyiv's use of long-range weapons would put NATO at war with Moscow.

Russia's Federal Security Service said in an online statement that the Foreign

Ministry withdrew the British envoys' accreditations, and Russian TV quoted an FSB official as saying it was decided to expel them.

The FSB said it received documents indicating the diplomats were sent to Russia by a division of the U.K.'s Foreign Office "whose main task is to inflict a strategic defeat on our country," and that they were involved in "intelligence-gathering and subversive activities." It did not identify the six diplomats.

The FSB warned that if other diplomats are found to be carrying out "similar actions," it "will demand early termination of their missions" to Russia.

Russian TV said the six diplomats had met with independent media and rights groups that have been declared "foreign agents".

Germany arrests Syrian man accused of machete attack plot on soldiers

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: German authorities said on Friday they had arrested a 27-year-old Syrian man accused of planning an attack on army soldiers using two machetes.

The suspect, an "alleged follower of a radical Islamic ideology", was arrested on Thursday on charges of planning "a serious act of violence endangering the state".

The man had acquired two heavy knives "around 40 centimetres in length" in recent days, prosecutors in Munich said.

He planned to "attack Bundeswehr soldiers" in the city of Hof in northern Bavaria during their lunch break, aiming "to kill as many of them as possible", they said.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Secretary General International Maritime Organization Arsenio Antonio and other officials inaugurate the International Maritime Sustainability Exhibition & Conference Pakistan-IMSEC 2024 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at a local hotel.

ADB approves \$320 mln to improve climate-resilience, safety of roads in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$320 million loan to support the rehabilitation of roads in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan, enhancing safe and all-weather connectivity in rural areas.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Roads Development Project will upgrade around 900 kilometers of rural roads in the province that are susceptible to floods and are in poor condition, according to ADB press release received here on Friday.

These cover key routes that link remote communities to education, health care, and markets, it said adding the project in-

cludes measures to incorporate climate-resilient design, road safety enhancement, and sustainable maintenance practices.

"Road transport is both a lifeline to the people and a key component of socioeconomic development in Pakistan. This vital infrastructure project will reduce travel time, lower transportation costs, and increase access to economic opportunities for millions of residents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," said ADB Director General for Central and West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov.

"By providing better access to markets and services, we are empowering local communities and driving inclusive economic

growth in one of Pakistan's most underserved regions," Zhukov added.

Annual rainfall and temperature patterns have significantly increased in parts of the province, and the lack of resilient infrastructure escalated the impact of disasters on people and livelihoods. Flooding events since 2010 have substantially damaged the road network, hampering economic opportunities for millions of residents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The project will offer technical and financial support to assist the government in preparing long-term targeted interventions that will enhance the climate resilience and sustainability of the province's road network.

Rabia Baloch says: CM determined to provide every possible facilities to masses of Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti is determined to provide every possible facilities to the people of province.

In this regard, the Chief Minister has been ensuring practical measures for provision of basic facilities to the people.

This was stated by the President of Pakistan Peoples Party Kalat Division, Rabia Baloch while speaking in the current affairs programme of PTV the other day.

She mentioned that the critics of Chief Minis-

ter also admit that he (CM) does his homework well. The Chief Minister have solid arguments to defend his decisions, and so he is a good educated face of the party in Balochistan, the PPP Divisional President maintained.

Ms. Rabia Baloch maintained that Mir Sarfraz Bugti is the choice of PPP Chairman, Bilawal Bhattu Zardari as he has the good political acumen and expertise.

She said that the PPP doesn't believe in any discrimination, rather it believes in humanity and public service.

No Muslim can tolerate blasphemy: Shahina Kakar

Independent Report
QUETTA: The central Joint Secretary of Awami National Party (ANP) and former Member of Provincial Assembly, Ms. Shahina Kakar has stated no one can tolerate blasphemy of Holy Prophet (PBUH).

In a statement issued here on Friday, the ANP leader said that the police spy Saeed Khan Sarhadi demonstrated and highlighted his love and respect for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) before the world by killing the blasphemy accused.

Ms. Shahina Kakar said that blasphemy is not acceptable at all and so it was intolerable in Quetta.

She also said that the sentiments of more than 1.5 billion Muslims were hurt because of the blasphemy.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Education Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani addressing participant of Youth Conference Balochistan

Secretary directs to timely complete projects for facilitating people in Hub

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Secretary Local Government Department, Abdul Rauf Baloch has directed to the concerned municipal officers to play their role for making Hub an exemplary city by improving the service delivery. The Secretary said that we are planning to provide better facilities in limited resources as compared to the proportion of increasing population in Hub.

He was presiding over

the meeting about issues and development projects in Hub on Friday, the Deputy Commissioner Hub, Ms. Rohana Gul Kakar and other concerned high ups were in attendance at the meeting. The Secretary visited the birth and death registration certificate centers. It was informed that 10,000 births have been registered at the center so far. Meanwhile, the Taxation Officer of Local Government Adil Bashir also briefed the Secretary.

Standing body irked over non formation of Zakat Council

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Standing Committee on Zakat, Ushr, Hajj & Auqaf, Minority and Youth Affairs, Fazal Qadir MandoKhel on Friday took serious notice of the non formation of Zakat Council. A meeting of the Standing Committee on Zakat, Ushr, Hajj & Auqaf, Minority Affairs, and Youth Affairs was held in the Committee Room of the Balochistan Assembly here.

The session was chaired by Fazal Qadir MandoKhel, with members Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani, Safia Fazal, and Parliamentary Secretary Sanjay Kumar in attendance. During the meeting, secretaries from the departments of Minority Affairs, Hajj, Zakat, and Ushr provided briefings on their departments' responsibilities, performance, and the challenges they face.



QUETTA: Fazal Qadir MandoKhel, Chairman Standing Committee for Zakat, Ushr, Hajj, Auqaf and Minority Affairs presiding over a meeting

Secretary General assures IMO's support for development of maritime sector in Pakistan

KARACHI (APP): The Secretary General International Maritime Organization (IMO) Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco stressing on compliance of UN conventions on Friday assured continued support of IMO to Pakistan through development projects and technical cooperation for capacity building and efficiency enhancement of the maritime sector in the country.

He was addressing the inaugural session of International Maritime Sustainability Exhibition and Conference IMSEC 2024 here. The 3-day long IMSEC 2024 is being held under the theme "Catalyzing Pakistan's Maritime Transformation" as part of World Maritime Week celebrations.

The event was attended by Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Secretary Maritime Zafar Shah, DG Shipping Alia Shahid, Commandant Pakistan Marine Academy Commodore Rizwan Munawar and Chairmen of KPT, Port Qasim, PNSC, Gwadar Ports as well as

diplomates of different countries and other stakeholders of the maritime sector.

The secretary General IMO, addressing on the occasion, emphasized the significance of leveraging the technology advancement and implementation on international conventions for promotion of blue economy, conservation of maritime eco system and enhancing ports and shipping efficiencies.

He said that digitization and automation help enhancing the efficiency of ports and shipping and it results into increased volume of international trade.

He said that IMO was an international organization with 176 members who share the same goals and work in coordination to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) while sharing of experiences and the best practices among the member states provides the opportunities of enhancing efficiencies and framing strategies to deal with encountered challenges.

Emphasizing the importance of conservation of marine eco system by ad-



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Irrigation Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai

Pakistan committed to strengthen ties with European Union: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday said that Pakistan highly valued its relationship with the European Union and was committed to strengthening that bond into a robust strategic partnership.

"Pakistan is a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-national country, where citizens enjoy fundamental rights as guaranteed by the Constitution," he said during a meeting with the EU delegation, led by Frans van Daele, Special Envoy of the European Union, at the Parliament House.

Dr. Reena Kavinka, EU's Ambassador to Pakistan was also present in the meeting.

The speaker further highlighted that the Parliament had consistently undertaken initiatives to safeguard the rights and welfare of all Pakistanis.

Ayaz Sadiq acknowledged the significant role

that minorities play in Pakistan's national development and prosperity.

He reiterated that the Parliament was committed to promoting religious harmony and had ensured full representation of minority communities in the legislative body.

"The international community should recognize the severe human rights violations occurring in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, and Gaza," he said, urging the global community to take action to halt the ongoing atrocities in the regions.

EU's Special Envoy Frans van Daele acknowledged Pakistan's importance on the global stage and expressed the European Union's desire to further strengthen ties with the country.

"The European Union is keen to enhance both bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Pakistan," he added.

Dr. Reena Kavinka, EU's Ambassador to Pakistan was also present in the meeting.

The speaker further highlighted that the Parliament had consistently undertaken initiatives to safeguard the rights and welfare of all Pakistanis.

Ayaz Sadiq acknowledged the significant role



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq meets with a European delegation led by Ambassador Frans Van Daele, Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief, alongside Dr. Riina Kionka, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, at Parliament House.

Important research, consultative programme on climate change and fisheries held in Gwadar

Independent Report
GWADAR: A significant research and consultative programme was held in Gwadar to discuss the impacts of climate change on coastal fisheries and the livelihoods of fishermen. The programme was organized by the RCD Council in collaboration with the South Asia Partnership Pakistan.

The programme was attended by experts, researchers, and local fishermen leaders. Senior Research Officer NIOF Ali Jan Baloch, Deputy Director Environment GDA Abdul Rahim, Deputy Director Irrigation Pizer Ahmed, Geologist and Climate Expert Hafiz Jaffar, and representatives from the Fisheries Department and Village Organizations of Union Councils Ganz, Pishukan, and Sarbandan participated in the programme.

The programme discussed the severe impacts

of climate change on fisheries in coastal areas, including the decline in fish production, the effects of sea level rise on fish species, and the impacts of sea temperature on fisheries. The programme also aimed to identify solutions to address these challenges and ensure the livelihoods of fishermen.

The programme was also attended by media representatives and other stakeholders.

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PR decide upgradation of Quetta-Taftan Rail Section

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Pakistan Railways has decided to upgrade the Quetta-Taftan railway section in due course of time. According to the sources of Pakistan Railways, the tenders have been called from the national and international companies for upgradation of the 638-kilometer-long Quetta-Taftan railway section.

The PR authorities told that the tenders for the work would be opened on October 22, 2024. It has been learnt through the sources that the Quetta-Taftan railway track would be upgraded and developed at the international standard. The authorities said that the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul transit train would be restored after upgradation.

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HUB: Secretary Local Government Abdul Rauf Baloch being briefed by Chief Officer Syed Saleem Shah about development projects and tuff tiles schemes in Komal city during his visit to Hub

PPP delegation meets CM Advisor

Independent Report
QUETTA: Advisor to Chief Minister for Labour and Manpower Barrister Sardar Baba Ghulam Rasul Khan Umrani met with Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leaders, including Provincial Senior Vice President Parveen Mengli, Provincial Deputy General Secretary Sakina Abdullah Khan, Provincial Media Coordinator Fiza Popalzai, Quetta Division President Khadija Zahri, and District President Balqis Awan.

The meeting discussed the registration of labourers and their children in educational institutions

in Islamabad under the Workers Welfare Board. The advisor assured the PPP leaders that the project aims to provide quality education to the children of deserving labourers and workers, who will become future leaders and make the province and country proud.

The PPP leaders appreciated the advisor's efforts and commitment to the welfare of labourers and workers, especially women, and expressed confidence that the project will benefit the children of labourers and workers in Balochistan.

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'Targeting Black Magicians Bill' to crack down on witchcraft with 7-year imprisonment: Samina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) on Friday emphasized the need for implementation and awareness of the "Targeting Black Magicians Bill", a legislation aimed at preventing witchcraft and related activities in the country. Talking to a Private news channel, she explained that the bill, which has been passed by the parliament, stipulates that black magic practitioners shall face a 7-year imprisonment term and a fine of Rs. 1 million.

She emphasized that the implementation of the "Targeting Black Magicians Bill" is essential to create a safe and secure environment for all citizens, particularly in rural areas where black magic is prevalent.

By pushing for the implementation of this law, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri aims to protect the rights of vulnerable individuals and promote a society free from superstition and fear.

Replying to a question, Zehri revealed that the "Targeting Black Magicians Bill" was initially passed in 2017, but due to certain limitations, it was presented again to incorporate suggestions from all stakeholders. She assured that after thorough deliberation and consultation, the bill will be finally implemented and black magic practitioners will face strict penalties. With the implementation of this bill, black magic practitioners will face severe consequences, including a 7-year imprisonment term and a fine of Rs. 1 million, she highlighted.



QUETTA: Peoples Party (PPP) Balochistan Secretary Information, Sardar Sarbuland Jozezai addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

BHBA ends boycott of medicines tenders

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Health Secretary Saleh Muhammad Baloch on Friday assured the delegation of Balochistan Health Bidders Association (BHBA) to resolve their demands on which the delegation announced to end boycott of medicine tenders.

He made this assurance while talking to delegation of BHBA which called on him at his office here with aim to address their demands for ensuring availability of medicines in respective hospitals of province. It should be noted that earlier the Balochistan Health Bidders Association had boycotted the tenders and supply orders of medicines to the Health Department due to their past arrears bills.

The meeting was attended by Director General Health Services Balochistan Dr. Amin Mandukhail, Deputy Secretary Health Department, State Ali, Balochistan Health Bidders Association President Syed

Jamilur Rehman Khan, General Secretary Taswur Shakeel, Chairman Javed Ashraf and Staff Officer to Secretary Health Shabbir Ahmad Shahwani.

During the meeting, the Cabinet President General Secretary and Chairman of Balochistan Bidders Association presented demands and issues being faced by them in the area.

Health Secretary Saleh Muhammad Baloch assured them that Balochistan Bidders Association would soon pay all the outstanding arrears and the budget of the supply order of the first medicine was provided to the bidders in the 1st half and 2nd half.

He said that this time they would be paid in lump sum instead of 1st half and 2nd half.

Apart from this, RHCS, Rural Health Centers no longer have any role whatever the supply order or demand will be, it will be only through the District Health Officer of the concerned district, he said.