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dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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SC ruling on reserved seats cannot be implemented under new law: NA speaker

NA Speaker pens letter to ECP, says the Amended Election Act, 2017, was passed on August 7 while the SC issued verdict in July.

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said the independent returned candidates who have already given a joining to a political party cannot be allowed now to switch parties in terms of the Amended Election Act, which has paramount and overriding effect.

In a letter written to the Election Commission of Pakistan, he said no allocation can now be made by the Election Commission without applying the Amended Election Act to the fullest. As the Judgment of the Supreme Court was rendered, based on the law

prior to the enactment of the amendment, the said judgment is now incapable of implementation. The Speaker said it is the Amended Election Act that shall prevail and supersede the prior ruling.

It is pertinent to mention that the above is not only my view, but in fact is the consistent jurisprudence of the Supreme Court as well. The Amended Election Act is in the field, therefore, it is the statutory obligation of the ECP to honor the laws made by Parliament and uphold the principles of democracy and parliamentary supremacy.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said after the Judgment of the apex court, the Parliament has been pleased to pass the Elections (Second Amendment) Act, 2024 which received the assent of the President on 7th August 2024 and was published in the Gazette of Pakistan on 9th August 2024.

He referred two particular provisions of the Amended Election Act, which states "provided that if a candidate, before seeking allotment of a prescribed symbol, has not filed a declaration before the Returning Officer about his affiliation with a particular political

party by submitting party certificate from the political party confirming that he is that party's candidate, he shall be deemed to be considered as an independent candidate and not a candidate of any political party."

"Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act or rules or any other law, for the time being in force, or a judgment, decree or order of any court including the Supreme Court and a High Court, the declaration, consent or affidavit, by whatever name called, of an independent returned candidate once given for joining a political party shall be irrevocable and cannot

be substituted or withdrawn."

The letter further stated that Section 1(2) of the Amended Election Act categorically states that the said amendments will have retrospective effect from 2017 when the Election Act 2017

The Speaker said upholding the principles of parliamentary sovereignty are essential in maintaining the integrity and independence of our parliamentary system. He said any actions perceived as undermining the sovereignty of the Parliament can erode public trust and confidence in our institutions.



President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Pakistan Mr. Jiang Zaidong cutting a cake to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of People's Republic of China, in Islamabad.

President, PM extend heartfelt felicitations to China on 75th anniversary

Pakistan to work with China for shared prosperity, global peace: President Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to working together with China for shared prosperity, and promoting peace and stability in the world.

Highlighting the importance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the President said that high quality development of CPEC would "help unlock greater benefits for our people, besides enhancing connectivity and prosperity of the region".

He emphasized the importance of advancing the high-quality development of CPEC to unlock greater benefits for the people of two countries.

President Zardari was speaking at the "China's National Day Reception", hosted by the Chinese Embassy. The event marking the 75th anniversary of the

founding of the People's Republic of China, was attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, federal ministers, dignitaries, diplomats, and senior civil and military officers. President Zardari, extending the warmest felicitations to Chinese brothers and sisters on the auspicious occasion, stated that the first October marked the rebirth of a strong, united China, achieved through the heroic struggle of the Chinese people.

under the visionary leadership of the Communist Party.

He reflected on the invaluable contributions made by the successive generations in transforming the Pakistan-China friendship into an All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. This partnership, he said, had served as a model of inter-state relations and thus become a source of in-

spiration and strength for both countries.

China was an iron-clad brother of Pakistan and the entire nation was proud of the enduring friendship as both countries stood by each other during testing times, he added.

In his address, the Prime Minister said it's a great day and a great event today that we are jointly celebrating the 75th anniversary of our great friend China's independence. He said we are all very happy to celebrate this momentous event.

The Prime Minister recalled his visit to China in June this year, saying that he was deeply touched by the warmth and very friendly welcome from our Chinese friends. He said the people of Pakistan and China are in an unbreakable and unshakable relationship.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister of Russian Federation, Alexei Overchuk calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Lebanon attacks: Use of electronic means for terrorism in foreign countries reprehensible: FO spox

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday strongly condemned the attacks in Lebanon through the detonation of electronic equipment and said that the use of cyber and electronic means to commit terrorism in foreign countries was reprehensible.

"Pakistan strongly condemns this week's attacks in Lebanon carried out through detonation of electronic equipment. The use of cyber and electronic means to commit terrorism in foreign countries is reprehensible," Foreign Office spokesperson Murtaz Zahra Baloch said at her weekly press briefing.

She said the terror attacks were the manifestation of Israel's alarming adventurism in the region, endangering peace and security.

"Pakistan reaffirms its support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and calls upon the international community to take urgent steps to hold Israel accountable for its acts of international terrorism and violation of international laws."

She said Pakistan called for full implementation of ICJ Advisory Opinion delivered on July 19 this year and welcomed the United Nations General Assembly resolution to turn the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ into action.

She also condemned the Israeli air strikes on a school and refugees shelter in Gaza and said such attacks on targets, including refugee camps, also violated the spirit of ICJ provisional measures.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Egypt, Dr. Ihab Abdelhamid Hassan calls on Federal Minister for Defence, Defence Production and Aviation, Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

Cases of polio continue to mount in Balochistan as tally reaches 13 in 2024

Independent Report

QUETTA: The cases of polio continued to mount in Balochistan province as their tally reached 13 during year 2024 with another case reported from Quetta district. The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication Balochistan confirmed the detection of WPV1 in a 2-year-old child from Union Council Qadriabad of District Quetta. It may be mentioned here that this is the second case from Quetta this year and the 13th from Balochistan province, the highest number of cases in the entire country.

Prior to this, five polio cases were reported

from Killa Abdullah district and one each from Dera Bugti, Chaman, Jhal Magsi, Zhob, Killa Saifullah and Kharan.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication, Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, expressed deep concern over the rise in cases from Balochistan and stressed the importance of reaching every child with multiple doses of the protective polio vaccines.

"It is devastating to see another child affected by a disease that can be completely prevented through vaccination. This new case from Quetta highlights the risk and the need to rapidly increase population immunity to further curtail the spread of virus." She added:

Bilawal stresses need for constitutional court to ensure fair judicial system

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has reiterated his party's long-standing demand for judicial reforms, emphasising the need for a constitutional court to ensure a fair judicial system.

Speaking to representatives of lawyers across the country on Thursday, Bilawal praised the legal community for their resistance against dictatorships, particularly in defeating Musharraf's regime.

"Lawyers have always stood firm against dictators, and their struggle led to the downfall of Musharraf's dictatorship," he said.

Bilawal highlighted the views of his late mother, Benazir Bhutto, who believed that judges should avoid political activism. "She used to say that if judges want to lead rallies, they should form a political party. She knew that political involvement by the judiciary would harm the public," he remarked.

He also recalled the PPP's commitment to the Charter of Democracy.

Pakistan keen to expand trade, security cooperation with Russia: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that Pakistan was keen to expand trade, economic, energy, connectivity and security cooperation with Russia.

The prime minister, talking to Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk, who called on him here, conveyed that Pakistan considered strengthening relations with Russia as an important priority of Pakistan's foreign policy, according to a PM Office press release.

Welcoming the delegation, the prime minister said that he looked forward to welcoming his Russian counterpart Mikhail Mishustin to Islamabad next month.

Recalling his "very fruitful" discussion with President Vladimir Putin in July earlier this year and

conveyed his thanks to President Putin for sending the high-level delegation to discuss expansion of bilateral cooperation.

DPM Overchuk thanked the PM for the warm welcome and reiterated Russia's resolve to deepen relations with Pakistan. He characterized Pakistan-Russia relations as constructive and mutually beneficial.

The two sides agreed to maintain regular contacts.

The prime minister also witnessed signing of an MoU between Russia and Pakistan, which signifies the shared understanding and desire of the two countries to further strengthen mutually advantageous cooperation in all areas of shared interest, especially trade, investment, energy, IT, agriculture, science & technology and education.

Ahsan sees Balochistan as country's most prosperous province in 15-20 years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday expressed confidence that Balochistan would emerge as the most prosperous province in the country within next 15-20 years due to its potential and extensive development activities being carried out there.

"This year, the Federal Government allocated Rs 130 billion in its development budget for Balochistan, which is almost double that of Punjab and higher than all other provinces," he said while addressing a ceremony held to launch a book titled "Mir Hazar Khan Marri - Mazahmat Say Mufahamat Tak" [From Resistance to Reconciliation].

The book, authored by

Ammar Masood with research work by Khalid Farid, details the struggle of Mir Hazar Khan Marri, who unveiled conspiracies that had been hatched against Pakistan.

The minister paid tribute to Mir Hazar Khan Marri, the brave son of Balochistan, for his efforts to educate the people, especially the youth of the province, about the inimical designs of adversaries against the motherland, thereby giving them political maturity and guiding them towards reconciliation, brotherhood and harmony.

He highlighted Pakistan's geo-strategic importance in the region, which was surrounded by the countries like China, Iran and India, with a history of thousands of years.



ISLAMABAD: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti addressing the launching ceremony of Ammar Masood's book "Mir Hazar Khan Marri: Muzahimat se Mufahimat Tak".

Book launch on "Mir Hazar Khan Marri: Muzahimat se Mufahimat Tak": Unfortunately false narrative built about Balochistan's accession to Pakistan: CM

Says coming generations should be aware about historic facts

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has categorically stated that our coming generations should surely be well aware about the historic facts and maintained that Balochistan's accession with Pakistan was not done forcibly, rather it was done with all willingness and pleasure.

He said that unfortunately a false narrative had been built about Balochistan's accession to Pakistan.

He said that the gifts exchanged between Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Khan of Kalat at that time manifested that mutual willingness and joy.

The Chief Minister

said that Mir Hazar Khan Marri played an important role in promotion peace and stability in the province.

The Chief Minister was addressing the launching ceremony of Ammar Masood's book "Mir Hazar Khan Marri: Muzahimat se Mufahimat Tak", here he said Balochistan province had a beautiful story to tell but unfortunately nobody wrote its tale. He said that this book would provide guidance to the new generation about the history of Balochistan and the role of tribal elders.

He said that unfortunately a false narrative had been built about Balochistan's accession to Pakistan. The CM announced that funds had

been allocated for construction of road to Thadri, native area of the late Baloch leader in Kohlu district which will be named "Mir Hazar Khan Marri Road".

The Chief Minister appreciated the writer of book, Ammar Masood, researcher Khalid Fareed and other associates and said that the book would be made available in the universities and educational institutions of Balochistan for reading of the students.

He said that more research would also be encouraged on the topic.

He said that we need to present correct concept of establishment of Pakistan so that people may know the facts.

Govt. of Balochistan & Indus Hospital Health Network ink MoU for Universal Health Coverage in Dera Bugti

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Health Department, Government of Balochistan, Indus Hospital and Health Network signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Universal Health Coverage through Health on Wheels in Dera Bugti on Thursday.

The Secretary Health, Saleh Muhammad Baloch and Executive Director of Indus Hospital Health Network signed MoU on behalf of their respective institutions at the ceremony held here.

Those who were present on the occasion were the Director General Health, Dr. Amin Khan Mandokhail, Additional Secretary Health, Arif Khan Achakzai, Additional Secretary Health, Taufiq Daniyal and Provincial Manager of Indus Hospital, Dr. Jahandad Kasi. It may be mentioned here that the MoU is in the backdrop of the Chief Minister's Initiative of Health on Wheels for provision of healthcare facilities in remote areas of the province.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Health said that it is very important to provide health care facilities to the people who are leading life below the poverty line.

He said that the expertise and skills of the Indus Hospital would be utilised for providing health services to the people in the areas of Dera Bugti.

He said that the decision of Universal Health Coverage would have far reaching results for bringing improvement in the health sector.



Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Health said that it is very important to provide health care facilities to the people who are leading life below the poverty line. He said that the expertise and skills of the Indus Hospital would be utilised for providing health services to the people in the areas of Dera Bugti. He said that the decision of Universal Health Coverage would have far reaching results for bringing improvement in the health sector.

PTI, govt speed up contacts with JI for strategic alliances

PESHAWAR (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the government have separately accelerated their contacts with the Jamaat-e-Islami, as former president Dr Arif Alvi is scheduled to meet with the Jamaat leadership today in Mansoor.

Reportedly, a government delegation is also scheduled to meet with JI leaders in the next 48 hours.

Bakht Kakar assigned Health Department: CM withdraws portfolios of Livestock & Health from Kakar & Jamali respectively

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has withdrawn the portfolios / departments of Livestock & Dairy Development and Health from the Provincial Ministers Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Sardarzada Faisal Khan Jamali respectively.

According to a notification issued here by the Services and General Administration Department

(S&GAD) on Thursday, the portfolios have been withdrawn from the concerned Provincial Ministers by the Chief Minister with immediate effect.

According to the notification, the Chief Minister assigned the portfolio / department of Health to the Provincial Minister, Bakht Muhammad Kakar with immediate effect. However, no portfolio / department has been assigned to Sardarzada Faisal Jamali yet.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Lingering concerns

Days later, the possible repercussions of what could have been had the government's planned amendments to the Constitution been bulldozed through parliament are still being discussed.

One thing seems clear: the government must have anticipated how strong the blowback would be if the details of its legislative coup were to leak beforehand. Senior political leaders have spoken about the lengths to which it went to cover its tracks, to the extent that it told different stakeholders different things about its plans. It appears that it had good reason to be nervous.

Ever since the reported draft amendments have emerged, lawyers, politicians, academics and analysts from across the political divide have united in expressing their disappointment and disgust. Many are still trying to come to terms with the audacity with which the proposals were put to paper. The intent behind them seems so naked in its ambition that no amount of window-dressing could have ever made them palatable.

Meanwhile, after their humbling at the hands of Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the government, its allies and their shills are no longer as gloating and aggressive as they seemed over the weekend. Having attempted and failed to make drastic changes to the Constitution to favour a handful of individuals, they are now lecturing all and sundry that their 'constitutional package' was, in fact, solely for the public's benefit.

After refusing to show anyone — even their own allies and ministers — a draft of the amendments they were planning, they are now waxing lyrical about the need for parliamentary debate and scrutiny of all important legislation. However, the damage may have already been done. The legal community, for instance, now suddenly seems to be highly agitated. The strong words in which many of its most respected members have condemned the government's move should be taken with the seriousness they deserve.

It is unclear for now whether the government will make another attempt to tweak the Constitution. Embarrassed after failing to muster the numbers during the high-stakes drama that played out all weekend, it will need time to regroup. It has also shown its hand and lost the element of surprise. This alone may force it to abandon the strategy altogether, especially after the strong pushback it has received from the legal community. Whatever the case may be, it would be well advised not to make another attempt in the manner it did last time.

There is a reason why the Constitution is a protected document that requires two-thirds of parliament's strength to acquiesce to any changes. Attempting to override this protocol by hiding legislative proposals and coercing other lawmakers to vote for them not only hurts our democracy but also signals that those making the changes may not be acting in good faith.

The other love

F.S. Aijazuddin

Bureaucrats wed twice — to a natural spouse, and also to an extracurricular distraction.

One was reminded of this intellectual infidelity when reading a volume of modern (ie, post-revolution) Persian poetry — Honeyed Poison — translated by a Pakistani diplomat, Malik M. Danish. A graduate from Lums, Punjab University and Georgetown University, Danish is the latest in a line of officials who will be remembered for their literary contributions.

One could begin with names like the Mu-ghal emperor Akbar's wazir Abul Fazl. He spent his spare hours chronicling his master's court and its functions. Closer in time and to home, though, is the 19th-century engineer Kanhaiya Lal. He worked in the Public Works Department for 30 years before retiring as superintendent engineer in 1885.

His legacies to the architectural visage of Lahore have survived time — Government College, Montgomery and Lawrence Halls, the then Mayo School of Arts, to name a few. 'Si monumentum requiris, circumspice'. (If you seek [his] monument, look around you.) Kanhaiya Lal's equally enduring achievement is his book Tareekh-i-Lahore, first published in 1884 (a year before his retirement), and republished many times.

Since then, there have been Syed Muha-mmud Latif's magisterial histories of the Punjab (1891) and of Lahore (1892). Latif's official responsibilities, though, were as an extrajudicial assistant commissioner.

Lepel Griffin (once chief secretary Punjab, 1880) assembled the genealogies of the Punjab chiefs in 1890. In it, he sifted the proof of research from the fiction of family legends. (His modern counterpart — the former high commis-

sioner to Pakistan Sir Nicholas Barrington — absorbed himself in Islamabad, pruning the family trees of Pakistan's prominent families.)

Sir Charles Aitchison, even while lieutenant-governor of the Punjab, found the time to compile his 11-volume Collection of Treasures, Engagements, and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring Countries (1862-1892). Subsequent research into Punjab's history continued with the History of the Punjab Hill States by another official, J. Hutchison, and his colleague, J. Ph. Vogel (1933).

More recently, Dr M.S. Randhawa (an ICS officer), Parsi lawyer Karl Khand-al-a-vala and Dr B.N. Goswami (who left the ICS for academia), through their seminal research — brought painting done in the Punjab hills into the plains of the art world's consciousness. Some like G. Mueenuddin (once of the ICS, later our chief negotiator in the Indus Waters Treaty) had much to tell, if only his pen had not been so shy.

Every retired bureaucrat in Pakistan feels impelled to publish their version of a history they could not prevent. They believe that their book — whether a biography or an autobiography — will ensure them the bronze of recognition, if not the gold of immortality. Not all can disguise to paraphrase American poet and essayist Mark Strand that 'their expressive part [was] rather tedious — never curious or responsive, but blind and self-serving'.

Strand foresaw perhaps the recent publication of memoirs by a former bureaucrat, responsible in the 1990s for the ingenious yellow cab and yellow tractor schemes, and later the squalid birth of the IPPs.

There was a time when bureaucrats saw themselves as modern Medicis — patrons of the

arts. B.A. Kureishi and Mukhtar Masood spring to mind. Which one of their successors today would expend their energies on restoring the Lahore museum?

Kureishi sponsored Sadequain there as an artist in residence. Squirrelled in the museum's basement, Sadequain produced many inimitable masterpieces. His tour de force — its painted ceiling — has become Lahore's distant echo of the Sistine chapel.

Who today would commission two of Pakistan's greats — Sadequain and Sha-kir Ali — to paint a mural, each in his unique style? They hang in the Punjab Public Library, a contest using brushes, a visual bait bazi between Akbar's singer Tansen, and his rival Bajju Bawra.

Malik Danish found his Persian muse in a language teacher at Jhelum and then in Dr Athar Masood, a fellow bureaucrat with a passion for Persian poetry. Danish is a br-ave scholar to venture into Persian poetry when the very word 'Iran' releases thunderbolts of sanctions from Washington, D.C.

If one had to isolate a few stanzas from among Danish's 20 poets — the 'frightened flowers' in a traumatised Iran — they would be from Mehdi Akhavan-e-Sales' Lament. He speaks for every Iranian and Pakistani: 'My house has caught fire, a deadly fire/ which is burning the engravings/ I etched with my heart's blood.'

Or Qeyser Aminpour's moving advice on behalf of fellow authors to readers everywhere: 'My hairs are turning white/ as pages of my book are turning black.' He concludes: 'Read my works/ Dot by dot/ Word by word/ Line by line/ and count the verses in my Divan/ Hair by Hair.' -- Courtesy Dawn

Debatable debate

Shahzad Sharjeel

Is leadership about oratory, rabble-rousing, long marches, or dharna in our context? Although political campaigns worldwide rely on debating ability, so do debating societies; these are forums for expanding discourse. While political activists and leaders must be engaging, recourse to incitement and invective only reflects a lack of substance.

Immediately after the first US presidential debate this election season, commentators and pundits felt Kamala Harris succeeded in goading Donald Trump into areas his camp would have him steer clear of. Her strategy was to make Trump implicate himself, and he did just that.

Traditionally, deep thinking with a proper mix of action set leaders apart from philosophers. In the subcontinent's context, Abul Kalam Azad and Bahadur Yar Jang were the best orators, but the leaders were Gandhi, Nehru, and Jinnah.

Among the recent world leaders, Barack Obama was that rare combination of being bookish yet communicating lucidly. However, even his ability to 'connect with the people' was questioned as, according to his critics, he could sometimes be 'too cerebral'. The dumbing down of discourse, ostensibly in the public interest, affects the quality of debate worldwide, the Democratic and Republican candidates' debates being no exception.

The battle of wits, at times dimwits, has come down to name-calling, slurs, and digging up past peccadillos and hush money trails. Regardless of the public laundering of candidates' alleged misdeeds — war crime, tax eva-

sion, sexual offences, murder, rape, etc — they continue to be voted in worldwide. The more they expose themselves, the more their ilk identifies with them, promoting a slimy culture.

Interestingly, earlier in her vice presidency, Ms Harris was not considered the sharpest tool in the drawer by commentators; however, compared to the failing mental alertness of her boss, Joe Biden, and now her competitor, Trump, she appears even-keeled.

Imagine a US-style debate between leading contenders for power in Pakistan. The debate would contain everything but a solution to myriad problems. There would be hardly anything in the debate for their audience other than the realisation that they are equally adept at pointing out challenges and their adversaries' contributions to it but unable to propose a tangible way out of the morass.

Deep thinkers are loath to speak and debate and cannot organise a rave in a brewery, let alone a political party. The charming orators can indulge in much rabble-rousing but cannot think to save their lives. Usually, after fulminating and bluffing their way to power, they gather a team of thinkers, also called strategists and technocrats, to run the actual business of governance. Lately, even the proverbial one-eyed leader has been missing, and it is a case of the blind leading the blind.

Take revenue collection, for instance. The leadership across the civil-military spectrum refuses to cough up its fair share of taxes. It is constantly hamstringed by one vested interest or another, usually surrogates, in broadening the tax base. Thus, the leadership makes half-hearted

attempts to bring external experts to run the FBR. It turns out that the external experts entrusted with the shake-up got so shaken so fast by the interest groups that they required a check-up from the neck up.

In a two-way or even a three-way debate, what would PML-N, PTI and PPP candidates say about the tax-to-GDP ratio, SOEs draining the exchequer, the energy sector, governance, reliance on the Fund pro-gramme, the investment climate, civil-military disequilibrium, etc? One good thing that might come out of such a debate is a public realisation of the sheer impossibility of the country's situation. It would also expose the jostling for office as nothing but a power grab.

While discussing public discourse, ignoring the recent PTI gathering near Islamabad is difficult. What the KP chief minister said to a cheering crowd of thousands is too repulsive to repeat. His leader Imran Khan's endorsement from behind bars is unsurprising. He may not be the pioneer of abuse in public discourse, but to borrow from the subcontinent's musicology, he definitely merits the status of the 'Barey Khan Sahib' of the 'Gaal gharana'. The party chairperson, Barrister Gohar, apologised on the floor of the House for the misogyny-laden language used at the rally, and as expected, Imran Khan quickly dubbed all such apologists 'cowards'.

Whether in one-on-one debates, televised speeches, or public rallies, what is said and how it is said reveals the workings of the state or the lack thereof. It also reflects on the audience; their leadership choice measures their self-esteem. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Rana Ihsan says: National economy inching towards 'growth' from stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industry Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan Thursday said the national economy had begun to show steady progress due to the prudent policies introduced by the incumbent government, marking a shift from stability to 'growth'.

"All economic indicators are moving in the right direction," he said while addressing a news conference after the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) 100 Index gained over 1,500 points, surging to 81,900, which he called a 'superb performance' and a 'big achievement'.

He noted that the stock exchange's positive trajectory reflected market-based sentiments and the confidence of investors and entrepreneurs in government policies.

"This indicates that the agreement with the IMF will be achieved successfully, hopefully by September 25, and the national economy will continue on its growth trajectory," he expressed confidence.

The coordinator added that Pakistan's shift from 'stability' to 'positive' regarding its debt liability and external

challenges was also being acknowledged by the world's top credit agencies like Fitch and Moody's.

Sharing some official statistics, Ihsan Afzal said during the first two months of the current fiscal year, the country's export sector witnessed a remarkable increase, with textile and clothing exports rising by 13 percent year on year basis, IT services by 27 percent, and overall exports by 7.2 percent during July and August.

During the same period, he said the country's remittances increased by 44 percent, reaching \$5.9 billion, which

he termed a 'massive surge' reflecting the confidence of overseas Pakistanis in government policies.

Similarly, he mentioned that the current account deficit declined remarkably, standing at \$0.2 billion, while the exchange rate against the dollar remained stable and fluctuated according to market trends. Additionally, 14 sectors in the Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) area showed positive growth, surging by almost 2.38 percent year on year, he added. The coordinator also highlighted the reduced inflation rate of 9.6 percent.



ISLAMABAD: Russian Deputy Minister of energy and Deputy Minister Economic development held a meeting with Pakistani delegation led by Dr. Musadik Malik.



AJMAN: Hussain Muhammed, Consul General met Salem Al Suwaidi, Director General of the Ajman Chamber at the Chamber's headquarters. Ali Rashid Al Kaitoob, Executive Director of the Studies and Investment Development Sector at the Ajman Chamber and Ali Zeeb Khan, Trade and Investment Counsellor Pakistan Consulate were also present during the meeting.

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 997 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 997.95 more points, a positive change of 1.24 percent, closing at 81,459.29 points against 80,461.34 points on the last working day.

A total of 459,037,985 shares were traded during the day as compared to 400,195,963 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 18.610 billion against Rs. 15.904 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 469 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 145 of them recorded gains and 239 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 85 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 35,184,576 shares at Rs 8.01 per share, K-Electric Limited with 23,819,654 shares at Rs 3.99 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 22,930,170 shares at Rs 1.33 per share.

Envoy says: Enhancing Pak-Swiss trade ties top priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Swiss Ambassador to Pakistan George Steiner on Thursday stressed that strengthening bilateral trade relations and economic cooperation was his top priority.

Efforts to the effect would ultimately benefit the people of both nations, he said addressing the the launching ceremony of Swiss homeopathic medicines in Pakistan, according to a press release.

He praised the successful partnership between Pakistani and Swiss companies, and expressed the hope for increased collaboration and investment from Swiss companies, leveraging Pakistan's 25 million population and diverse industries.

He, however, said PIA has halted Peshawar to Karachi operation for the last several months, due to which the business community has not only faced difficulties but also inflicted huge revenue loss to the national carrier PIA.

Jam, US trade representative discuss bilateral trade expansion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday held a virtual meeting with United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai to strengthen bilateral trade relations between both countries.

The minister highlighted that the US is Pakistan's leading trade destination and expressed desire to further expand this partnership, said a news release.

He underscored the country's agricultural strengths particularly in mangoes and dates, and noted the potential for growth in value-added agro-services.

Katherine Tai acknowledged Pakistan's contributions, particularly its agricultural exports, and praised the quality of Pakistani mangoes.

She also mentioned the potential for US beef exports to Pakistan, given the large demand in the market.

Both sides discussed issues of mutual interest, agreeing to further strengthen their trade relations. During the meeting, it was confirmed that the next Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) meeting would be scheduled soon, along with discussions on agriculture, textiles, women's empowerment, IT and E-commerce.

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim
KARACHI (APP): Five ships, Maersk Pittsburgh, Maersk Cairo, Lotus-A, CD Fortune and FSM scheduled to load/offload Container, Sand and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively during last 24 hours. Meanwhile two more ships, Tirua and MSC Adelaide are arrived at outer anchorage port on Thursday. Eleven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a chemicals carrier 'Chemroad Jupiter' left the port on today morning, while five more ships.

Russian Deputy PM's visit to boost trade: PFC CEO

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq Thursday said that Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk's visit will further promote trade ties between the two countries with a special focus on energy sector and infrastructure, paving the way for closer economic collaboration in the future.

Commenting here on the visit, he said Overchuk's visit comes at a crucial time when both countries were looking to deepen economic cooperation in key areas, including energy, transportation, and logistics.

He said Russia, as one of the world's largest energy producers, was keen to expand its energy exports, while Pakistan was looking to secure reliable energy sources for its growing industrial needs.

SCCI demands resumption of Peshawar-Karachi PIA flight operation

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) has expressed concern over closure of PIA flight operation from Peshawar to Karachi and demanded for its immediate resumption. Fuad Ishaq, president of the SCCI, in a statement issued here on Thursday, said PIA was operating only one flight from Peshawar to Karachi

PBS capacity building, data digitization vital for service delivery

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Muzammil Aslam has underscored the need for enhancing the capacity of the provincial bureau of statistics and leveraging data and digitalization to improve service delivery for citizens and businesses. The CM's Advisor emphasized the urgent need for evidence-based solutions to drive policy-making and implementation in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa. Highlighting the province's goals of increasing tax and non-tax revenues, Dr. Aslam reiterated the commitment of the economic team to bolster provincial resources, particularly towards education and health sectors.

He expressed these remarks during the inaugural meeting of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) led National Network of Economic Thinktanks (NNETT) Advisory Committee.

Marriyam discusses health, education, climate change with US Consul General

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb Thursday met U.S. Consul General Kristin K Hawkins to discuss various issues including health, education, economic growth, climate change, solid waste management, agricultural programs, law & order, price control management and protection of minorities. She highlighted that CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif was the first chief minister who personally monitors governance of the province. She begins each day by overseeing public welfare matters. Following

the directives of the chief minister, all provincial ministers are actively engaged in the field to monitor the prices of essential commodities. Significant progress is being made in several areas such as field hospitals, hospitals-on-wheels, demand and supply management, scholarships, road up-gradation and women's economic development programmes, she added. The senior minister further said that the people of Punjab are severely affected by the dangerous impacts of climate change,

particularly in the form of smog in the region. As soon as Maryam Nawaz assumed office, she activated the entire government machinery in March to combat smog. Initiatives such as the e-mass transit system, establishment of solarised networks, and digital monitoring of crop residues, vehicles, industries, and brick kilns are underway, minister added. Marriyum Aurangzeb mentioned that 1,000 super seeders and approximately 9,500 eco-friendly tractors have been provided to the farmers.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan in a group photo with delegation comprising bishops and pastors of churches under the leadership of Vice President Pakistan People's Party Punjab Minority Wing, Edwin Sahutra.

Advisor Health briefed on the Sehat Card Program

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Health, Advocate Ihtisham Ali was briefed on the Sehat Card Program by Chief Executive Officer Dr Riaz Tanoli. The briefing was attended by Special Secretary Health Habibullah, CEO Sehat Card Dr Riaz Tanoli, and other relevant officials.

During the briefing, the Health Advisor was informed about the treatment packages offered under the Sehat Card Program. The Secondary Care Package provides Rs 40,000 per person and Rs

200,000 per family, while the Tertiary Care Package offers free treatment up to Rs 400,000. The Advisor was also briefed that Rs10.5 million families in KP were receiving free treatment at 753 public and private hospitals under the Sehat Card Program. So far, Rs. 88 billion had been spent on the free treatment of 3,529,487 individuals. It was further highlighted that the provincial government was bearing monthly expenses of Rs. 2.5 billion and annual costs of Rs 30 billion for free treatment under the program.

DC Dera vows to provide prompt relief to citizens

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Deputy Commissioner Sarah Rehman has said that it is a top priority of district administration to work for the development and welfare of the citizens.

"Providing prompt relief to the public is our top priority, and we will not tolerate any negligence in this regard," the DC expressed these views during a revenue darbar held the village of Kotjai, Tehsil Pharpur under the public agenda of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to resolve revenue department-related issues of people at their doorstep. Besides officials of the revenue department, Assistant Commissioner Pharpur Sohni Saleem and Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dera Sher Bahadur were also present on the occasion, where a large number of residents raised several issues pertaining to the revenue department including land transfers, Fard, registry and others. Speaking on the occasion, she said that the district administration was committed to extending relief to citizens by dispensing justice at their doorstep.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah meets with Syed Shafqat Hussain Sheerazi, Provincial Minister Riaz Hussain Shah Sheerazi and MPA Shah Hussain Shah Sheerazi at CM House.

Punjab Governor says: Role of Christian community in development and stability of country is commendable

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has said that the role of the Christian community in the development and stability of the country is commendable. Pakistan belongs to all of us, everyone has to play a role for its improvement and lead towards improvement. He expressed these views here today at Governor House Lahore during a meeting with a delegation comprising bishops and pastors of churches under the leadership of Vice President Pakistan People's Party

Punjab Minority Wing, Edwin Sahutra. In the delegation Pastor Irfan Shahzad, Pastor Ubaid Iqbal, Pastor Younis Javed, Bishop Wilson John, Bishop Dr. Junaid Javed, Bishop Afzal Masih, Bishop Akbar Khokhar, Pastor Captain Sabir Anees, Pastor Muswar Manoor, Pastor Parvez Nadeem and Pasar Irfan John were present. Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider said that Islam teaches love, tolerance, peace and brotherhood. He said that minorities are living peacefully in Pakistan.

57 new cases of Dengue recorded in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP): The 57 new cases were recorded in Rawalpindi during past 24 hours, increasing the number of patients under treatment in allied hospitals to 100. According to the latest report released by the District Health Authority, this year's total positive cases reached 501. Pothohar Town remains the top contributing and the most affected area. 27 patients from Pothohar Town were reported alone during the last 24 hours. Rawalpindi Cantonment Board areas also reported 9 dengue patients in one day.

Minister assures prompt solution to problems of hospital's House Officers

KOHAT (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate on Thursday assured the House Officers of District Headquarters Hospital Kohat that their problems will be solved on priority basis. He gave this assurance while talking to the representative delegation of House Officers of District Headquarters Hospital Kohat led by the Chairman Insaf Doctors Forum Kohat Dr. Nizam Ali at his residence. Other members of the

delegation included President Insaf Doctors Forum Kohat Dr. Hamza Shehzad and Secretary General Insaf Doctors Forum Dr. Haris Waheed. Members of the delegation had a detailed discussion with the provincial minister about the problems of House Officers. The law minister took personal interest in solving the problems of House Officers and called in the MS DHQ Hospital Kohat Dr. Tahir Ali Shah and on the spot held a special meeting with him in this regard in presence.

ANF foils attempt to smuggle drugs, weapons

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting a raid in Karachi foiled an attempt to smuggle drugs and weapons and recovered 1200 grams charras, seven pistols and ammunition, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that ANF conducted a raid at a courier office near Nursery Stop in Karachi and recovered 1200 grams hashish and weapons, concealed in electronic goods sent from Peshawar.

Governor lauds establishment of technical training lab at Gomal University

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday lauded the establishment of a Technical Training Lab at Gomal University with the collaboration of China. Initial work has begun on the establishment of a Technical Training Lab, with the special interest of Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and directives from the Chairperson of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) Gulmina Bilal. A meeting on the directives of Governor Faisal Karim Kundi who is Chancellor of the University was convened at Gomal University to discuss the project, attended by key

figures including Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Shakeebullah, Registrar Zahir Shah Marwat, and representatives from the Chinese organization UNI International Zargham Abbas, and Ghufuran Malook, PRO to Governor and Incharge PID Regional Office Dera Muhammad Fazlur Rehman and others. The meeting highlighted the Governor's priority to provide economic opportunities for the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Under the Youth Engagement and Women Empowerment Agenda, the Chairperson of NAVTTTC, Gulmina Bilal, has directed UNI International to provide local students with modern facilities for online marketing and trading.



LAHORE: U.S. Consul General in Lahore Kristin K. Hawkins meeting with Senior Minister Punjab Marriyum Aurangzeb.

Child protection unit inaugurated in Mardan

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KPCPCWC), in collaboration with UNICEF, achieved a significant milestone with the inauguration of the Child Protection Unit in Mardan. The inauguration ceremony brought together key stakeholders, senior government officials, representatives from civil society, academia, adolescents, and children from District Mardan to mark this momentous occasion on Thursday. District Officer Social Welfare, Special Education and Women

Empowerment Mardan Jamal Shah highlighted the significance of the Child Protection Unit and its role in safeguarding the rights and welfare of children in the region. Program Manager UNICEF Peshawar Wisam Hazem thanked the KP government for taking the initiative to inaugurate the Child Protection Unit in Mardan district and congratulated the district administration and KP Child Protection and Welfare Commission for their leadership in establishing the unit. He said it would contribute to strengthening the child protection system in the district.

International News

Putin says Russia is ramping up drone production tenfold

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that Russia is ramping up drone production by around ten times to nearly 1.4 million this year in a bid to ensure the Russian armed forces win in Ukraine.

Since Russia sent tens of thousands of soldiers into Ukraine in February 2022, the war has largely been a story of grinding artillery and drone strikes along a heavily fortified 1,000-km (620-mile) front involving hundreds of thousands of soldiers. The conflict has been a crucible for drone development - and an illustration of the importance of drones to modern warfare, from terrorising infantry and collecting intelligence to sabotaging infrastructure and attacking arsenals. "In total, about

140,000 unmanned aerial vehicles of various types were delivered to the armed forces in 2023," Putin said. "This year, the production of drones is planned to increase significantly. Well, to be more precise, almost 10 times."

"Whoever reacts faster to these demands on the battlefield wins," Putin said at a meeting in St Petersburg about drone production. Both Russia and Ukraine have bought drones abroad and ramped up their own production while drone videos have illustrated the horror of the battlefield, showing deadly strikes on infantry, artillery and tanks.

Inexpensive first-person view (FPV) drones - originally developed for civilian racers - are controlled by pilots on the ground and often crash into targets,

laden with explosives. For just a few hundred dollars, soldiers on both sides can inflict vast damage on the other side. A large-scale Ukrainian drone attack on Russia triggered an earthquake-sized blast at a major arsenal in the Tver region on Wednesday. Putin said that Russia was making almost weekly advances in drone technology and needed to also develop its drone defences, essentially technology which senses, confuses and then shoots down the attacking drones. "The key task is to produce a wide range of aerial unmanned vehicles, to establish serial production as quickly as possible," Putin said.

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Ammunition from India enters Ukraine, raising Russian ire

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Artillery shells sold by Indian arms makers have been diverted by European customers to Ukraine and New Delhi has not intervened to stop the trade despite protests from Moscow, according to eleven Indian and European government and defence industry officials, as well as a Reuters analysis of commercially available customs data. The transfer of munitions to support Ukraine's defence against Russia has occurred for more than a year, according to the sources and the customs data. Indian arms export regulations limit the use of weaponry to the declared purchaser, who risks future sales being terminated if unauthorised transfers occur. The Kremlin has raised the issue on at least two occasions, including

during a July meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Indian counterpart, three Indian officials said. Details of the ammunition transfers are reported by Reuters for the first time. The foreign and defence ministries of Russia and India did not respond to questions. In January, Indian foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told a news conference that India had not sent or sold artillery shells to Ukraine. Two Indian government and two defence industry sources told Reuters that Delhi produced only a very small amount of the ammunition being used by Ukraine, with one official estimating that it was under 1% of the total arms imported by Kyiv since the war.

Taliban in control of 39 Afghan embassies globally

Monitoring Desk KABUL: The Taliban administration is in control of 39 Afghan embassies and consulates globally three years after it took over Afghanistan and the previous Western-backed government collapsed, the acting foreign ministry said on Thursday. No international government has formally recognised the Taliban administration, though China and the United Arab Emirates have officially accepted its ambassadors in their capitals. Many governments, especially Western nations including the United States, have said the path to any formal recognition of the Taliban will be stuck until they change course on women's rights and re-open girls schools and universities to girls and women and allow their full freedom of movement.



Russia's President Vladimir Putin visits a drone production facility of the Special Technology Centre in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Lebanon's Hezbollah reeling after 37 killed in two days of device blasts

Monitoring Desk BEIRUT: Israel said on Thursday it bombed Hezbollah sites in Lebanon, piling pressure on the armed group already reeling after a series of deadly explosions targeting its communications systems that it blamed on Israel. Those coordinated blasts killed 37 people across two days, including two children, and wounded more than 2,900 others, according to Lebanon's health minister, heightening fears of another full-blown war in the region. The latest batch of device explosions killed 25 people and wounded more than 450 others on Wednesday, officials said. The blasts came a day after the simultaneous detonation of pagers used by Hezbollah killed 12 people, including two children, and wounded up to 2,800 others across Lebanon, in an unprecedented attack blamed on Israel.

Turkey accuses Israel of expanding Gaza war to Lebanon

Monitoring Desk ISTANBUL: Turkey on Thursday accused Israel of seeking to expand the war in Gaza to Lebanon with the "alarming" wave of deadly explosions that swept through Hezbollah strongholds. "The escalation in the region is alarming," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on state-run TRT television. "We see Israel mounting its attacks towards Lebanon step by step." The blasts have killed 32 people in two days, including two children,

wounding more than 3,000 others, according to Lebanese health ministry figures. Israel has not commented on the unprecedented operation in which Hezbollah operatives' walkie-talkies and pagers exploded in supermarkets, at funerals and on streets. But its defence minister Yoav Gallant, referring to Israel's border with Lebanon, said Wednesday: "The centre of gravity is moving northward." Turkey blamed Israel for the blasts.

Japan firm says no longer makes radio reportedly used in Lebanon

Monitoring Desk TOKYO: Japanese firm Icom said on Thursday that it had stopped producing the model of radios reportedly used in recent blasts in Lebanon around 10 years ago. "The IC-V82 is a handheld radio that was produced and exported, including to the Middle East, from 2004 to October 2014. It was discontinued about 10 years ago, and since then, it has not been shipped from our company."

US not involved in device explosions in Lebanon: White House

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: White House national security spokesperson John Kirby on Wednesday denied any involvement of the United States in the device explosions in Lebanon. During media briefing here, he said the US did not want the conflict to escalate in the Middle East. "I want to tell you that we are not involved in the incidents yesterday and today in any way."

Israel's defense minister announces a "new phase" of war

Monitoring Desk JERUSALEM: With Israel's defense minister announcing a "new phase" of the war and an apparent Israeli attack setting off explosions in electronic devices in Lebanon, the specter of all-out combat between Israel and Hezbollah seems closer than ever before. Hopes for a diplomatic solution to the conflict appear to be fading quickly as Israel signals a desire to change the status quo in the country's north, where it has exchanged cross-border fire with Hezbollah since the Lebanese militant group began attacking on Oct. 8, a day after the war's opening salvo by Hamas.

In recent days, Israel has moved a powerful fighting force up to the northern border, officials have escalated their rhetoric, and the country's security Cabinet has designated the return of tens of thousands of displaced residents to their homes in northern Israel an official war goal. Here's a look at how Israel is preparing for a war with Lebanon: While the daily fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has escalated on several occasions, the bitter enemies have been careful to avoid an all-out war. That appears to be changing - especially after pagers, walkie-talkies and other devices exploded in Lebanon.

Spain denies 'complicity' in Venezuela's Gonzalez signing letter accepting Maduro victory

Monitoring Desk MADRID: Spain has denied involvement in negotiations between Venezuelan opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez and President Nicolas Maduro's government for his flight to Spain, before which he signed a letter saying he accepted Maduro's victory in the country's July election. The letter included an undertaking to limit political activity once in Spain and was signed at the residence of the Spanish ambassador to Caracas, where Gonzalez had taken refuge before his departure. In a news conference on Wednesday, the head of Venezuela's National Assembly, Jorge Rodriguez, held up printed photographs of what he said was the moment the document was signed in his presence as well as that of his sister, Vice President Dely Rodriguez, and Spain's ambassador to Venezuela, Ramon Santos. However, Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares told re-

porters in Brussels on Thursday that his government did not invite anyone to visit Gonzalez at the ambassador's residence. "The Spanish government, and of course the ambassador, did not take part in any negotiation of any document of any type," Jose Manuel Albares told reporters in Brussels. Gonzalez, who was granted political asylum in Spain earlier this month, said in a video message released on Wednesday the letter was signed under "coercion, blackmail and pressure". On Thursday, a senior figure in Spain's opposition People's Party (PP) said Madrid had been complicit in removing Gonzalez from Venezuela, thereby ensuring Maduro would stay in power. "Beyond watching someone being blackmailed live, it's clear that Spain is involved in perpetuating Maduro as a dictator," PP Vice Secretary Esteban Gonzalez Pons said in a radio interview.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister of Russian Federation witness signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Pakistan and Russia to increase cooperation in different fields.

Ameer Maqam says Proposed constitutional amendments to be tabled after achieving consensus

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for States, Frontier Regions, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Engineer Ameer Maqam, Thursday, said that proposed constitutional amendments will be tabled in the house after due consultations and achieving consensus of all the political parties and other stakeholders.

While addressing to elders of Afghan Refugees and later talking to media during visit of Urban Cohesion Hub Karachi here, he said that negotiations were under way with the political parties and consultation process was continue in connection with the proposed amendments aimed at introducing reforms in judicial system and ensuring swift justice to the people of the country.

The government has initiated the process of constitutional amendment in the best interest of the people of Pakistan and there were no personal motives involved in it, he said and urged all the political leadership to join the hands of government for betterment of the country and the nation.

Pak Ambassador presents credentials to US President Joe Biden

WASHINGTON (APP): Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh Wednesday presented his Letter of Credence to President Joseph Biden as the 30th envoy of Pakistan to the United States.

At a ceremony, held at the Blair House, the President welcomed Ambassador Sheikh, saying the United States will continue to stand with Pakistan in dealing with key global and regional challenges.

The ceremony was attended by members of the diplomatic community and senior officials of the U.S. administration, according to a press release of the Pakistan embassy.

In his remarks, Ambassador Sheikh conveyed greetings from the President, Prime Minister and the people of Pakistan to the leadership and people of the United States, saying the two countries have a rich legacy of cooperative relations and have laid enduring foundations to strengthen bilateral ties.

Recalling U.S. assistance to Pakistan, especially during its nascent phase of statehood, the Ambassador observed that the two countries continue to invest in their relationship and are stepping up cooperation in climate change, energy, health, trade, and investment.



QUETTA: Chairman Public Accounts Committee Asghar Ai Tareen and former Chairman Senate & MPA Sadiq Sanjrani and former Home Minister Balochistan Mir Ziaullah Lango during a meeting.

Quetta administration continues crackdown against profiteering

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Quetta district administration continued crackdown against the profiteering and encroachments in different parts of the metropolis and its adjoining areas.

According to the official sources, crackdown was conducted on Toghi road, Kasi road, Baleli, Nawab Killi, Mano Jan road, Almo Chowk, Kuchlak bazaar and other areas of the city.

During the crackdown, more than 140 shops were visited by the administrative teams including the Assistant Commissioners, Magistrates and other law enforcers and inspected the rates there.

In the meantime, 11 shopkeepers were arrested while six shops were sealed by the raiding teams on the charges of non-implementation on the official rate list. Similarly, 16 shopkeepers were charged fine and 19 others were issued stern warning.

It was warned to the shopkeepers to strictly follow the official price list, otherwise stern action would be taken against them.

During the crackdown, the encroachments established in different areas were also removed.

Goodly initiative of Chaman administration: Chaman Educated Youth Database set up as per vision of Chief Minister

Independent Report
QUETTA: In line with the initiative of the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, the Chaman Educated Youth Database has been set up thanks to the district administration of Chaman.

It may be mentioned here that the Chaman Educated Youth Database has been established in the history of Balochistan for the first time because of the special interest and assistance of the Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai. According to the Deputy Commissioner Chaman, Athar Abbas Raja, the detailed particulars of all the educated youth of Chaman would be made available in the database. The Deputy Commissioner told that the data bank would prove to be helpful for the human resource to be required by the government institutions and non-governmental organizations.



QUETTA: DG Health Balochistan Amin Khan Mandokhel addressing on seminar on Woman Health.

Pakistan's blue economy could generate over \$100bn in revenue: British Deputy HC

KARACHI (APP): The British Deputy High Commissioner in Karachi Sarah Mooney said that incorporating blue economy in the national economy is of utmost importance for a country like Pakistan.

She stated this while addressing as a chief guest at a World Maritime Day 2024 seminar organized by the Directorate of Electronic Media and Publication (DEMP) in collaboration with Maritime Training Institute at a local hotel on Thursday.

Sarah Mooney said that Pakistan has a coastline of 1001 km, which is home to many different species of marine animals, plants and mineral resources.

She said the blue economy industry had not been used up to its full potential, while it has the potential to generate a revenue of more than \$100bn.

Director General Press Information Department PID Erum Tanyeer said that Pakistan's unique geographic position-bridging the East and West, with warm, deep-water ports and a 1,000 km-long coastline-places us at the center of global maritime affairs. It also makes us acutely aware of the challenges we face in today's rapidly changing climate.

She said Climate change is a global challenge with profound implications for our oceans, coastlines, and communities. As a responsible member of the international community, Pakistan has introduced several national policies like Blue economy initiatives including sustainable fisheries, marine renewable energy and marine bio-diversity conservation to safeguard our environment and promote sustainable development. The National Forest Policy of 2015, for instance, aims to increase our forest cover and mitigate the impacts of climate change, in line with our commitments to the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). DG PID said the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting plays a pivotal role in supporting these national efforts by fostering an informed society and advancing media development. Through the Press Information Department (PID) and the Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications (DEMP), we disseminate vital information on government policies, achievements.

Dr. Ihab Abdelhamid, Ambassador of Egypt, called on Minister for Defence

ISLAMABAD (Online): Dr. Ihab Abdelhamid Hassan, Ambassador of Egypt, called on Minister for Defence, Defence Production and Aviation, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Islamabad Thursday.

Defence Minister exclaimed that Pakistan and Egypt enjoy cordial historical ties. There exists a greater confidence and mutual trust in their bilateral relations.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with the visiting Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, Alexei Overchuk, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Sardar Khetran says: All resources being mobilized to provide facilities to people

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering (PHE), Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran has stated that all resources are being mobilized for provision of facilities to the people.

He said it is included in his priorities to work for development of his district.

He said that provision of healthcare facilities is also priority of the government so that the people may not go in big cities for treatment.

Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran was speaking on occasion of the open katchehry at his residence in Haji Kot, Barkhan on Thursday.

The Minister heard problems of the people approached him there.

He said that public exchequer is being spent on their welfare.

He urged the people to take responsibility of the development projects and identify any negligence and carelessness in these projects. He said that the government is taking steps for increasing it's revenue.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal with writer Ammar Masood and Researcher Khalid Fareed on the occasion of launching of book 'Mir Hazar Khan Marri: Muzahimat se Mufahimat Tak' by Sang-e-meel Publications.

Bakht Kakar says: Health facilities in Balochistan's remote areas to be ensured

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan's new Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar on Thursday said that provision of health care facilities in remote areas would be ensured under the vision of Balochistan Chief Minister.

Talking to APP here, he said that we would work together with all stakeholders for the improvement of health sector by addressing the problems of people related health department including medical staff.

It should be noted that Provincial Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar has given the portfolio of Livestock and Water Development Department and handed over the portfolio of Health Department to him after changing the portfolio of Livestock and Water Development Department.

Bakht Muhammad Kakar also thanked Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, central leadership and especially Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bagti for trusting as gave me the portfolio of the Ministry of Health.

He said that currently the health department is facing various challenges, new cases of polio are being reported in the province.

He said that Balochistan is 44 percent of Pakistan in terms of area and providing better health facilities across the province is no less than a big challenge.

The Minister said that he would try to improve the health sector with the help of international aid organizations and could take steps with good intentions to solve the problems of medical and non-medical personnel related to the health sector.

Pakistan, Russia for enhanced trade, economic cooperation, regional connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Russia on Thursday reiterated their commitment to expanding trade and economic ties, besides enhancing regional connectivity to strengthen bilateral relations. In a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and visiting Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk, who along with members of his delegation called on the president, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, both sides underscored the importance of fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in key sectors such as agriculture, food security, business, education, railways, science and technology, besides promoting stronger people-to-people connections, according to a President House press release.

Welcoming the Russian deputy prime minister, the president stressed the importance of exploring possibilities for barter trade, in addition to improving connectivity to strengthen economic relations between the two nations.

He called for easing visa regulations and increasing connectivity through railways and direct flights to facilitate and enhance people-to-people and business-to-business contacts.

During the meeting, it was highlighted that there was great scope to increase bilateral cooperation in the agriculture sector.

It was emphasised that there was enormous potential to undertake joint ventures in the agricultural sector for the mutual benefit of the two countries. It was also informed that a 75-member business delegation from Pakistan would visit Russia in October to explore avenues for business and economic cooperation.

Alexei Overchuk said that Russia was looking forward to improving cooperation with Pakistan in food security, science and technology, education, connectivity and railways.

He stated that the upcoming visit of the Russian Prime Minister to Pakistan, in October, would provide another opportunity to further strengthen bilateral relations. He further said that Russia had tremendous respect for all religions and Muslim culture, and had condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Minister of Energy (Power and Petroleum Divisions) Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister of Communications Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Senator Sherry Rehman, and senior government officials were also present during the meeting.



LAHORE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman and former President and PTI Senior Leader Dr. Arif Alvi talking to media persons.

TTP emerging as umbrella body for other terrorist groups posing worldwide threat: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS (APP): A top Pakistani diplomat Wednesday told the U.N. Security Council that the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP), which has Afghan rulers' protection, was emerging as an umbrella organization for other terrorist groups, whose objectives, he said, were the destabilization of Afghanistan's neighbours.

"While some of our friends may believe that they are only threatened by Daesh, they should also be concerned by the threat they could confront from a strengthened TTP in the not too distant future," Ambassador Munir Akram warned the 15-member Council during its debate in the situation in Afghanistan. Pakistan, he said, will take national action, cooperating with regional and international organizations to eliminate TTP's threat.

"The TTP (which we in Pakistan call Fitna Al Khawarij) is an organization of special concern to Pakistan and should be of concern to the entire region and the world," the Pakistani envoy said, while giving details of its deadly cross-border attacks that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians and soldiers. Even three years after the Taliban assumed the reins of power in Afghanistan, the situation continues to be dire and deeply concerning, Ambassador Akram said. There will be no normalization "until the fundamental issues that trouble Afghanistan are addressed — terrorism."

324 police officials, civilians martyred in 2024: CTD

PESHAWAR (APP): A report from the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Thursday reported that 234 people including police officials, officers and civilians have been martyred in terror incidents in restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) since the start of this year.

Moreover, it said 616 others including civilians have been injured due to attacks by anti-state elements.

In Peshawar alone, 103 police officials have been martyred, with 154 others injured in terrorism-related incidents. The report also noted that 103 civilians have died, and 159 have sustained injuries.

Dera Ismail Khan has reported the deaths of 63 security personnel, including 49 from the Frontier Corps, and 124 injuries. Furthermore, 8 law enforcement officials were martyred, with 4 others wounded.

Russian Dy PM departs after two-day Pakistan visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Alexei Overchuk on Thursday departed from here after the culmination of his official visit to Pakistan.

Additional Foreign Secretary (Europe) Shafiqat Ali Khan and Pakistan's Ambassador to the Russian Federation Muhammad Khalid Jamali saw off the Russian deputy prime minister at the Islamabad airport. During the visit, Overchuk, who was accompanied by a high-level delegation, held talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, besides meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and others.

Besides, a Memorandum of Understanding between Pakistan Mercantile Exchange and St. Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange was signed on Wednesday.

DC directs to deduct salary of 63 teachers on absence of duties in Kohlu

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kohlu Aqeel Ahmed Baloch on Thursday directed to deduct the salary of 63 teachers on absence of their duties in the light of the reports of the officers of the Education Department while 6 teachers were dismissed for long absence. He expressed these views while addressing the meeting of District Education Group. The meeting was attended by concerned officials and others.

In the meeting, the officers of the education department gave a detailed briefing to the Deputy Commissioner regarding their visits this month in which the absent teachers were identified. Addressing at the meeting, the DC said that the challenges of the modern era could be met only with better and quality education. He said that the district administration has taken coordinated steps with the officers of the education department to provide facilities and attendance of teaching staff in educational institutions.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for PHE Sardar Abdul Reman Khetran shaking hands with resident of the area during arrival at his native village.

Stakeholders highlight strategic path forward for MHM in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): A high-level stakeholders' deliberation on "Provincial Inroads to Improve MHM & Way Forward" was organized in Quetta on Thursday by the Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management Working Group (MHMWG) Secretariat Balochistan in collaboration with Water Aid Pakistan. The event brought together key policymakers, experts, advocates, and stakeholders to discuss the progress of MHM initiatives in the province and to develop an actionable plan for 2025.

Director General Health Dr. Amin Mandokhail delivered an insightful keynote address, praising Balochistan for its leadership in tackling menstrual health issues.

She stressed the importance of collective efforts in promoting MHM and creating a supportive environment where menstrual hygiene products are accessible to all women and girls. She also encouraged the media to continue playing a pivotal role in raising awareness and reducing stigma. Earlier, the conference opened with a welcome speech by Dr. Tahira Kamal Baloch, Chairperson of MHMWG, Balochistan, who highlighted the significance of addressing MHM challenges in the province and called for sustained collaboration among stakeholders to achieve meaningful progress.

She noted that the strategic discussions at this event would help shape a more inclusive and sustainable future for MHM in Balochistan.

The Chairperson of Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women (BCSW) assured the participant that BCSW would lend its every possible support to stakeholders to promote MHM in the province.