

# Independent

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the Federal Cabinet meeting.

## PM Shahbaz praises friendly nations' support IMF board to review Pakistan's \$7b loan on September 25 after key conditions met

**Monitoring Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has confirmed that its Executive Board will meet on September 25 to discuss the approval of Pakistan's \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The loan is crucial for stabilising Pakistan's economy, which has been grappling with rising inflation and dwindling reserves.

IMF spokesperson Julie Kozack announced the meeting during a press briefing on Thursday, saying, "We are very happy that we can say now that the board meeting is scheduled for September 25."

This announcement comes after Pakistan secured the necessary financing assurances from development partners.

The \$7 billion loan package had been under discussion since May, and a staff-level agreement was reached in July. Despite this, Pakistan faced delays in finalising the IMF Board's approval. The government has had to meet stringent IMF conditions, including the imposition of a record Rs1.8 trillion in new taxes and electricity price hikes of up to 51%.

Among other conditions, Pakistan agreed to halt the establishment of any new special economic or export processing zones. The country also accepted that tax incentives for existing zones would not be extended after expiry.

These measures are part of a broader set of industrial policy changes that, critics say, effectively transfer control of key economic decisions to the IMF.

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad confirmed that the country arranged over \$2 billion in external financing from lenders other than the IMF.

"All those assurances and external financing have already been arranged by the government, and I don't see any further hurdle now in taking our case to the board," Ahmad said during an analyst briefing on Thursday. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, addressing the federal cabinet earlier in the day, praised the progress in negotiations with the IMF. "We are moving in the right direction with the Fund, and I am hopeful for a positive outcome," he said.

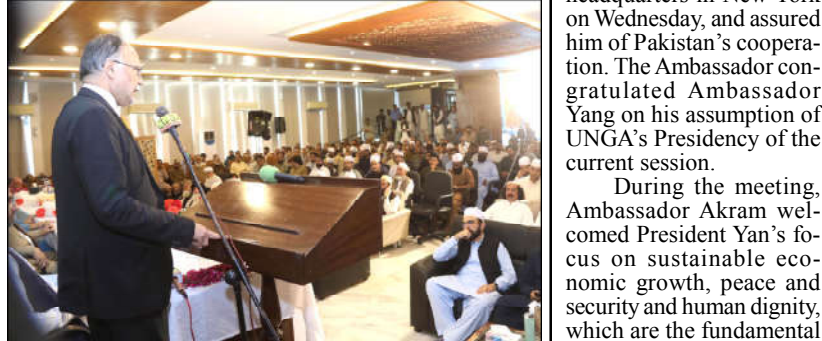


ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan addresses the 23rd meeting of the Ministers of the Member States of the SCO 'Responsible for Foreign Economic and Trade Activities'.

## Quetta police official kills blasphemy suspect in jail

**Monitoring Desk**  
QUETTA: A Quetta police officer allegedly killed a man being held in custody on suspicion of blasphemy charges, police officials said on Thursday. Quetta Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Muhammad Baloch said that the police officer accused of the killing had been arrested. The officer had accessed a police station where a man accused of blasphemy was being held by pretending he was his relative before opening fire on him.

The man accused of blasphemy had been taken into custody earlier in the week and moved to a more heavily fortified station due to an enraged mob demanding that he be handed over to them.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, sharing his thoughts during the Mehfil-e-Milad hosted by the Ministry of Planning.

## JUI-F Chief urges political parties to work for supremacy of parliament

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman Thursday urged all political parties to work towards the supremacy of Parliament and the strengthening of democracy. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he said, "We must make Parliament supreme, and as the highest authority, it should be trusted."

He suggested that a joint meeting between the Judicial Council and a parliamentary committee be held to discuss reforms in the judiciary. He said that his party is committed to this cause and will bring more suggestions in this regard.

He appreciated the Speaker for issuing production orders for the detained members and raised concerns about the law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Balochistan provinces, noting that no action has been taken so far.

## Federal Cabinet approves plan to boost Gwadar Port's operations

PM hails 2% policy rate cut, says it will boost economic activities

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs to direct all government departments to route 50% of their imports, such as wheat, sugar, and fertilizer, through the Gwadar Port. Earlier, the prime minister had issued the directives to increase the Gwadar port operations to ensure development and prosperity of the Balochistan province. He also directed that 50% of all public sector imports should be ensured through the Gwadar Port.

The meeting of the cabinet was held here under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The cabinet also instructed to increase the volume of exports from Gwadar Port in the future. A subcommittee of the cabinet will be formed to submit a quarterly report on imports and exports through Gwadar Port to the cabinet. The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Communications, approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Pakistan and Sri Lanka for the issuance of a commemorative postal stamp to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The Ministry of Industries and Production presented a report from the Cabinet Committee on Sugar Exports. The cabinet expressed satisfaction that, due to a well-timed decision on sugar exports, the country not only earned valuable foreign exchange, but sugar prices remained stable, and sugarcane farmers were adequately rewarded for their efforts.

The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, also approved the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of the Korangi Fish Harbour Authority, Karachi.

The cabinet instructed that all provinces should be given representation on such government boards. Additionally, the cabinet directed that any government-owned corporations with incomplete boards should be fully con-

stituted as soon as possible.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of National Health Services, the cabinet approved the appointment of Muhammad Yaqoob, Assistant Director of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan, as the Federal Inspector Drug Balochistan.

Likewise, on the recommendation of the Planning Ministry, the federal cabinet approved an amendment to the Cabinet resolution dated October 30, 2013, regarding the appointment of Planning Commission members from the open market.

Under this amendment, the salaries of Planning Commission members will now be set under the Special Professional Pay Scale-II (SPPS-II) instead of the Management Pay Scale.

Furthermore, the cabinet also approved setting the salary of the Chief Economist of the Planning Commission, to be appointed from the open market, under the Special Professional Pay Scale-I (SPPS-I).

The cabinet, based on the recommendations of the Revenue Division and according to the Supreme Court of Pakistan's orders, approved the Federal Public Service Commission to conduct departmental promotion exams for the posts of Inspector Inland Revenue (BPS-16).

## Pakistan Chairs 23rd meeting of SCO ministers responsible for foreign economy, trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Commerce Minister, Jam Kamal Khan chaired the 23rd Meeting of Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States responsible for foreign economy and trade activities on Thursday.

Pakistan hosted this gathering in its capacity as the chair of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, the second-highest forum of the organization, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

The ministerial meeting was preceded by the 47th Meeting of the Commission of Senior Officials (CSO) of SCO Member States on 10th and 11th September 2024, also held in Islamabad.

In his opening remarks, Jam Kamal Khan, welcomed his counterpart Ministers from the SCO fraternity to Pakistan and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the laudable aims and objective of the SCO to promote peace and prosperity in the region.

While acknowledging the global economic challenges facing the region, he emphasized the vital role of the SCO in addressing these issues through cooperation and constructive engagement. To this end, he conveyed Pakistan's strong commitment and readiness to contribute to and collaborate with all Member States to achieve our shared goals.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Chairman Pakistan People's Party and MNA, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, is also present in the meeting.

## CM Sindh calls on President Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah Thursday called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr and discussed matters relating to mutual concerns.

Chairman Pakistan People's Party and MNA, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Provincial Minister Sindh Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Khan Maher were also present in the meeting.

Overall situation and ongoing development projects in Sindh came under discussion during the meeting.

The president directed to expedite the work on the development projects in the province.

Additionally, the security situation and law and order in Sindh were also reviewed during the meeting.

## K-P CM's call to talk with Afghanistan an attack on federation: Defence Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Thursday criticized Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's statement about holding direct dialogue with Afghanistan, calling it a direct attack on the federation.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he said that no province has the authority to hold direct talks with any foreign country.

He also highlighted the initiatives taken by the Speaker of the National Assembly to ensure the supremacy of Parliament.

The Minister said the Sunni Ittehad Council had not lost their representation due to the Speaker's issuance of production orders.

He urged that the tradition set by Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq should continue, stressing the importance of following rules and laws.

Recalling past events, he pointed out that during the PTI regime, the former Speaker denied production orders of the arrested members.

The Minister also informed the House of the victimization carried out by the PTI government, stating that Rana Sanauallah Khan, Maryam Nawaz, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif, and Asif Ali Zardari's sister had been arrested in fake cases.

Asif further mentioned that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was consulted on important legislation during the PDM government.

He said that now is the time to promote a politics of tolerance in the country.

Leader of the Opposition, Omar Ayub thanked Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for issuing production orders for detained members.

## SBP slashes policy rate by 200bps to 17.5%

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan, Thursday, slashed policy rate by 200 basis points to 17.5 percent owing to sharply declining inflation and moderate pick up in the economic activity during the past months.

The central bank, in the monetary policy statement issued here, informed that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) reviewed overall economic and financial situation and decided to decrease the policy rate to 17.5 percent effective from September 13, 2024. The MPC observed that both headline and core inflation fell sharply over the past two months with a disinflation pace exceeding the committee's expectations, mainly due to the delay in the implementation of planned increases in administered energy prices and favorable movement in global oil and food prices.

The inherent uncertainty related to these developments warranted a cautious monetary policy stance, the committee acknowledged and underscored the importance of the tight monetary policy stance in driving the sustained decline in inflation over the past year.

The MPC also reviewed key developments since its last meeting that have implications for the macroeconomic outlook including sharp decline in global oil prices, stability in SBP's FX reserves despite weak official inflows and continued debt repayments, decline in secondary market yields of government securities, improved inflation expectations and confidence of businesses and lower than target tax collection by FBR, during July-August 2024.

## Pakistan strongly condemns Israeli airstrikes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday strongly condemned the airstrikes by Israeli occupation forces on the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone in Khan Yunis, Gaza, on September 10, which claimed the lives of 40 civilians. "Executed in an area designated as a safe zone for displaced persons by the Israeli occupation forces themselves, constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law," Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in her weekly briefing.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam addresses a press conference on 'Recharge Pakistan Project' at the PTV Headquarters.

## Khurshid Shah elected as Chairman NA special committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): A maiden meeting of the Special Committee of the National Assembly held on Thursday at the Parliament House in which MNA Syed Khurshid Ahmad Shah was unanimously elected as the chairman of the committee.

Sahibzada Hamid Raza proposed the name of Syed Khurshid Ahmad Shah as the chairman of the committee which Mehmood Khan Achakzai and other members seconded him as a Chairman, said a press release. Members of the Committee felicitated Syed Khurshid Ahmad Shah on being elected as the Chairman.

## Info Minister vows to address challenge of climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has expressed government's commitment to address the challenge of climate change in collaboration with international partners. He was addressing a news conference flanked by Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam in Islamabad on Thursday.

The Minister said contribution of Pakistan in global carbon emission is minuscule, but unfortunately, the country is included in the list of those nations which are suffering badly due to the hazardous impacts of climate change.

Attaullah Tarar called for raising awareness to grassroots level to address this subject and convince the general public to participate in the tree plantation.

Information Minister commended the efforts of Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam for building liaison with international partners to address the issue of climate change.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Coordinator to PM on Climate Change and Secretary General of International Maritime Organization are jointly holding a presser.



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Lakki police protest

The protest sit-in by hundreds of police personnel in KP's Lakki Marwat district entered its third day on Wednesday, with no sign of an amicable resolution. The law enforcers have taken to the streets to protest rising militancy in their district, and surrounding regions. They say they feel vulnerable, and want the counterterrorism drive in the area to be led by them, instead of the military. Police officers from surrounding districts, including Bannu, D.I. Khan and Tank, have joined their protesting colleagues, while political parties, tribesmen and civil society groups have also expressed solidarity with them. Efforts by the local administration to end the impasse have failed, and traffic between this part of KP and the rest of the country has been suspended.

The policemen's concerns are not without merit. According to figures published recently, KP experienced 29 terrorist attacks in August alone, in which 25 lives were lost. Lakki Marwat and its surrounding districts have been particularly affected by terrorism, with most of those targeted being police personnel, security men and government officials.

Therefore, if policemen have come out on the roads to protest, it shows that the state of law and order in the area is clearly a matter of grave concern. If police morale is low and law enforcers have to publicly air their grievances, it reflects a failure of the administration and the security forces to crush militancy in the affected areas. It is also significant that the local civilians are backing the policemen's demands.

Unfortunately, the KP administration and security forces seem too consumed with political matters to address the issue of militancy with the seriousness and urgency it deserves. Police personnel are on the front line in the campaign against militancy, and their concerns cannot be dismissed. As the protesting law enforcers have demanded, they should be empowered to deal with terrorist groups.

The fact is that it requires a combined effort involving the police, Counter-Terrorism Department, intelligence agencies and the military to wipe out the terrorist menace before the matter gets out of hand. As they negotiate with the protesting policemen, members of the administration must keep their concerns — as well as those of the local civilians, who pay a high price whenever there are kinetic operations — in mind to evolve a dynamic and effective CT plan.

Both the KP government and security forces must lend a sympathetic ear to these demands, as the province cannot expect a demoralised police force to deal with the militant threat. Let the police lead CT efforts, backed by the military where required, so that terrorist groups are cleared from the areas. And after kinetic operations to uproot terrorist groups, the civilian administration needs to implement the 'build' phase successfully.

### 'Lambooo' Nayar

F.S.Aijazuddin

No one stood taller among the pique of Indian political columnists than Kuldip 'Lambooo' Nayar. Ironically, he received that nickname from the shortest of Indian prime ministers — Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Born in Sialkot, Nayar lived a long life, dying in New Delhi in 2018 at the age of 95. He had a career crammed brimful with history. Initially an Urdu press reporter, he served as editor of The Statesman, saw prison during Mrs Indira Gandhi's Emergency (1975-77), became Indian high commissioner to Great Britain in 1990, and sat in his country's Rajya Sabha in August 1997. His syndicated columns appeared in over 80 newspapers.

Just before his death, he compiled portraits of Leaders and Icons from Jinnah to Modi (2019). (He felt tempted to rename his book 'Heroes, Neros, and Zeros'.) That slim volume included his recollections of Indian and Pakistani leaders — M.K. Gandhi to N. Modi, and from M.A. Jinnah to Z.A. Bhutto. He knew them all — perhaps, only too well.

Nayar's personal 'trysts with destiny' began early. In 1945, as a young student, he heard M.A. Jinnah speak to a sparse audience in Lahore. Nayar asked him whether after independence, Hindus and Muslims might be 'at each other's throats'. Jinnah disagreed, countering that the two new nations would live in amity, like postwar Germany and France.

On Jan 30, 1948, he walked in Birla House, the scene of Gandhi's assassination, noticing "a few drops of blood glistening in the receding light".

He interviewed K. Abdul Ghaffar Khan — the Frontier Gandhi —

who startled Nayar by asking him pointedly: "Kya aap log baniya hotay ho?" (Are you Indians still traders?)

In February 1999, he travelled to Lahore in PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee's peace bus yatra from Amritsar to Lahore. An advocate of Indo-Pak amity, he renewed his commitment each year by lighting a peace candle on Wagah border on Aug 14-15.

Nayar had unbridled admiration for Jawaharlal Nehru's commitment to democracy and secularism. He thought less of Indira Gandhi, and even less so after being imprisoned by her for his abrasive articles. Nayar could see that Sanjay Gandhi held sway over her. He asked Sanjay how long did he think he and his mother could get away with their authoritarian tactics? Sanjay replied: "In my scheme of things, there were to be no elections for three to four decades."

Kuldip describes Z.A. Bhutto as "brilliant, audacious, and adventurous [but] arrogant". Bhutto asked Nayar, now that he had met Indira, Sheikh Mujib and himself, did he not agree that he (Bhutto) "deserved to be prime minister of the subcontinent?"

At Shimla, Nayar insists, "Bhutto had accepted the ceasefire line as an international border, meaning thereby that Pakistan would retain the territory it held in Kashmir (called Azad Kashmir), and India the rest of the Valley, Jammu and Ladakh". (PM Modi's subsequent abrogation of Article 370 had early roots). Nayar's plethora of Pakistani friends included Faiz Ahmed Faiz, whose verses (if not his recitation) he admired. Nayar believed that Faiz's "humanity was his religion". He asked Faiz who was his favourite singer. To his surprise, Faiz did not say Iqbal Bano nor

Noor Jehan. He opted for Nayyara Noor.

On one of his trips to Lahore, Kuldip Nayar asked to meet Noor Jehan. He was taken to a film studio in Model Town. Not recognising her at first (he remembered her as the Baby Noor Jehan of her Bombay days), he began by asking how many songs had she sung. Her witty response— "Na hi gaano ka shumaar hai, aur na hi gunahon ka" (Neither can I re-m-ember the number of records, nor count the number of sins I have committed).

Nayar met Nawaz Sharif during his exile in Jeddah. He did not accept Sharif's assertion that he knew nothing about Kargil. (Nayar drew a comparison with Bhutto's denial about prior knowledge of the 1965 war.)

After Sharif's ouster, Nayar interviewed A.B. Vajpayee. Vajpayee told him: "Nawaz Sharif sacrificed himself for us." Referring to the back-channel talks between R.K. Mishra and Niaz Naik, Vajpayee added: "We were almost there." Years later, PM Manmohan Singh expressed the same regret over the failure of the S.K. Lambah/ Tariq Aziz talks.

Like many others, Nayar commented on Sonia Gandhi's use of "stalking horse". He too noticed "how unhappy Manmohan Singh looked when occupying the chair ahead of Sonia Gandhi, his benefactor". After Nayar's death in 2018, his ashes crossed Wagah border where he had lit candles each year, and then were immersed by co-peacekeepers in the river Ravi. Before his death, Nayar predicted that PM Modi "is not likely to take any initiative on Pakistan". Neither then, nor it would appear ever again in PM Modi's political lifetime. -- Courtesy Dawn

### Informal jobs

Neda Mulji

In the last decade, informal jobs have mushroomed in Pakistan. Part of the reason is the high income tax levy which makes small firms contain costs by hiring cheap labour for informal jobs. Historically, societies have not been able to grow economically without a structured job market. In Tanzania, Ethiopia and the Czech Republic, for example, cheap labour coupled with the scarcity of capital made informal labour predominate even in industry. Clearly, these economies have suffered stagnation as opposed to Taiwan and Vietnam, where the main driver of growth was the formal jobs sector.

With fast automation in all sectors, labour-intensive economies are likely to spiral further downward. Traditionally, in Pakistan, low-cost labour has meant quick income for families that have many mouths to feed. However, this can at best be a survival mechanism for a fledgling economy. Hope for growth can only come from a sound industrial policy that not only creates formal employment but also upgrades the skill level required for those jobs.

Education and training remain the key drivers of economic, industrial and social development as we have seen in many successful economies. Those that have run into roadblocks after a period of intense growth — such as the Philippines and Argentina — have been burgeoning informal economies. Both economies, once successful, struggled due to the exponential growth of their informal sectors, relying on low-skilled labour.

From street vendors to low-wage domestic staff, unskilled handymen to unlicensed

wives, we have seen the unregulated growth of low-wage jobs in Pakistan. Those in low-skill jobs will always be at a disadvantage due to the unsustainable nature of the work, lack of contracts and zero social or legal protection. What's worse is the lack of economic mobility where generations will be trapped in the disadvantaged strata of society.

For sustained industrial growth, STEAM-based and digital literacy programmes need to be established for quick labour mobility — a paradigm shift from low-paying, low-skilled jobs to learning the ropes for more demanding, high-paying jobs. Developments in technology will essentially result in large gaps between those who are unable to rise to the job demands — therefore falling prey to wage stagnation or lay-offs — and those who can upgrade their skills.

In the absence of a higher education system that can develop the skills required by industry, the government will need to establish programmes to upskill workers in a public-private partnership model. Last year, in a bid to contribute to technological development, 100,000 laptops were handed out on a merit basis to university graduates. Initiatives like these are a case of 'too little, too late'. It is not so much access to technology that is required but the skills to be able to use the technology. Access can be provided on the job. Yet, without training, technology will still be out of reach for many.

This brings us back to the critical need for education and training to address the skills gap, for growth to be enabled in all sectors of the economy. Higher education institutes worldwide provide

part-time jobs to students that enables them to earn a little extra, develop basic skills that will lay the ground for their professional lives and also to help them engage in some networking with industry professionals. Part-time jobs at university have a range of benefits, from learning time-management and interpersonal skills to acquiring work discipline; the students are already on a springboard to support their careers.

In Pakistan, however, the jobs that should be open to students are usually taken by less skilled, low-wage earners. In an informal economy, we can't strictly classify jobs as open to 'students only'. There are huge opportunities that we haven't tapped into. We haven't yet explored the options available for certifying students for jobs because all these and much more are being managed in an informal capacity by untrained workers.

In many countries, students work in libraries, cafeterias, or as administrative and research assistants in a paid capacity. There are university portals that list the available on-campus jobs, and any certification options such as first-aid worker jobs. This is where students find preparatory ground for soft skills that will be required in a more formal job environment. Students can also undertake shadow work or apprenticeships within the university IT, marketing or curriculum planning teams. Gradually, we may be able to stem the tide of informal employment and bring more citizens into the safety net through training and regulation. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### China, Pakistan ink landmark leather industry pact, boosting Sino-Pak collaboration, trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Economic Net reported. Leather industry plays a crucial role in Pakistan's economy as it is one of the topmost foreign exchange earners for the country. It's widely recognized that China and Pakistan are complementary in leather industry. Through cooperation with China such as establishing joint ventures, modern Chinese technologies can be used to improve Pakistan's leather processing and product quality while Pakistan offers unique advantages of abundant raw materials, low labor costs, etc. Recently, the interactions between China and Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Albert P. Khuriev Russian Ambassador to Pakistan called on Federal Minister for Industries & Production and National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain.

### Delegation of int'l major investment companies meets Shafay Hussain

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of major investment companies from America, Europe and Great Britain met Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain to discuss investment opportunities in the province, at Punjab Investment Board Committee Room. The provincial minister informed about the possibilities of investment in the industrial estates of the province and the facilities being provided. A joint investment agreement was also signed between

the providential group and a multinational group from the United States, Europe and the United Kingdom. According to the agreement, there will be an investment of 1.5 billion dollars in energy, mining, real estate development, agriculture and other sectors in Punjab. This will be the largest foreign direct investment by a multinational group.

The head of the delegation said that there is a vast scope for investment in Punjab and "We will take advantage of the investment opportunities."



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh in a group photo at International Maritime Sustainability Exhibition & Conference Pakistan IMSEC-2024.

### Pakistan's blue economy has potential to become a driving force for growth, resilience: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Business and Finance Conference held here, said that to enhance Pakistan's share in the blue economy, efforts were being made under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to modernize the fisheries and shipbreaking industry using advanced technology. He told the gathering that the government had already removed sales tax on fisheries processing plants and fishery seeds.

The deputy prime minister, addressing the International Maritime

Conference held here, said that to enhance Pakistan's share in the blue economy, efforts were being made under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to modernize the fisheries and shipbreaking industry using advanced technology. He told the gathering that the government had already removed sales tax on fisheries processing plants and fishery seeds.

Highlighting the significant investment opportunities offered by the country's ports, he said the oceans supported around 85% of global trade and also played a critical role in meeting the sustainable development agenda. Dar said that as a maritime nation, Pakistan viewed the Arabian Sea as its fifth neighbor and a vital component of its economic and strategic paradigm. Pakistan's unique

geopolitical and geographical position offered immense potential for trade with economic zones offering opportunities for coastal tourism, aquaculture, biotechnology, energy, and health. He said Pakistan was transforming ports into hubs of regional and international trade and efficient green transshipment as a maritime single window was operational to enhance the efficiency of ports.

### Rupee gains 10 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Thursday appreciated by 10 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.44 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.54. 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 and Rs 280.85 respectively. The price of Euro decreased by Rs 1.05 to close at Rs 306.46 against the last day's closing of Rs 307.51, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

### Senate body reviews progress on key infrastructure projects, calls for enhanced accountability

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Senator Saifullah Abro convened today at Parliament House. The meeting began with a detailed update on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee in its previous meetings. The Addl. Secretary of Economic Affairs Division provided an overview of ongoing and completed

projects in the communications sector, covering national highways, motorways, and road infrastructure. These projects, carried out under multilateral and bilateral agreements, and with support from UN agencies, included information on proposals, the tendering process, current progress, interest paid by the federal government or departments, and other relevant details dating back to 2002. The Committee

also reviewed a summary of ongoing and completed communication sector projects, including 16 projects funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with disbursements of 1,331.04, and 5 projects funded by the World Bank, with disbursements of 1,754. Chairman Committee Senator Saifullah Abro suggested that adding tender process updates to date to the report would provide greater clarity.

### Pakistan, Russia to sign agreement for enhancing agri, industrial cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Russia are set to sign a memorandum of understanding to promote agricultural cooperation aimed at developing the local agriculture sector and enhancing the productivity of agricultural products. Russia will also provide technical assistance for modernizing fertilizer manufacturing plants in Pakistan to boost the output of fertilizers and meet local agricultural input requirements. This consensus was reached during a meeting between Minister for National Food Security and



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and the Trade Minister of Tajikistan exchange souvenirs during a sideline meeting at the SCO Summit. Discussions focused on enhancing bilateral trade volume and mutual interests.

### Support 10 mln families BISP to increase Kafaalat stipends amount up to Rs. 13,500 by January

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Thursday announced that the number of families benefiting from BISP will reach 10 million by the end of this year. She expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for increasing the financial budget of the BISP, which will result in the quarterly installment of the Benazir Kafaalat being raised from 10,500 rupees to 13,500 rupees starting in January 2025. She shared these remarks while speaking to media representatives at the zonal office of BISP in Gilgit. Senator Rubina Khalid stated that the registration of deserving families is ongoing through Dynamic Registration Centers across the country. Additionally, recertification of already registered households is in progress to evaluate the socio-economic conditions of eligible families.



## Women possess immense potential for skill development, art and design: Governor

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that women possess immense potential for skill development, particularly in the fields of art and design.

Their creativity and innovative thinking drive advancements and bring fresh perspectives to the industry. Investing in women's talents not only enhances their personal growth but also contributes significantly to cultural and economic progress.

Empowering women in art and design can lead to groundbreaking contributions and a richer, more diverse creative landscape.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said this in a meeting delegation from the Arts and Design Department of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University at the Governor House.

The delegation, including Schrish Zafar, Aneela Mudassar, Saima Naseer, Saniya Siraj, and Nida, discussed various proposals aimed at enhancing the province's soft image through art and design.

The delegation highlighted the lack of infrastructure at the university, including designated spaces for practical activities, display centers, and classrooms, which has hindered

research and practical work for the students.

They informed the Governor about a proposal sent to the Higher Education Commission, JICA, and the Museum Department, adding the HED also had not seen any progress since 2021 in this regard. Additionally, the delegation proposed establishing a Biennale 3D Installation Exhibition in Peshawar.

During the discussion, the Governor assured full support for the department and recommended preparing a comprehensive new proposal.

He also suggested informing him about countries that support fine arts.



**PESHAWAR:** Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi called on by faculty members of Sarhad University of Science & Information Technology at Governor House.

## Rana Mashhood says: Country's development depends on youth prosperity

**LAHORE (APP):** Prime Minister Youth Program Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan on Thursday said that enemies wanted to create a division between the public and the state institutions. "Seeds of hatred are being sown between the people and the institutions, and a campaign is being run against them", he added.

He was addressing a seminar on "Exemplary Ways in Education System in Light of Prophetic Teachings" held here at Arfa Karim Tower.

Recalling the past, he stated that Pakistan had attracted students from around the world due to its high-quality education system and today, there was a visible decline on proper training and values.

Rana Mashhood said: "We are left with only those who talk a lot but lack of action. There are many who deceive with their words but the real heroes of character are rare," he remarked.

In a message to the youth, Rana Mashhood emphasized that future of the youth is the most important for progress and development of the country.

## Governor signs summary of appointments for Advisor, Sp Assistants

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday signed the summary for the appointments of Advisor and Special Assistants to the Chief Minister.

Governor Kundi has approved the appointment of four special assistants including Mussavir Khan, Muhammad Sohail Afridi, Naik Muhammad Khan Humayoon Khan, and one Advisor Ihtisham Ali to the Chief Minister (CM) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Following the Governor's approval and signature, the summary has been sent back for implementation.

## Regional Director ANF calls on Governor Punjab

**Independent Report LAHORE:** Regional Director Commander Anti-Narcotics Punjab Brigadier Sikandar Hayat Chaudhry called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan and discussed measures on drug prevention in educational institutions of Punjab during a meeting at the Governor's House, here on Sunday.

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that youth are the asset of the country, adding that it is the responsibility of the government to provide them with a secure and conducive learning environment. He said that as chancellor he is taking various steps for the betterment of universities.

He said that all possible measures will be taken to eradicate drugs from the campuses. The Governor Punjab said he has issued instructions to the vice chancellors of the universities to implement prohibition of smoking in campus premises and hostels in letter and spirit. This initiative will help in promoting a clean and conducive learning environment for the student, he added.

He said that counseling of students who would be found involved in taking drugs would also be ensured. He also emphasized the need to organize anti-drug awareness campaigns in educational institutions across Punjab.



**LAHORE:** Regional Director ANF Brigadier Sikandar Hayat Chaudhry called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor's House.

## Rs320m allocated for third phase of Drug Free Peshawar: Finance Advisor

**PESHAWAR (APP):** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has allocated a sum of Rs 320 for the rehabilitation of drug addicts in Peshawar.

This was informed by Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance, Muzammil Aslam during a high-level meeting that was attended by Excise Minister, Mian Khaliq ur Rehman, Secretary Excise, Fayyaz Ali Shah, Secretary Social Welfare and Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Mehsud.

The Advisor Finance informed that all arrangements have been finalized to start work on the third phase of "Drug-Free Peshawar." Under the project, he said a total of 2000 drug addicts would be rehabilitated. Aslam further said that on the instruction of the provincial cabinet, an amount of Rs 320 million has been allocated for the purpose adding that around Rs 160,000 would be spent on the rehabilitation of a single drug addict.



**LAHORE:** Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari inspecting the newly constructed building of DGPR, Punjab Secretary Information and DGPR Shenshah Faisal Azeem is also present.

## PWD secretary holds 34th annual Country Engagement Working Group meeting

**LAHORE (APP):** Population Welfare Specialist Department (PWD) Punjab Secretary Salman Ijaz chaired the 34th annual Country Engagement Working Group (CEWG) meeting, organised by the Federal Ministry of Health at a local hotel here on Thursday.

Secretary Health Syed Muazzam Ali, Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan, Secretary Health KP Imdad Ali, Secretary Health

## Post-induction training course participants visit PSCA

**LAHORE (APP):** Officers taking part in the post-induction training course visited the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), here on Thursday.

According to details, Operations Commander SP Shafiq Ahmed briefed the delegation about the institution's working. The trainee officers were taken to various departments, including the Virtual Centre for Child Safety and the Women's Police Station.

The delegation also reviewed the modern features of the 15 Emergency Helpline Centre and the operations of the monitoring centre.

The officers were briefed about the working of the Artificial Intelligence Traffic Management System.

Operations Commander Shafiq Ahmed informed the delegation that the Virtual Women Police Station, established to ensure the protection of women.

## Sikh community has special respect for Hazrat Mian Mir (R.A): Ramesh

**LAHORE (APP):** Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora, while addressing an interfaith harmony conference, said here on Thursday that the message of Hazrat Mian Mir (R.A) is for all of humanity, as it is continuation of the message delivered in the farewell sermon of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH).

He said that societal conditions would only improve when all citizens would teach respect and tolerance for one another. Hazrat Mian Mir (R.A) holds a special place in the Sikh community, as he was a close friend of the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, the minister said. The messages of humanity from Guru Arjan Dev and Mian Mir will always be respected and followed, he added.

He stated that the land of Pakistan is the soil of Sufis, saints, and gurus, which promotes peace and love, with a heritage spanning thousands of years.

He noted that the relationship between Sikhs and Pakistan is deep and must be understood.

## IGP issues Rs 2.4m for treatment of injured cops

**LAHORE (APP):** Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has released Rs. 2.4 million for medical treatment of policemen injured in the line of duty. According to details, Rs. 1 million were released for treatment of constable Muhammad Salman Asghar of Sialkot, Head Constable Ashfaq Ahmad from Lahore has been awarded Rs. 700,000 for his medical expenses, while Constable Muhammad Zafarullah has been given Rs. 300,000.

# International News

## At least 34 dead as Israeli planes hit UN school and homes in Gaza, hospitals say

**Monitoring Desk DEIR AL-BALAH:** Israeli airstrikes across Gaza overnight and Wednesday hit a UN school sheltering displaced Palestinian families as well as two homes, killing at least 34 people, including 19 women and children, hospital officials said. A UN official said six staffers were among the dead.

The war in Gaza is now into its 11th month, with tens of thousands of people dead, and international efforts to mediate a cease-fire between Israel and the Hamas militant group have repeatedly stalled as they accuse each other of making additional and unacceptable demands.

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli troops launched raids in several towns backed by airstrikes, continuing a crackdown across the territory that the military says is targeting fighters but has wrecked

neighborhoods and killed civilians. One airstrike killed five people the military said were militants threatening its troops. A second strike on a car killed at least three people, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

An attacker crashed a fuel truck into a West Bank bus stop near the Israeli settlement of Givat Assaf, killing an Israeli soldier, the military said. Officials said soldiers and an armed civilian "neutralized" the attacker.

The strike on the UN's al-Jaouni Preparatory Boys School in the Nuseirat refugee camp killed at least 14, including two children and a woman, officials from Awda and al-Aqsa Martyrs hospitals said. At least 18 other people were wounded, they said.

The Israeli military said it was targeting Hamas militants planning attacks from inside the school. The

claim could not be independently confirmed.

One of the children killed was the daughter of Momin Selmi, a member of Gaza's civil defense agency, which rescues wounded and retrieves bodies after strikes, the agency said.

Gaza's schools are packed with tens of thousands of Palestinians driven from their homes by Israeli offensives and evacuation orders. The al-Jaouni school, one of many in Gaza run by the UN agency for Palestinians, or UNRWA, has been hit by multiple strikes during the war. UNRWA said six staffers aiding the displaced, including the manager of the shelter, were killed. "Humanitarian staff, premises & operations have been blatantly & unabatedly disregarded since the beginning of the war," the agency's director, Philippe Lazzarini, wrote on X.



**U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is accompanied by U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink as he prepares to depart the train station in Kyiv, Ukraine.**

## Saudi Crown Prince, Chinese PM discuss cooperation in several sectors

**Monitoring Desk BEIJING:** Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman discussed cooperation in several sectors including energy, investment and trade in a meeting in Riyadh on Wednesday, the Saudi state news agency SPA reported.

Earlier, Li had urged Beijing and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to accelerate free trade negotiations. Li made his remarks in a meeting in Riyadh with GCC Secretary General Jassem al-Budaiwi, Chinese state news agency Xinhua said. SPA reported that al-Budaiwi had stressed the importance of moving forward and finalising the trade talks in the "near future".

The free trade negotiations have stalled over concerns by Saudi Arabia about cheap Chinese imports, with sources telling Reuters in May that the talks were at an impasse.

## Tehran did not deliver missiles to Russia, foreign minister says

**Monitoring Desk DUBAI:** Iran's foreign minister said on Wednesday that Tehran had not delivered any ballistic missiles to Russia and sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States and three European powers would not solve any problems between them.

"Once again, US and E3 act on faulty intelligence and flawed logic. Iran has NOT delivered ballistic missiles to Russia. Period... Sanctions are not a solution, but part of problem."

## Hamas says ready to implement ceasefire without new conditions

**Monitoring Desk CAIRO:** The Palestinian Hamas group said on Wednesday that its negotiators reiterated its readiness to implement an "immediate" ceasefire with Israel in Gaza based on a previous UN proposal without new conditions from any party.

The Palestinian group said in a statement that their negotiation team, led by senior official Khalil al-Hayya, met mediators on Wednesday including Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and Egypt's intelligence chief Abbas Kamel in Doha to discuss the latest developments in Gaza.

Talks have so far failed to reach a deal to end the 11-month-old war. Linger-ing issue include control of the Philadelphi corridor, a narrow stretch of land on Gaza's border with Egypt, persisting.

CIA Director William Burns, who is also the chief US negotiator on Gaza, said on Saturday that a more detailed ceasefire proposal would be made in the next several days.

## Trump says debate was 'rigged'

**Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON:** Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump on Wednesday claimed — without providing evidence — that the debate between him and rival Kamala Harris was "rigged."

"It was a rigged deal, as I assumed it would be, because when you looked at the fact that they were correcting everything and not correcting with her," he said on right-wing news channel Fox News.

He also panned pop megastar Taylor Swift for endorsing Harris shortly after the debate.

## Blinken says US will keep pressing Israel to spare Gaza humanitarian sites

**Monitoring Desk NEW YORK:** The U.S. secretary of state said Thursday the United States will continue to press Israel to do more to spare humanitarian sites in the Gaza Strip, a day after an Israeli airstrike on a U.N. school complex sheltering displaced Palestinians killed 14 people there, including six U.N. staffers.

Meanwhile, Turkey announced its own probe into the death of a Turkish-American activist who was shot and killed by Israeli forces last week while protesting settlements in the occupied West Bank. And a Syrian pro-government media outlet and an opposition war monitor said an Israeli strike hit a car in southern Syria on Thursday, killing two people.

The deaths at the U.N. school on Wednesday came amid a spate of Israeli airstrikes across Gaza that killed at least 34 Palestinians, according to local officials. Among those killed were 19 women and children, they said.

The Health Ministry says more than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the Israel-Hamas war began. It does not differentiate between fighters and civilians in its count. The war has caused vast destruction and displaced about 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, often multiple times.

## Greek PM says German border plan will be burden for Greece

**Monitoring Desk ATHENS:** Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said on Thursday that a German plan to impose tighter checks at its land borders amounted to unilateral scrapping Europe's open-border Schengen zone and would burden frontline states such as Greece.

Germany said this week that the checks within what is normally a wide area of free movement - the Schengen zone - would start on Sept. 16 and initially last for six months, as the country tries to clamp down on irregular migration.

"Germany had an extremely tolerant and I would say socially generous policy against migrants which is now triggering a big social backlash," Mitsotakis said in an interview with a Greek radio station. "The response cannot be unilaterally scrapping Schengen and dropping the ball to countries which sit on Europe's external borders," he said.

Instead, the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, a revamped migration system which recognises the importance of guarding Europe's external borders, should be implemented, Mitsotakis said.

Greece was on the frontline of Europe's migration crisis in 2015-16 when more than a million refugees - many of them fleeing civil war in Syria - arrived, mainly via Turkey. Most eventually moved on to Germany and other Western European destinations.

The number of arrivals in Greece has since fallen sharply but many migrants, mainly from Libya and Egypt, still reach Greek shores before also heading towards western Europe. Mitsotakis' conservative government, which won a second term last year, has tightened its migration policy since 2019. A cement and barbed-wire fence that Greece is extending along its northern border with Turkey to prevent migrants from entering the country will be completed within a year, Greek Citizen Protection Minister Michalis Chrisochoidis told state television on Thursday.

## North Korea launches multiple ballistic missiles off Korean peninsula

**Monitoring Desk SEOUL:** After months of trading provocations with South Korea and a recently renewed vow to keep growing its nuclear arsenal, North Korea sent its most aggressive message yet when it fired numerous ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan on Wednesday, as confirmed by both South Korea and Japan.

North Korea fired multiple short range ballistic missiles into waters east of the Korean peninsula on Thursday, Seoul's military reported, days after the nuclear-armed North marked a state anniversary.

Seoul's Joint Chief of Staff said it had detected multiple "short-range ballistic missiles launched into the East Sea around 07:10 from Pyongyang today (2210 GMT on Wednesday)," referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

It said it was analysing details of the launch and "closely sharing information on the North Korean ballistic missile with the USA and Japanese authorities, while strengthening surveillance and vigilance in preparation for further launches".

Japan's defence ministry also confirmed the launch of at least one suspected North Korean ballistic missile, with the coastguard warning vessels to take care.

It is Pyongyang's first apparent weapons test since July 1, and comes days after the isolated, nuclear-armed country marked a key anniversary celebrating the founding of the ruling regime.

## Guinea Bissau President Embalo says he will not run for a second term

**Monitoring Desk BISSAU:** Guinea Bissau's President Umaro Cissoko Embalo said on Thursday he would not run for a second term in elections in November.

Embalo, 51, was elected in January 2020 to succeed outgoing president Jose Mario Vaz. He defeated runner-up Domingos Simoes Pereira with 54% of the vote and would have been eligible for another term in office.

The unexpected announcement could trigger a power vacuum and heighten political instability in the coup-prone country of around two million people.

At the end of a council of ministers on Thursday night, Embalo said his wife had dissuaded him from running again.



## Pakistan committed to conserving marine ecosystem: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday reiterated Pakistan's commitment to conserving its marine ecosystems and coastal areas by addressing challenges such as sea pollution and climate change.

He said that maritime pollution was a major concern for Pakistan as it was negatively affecting aquatic life, causing a decline in the growth of the country's fisheries sector.

The president expressed these views while talking to the visiting Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh, Chairperson Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman, and senior government officials attended the meeting.

Welcoming the Secretary-General, the president said that focusing on the blue economy was a cornerstone of national development strategy as Pakistan was keen on modernizing its fisheries and ship-breaking sectors under the Special Investment Facilitation Council. He said that Pakistan was taking effective steps to tackle the effects of climate change. He said that Pakistan intended to improve its marine ecosystem and would welcome IMO's assistance and expertise in this regard.

In order to mitigate the impacts of climate change, he highlighted that Pakistan had planted mangroves over a million acres in Sindh and also sold carbon credits in the international market. He informed that plans were afoot to plant mangroves on another 2 million acres of land. The president also highlighted Pakistan's strong commitment to adhering to IMO regulations and standards for maritime safety, security and environmental protection. He said that Pakistan was looking forward to exploring potential areas for future collaboration with IMO, including technical cooperation and expertise-sharing to improve Pakistan's maritime sector.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah and Member of the National Assembly Syed Naveed Qamar call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Parliamentarians inspect & lauds facilities at IMCB I-8/3

ISLAMABAD (APP): A parliamentary delegation, accompanied by educationists, visited Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) I-8/3 to inspect the recently completed renovation and restoration work. The project was undertaken by the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) through a special initiative led by the Ministry of Education and Professional Training.

The delegation included Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) Nuzhat Sadiq, Nafesa Shah, Khawaja Izhar ul Hassan, Senator Gurdeep Singh, Director General of Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI) Maj Gen Qaisar Suleman, and Rector of National University of Technology (NUTech) Lt Gen (Retired) Moazzam Ejaz, Dr. Ghulam Ali Mullah, Executive Director of the Inter Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC), along with DG Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) and Chairman FBISE, Junaid Akhlaq, were also present.

Prof. Shahid Mahmood Abbasi, Principal of the College and Director Colleges (FDE), warmly received the delegation and accompanied them on a tour of the newly renovated facilities.

Secretary of Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani, who played a key role in the project's development, showed particular interest in the improvements made to the college. The extensive renovation includes a state-of-the-art computer lab equipped with 40 computers, a fully furnished library, a new gym with modern machines, a dispensary, smart classrooms, updated washroom facilities, and a refreshed exterior of the main building. Foreign language courses.

## Pakistan can not afford revolution of anarchy: Irfan Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)'s Parliamentary leader in the Senate, Senator Irfan Ahmad Siddiqui on Thursday said that Pakistan can not afford the revolution of unrest, abuse and anarchy.

While speaking in response to opposition members' concerns over raids on the arrest of parliamentarians from the lower House premises two days ago, he condemned the incident and said that the Speaker National Assembly had formed the committee to probe the matter, however, he said that Pakistan would survive, Parliament will live and reviling does not bring revolutions.

He reminded the PTI-backed lawmakers that the constitution of 1973 was in place and it was also in place during 2018-21 when they had sent all opposition members behind bars including me, but no PTI members said any word of condemnation over illegal practices.

Irfan questioned "How many sit-ins, and attacks were carried out on Britishers and Hindus during the Pakistan movement on the orders of Quaid Muhammad Ali Jinnah?"

Siddiqui further asked whether Quaid Azam ordered their followers to fall petrol bombs on British institutions, the Army, Gandhi and Nehru.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Spain, Jose Antonio de Ory, Chairperson KKAWF, Cristina Afridi, ambassadors, diplomats, members of civic society at the launch of the Declaration of Oviedo a global initiative on drug use prevention held at the residence of Spanish Ambassador.

## SC disposes off contempt case against Vawda, TV channels

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday withdrew its show-cause notices served to TV channels while accepting their unconditional apology and also disposed of a contempt case against Senator Faisal Vawda.

A four-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa heard the contempt of court case against Faisal Vawda and TV channels. Justices including Irfan Saadat Khan, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Shahid Bilal were also part of the bench.

During proceedings, the TV channels submitted unconditional apology and assured that it would also be on-air.

TV channels' lawyer Faisal Siddiqui said that they would also improve the self-accountability mechanism, adding that these remarks should have not been on-air repeatedly in media.

The chief justice remarked that we didn't want to send anyone to jail but everyone should have sense of responsibility. He remarked that the apology tendered by Faisal Vawda and Mustafa Kamal was not given appropriately in the media.



ISLAMABAD: The visiting Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Mr Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco, call on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## NCRC launches social media awareness campaign against early child marriages

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) has launched a social media awareness campaign against early child marriages and its harmful impacts on the society.

Talking to APP on Thursday, an official of NCRC informed that the purpose of the campaign was to highlight Pakistan's national and international commitments regarding child rights as well various gaps in the prevailing laws.

The official observed that Pakistan is over legislated country however there are many hurdles in implementation of various laws.

However, the present government is working to address and overcome systematic and societal challenges in the way of implementation of such laws.

"Lack of education is also one of the major contributing factors in the early marriage of children in Pakistan which needs to be addressed", the official said.

Pakistan is ranked as the 6th highest in the world in early girl marriages (before 18 years) while 71 per cent of girls in family do not have any say in who and when they will marry, the official added.

The NCRC in Pakistan is a statutory body tasked with promoting and protecting children's rights in accordance with national laws and international conventions like the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Pakistan has ratified.

The official highlighted the NCRC role in addressing one of the critical issues of early child marriages, a persistent problem in Pakistan, especially in rural areas.

## ICT admin gears up for Eid Milad with citywide celebrations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has planned to celebrate the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) with the series to programmes and decorations in a befitting manner in the Federal Capital.

In this regard, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon has chaired a key meeting and discussed plans for the upcoming Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH). They also discussed city security, cleanliness arrangements and public participation in the different rallies and seminars.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) and the members of District Peace Committee.

The officials focused on ensuring the city is well-prepared for the celebrations. Security measures and overall readiness were key points of discussion, with the DC stressing the importance of maintaining order throughout the city.

In line with the events, the DC announced that the city would be illuminated with lights to mark the occasion.



ISLAMABAD: Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon calls on Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Engr Amir Muqam at Ministry.

## Punjab, CDA collaborate to address Islamabad's water shortage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Punjab government on Thursday joined hands to tackle Islamabad's water scarcity issue. A meeting in that regard was held under the Chairmanship of CDA Chief Muhammad Ali Randhawa.

The meeting attended by the Secretary Irrigation Punjab via Zoom, explored ways to utilize excess water from Rawal Dam.

The panel discussed supplying 2 million gallons of water per day to Islamabad from Rawal Dam, a request made by CDA to the Punjab government two years ago.

The CDA's Water Management Wing and Punjab Small Dam teams will jointly finalize the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for water supply, with final approval pending the decision on the water supply procedure.

## IGP Islamabad chaired important meetings at CPO

Independent Report

IG Islamabad issued orders to all police officers to arrest accused involved in theft, robbery, murder, street crime, and other wanted absconders.

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired important meetings at the Central Police Office (CPO) in Islamabad.

The meetings were attended by DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, AIG Establishment/General Abdul Haq Umrani, SSP Operations Arslan Shahzaib, all zonal SPs, and other police officers.



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The meetings were attended by DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, AIG Establishment/General Abdul Haq Umrani, SSP Operations Arslan Shahzaib, all zonal SPs, and other police officers.

He said that no one would be allowed to disturb the peace and order of the citizens.

He instructed all police officers to focus on serious crime, street crime and crime hotspots to prevent criminal activities.

## Salik reaffirms Pak commitment to fight religious extremism, promoting interfaith harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fighting religious extremism and to promote interfaith harmony across the nation.

He made these remarks during a meeting with Indonesia's Chargé d'Affaires, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma who called on him here at the ministry.

During the meeting, they discussed various proposals for promoting religious harmony, respect for humanity, and tolerance.

Minister Salik said the Muslim world is in dire need of unity and solidarity. Given the challenges and circumstances faced by Muslim countries today, he said there is a pressing need to promote religious harmony, tolerance, and unity.

"Islam teaches us about the unity of the Ummah, peace, brotherhood, respect for humanity, and camaraderie," he added.

Indonesia's Chargé d'Affaires, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma said there is an urgent need for dialogue between religions and cultures to establish peace in the world. He said the attitude of tolerance and respect is an essential component of Islamic teachings.

In the meeting, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation to eliminate extremism and promote interfaith harmony.



ISLAMABAD: Indonesia's Chargé d'Affaires, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma call on Federal Minister for Inter-faith harmony Chaudhary Salik Hussain.

## AIOU students to be included in PM's Laptop Scheme: NA assured

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Thursday assured the National Assembly that students of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) would be included in the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme.

Responding to a Calling Attention notice raised by Shahida Begum regarding the non-inclusion of AIOU students in the Prime Minister's laptop scheme, the minister said that the final decision has yet to be taken about the PM's Laptop Scheme.

However, the minister assured the assembly that these concerns would be addressed in the final decision-making process.

Siddiqui clarified that while a final decision is yet to be made, the government is committed to ensuring AIOU students benefit from the program.

He highlighted that the PM's Laptop Scheme, initiated in 2013, has previously distributed over 10,000 laptops to students, including those from AIOU and Virtual University (VU).

## NCSW announces training opportunity on "Gender and Child Rights" for journalists

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), in collaboration with UNICEF Pakistan, has announced an exciting training opportunity on "Gender and Child rights" for journalists across Pakistan.

According to the NCSW, the Media Fellows with a minimum of seven years of experience are invited to participate in specialized training focusing on gender and child rights.

This initiative aims to foster a more responsible and informed media narrative surrounding these important social issues.

Journalists interested in applying can submit their applications via the provided link.

The deadline for applications is set for September 20, 2024.

Participants will have the chance to enhance their skills and contribute to a media landscape that prioritizes inclusivity, gender parity, and empowerment.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing at the inaugural session of the high-level event on 'Enhancing the Water Quality Monitoring System to Achieve Sustainable Development Goal-6 (SDG-6) in Pakistan'

## Senate body warns population growth jeopardizes sustainable development in five year plan

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Senator QuratulAin Marri chaired the meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Special Initiatives held today at Parliament House.

The Senate Committee deliberated on the socio-economic objectives of the 13th Five Year Plan (2024-29). Joint Chief of Economic Policy, Zafar ul Hassan, highlighted the challenges shortlisted for the 13th Five year's plan. Senator QuratulAin Marri astoundingly remarked that the Planning Division should focus on the biggest of all challenges i.e. "Population Control" which is not mentioned in the list. She stated that no country could achieve sustainable development with a population growth rate of 2.5%. It is high time that the country should devise a comprehensive plan to mitigate the trickle-down effect of population explosion.

Joint Chief of Economic Policy also highlighted the objectives for the 13th Five-year plan. He emphasized that the Federal Government has set objectives of improving the quality of human capital, preventing hunger and malnutrition, enhancing the use of technology, and making agriculture more productive and efficient.

The Chairperson of the Committee asserted that the country should also empathize and facilitate the "Services Sector," following the example of Bangalore, India, as the demand for services is increasing manifold. Zafar ul Hassan remarked that the price mentioned by the District Administration is twice as high as the price evaluated by the committee. The Deputy Commissioner pointed out the forest land is also located in the region which is more suitable for the solar project and mentioned that the said forest land has also been proposed by the District Administration to the Secretary of Settlement (Punjab) for the allotment of land.