

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

Vol. XIV No. 214 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Saturday September 14, 2024, Rabi-ul-Awwal 09, 1446 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12



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

COAS vows to comprehensively defeat hostile terrorist nexus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During the two-day Summit, member states are expected to conclude negotiations ahead of adopting the Pact for the Future, which aims to chart a path toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. It will include a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations.

The SDGs are an internationally agreed set of targets to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

In a video call from Islamabad, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, called for collective efforts to deal with acute world problems, saying, "Today, in times of unprecedented global challenges and escalating conflicts, we are at risk of permanently damaging the notion of 'we'.

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

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

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

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

Responding to a question during the National Assembly's question hour, the minister said, "The federal government is financing the construction of various small, medium, and large dams/reservoirs through the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) to store surplus water, which becomes available during the flood season. This stored water will be used for irrigation and drinking, when the natural flow in rivers decreases."

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

Ahsan Iqbal maintained that the responsibility for the increase in the project cost lies with the previous incompetent government, and due to lack of funding and delays, the cost has now increased from Rs. 479 billion to Rs1400 billion.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

However, due to delays and unnecessary postponements during the previous government, the cost of the project has increased significantly.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

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

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

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

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

Responding to a question during the National Assembly's question hour, the minister said, "The federal government is financing the construction of various small, medium, and large dams/reservoirs through the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) to store surplus water, which becomes available during the flood season. This stored water will be used for irrigation and drinking, when the natural flow in rivers decreases."

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

Ahsan Iqbal maintained that the responsibility for the increase in the project cost lies with the previous incompetent government, and due to lack of funding and delays, the cost has now increased from Rs. 479 billion to Rs1400 billion.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

However, due to delays and unnecessary postponements during the previous government, the cost of the project has increased significantly.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.



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

Govt sponsoring 32 dam projects to address water scarcity: Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Water Resources, Musadik Masood Malik, informed the National Assembly on Friday that the Federal Government is financing the construction of 32 dam projects across Pakistan, with a total cost of Rs. 1,056,986 billion.

Responding to a question during the National Assembly's question hour, the minister said, "The federal government is financing the construction of various small, medium, and large dams/reservoirs through the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) to store surplus water, which becomes available during the flood season. This stored water will be used for irrigation and drinking, when the natural flow in rivers decreases."

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

Ahsan Iqbal maintained that the responsibility for the increase in the project cost lies with the previous incompetent government, and due to lack of funding and delays, the cost has now increased from Rs. 479 billion to Rs1400 billion.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

However, due to delays and unnecessary postponements during the previous government, the cost of the project has increased significantly.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

PM chairs high-level review meeting on Mpxo situation

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

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

"All necessary precautionary measures to prevent Monkeypox should be adopted," the prime minister said directing the officials concerned to raise public awareness about preventive steps.

He also instructed that scanning at all airports, seaports, and land entry points must be strictly enforced to detect any potential cases.

The prime minister said Pakistan was not currently facing an emergency situation related to Monkeypox. However, he stressed the need for continued preparedness, particularly by the Ministry of Health and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

He called for the establishment of quarantine centers across the country to accommodate any affected individuals.

During the briefing, officials informed the prime minister that while the African continent remained the most affected by Monkeypox, Pakistan had so far recorded only five cases, all diagnosed after individuals arrived in the country from abroad. The detected cases were of the Clade-II strain, which was considered relatively less dangerous.

It was informed that daily review meetings on the situation were being held at the National Command and Operation Center (NCO) to ensure real-time monitoring and response.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also maintaining communication with Pakistani embassies abroad regarding the global Monkeypox situation.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, presides over a review meeting on the progress of the Diamer Basha Dam project.

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

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

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

The event was attended by Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Secretary Maritime Zafar Shah, DG Shipping Alia Shahid, Commandant Pakistan Marine Academy Commodore Rizwan Munawar and Chairmen of KPT, Port Qasim, PNSC, Gwadar Ports as well as diplomats of different countries and other stakeholders of the maritime sector. He, the secretary General IMO, addressing on the occasion, emphasized the significance of leveraging the technology advancement and implementation on international conventions for promotion of blue economy, conservation of maritime eco system and enhancing ports and shipping efficiencies.

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

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

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

However, due to delays and unnecessary postponements during the previous government, the cost of the project has increased significantly.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

However, due to delays and unnecessary postponements during the previous government, the cost of the project has increased significantly.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

However, due to delays and unnecessary postponements during the previous government, the cost of the project has increased significantly.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal on Friday chaired a review meeting on the progress of the Diamer Basha Dam project.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary of Planning, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

However, due to delays and unnecessary postponements during the previous government, the cost of the project has increased significantly.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

Pakistan committed to strengthen ties with European Union: Ayaz

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

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

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

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

Ayaz Sadiq acknowledged the significant role that minorities play in Pakistan's national development and prosperity.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

Naqvi praises Punjab CTD for foiling terrorist plot in DGK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the Punjab Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) for its swift and effective action in foiling a terrorist plot in Dera Ghazi Khan.

He praised the CTD for conducting a highly successful intelligence-based operation that led to the elimination of two terrorists linked to the extremist group Fitna Al Khawarij. In a statement, Minister Naqvi emphasized the professionalism and dedication of the CTD team, congratulating them for their timely intervention, which prevented a major terror attack.

"Through their intelligence-driven efforts, the brave personnel of the Punjab CTD thwarted a devastating plot, sending two terrorists to their demise. This operation once again underscores their unwavering commitment to safeguarding our nation," he remarked. Minister Naqvi highlighted that the Punjab CTD has consistently played a critical role in disrupting the malicious plans of terrorist groups like Fitna Al Khawarij.

He also instructed that scanning at all airports, seaports, and land entry points must be strictly enforced to detect any potential cases.

The prime minister said Pakistan was not currently facing an emergency situation related to Monkeypox. However, he stressed the need for continued preparedness, particularly by the Ministry of Health and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

He called for the establishment of quarantine centers across the country to accommodate any affected individuals.

During the briefing, officials informed the prime minister that while the African continent remained the most affected by Monkeypox, Pakistan had so far recorded only five cases, all diagnosed after individuals arrived in the country from abroad. The detected cases were of the Clade-II strain, which was considered relatively less dangerous.

It was informed that daily review meetings on the situation were being held at the National Command and Operation Center (NCO) to ensure real-time monitoring and response.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also maintaining communication with Pakistani embassies abroad regarding the global Monkeypox situation.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

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

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

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

These cover key routes that link remote communities to education, health care, and markets, it said adding the project includes measures to incorporate climate-resilient design, road safety enhancement, and sustainable maintenance practices.

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

"By providing better access to markets and services, we are empowering local communities and driving inclusive economic growth in one of Pakistan's most underserved regions," Zhukov added.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, the Damer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest.

He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Damer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.

However, due to delays and unnecessary postponements during the previous government, the cost of the project has increased significantly.

He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems.

During the meeting, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Monetary easing

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

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

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

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

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

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

Privatisation myth

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Community service

Amin Valliani

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Commerce News

PM calls for SMEs capacity building to enhance profitability

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

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

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

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

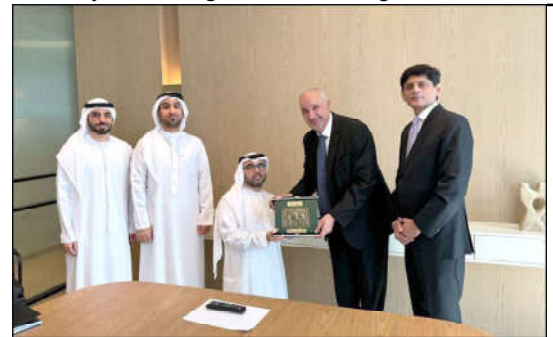
The prime minister was also briefed about the measures to make SMEs profitable, their access to easy loans, promotion of SMEs exports, facilitation of women in SMEs and their cohesion with the climate change. It was told that climate change would be tackled by introducing technology of manufacturing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

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

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



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



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

SPI witnesses nominal increase of 0.01%

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

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

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

SBP injects Rs11.77 trillion into market

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

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

Rupee gains 28 paise against dollar

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

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

Ali Pervaiz says: Economic reform agenda underway to bring stability

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Governor KP emphasizes agriculture's role in provincial development

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

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

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

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

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

He further said that the integration of traditional farming

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

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

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



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

Cybercrime case: Court confirms interim bail of Swati, others

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

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

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

LHC acquits murder accused

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

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

PDWP approves 2 development schemes worth Rs 4.48b

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



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

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

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

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

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

FIA arrests 3 for fraud, human-trafficking

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANF recovers 419 kg drugs in 10 perations

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

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

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

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

Interior Secretary

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

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



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

Protection and promotion of culture top priority: Shazia

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

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

International News

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

14 killed in Afghanistan attack; IS claims responsibility

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

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

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

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

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

Trump rules out another debate with Kamala

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

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

Sweden offers immigrants \$34,000 to leave country

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hungary, which holds the EU's rotating presi-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Germany arrests Syrian man accused of machete attack plot on soldiers

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

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

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

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



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of young parliamentarians calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

SSDO organizes capacity building workshop on migration governance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO), with support from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), successfully conducted a two-day intensive workshop focused on strengthening migration governance and combating Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) including trafficking in person and smuggling of migrants.

The training brought together around 40 participants, including parliamentarians and policymakers from Punjab.

This initiative aimed to foster a deeper understanding of the legal and policy frameworks surrounding migration, Trafficking in Persons (TIP), and the Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) while enhancing the

capacity of key stakeholders to develop and implement robust legislative and governance strategies.

The training began with an opening session led by Executive Director of SSDO, Syed Kausar Abbas who warmly welcomed participants and outlined the objectives of the workshop. He set the stage by highlighting the importance of a coordinated approach in tackling irregular migration and organized crime.

He highlighted the critical role of parliamentary oversight in ensuring the effective implementation of legal frameworks, urging lawmakers to hold the government accountable for upholding migration governance standards. Abbas further called for

strengthening collaboration between parliament, civil society, and enforcement agencies to address these complex challenges.

The session was graced by remarks from Director General of the Anti Money Laundering Authority, Dr. Ehsan Sadiq and Deputy British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Andrew Dalgleish.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Ehsan Sadiq highlighted the complexities surrounding Transnational Organized Crime and Irregular Migration in Pakistan, outlining the key issues and challenges. He stressed the urgent need for stronger enforcement mechanisms and enhanced international cooperation to dismantle criminal networks preying on vulnerable populations.

Ayaz Sadiq inaugurates calligraphic exhibition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday inaugurated the calligraphic exhibition of the names of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Seerat Mahal Book Corner in the Library of National Assembly at Parliament House.

Addressing the participants on the occasion, Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said, "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the Mercy for the whole universe, Humanity and other creature."

He added that the

noble model and unmatched nobility of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) are a beacon of light for all of us.

The Speaker said that success in this world and the hereafter is dependent upon following the excellent deeds of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

He also underscored that the teachings of the Prophet ? teach us brotherhood, peace, justice, and service to humanity.

Ayaz Sadiq said, "In this blessed month, we need to remember the teachings of the Prophet and implement these teachings in our lives."



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Calligraphy Exhibition in connection to celebrate the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) at Parliament House.

HEC, Pink Ribbon join hands to create breast cancer prevention awareness

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan and Pink Ribbon Pakistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on raising awareness about breast cancer in educational institutions across the country.

Pakistan has the highest prevalence of Breast Cancer in the whole of Asia with over 10 million women are at risk of Breast Cancer while more than 40,000 women die from this disease every year in Pakistan. The situation presents an alarming picture with a dire need to create mass awareness of breast cancer.

HEC and Pink Ribbon Pakistan will celebrate the whole month of October marked as 'PINKtober' to create awareness on the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of Breast

Cancer across the country.

An awareness campaign will be launched to educate university students on Breast Cancer. A wide range of awareness activities will be conducted in educational institutes as part of the campaign to mobilize the youth and help them become the torchbearers to spread the word in society.

HEC aspires to save every mother, sister, wife and daughter in Pakistan from the havoc of Breast Cancer and urges everyone to play their role in the fight against this deadly disease.

The signing ceremony was held at HEC Secretariat in Islamabad. Managing Director, National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), Noor Anma Malik and CEO of Pink Ribbon Pakistan, Omer Aftab signed the agreement. Executive Director of HEC, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum

graced the occasion as chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum said, "We believe that by engaging educational institutions, we can significantly reduce the stigma associated with this disease and promote a culture of awareness and prevention."

Noor Anma Malik emphasized the importance of this partnership, stating that cases of breast cancer are increasing in the country and it is essential for our higher education sector to play an active role in promoting awareness.

"Through this MoU, we aim to equip students, faculty, and communities with the knowledge needed to fight this disease", she added. Pink Ribbon Pakistan also agreed to provide breast cancer diagnostic and treatment support to the staff of HEC at both the head office and regional offices in their respective cities.



ISLAMABAD: Syed Ahmad, CEO, DPL and Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry, CEO, NPO in a group photo with participants of international workshop.

Space technology essential for socio-economic stability of country: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Friday said the development in space technology was essential for socio-economic stability of the country.

Economy of the future depends on technology and continuity of policy was necessary for national development, he said.

He said this while visiting the SPARCO Pakistan Space Program here.

He said this project is a milestone in countries history and continuity of policies is indispensable for a stable economy.

He said that economic stability in the country was the top priority of the government and Space technology had a key role in the

country's development.

Ahsan said the government should take steps to bring innovation in technology in the country and space technology is associated with all spheres of life.

He said that space technology helped reduce the cost of projects and complete them on time. Pakistan has not been able to achieve the economic goals that other countries have achieved due to the continuity of their policies.

He said that geo-spatial technology helps in dealing with natural disasters and space technology has an important role to play in meeting the challenges faced by sectors like climate change, resource monitoring and disaster management.

Senator Abro seeks justice for Jacobabad polio worker

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Saifullah Abro of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf on Friday urged the Senate Deputy Chairman to issue directions to the quarters concerned to ensure justice for a polio worker who was allegedly raped after being abducted in the Jacobabad District.

Speaking in the Senate during the question hour, Senator Abro said the polio disease was surging in the country and the workers had to visit far-flung areas for vaccinating the children against the disease.

IRSA releases 215,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 215,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 190,700 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1549.13 feet and was 151.13 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 105,300 cusecs and 130,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1228.50 feet.

Suspect killed during shootout while attempting to free accomplices

ISLAMABAD (APP): A suspect was killed during a shootout on Japan Road, in the jurisdiction of Karpal Police Station, while trying to free his accomplice escape last night.

According to police spokesperson the incident occurred while police team were taking the accused Hamidullah Afghani, for recovery who was under custody and facing multiple charges.

He said when the police team were getting out of the vehicle with Afghani, four assailants on two motorcycles suddenly opened fire.

During the surprise attack, two police officers came under fire but were protected due to their precautionary measures, he said.

PPP chief felicitates Makhdoom Tahir on his victory in by-polls

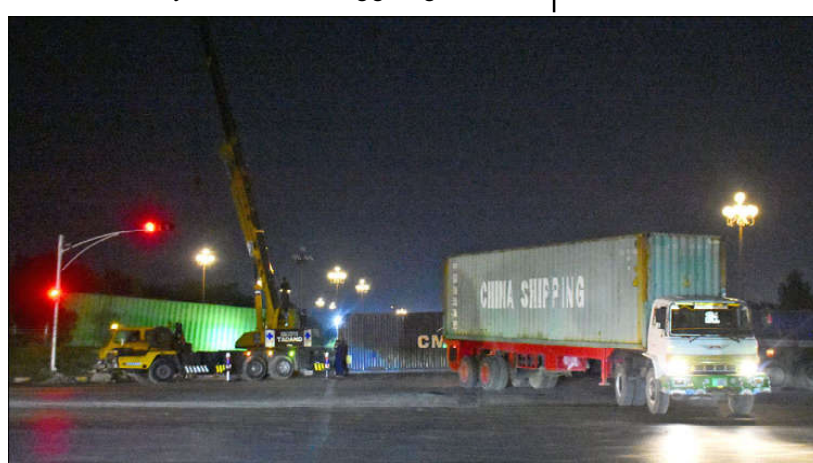
ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has congratulated Makhdoom Tahir Rashiduddin on his resounding victory in the NA-171 Rahim Yar Khan by-election. In a statement issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, he expressed his delight over the victory and praised the people of Rahim Yar Khan for placing their trust in the leadership of the PPP.

He also thanked the PPP workers, local leadership, and supporters for their tireless efforts in securing this success.

"This victory reflects

the people's confidence in the PPP's vision for a progressive, inclusive, and democratic Pakistan," he said. Bilawal Bhutto said that Makhdoom Tahir Rashiduddin's win was not just a triumph for the party but also for the people of Rahim Yar Khan, who have chosen progress over regression and development over hollow promises.

"This mandate reminds us of our responsibility to serve the people with honesty, integrity, and transparency," he added. He also emphasized the party's commitment to addressing the needs of the people, ensuring good governance.



ISLAMABAD: A view of heavy shipping containers removing from D-chowk with the help of heavy machinery, in the Federal Capital.

Ayesha vows to leave no stone unturned in polio fight, urges parents to cooperate

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio Eradication Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq Friday launched an unrelenting war on polio, vowing to leave no stone unturned in the quest to vanquish this debilitating disease from Pakistan's soil once and for all.

In an exclusive talk with a Private news channel, she reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to eradicating polio from the country as aggressive steps were being taken to achieve this goal, including intensified vaccination campaigns, enhanced surveillance and strengthened coordination with provincial authorities.

Senator Farooq also reiterated the crucial role of public cooperation in this endeavour, appealing to citizens to join hands with the government in its efforts to wipe out this debilitating disease.

"By working together, Pakistan can overcome the challenges posed by polio and ensure a healthier future for its children," she stressed.

Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq emphasized the urgent need to re-educate people about the critical importance of polio vaccination. She stressed that hiding children from polio drops is a significant obstacle to eradication efforts.

"To address Polio, this year's first nationwide polio campaign will continue until September 17th. Two additional national emergency drives will be conducted before the end of December," she announced.

"Intensive efforts will focus on re-educating parents and caregivers about the safety and efficacy of polio vaccines. This will involve addressing misconceptions and concerns that lead to vaccination hesitancy."

Action against alms-seeking in ICT; 23 arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administration of Islamabad, led by Assistant Commissioner Rural, has arrested 23 persons from different areas of the Federal Capital involved in professional begging. The arrests took place within the jurisdictions of Lohibir, Sahala, Kural, and Hamak police stations, said the spokesman of ICT administration. The arrested beggars were taken to the police station. Meanwhile, minors found begging were sent to the Edhi Center for care and rehabilitation. DC Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, emphasized the need for stronger measures against professional beggars.

Three arrested for acid attack on woman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have on Friday successfully arrested three suspects, including a woman, in connection with an acid attack on a young woman within the jurisdiction of Shalimar Police Station.

According to a police spokesperson, the incident occurred on September 4 in the F-10 area, where the three accused threw acid on the victim and subsequently went into hiding.

He said Inspector General (IG) police, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, responded promptly by forming a special police team.

Green- I,II, Sky Garden housing projects be completed by December 2025: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, informed the National Assembly on Friday that the Green One, Green Two, and Sky Garden housing projects are progressing well and are expected to be completed by December 2025.

During the question hour, he invited assembly members to visit the project sites, assuring them that arrangements could be made for them to accompany ministry officials during such visits.

Addressing another query, the minister clarified

that no final decision has been made regarding the future of Pakistan Public Works Department (PWD) employees.

He assured the assembly that these employees remain government servants and that their jobs are not at risk. There will be no unjust treatment towards them.

He also mentioned that a legislative amendment is being prepared to address any changes concerning the PWD. He said that no definitive decision will be made until the bill is presented and approved in the Assembly.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of United Arab Emirates to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, viewing a painting during painting exhibition titled 'Fractured Landscapes- Flourishing Spirits' by Abid Hussian at Gallery-6, in the Federal Capital.

Senators regret absence of Ministers during session

ISLAMABAD (APP): The members of the Opposition Benches on Friday registered their strong protest over absence of the Ministers concerned during the Senate session and called the chair to ensure their presence so that the question and answer could be conducted in an effective manner. The ninth meeting of the 342nd Senate Session commenced seven minutes late with the recitation of the Holy Quran whereas the treasury benches started protesting to the chair on absence of the Cabinet Members concerned whereas only Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar was present.

Senator Shahadat Awan of Pakistan Peoples

Party (PPPP) urged the Opposition members to allow deferment of the question for half an hour and take up the legislative business to start the House proceedings whereas the Cabinet members not present would join the proceedings meanwhile to reply to their queries.

Senator Danesh Kumar of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) said the chair must assert his authority and issue a ruling that the Cabinet member not attending the session would be deprived of his or her membership. "The Senators in the absence of any Minister concerned could not make their questions as we cannot talk to the walls of the chamber."