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Pakistan, Russia to cement ties through dialogue, cooperation

DPM Ishaq Dar says Pakistan views Russia as key player in regional cooperation; Calls for enhanced energy, trade cooperation with Russia; Pakistan, Russia sign MoU to boost economic, trade cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday underscored the considerable potential in Pak-Russia relations, emphasizing the importance of boosting economic ties and increasing cultural and educational exchanges, as well as enhancing cooperation in energy, trade, and regional connectivity.

Addressing a joint press briefing with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk, Ishaq Dar welcomed the Russian delegation and noted last year's record high in bilateral trade.

He pledged to tackle logistical challenges in fu-

ture meetings, including the Pak-Russian intergovernmental commission and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) discussions, which are crucial for enhancing cooperation on Afghanistan, energy security, and food security.

Ishaq Dar stated that the visit of the Russian Deputy Prime Minister and his delegation reflects the growing depth and scope of economic cooperation, highlighting a clear mutual desire to strengthen Pak-Russia relations.

Strengthening bilateral cooperation with the Russian Federation remains a key priority of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Ishaq Dar noted that

Pak-Russia relations have advanced significantly, with a strong desire to forge cooperation between the two countries. A step-by-step approach based on trust and mutual respect has placed the relationship on a positive trajectory. Both delegations engaged in in-depth discussions focused on bilateral relations, identifying potential areas for economic expansion.

Specific areas of mutual interest were outlined, including trade, economic collaboration, cultural relations, and people-to-people contacts.

Dar said Pakistan and Russia see significant

potential for cooperation in the agriculture sector. Both countries aim to expand bilateral ties and navigate banking sanctions. Pakistan is eager to join BRICS, which was created by Brazil, Russia, India, and China, and looks forward to a positive role from Russia in helping it join the organization, as well as participation in other similar organizations.

He stated that the SCO provides an important forum aimed at promoting peace, development, and stability in the region. Pakistan will collaborate with Russia in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to address a range of global and regional is-

suess, including the situation in Palestine.

Ishaq Dar said that Pak-Russia bilateral trade reached a record one billion US dollars last year. Expanding trade relations by addressing logistical issues is a priority for both sides. He emphasized the potential for energy cooperation, which will be explored further in detailed discussions. Additionally, both countries are eager to develop connectivity projects, including railways and roads, extending beyond their borders.

Ishaq Dar expressed satisfaction over the growing cultural and educational ties between the universities of Pakistan and Russia.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar along with Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Alexei Overchuk addresses a joint press stakeout at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad

President rejects IIOJK elections amid human rights concerns

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday categorically rejected the elections for the Legislative Assembly of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), asserting that the polls were no substitute for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

President Zardari, talking to a delegation of migrants from the IIOJK residing in Pakistan since 1989 led by Uzair Ahmed Ghazali at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, emphasized that such elections were unacceptable to the people of Kashmir and called upon the international community to hold the Modi government accountable for ongoing human rights violations in

the occupied territory.

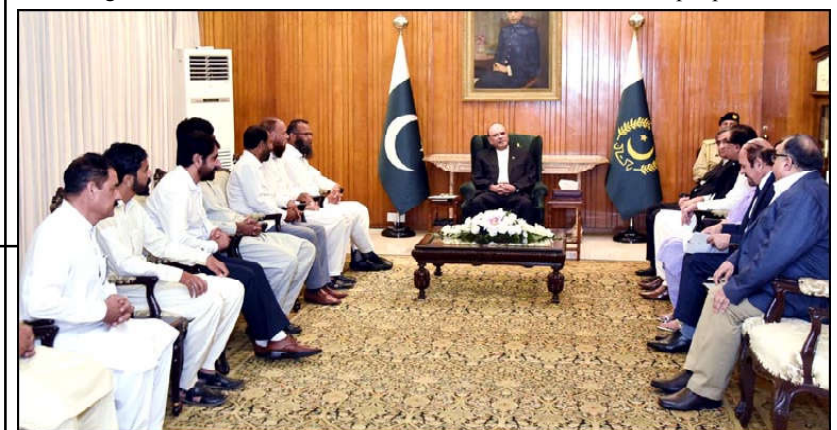
He further urged the need to take concrete steps toward conducting a plebiscite in line with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Welcoming the delegation, the president condemned the Legislative Assembly elections in the IIOJK, terming them part of India's broader strategy to consolidate its illegal occupation of the region.

He highlighted that such measures could neither legitimize India's occupation nor suppress the freedom struggle of the Kashmiri people.

He stated that India was trying to alter the demographic structure of the IIOJK by turning the Kashmiri Muslims into a

minority and transforming them into a disempowered community in their own land. President Zardari said that Pakistan greatly valued the sacrifices made by the Kashmiri people for their rights and would continue to stand in solidarity with them. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to provide moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people till the realization of their right to self-determination. The delegation apprised the president about the atrocities being committed by the Modi regime in the IIOJK. It was highlighted that the entire Kashmiri leadership had been imprisoned to suppress the voice of the Kashmiri people.



A delegation of migrants from the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, led by Mr Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

Impression of kidnapping citizens by intelligence agencies is threat to national security

ISLAMABAD (Online): Justice Babar Sattar of Islamabad High Court (IHC) has directed to make all intelligence and investigation agencies of Islamabad, director generals of IB, FIA, ISI, MI, director generals of air and Naval intelligence agencies and CTD Punjab respondents on the petition seeking recovery of missing person Faizan Usman from Islamabad and initiation of action against them.

Justice Babar Sattar remarked chief commissioner be also made party and he should file affidavit that as to why enforced disappearances are taking place persistently in his power of jurisdiction.

The applicant should file amended memo of respondents and notices be issued to new respondents.

The court inquired the intelligence agencies and investigation agencies should give report that have their information how enforced disappearance of Faizan took place.

UNGA adopts resolution demanding Israel end occupation of Palestinian territories in 12 months

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies): The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday adopted a Palestinian-drafted resolution that demands Israel end "its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" within 12 months.

The resolution received 124 votes in favor, while 43 countries abstained and Israel, the United States and 12 others voted no.

The action isolates Israel days before world leaders travel to New York for their annual UN gathering. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is due to address the 193-member General Assembly on Sept. 26, the same day as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. The resolution welcomes a July advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice that said Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and settlements is illegal and should be withdrawn.

The advisory opinion - by the highest United Nations court, also known as the World Court - said this should be done "as rapidly as possible," although the General Assembly resolution imposes a 12-month deadline.

The General Assembly resolution also calls on states to "take steps towards ceasing the importation of any products originating in the Israeli settlements, as well as the provision or transfer of arms, munitions and related equipment to Israel... where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that they may be used in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." The resolution is the first to be formally put forward by the Palestinian Authority since it gained additional rights and privileges this month including a seat among UN members in the assembly hall and the right to propose draft resolutions.



ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Senior Management Committee of the Ministry of Planning was held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal. The meeting was attended by Secretary Planning Awais Manzoor Samra, senior officials of the Ministry, project directors, and heads of various Planning Ministry departments.

King Charles phones PM Shehbaz; invites to attend CHOGM in October

ISLAMABAD (APP): King Charles III of the United Kingdom on Wednesday telephoned Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and formally invited him to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa in October.

Accepting the invitation, the prime minister said that the CHOGM in Samoa would be a significant moment in the history of the Commonwealth, being the first summit to be chaired by the King since becoming Head of the Commonwealth, according to a PM Office press release.

Prime Minister Sharif reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the Commonwealth and the values enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter.

He said that the CHOGM in Samoa would

provide a forum to discuss opportunities for enhancing intra-Commonwealth cooperation on a number of important issues, such as fostering sustainable development, strengthening democratic institutions, and empowering Commonwealth youth.

Noting the King's longstanding interest in environmental issues and various initiatives for climate sustainability, the prime minister said that he particularly looked forward to engaging with Commonwealth leaders on climate change, as Pakistan was highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The prime minister also inquired after the King's health and conveyed his best wishes for The Princess of Wales, who had successfully completed her treatment.

Despite fierce coalition govt wooing, Fazal completely rejects constitutional package

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who took the centre stage as both the government and the opposition sought his support, has completely rejected the draft of the "controversial" constitutional package, aimed at making changes to Pakistan's judicial and parliamentary systems.

"The draft we were given was reviewed, and it was in no way acceptable," the veteran politician said while talking to journalists after attending a luncheon at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Qaiser's residence on Wednesday. The government pushed the proposed constitutional package amid speculation about a potential extension in the tenure

of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, who is set to retire in October this year, following the PTT's request last month for the early issuance of a notification regarding the appointment of the next top judge.

The ruling coalition left no stone unturned to woo the "fate-decider" Fazl, with leaderships of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) holding a flurry of meetings with the cleric, but to no avail.

Despite claims of securing the "magic number" needed to push the bill through, the government failed to table the amendments in parliament and postponed its move indefinitely — a development confirmed by PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui.



ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam called on Federal Minister for Defence, Defence Production, and Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

PPP to prepare new draft of constitutional amendments: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Claiming that the draft of the constitutional amendments doing rounds in the media was not correct, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday announced that the party would prepare a new draft.

Talking to a private news channel, Bilawal said that JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman was also busy preparing the draft. "We will reach a consensus with Maulana on a single draft," he said.

The controversial amendments aimed at giving the executive more power over the judiciary are the latest bone of contention between the government and the opposition.

And despite the fact that the government looked confident that it would be able to get the legislation passed by enlisting the support of the required number of MNAs and senators, from the treasury and opposition benches, it badly failed in its efforts.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif

COAS reiterates desire to foster defence ties with Russia

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir has reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fostering traditional defence ties with Russia.

He was talking to Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk, who paid a courtesy call on him at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi today.

Both the sides reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen security and defence cooperation in multiple domains.

During the meeting, they engaged in productive discussions on matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, and bilateral cooperation across various sectors. The visiting dignitary praised pivotal role played by Pakistan Armed Forces in combating terrorism, and their tireless efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.

Consultations on constitutional package underway: Info Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday said that extensive consultations with all political parties on the proposed constitutional package were underway.

Talking to the media, he said that all the political parties tried to reach a consensus on the draft bill both inside and outside the Parliament.

The parties on both sides of the aisle in the Parliament had thorough discussions on the constitutional amendments, he added. Tarar said the role of the Law Minister in the drafting of constitutional amendments and engaging all political forces was highly commendable.

He cited that many countries, including Italy, Germany and Spain, had supreme courts and constitutional courts side by side.

"Constitutional matters go to constitutional courts so that common citizens do not face any obstacles in the way of justice and their cases reach logical conclusion well in time."

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EC authorities tell commission If intra party election of PTI not accepted then its Org. structure will not exist

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has said if intra party election of PTI are not accepted then its organizational structure will remain no more. A 3-member commission under member Sindh of EC Nisar Durrani took up the case for hearing Wednesday. Chairman PTI Barrister Gohar appeared in the EC.

Member Balochistan inquired were the election of PTI held in Chamakni.

Barrister Gohar replied no Sir, elections were held in Islamabad too.

Barrister Gohar said if even now too we don't accept PTI intra party election then we have powers to do what.

COPHC chairman meets Jam Kamal to discuss Gwadar Port development

ISLAMABAD (APP): The China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) Chairman, Yu Bo, on Wednesday met with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan to discuss proposals for the activation and enhancement of trade activities at Gwadar Port.

During the meeting, Yu Bo presented suggestions to boost operations at the port and sought the government's support to increase trade through Gwadar, said a press release issued here.

In response, Jam Kamal Khan assured full government backing, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to enhancing Gwadar's trade capacity, in line with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's priorities for the region.



MUZAFFARABAD: Kashmiris shouting slogans at Azadi Chowk against the elections in Occupied Kashmir and demanding referendum.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Parliament's place

With the storm around the government's planned amendments to the Constitution now behind it, will parliament turn its attention once again to protecting its privileges and reasserting the stature it has been granted within the configuration of the state?

The issue, it may be recalled, had been taken up last week after masked individuals entered the National Assembly's premises to arrest several lawmakers associated with the PTI — a serious infraction of House privileges that had triggered an uproar on both the treasury and opposition benches.

In the aftermath, a special 16-member committee was set up through a unanimous motion moved by the Lower House, which has been followed by the formation of a similar 13-member committee in the Senate as well. The committees are tasked with discussing, analysing and making recommendations regarding issues related to parliament, rules and procedure, and conduct of business.

While the committees get to work on their mandates, it is pertinent to examine the scope of the crisis parliament faces today. Over the years, a series of poor precedents have been set under successive governments that have greatly undermined its prestige and power. For example, it would be a big step towards restoring the prestige of parliament if our elected representatives agreed to stop constantly painting each other as the vilest villains to roam the earth. The executive and judiciary have remained shielded from the kind of continuous controversy that afflicts the legislature mainly because they do not air their members' dirty linen in public.

This, of course, should not be taken to mean less transparency and accountability; however, there is an urgent need to set some basic rules of engagement between political rivals.

Relatedly, there is a need to realise that parliament and its members must be respected regardless of who controls the government and who sits on the opposition benches. For example, parliament injures itself when it blacks out the speeches of some of its lawmakers. If parliamentary privileges protect all lawmakers' speeches on the floor of the House, then no power should be able to dictate which speeches can be heard by the public, and which cannot. It should be left to parliamentarians to bear responsibility for their words.

Secondly, those who champion parliamentary politics must also respect its procedures. Attempts to bulldoze major legislation through backdoor deals, with votes coerced out of unwilling lawmakers, undermines everything parliament stands for. Legislative activities must be open to scrutiny and debate — it is this transparency from which parliament derives its legitimacy and, ultimately, its power. Lastly, the effort to restore parliament's sanctity must not be predicated on the actions or words of any individual. It must rise above all political differences, no matter how serious, if it is to achieve its intended results.

One ummah

Qasim A. Moini

In the Holy Quran, in the Almighty's final message, as relayed to His beloved final Messenger, the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the Creator classifies believers as members of one ummah (community) as mentioned in Surah Muminun.

Of course, the Quran classifies mankind using different terms. For example, elsewhere (Surah Nisa), it is stated that humanity has been "created ... from one soul", highlighting the common origins of the human race.

Yet the ummah is a specific classification, bringing together all those who testify that there is no god but Allah, and that Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa is His last and final Messenger. In essence, while humanity is one tribe, the ummah is a smaller subgroup consisting of close 'relatives'. Therefore, when members of one part of the ummah are in distress, it should concern all other members of this 'family'.

Critics can question why such focus on members of the ummah, when Islam claims to be a universal religion, more so when the Holy Prophet, whose birth we are celebrating today, is described in the Quran as a "Mercy to the worlds". Indeed, we should be concerned when any part of humanity is suffering. But going back to the tribe/family analogy, while one would be concerned about troubles confronting those in one's neighbourhood or city, one would be most concerned when members of one's immediate family are in anguish.

Apart from the Quran, the need for believers to come to the aid of other believers is clearly mentioned in hadith literature. For example, in Biharul Anwar, it is stated that "if any believer comes to the aid

of one who is oppressed, that would be better than fasting for a whole month and performing i'tikaf in the Sacred Mosque". Similarly, in Sahih Bukhari, it is stated that "a Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor".

Where the suffering of Muslims is concerned, there are many vulnerable populations worldwide. For example, there has been no satisfactory resolution of the Rohingya's plight, as this stateless population continues to live in squalid refugee camps. Elsewhere, the people of Kashmir endure a brutal Indian occupation, while a vicious civil war in Sudan has disrupted life for millions. But perhaps no other Muslim population is enduring the hellish circumstances that the people of Gaza have been going through for the last year, due to Israel's genocidal assault.

Unfortunately, most members of the ummah living in comfort seem oblivious to Gaza's suffering. The terrified screams of its children do not move them; the numb bodies of its adults do not affect them. Surely, this lack of empathy for fellow believers in distress is diametrically opposed to the message of the Quran, and the teachings of the Holy Prophet.

While some Muslim governments have tried to raise the issue internationally and ostracise Israel for its vile behaviour, most rulers of Muslim-majority states seem unconcerned about Gaza's plight, other than issuing statements of condemnation. The 'Muslim street' — ordinary believers — on the other hand, is reacting in a variety of ways, including the boycott of brands seen as supportive of Israel, along with taking part in demonstrations to de-

nounce the butchery in Gaza. And while large protests have been held in Muslim cities — Amman, Sana'a, Baghdad, etc — amongst the largest pro-Palestine rallies have taken place in non-Muslim states.

Ironically, as much of the ummah sleeps, many non-Muslims with a conscience are awake to their responsibility as human beings to raise a voice for Gaza's defenceless people.

To reiterate their belief in the concept of the ummah, and the teachings of the Noble Prophet (PBUH), leaderships of Muslim states must do much more to defend Gaza. This should include economic sanctions targeting Israel and all those states that are helping power Tel Aviv's war machine. Moreover, Muslim states need to team up with non-Muslim supporters of Palestine, such as South Africa and Brazil, at multilateral fora such as the UN, ICJ etc, to help end the genocidal violence.

It is unconscionable that as Muslims in 'safer' locations continue to live life as usual, the people of Gaza are being subjected to a slaughter perhaps unparalleled in modern times. This lack of concern is an affront to the concept of Islamic brotherhood and community, while it betrays the human values of empathy and compassion as well.

As per Islamic belief, this life is transitory, while the next life is eternal. Therefore, those subjecting Palestine's people to such monstrous violence must remember that they will one day face Divine justice to ensure their will. And those powerful members of the ummah that are doing nothing for Palestine must remember that on the Day of Judgment, the children of Gaza will have every right to complain to Allah and His Prophet. - Courtesy Dawn

Perverse third way

Dr Niaz Murtaza

Capitalism and socialism are the great global ideologies of our age. The word before 'ism' reflects the core logic running a system. So, under capitalism, the interests of private capital do so and subjugate all societal concerns. Private capital, profits, wage labour, etc — wrongly seen as capitalism's core — have actually existed forever. But as American sociologist Karl Polanyi reminds us, capitalism emerged in the 17th century when capital's interests became dominant societally. Since then, it has given us efficiency and productivity, but also huge inequity, ecological damage and conflict.

Under socialism (a response to capital's ugly hold), common social interests rightly serve as the dominant concern. Communist states, though, wrongly equating capitalism's core with private capital, wage labour, etc, eradicate them, with poor results. Scandinavian states, seeing the sway of capitalist interests as the real problem, make social concerns paramount, but allow private capital to operate under them, with better results.

However, a few states (Pakistan, Thailand, Myanmar, Sudan, Egypt, etc.) follow a perverse third way where military interests subjugate both capital and social interests in six key spheres. Their specific patterns vary much across such states. First, armies control ties with key states. Some, like Egypt, become clients of big states to ensure their own survival, while others, such as Sudan and Myanmar, have tense ties with the West. Some, like Pakistan, oscillate between the two extremes. But normal ties away from the two extremes are usually absent. Neither

extreme delivers good outcomes. Clientage results in a dependent, rent-seeking economy with little innovation and productivity. Tensions with the West results in isolation and the blockage of investment and technology flows.

Second, the economy suffers from other ills too. Security concerns often impede dynamic economic sectors, such as IT and social media. Some armies, as in Pakistan and Myanmar, control large parts of the economy and curtail the growth of the private sector there. Military businesses often thrive on state support that gives them monopoly or preferential access, thus distorting market processes. Resultantly, most such states have stagnant economies.

Third, security concerns dominate, and many states, like Pakistan, Myanmar and Sudan, have conflicts with their neighbours. This consumes huge state resources, diverting the states from development aims and isolating them regionally. Some, for example, Sudan and Pakistan, also employed non-state actors to pursue their security goals, which boomeranged as terrorism in Pakistan and state collapse in Sudan.

Fourth, politics is autocratic in such states. Militaries often rule directly or via thinly veiled hybrid regimes and undermine fairly elected set-ups. State institutions and entities, such as parliament, the judiciary and bureaucracy, are deliberately weakened and forced to toe the security establishment's line. In ethnically diverse states, the lack of democracy leads to ethnic tensions and rebellions and even state break-up, as in Sudan and Pakistan.

Fifth, some states

also manipulate social narratives to fan extremism in the service of security aims. This unleashes huge social problems, such as poor status of women and religious minorities, regressive attitudes towards science, vaccines and population control, and knee-jerk xenophobia.

Sixth, while raw military powers underpin such a system, the state is run via a powerful intelligence apparatus for so-called surveillance and control. Human rights abuses by spy agencies still abound.

Almost all such states do poorly. But Sudan is currently worst off, as ferocious battles between its army and a non-state ex-ally, involving tanks and planes, rage in the capital and countryside, something not seen even during decades of war against South Sudan and the Darfur rebels. Myanmar stands isolated and war-ravaged too. But beyond violence, the state that has been damaged most, going by the wide nature of damage inflicted, may be Pakistan. It may be the only one in the category to have suffered all the ills listed above and more.

Even worse, there is no sign of a transition to a better system, and the establishment's control appears to have been increasing rapidly since 2017. But given its diversity and huge challenges in every realm, Pakistan direly needs to change course quickly to avoid Sudan's fate. However, it must avoid a transition to neoliberal capitalism, where corporate hegemony replaces the military but follows similar policies. Only a model where common social interests dominate can save us from doom. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Govt considers proposal to establish a new steel mill with Russian cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government is considering a proposal to establish a new steel mill in Karachi with Russian cooperation and the two countries agreed to form working groups to negotiate the project's details.

In this regard, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Russian Federation Alexey Gruzdev met with

Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain, said a news release here on Wednesday. The minister informed that the government has earmarked 700 acres land of Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) for establishing a new Steel Mill.

He said despite being blessed with considerable reserves of iron ore (estimated reserves of 1887 million tons), Pakistan is importing around \$2.7 billion of iron and steel.

There is perpetual gap between domestic production and demand of iron and steel. For the last year, the gap is estimated at 3.1 million tons, he added.

Pakistan's per capita steel consumption level is below even those of developing countries indicating significant growth potential over medium and long term.

He said efficiency of Pakistan's steel industry is limited as it segmented (600 small units) and based on old inefficient

technology.

The proposed site is located at Karachi and is closed to Port Qasim that reduces cost of transportation of raw materials.

Pakistan's industrial and agricultural experts are set to visit Russia, marking a significant step in strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations.

During the meeting, they emphasized on balance trade between both countries. Rana Tanveer stressed the need for modern agricultural machinery to boost crop yields and enhance agricultural productivity.

He said the government will provides all the facilities to the Russian investor in the country.



The Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of Russian Federation Aleksei Gruzdev meets with Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain in Islamabad.

Pak, Turkmenistan agrees for strengthening bilateral economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Turkmenistan on Wednesday agreed for strengthening bilateral economic and trade relations in potential sectors.

The Ambassador of Turkmenistan, Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, called on Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan to discuss the enhancement of bilateral trade and explore avenues for increased cooperation between the two nations, said a press release issued here.

The meeting, held at the Commerce Minister's office, focused on finalizing key agreements and exploring new sectors for future collaboration.

Minister Jam Kamal emphasized the need for robust business-to-business (B2B) engagement to boost trade volumes between Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

He highlighted the untapped potential in various sectors including energy, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and construction materials.

Despite long-standing brotherly ties, trade between the two countries remains meager, and steps very essential to increase it.

A key focus of the conversation remained the expedited finalization of the Turkmenistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, which is expected to significantly enhance the movement of goods between the two nations.

This agreement will also improve cooperation in banking, customs, and trade transit operations.

ADB delegation discusses Metro Bus Service

FAISALABAD (APP): A delegation of Asian Development Bank (ADB) called on Deputy Commissioner Capt (ret) Nadeem Nasir here on Wednesday and discussed the 'Faisalabad Quality Public Transport Network Report'.

Members of the delegation were Huma Daha, an expert in an urban transport system, Ashar Lodhi and Muhammad Mubashar Moeen.

A spokesman said all stakeholders are being taken on board to give practical shape to the project. On the instructions of the Punjab government, paperwork on the Metro Bus Service project under BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) is underway, added the spokesman.

FDA Director General Muhammad Asif Chaudhry, Chief Engineer FDA Mehr Ayub and others were present. The DG FDA briefed the delegation about the study report and a proposed plan for metro bus service.



LAHORE: A vendor displaying and selling the used toys on their handcart at Landa Bazar in the Provincial Capital.

RDA inflows rise to \$8.581 bn in August

ISLAMABAD (APP): The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) has risen to US \$8.581 billion by the end of August 2024 as compared to US \$8.416 billion by July (2024) end. The data showed that the inflows of remittances during August were recorded at US\$165 million as compared to US\$ 161 million in July and US\$ 200 million in June 2024, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

These accounts provide innovative banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment, and investment activities in Pakistan.

The number of accounts registered under the programme also rose by 11,515 to 735,113 in August 2024 from 723,598 accounts in July 2024.

Govt committed to resolve industry's issues; Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that the economic indicators show positive results and the country is moving in the right direction.

Addressing the Oath-taking ceremony of the All Pakistan Marble Industries Association here on Wednesday, he said that

foreign investments showed remarkable confidence in the country's economy due to the tireless work of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and 2025 will be the

year of Pakistan's rise.

Rana said that the government was committed to resolving the industry's issues and was taking effective measures to address the industry's challenges, adding the transformation of the industry to technology-driven initiatives would positively impact the growth of the economy.

He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had set up a Gems and Stone Committee which would form a growth-oriented policy with the consultation of all stakeholders.



FAISALABAD: Voters casting their votes during the Elections of Chamber of Commerce in the city.

Cotton production drops by over 63pc

MULTAN (APP): Country's cotton production has dropped by 63.55 per cent this year, says the latest report by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA), here on Wednesday.

By September 15, 2024, only 1.43 million bales have been produced which is a remarkable drop from 3.93 million bales during the same period last year. Punjab, the country's largest cotton-producing province, has seen a severe 65.13pc decline, with only 538,686 bales produced. In comparison, 1.54 million bales were produced by this time in 2023. The Sindh province has also faced a sharp reduction of 62.5pc, producing just

895,342 bales this year compared to 2.38 million bales last year. Balochistan, contributing the least, has managed to produce only 34,900 bales so far. According to cotton experts, the steep decline is being largely attributed to climate-related challenges. Record-breaking heat, pest infestations, and erratic rainfall have devastated crops in key growing regions. This year, heatwaves of up to 48°C scorched cotton fields across Punjab and Sindh and led to lower yields.

Similarly, continuous rains over the past two weeks in Sindh have further delayed cotton picking and it resulted in labour shortages and price.

CM KP launches "Ikhtiyar Awam Ka" portal

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has launched an innovative portal "Ikhtiyar Awam Ka" as an important initiative towards promoting good governance and addressing public issues in the province.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has formally launched this newly developed portal at a ceremony held here at Civil Secretariat Peshawar on Wednesday.

The "Ikhtiyar Awam Ka" portal is a robust and users-friendly digital platform that is now open for citizens to file complaints regarding their issues and grievances. This 24/7 portal will ensure a real time-tracking and

monitoring of public complaints regarding services delivery in public sector entities allowing for swift redressal and resolution. Overseas Pakistanis can also register their concerns and issues on this portal.

This inclusive platform featuring simplified complaint submission mechanism, multi-channel interaction, data security and privacy, citizen feedback loop, and AI-powered analytics and reporting, is available on mobile app, WhatsApp, email, telephone and written application, offering dashboards for all departments and officers, ensuring seamless coordination and swift implementation of government decisions.

Similarly, this pioneering initiative, fostering effective communication between the government and citizens, will also facilitate to increase transparency, accountability, and public confidence in the government.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur emphasized the portal's significance, stating, "The purpose of this portal is to provide immediate solutions to people's problems. We are empowering the people, because solving their problems is our priority." He assured that complaints will not be closed until the complainant is satisfied, reiterating the government's commitment to citizen-centric governance.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain laying the foundation stone of the project to build 19 centres of excellence in Government College of Technology here at Allama Iqbal Town.

27-km two-way road connecting Pakpattan to Sahiwal completed: Malik

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has delivered on yet another promise under the 'Punjab Khushhal' project, with the completion of a 27-kilometer two-way road connecting Pakpattan to Sahiwal.

This was stated by Punjab Minister for Communication and Works (C&W) Malik Sohaib Ahmed Bharth while talking to the media here on Wednesday. He said the road was completed with Rs. 2.7 billion and was expected to serve between 20,000 to 25,000 vehicles daily. This road is a critical infrastructure development, linking important locations including Malka Hans, Noorpur, Baba Farid's shrine, the GT Road, and the Motorway, thereby facilitating smoother travel and boosting local connectivity.

ATC grants bail to TLP leader in two cases

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday granted bail to Maulana Muhammad Tahir Saifi, a leader of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), in two cases registered under terrorism charges for creating disturbances and damaging state property.

The court ordered the TLP leader to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 in each case.

ATC Judge Arshad Javed heard the post-arrest bail applications of the TLP leader. The petitioner's counsel argued that Murriddke police had registered two cases against his client in 2021, but he was arrested in the cases after a lapse of many years.

Salman emphasises quality research in medical institutions

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has reiterated the government's commitment to promoting quality research across medical institutions in the province. He was speaking at the 15th syndicate meeting of Nishtar Medical University, which was held at the Department of Specialised Healthcare and Medical Education on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the minister stressed the importance of completing the ongoing revamping project at Nishtar Hospital in Multan, instructing that it be finished on a priority basis. Earlier, the Nishtar Medical University registrar presented the meeting agenda, and the syndicate approved the creation of new faculty positions for professors and associate professors in the pharmacy college. Key officials, including Special Secretary Development Syed Wajid Ali Shah, Additional Secretary Finance Sidra Salim, and Deputy Secretary Hamad Al-Rab, joined via video conference. Punjab Assembly Member Fizza Maimunah, Vice Chancellor of Nishtar Medical University Prof. Mahnaz Khakwani.

Chaudhry Shafay lays foundation stone of 19 centres of excellence

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain laid the foundation stone of the project to build 19 centres of excellence in Government College of Technology here at Allama Iqbal Town on Wednesday.

Under the project, Centres of Excellence will be established in 16 institutions of TEVTA and 3 institutions of Punjab Vocational and Training Council. With the support of Asian Development Bank, 19 centres of excellence will be built and the project will cost Rs. 5 billion.

Chaudhry Shafay Hussain said that the plan to establish centres of excellence in Punjab is a milestone in the preparation of skilled manpower. Completion of the project will increase the efficiency and professional technical skills of these institutions. CETA based courses will be conducted on modern lines in all these centres of excellence. Chaudhry Shafay Hussain apprised that under this project, access to technical and vocational education will be easy. The youth will get decent employment opportunities.



LAHORE: Deputy Chairman NAB Sohail Nasir meeting with Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

Fortifying provincial border checkpoints nearing completion: IGP

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said the mission to strengthen provincial border checkpoints is progressing towards completion. Addressing a video-link meeting at the Central Police Office on Wednesday, he emphasised that Punjab Police's border and riverine checkpoints were the first line of defence against terrorists.

"These checkpoints play a crucial role in combating smuggling and illegal activities," he said and added that prevention of weapon and terrorism material transport through

Taunsa Ghazi Ghat and Mithanwala bridge must be ensured, with timely and effective countermeasures based on ground realities and intelligence reports. He added that the riverine checkpoints were being further strengthened with modern resources and infrastructure development. Personnel at these checkpoints have been equipped with bulletproof vests, helmets, modern vehicles, and logistics. Dr. Usman Anwar also directed all DPOs to regularly inspect border and riverine checkpoints, and to improve the quality of facilities.

Name of KP speaker removed from PNIL; PHC disposes of writ petition

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Wednesday disposed of a writ on completion of Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Saleem regarding inclusion of his name in Pakistan National Identity List (PNIL). During the hearing on the petition, the bench comprising Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmed was informed by the petitioner's counsel that the name of Babar Swati had been removed from the list.

Governor Kundi pays tribute to Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday issued a heartfelt message commemorating the anniversary of Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto.

He emphasized that Murtaza Bhutto's contributions to democracy are unforgettable and highlighted his pivotal role in the struggle against authoritarianism.

In his statement, Governor Kundi remarked, "Mir Murtaza

Bhutto was a guiding light in the fight for democracy. His unwavering commitment to democratic ideals continues to inspire us today."

He further said that democratic forces acknowledge and honor the sacrifices made by Murtaza Bhutto in the pursuit of a just society.

Kundi's tribute reflects the ongoing recognition of Bhutto's legacy among those who champion democracy in Pakistan.

Eve-teaser arrested on CPO orders

FAISALABAD (APP): Rail Bazaar police have arrested an accused after CPO orders on charge of eve-teasing. Police spokesman said here on Wednesday that City Police Officer (CPO) Kamran Adil had received complaints that a youth Majid was involved in habit of eve-teasing in the area of Rail Bazaar police station. Therefore, taking serious notice, the CPO directed the police to ensure immediate arrest of the accused and take him.



LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique chairs the 15th syndicate meeting of Nishtar Medical University, held at the Department of Specialised Healthcare and Medical Education.

International News

Blinken warns against further Middle East escalation after Lebanon blasts

CAIRO: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday warned against the risk of escalation in the Middle East after the detonation of thousands of Hezbollah paggers threatened to derail his latest regional diplomacy push.

News of the blasts broke as the top U.S. diplomat traveled to Cairo to meet senior Egyptian officials hoping to advance efforts to secure a ceasefire in Gaza and improve ties with Egypt.

Militant group Hezbollah promised to retaliate against Israel, accusing it of detonating paggers across Lebanon on Tuesday killing at least 12 people, including two children, and wounding nearly 3,000. Israel has declined to respond to questions about the explosions. Asked about the blasts, Blinken said the

United States was still gathering facts but it was in no one's interest for conflict to spread.

"It's imperative that all parties refrain from any actions that could escalate the conflict," Blinken said at a news conference alongside his Egyptian counterpart.

He did not say who the U.S. believes was behind the blasts.

Item 1 of 6 U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken attends a U.S.-Egypt strategic dialogue with Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty in Tahrir Palace in Cairo, Egypt.

Blinken said he was focused on securing a ceasefire deal that would bring calm, including to Israel's northern border with Lebanon, and that 15 out of 18 paragraphs of a deal

had been agreed by all sides.

Making progress involved long waits for messages to be passed between the parties that left time for incidents to disrupt the talks, Blinken said.

"We've seen that in the intervening time, you might have an event, an incident - something that makes the process more difficult, that threatens to slow it, stop it, derail it - and anything of that nature, by definition, is probably not good in terms of achieving the result that we want, which is the ceasefire," Blinken said.

He cited Hamas' execution of six Israeli hostages last month. He did not name Israel, which is believed to have targeted members of groups aligned against it in Lebanon, Syria and Iran that have set back the talks.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken attends a U.S.-Egypt strategic dialogue with Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty in Tahrir Palace in Cairo, Egypt.

Hundreds wounded as Hezbollah hand-held radios detonate across Lebanon in new explosions

BEIRUT: Hand-held radios used by Lebanon's armed group Hezbollah detonated late on Wednesday afternoon across the country's south and in the southern suburbs of the capital Beirut, injuring hundreds, a security source and a witness said.

At least one of the blasts took place near a funeral organised by Hezbollah for those killed the previous day when thousands of paggers used by the group

exploded across the country.

The group said on Wednesday it had attacked Israeli artillery positions with rockets in the first strike at its arch-foe since pager blasts wounded thousands of its members in Lebanon and raised the prospect of a wider Middle East conflict.

The hand-held radios were purchased by Hezbollah five months ago, around the same time that the paggers were bought, said a security source.

China announces sanctions on US companies selling arms to self-ruled Taiwan

BEIJING: China on Wednesday announced sanctions on American companies selling arms to the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory and threatens to annex by force.

Chinese state media made the announcement, citing the Foreign Ministry, but gave no details on the companies involved. Taiwan is awaiting deliveries of F-16 fighter jets.

Ukrainian drones strike a large military depot in a Russian town northwest of Moscow

KYIV: Ukrainian drones struck a large military depot in a town deep inside Russia overnight, causing a huge blaze and prompting the evacuation of some local residents, a Ukrainian official and Russian news reports said Wednesday.

Meanwhile, a senior U.S. diplomat said that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's recently announced — but still confidential — plan for winning the war "can work" and help end the conflict that is now in its third year.

Ukraine claimed the strike destroyed Russian military warehouses in Toropets, a town in Russia's Tver region about 380 kilometers (240 miles) northwest of Moscow and about 500 kilometers (300 miles) from the border with Ukraine.

The attack was carried

out by Ukraine's Security Service, along with Ukraine's Intelligence and Special Operations Forces, a Kyiv security official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the operation.

According to the official, the depot housed Iskander and Tochka-U missiles, as well as glide bombs and artillery shells. He said the facility caught fire in the strike and was burning across an area 6 kilometers (4 miles) wide.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti quoted regional authorities as saying air defense systems were working to repel a "massive drone attack" on Toropets, which has a population of around 11,000. The agency also reported a fire and the evacuation of some local residents.

Trump slams India as 'very big abuser' on trade but calls Modi 'fantastic'

WASHINGTON: Former US president Donald Trump on Tuesday said that he plans to meet with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi next week during the latter's visit of the United States for several official events. During a campaign event in Michigan, Trump slammed India as a "very big abuser" on trade, but said Modi was "fantastic."

"He happens to be coming to meet me next week," Trump told the crowd without providing further details. Modi will be traveling this weekend to Wilmington, Delaware — President Joe Biden's hometown — as part of the "Quad Leaders" summit alongside Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio.

Egypt won't accept security changes on Gaza border, foreign minister says

CAIRO: Egypt will not accept any changes to the security arrangements that were in place on its border with Gaza before war broke out between Israel and Hamas last October, the Egyptian foreign minister said on Wednesday.

Security on the border, and whether Israel will maintain a troop presence along a 14-km (9-mile) buffer zone known as the Philadelphi Corridor, have become a focal point of months-long talks aimed at securing a ceasefire and the

release of hostages in Gaza. Israeli troops entered the buffer zone in May as they pursued an offensive around Rafah, Egypt, which is a mediator in ceasefire talks, says Israel must withdraw and that a Palestinian presence needs to be restored at the Rafah crossing between Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and Gaza.

"Egypt reiterates its position, it rejects any military presence along the opposite side of the border crossing and the formation of a (Philadelphi) corridor."

North Korea fires short-range ballistic missiles for second time in a week

SEOUL: North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles on Wednesday toward its east coast, South Korea and Japan said, days after Pyongyang unveiled a uranium enrichment facility and vowed to beef up its nuclear arsenal. The missiles lifted off from Kaechon, north of the capital Pyongyang, at around 6:50 am (2150 GMT Tuesday) in a northeast direction and flew about 400 km.

Erdogan says Turkey will deepen ties with East while still facing West

ANKARA: President Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday that Turkey would not stop deepening ties with the East, including the BRICS group of nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), even as it continued to face West, Turkey, a NATO member, has in recent months voiced interest in joining the BRICS and SCO groups, both of which include China and Russia. This has stirred U.S. and European fears that Turkey may be pivoting away from its traditionally Western geopolitical orientation, despite repeated denials from Ankara.

Speaking at an event in Ankara, Erdogan said de-

bates over an "axis shift" were unfounded, but that Turkey had to adapt to new "centres of power" forming in the fields of economy, production, and technology, while keeping itself open to opportunities with every structure and actor.

"That is the approach that lies behind our country's will to expand the basis of dialogue with all of them, from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation to BRICS and ASEAN," Erdogan said. "Of course, our face is turned to the West, but this certainly does not mean that we will turn our backs on the East, that we will ignore the East, or not improve our ties with the East," he added.

Finland's president wants end of single state veto at UN Security Council

HELSINKI: Finland's President Alexander Stubb has called for expansion of the U.N. Security Council, abolition of its single state veto power, and suspension of any member engaging in an "illegal war" such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Stubb, who leads the Nordic nation's foreign policy, said he would add his voice to reform calls at next week's UN General Assembly in New York which is to discuss composition of the global body's Security Council.

Consisting of five permanent and 10 rotating member states, the council's brief is to keep global peace, but geopolitical rivalries have deadlocked it on issues from Ukraine to Gaza. Stubb said in an interview on Tuesday he would propose the number of permanent members be expanded from five to 10, with one more from Latin America, two from Africa and two from Asia.

"No single state should have veto power in the UN Security Council," he told Reuters.

The US, one of five veto-wielding nations with Russia, China, France and Britain, has also backed two permanent seats for Africa.

Stubb said any member engaging in an illegal war, "such as Russia is in right now in Ukraine", should be kicked off.

Moscow has justified its invasion of Ukraine by saying it is creating a buffer against Western aggression and taking territory that is historically Russia's.

Stubb said he knew his Security Council proposals were "beyond what is usually said from small member states", but added that the big nations would otherwise not propose weakening their own influence.

"So they talk the talk, but don't walk the walk," he said, adding he hoped others would help take the plan forward by the UN's 80th birthday next year.

Any changes to Security Council membership need approval by two thirds of the General Assembly, including the five veto powers.

Strengthening Parliament interlinked with developing political consensus, rising above differences: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Wednesday said that strengthening the Parliament was interlinked with developing consensus and rising above political differences.

"As parliamentarians, it is of utmost importance for us to respect each other's dignity," he said while addressing the Members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly at an official workshop organized by the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), during their visit to the Parliament House.

He highlighted that the "Charter of Parliament" aimed to strengthen the Parliament and in turn the country's governance system.

He added, "Uphold-

ing the supremacy of Parliament is essential to lead the country on the path of development and prosperity."

The speaker warmly welcomed the KP Assembly members and underscored the significance of such training workshops in ensuring effective legislation.

He said that the training workshop organized by PIPS would enhance the capacity of members and the legislative staff in parliamentary matters.

He noted that participation in such workshops would allow provincial assembly members to keenly observe the activities of the Parliament closely. He added that fostering communication between legislative bodies would provide opportunities for members to benefit from each other's

experiences.

He expressed the hope that provincial assemblies would also benefit from initiatives like the establishment of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus and the SDGs Secretariat in the National Assembly, which aim to promote public welfare.

More than 20 members of the KP Assembly are attending the three-day workshop at PIPS.

During their visit to the Parliament, Advisor Legislation Muhammad Mushtaq also briefed the members on the formation of the National Assembly standing committees, and the legislative process.

The KP Assembly members expressed gratitude to the NA speaker for a warm welcome. They also praised PIPS for successfully organizing the workshop.



ISLAMABAD: Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan called on Federal Minister for Defence, Defence Production and Aviation, Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

Scholars, leaders advocate for dialogue, tolerance at Eid Milad symposium

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Chapter of the Muslim Council of Elders on Wednesday organized a symposium titled "Peaceful Coexistence in Light of the Life of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)" in celebration of the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW). The event was held in cooperation with the Shaikh Zayed Islamic Center (SZIC) in Peshawar and attended by a distinguished group of scholars, academics, and representatives of minorities.

The prominent personalities including Peer

Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, former Minister of Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony, Prof. Dr. Qazi Muhammad Naem, Vice Chancellor of Peshawar University, Prof. Dr. Rashid Ahmed, Director of the Shaikh Zayed Islamic Center at Peshawar University, Prof. Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Judge at the Shariat Court and former Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, Qari Roohullah Madani, Chairman of the Pakistan Council of World Religions - Faith Friends, and former Minister of Religious Affairs of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, attended the symposium, said a press release issued here.

The symposium witnessed a large audience and widespread praise for the efforts of the Muslim Council of Elders, under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, in promoting a culture of peace, tolerance, and coexistence, calling on the council to continue implementing such initiatives aimed at building bridges of communication, dialogue, and understanding among different religious and cultural groups.

PM emphasizes enhanced cooperation with British leadership

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reaffirmed his commitment to working closely with the British leadership to strengthen relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom, emphasizing that their long-standing ties could be further enhanced through cooperation in various areas. Talking to British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott, the prime minister stressed the importance of prioritizing government's initiatives, particularly the economic challenges being faced by the country.

He emphasized the need for enhanced coordination and cooperation on trade and investment, climate change, social connectivity, and regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

He stated that millions of Pakistanis residing in Britain served as a vital link between the two countries, playing a key role in enhancing bilateral relations.

The prime minister also extended his best wishes to King Charles, while the British High Commissioner conveyed good wishes for Pakistan on behalf of the British Government.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, WADA Mitsuhiro, posing for a group photograph along with SHIRAI Mariko, Lahore Sogetsu Study Group and Lahore Bonsai Society, Neven Syed, President Lahore Sogetsu Study Group, and Mian Umair, President Lahore Bonsai Society, addressing during certificates of commendations distribution ceremony at his residence.

DHA-CDA long standing matter resolved

ISLAMABAD (APP): The long standing matter regarding handing over of 729 plots by the Defense Housing Authority (DHA) to the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has amicably been resolved. The DHA has already issued allotment letters of 729 plots in favour of CDA. Capital Development Authority has now decided to offer 729 residential plots to general public and Overseas Pakistanis, said a press release.

This was decided in a meeting held at CDA headquarters chaired by the Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting was attended by all board members and senior officers of the authority.

The meeting discussed the successful resolution of a long-standing issue between CDA and

DHA concerning the allotment of 729 plots.

The matter had been lingering and remained unresolved since 2007-2008, when CDA had handed over 2,412 kanals and five marlas of land to DHA under an agreement. According to the original terms, CDA was to receive 729 plots against that land but the agreement could not materialize for years. Under a fresh agreement, DHA has now handed over the 729 plots to CDA. During the meeting, CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa stated that the issue has been unresolved for over 15 years through proactive efforts and positive approach which has enabled the authority to secure these plots finally, which are worth billions of rupees.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing a meeting of development partners regarding preparation for COP29.

IUI, HEC inaugurates workshop on enhancing online teaching

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Faculty of Education at the International Islamic University Islamabad (IUI), in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the Iqbal International Institute for Research and Dialogue (IRD), and the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Development (QAD), successfully inaugurated the two-day workshop titled "Quality First: Enhancing Online Teaching in Higher Education."

The event aims to strengthen the quality of online education across higher education institutions in Pakistan, focusing on best practices for course design, student engagement, and assessment in digital platforms.

The workshop is part of NRPDU Project Quality Assurance for Online Teaching in Higher Education in Pakistan by Dr

Fouzia Ajmal (PI) and Prof. Dr. N. B. Jumani (Co-PI). The opening ceremony was graced by the Acting President IUI, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar, who lauded the participants for the urge to adopt the modern means of teaching and learning. He said that factor of relevance is mostly missing that must be the prime focus of the teachers.

He discussed distance education, its utilization, future scope, its global needs and transformations on teaching and learning and ever changing job market.

He said without compromising the quality is the way forward for success.

He commended the Faculty of Education and its collaborators for organizing such a significant initiative, stating, "In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, maintaining quality in online learning is pivotal.

IRSA releases 205,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 205,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 151,000 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1543.12 feet and was 145.12 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 83,000 cusecs and 110,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1226.05 feet, which was 178.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 17,100 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 113,000, 107,200, 91,200 and 48,200 cusecs respectively.

Japanese envoy confers "Japanese Commendations" to SHIRAI Mariko

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, WADA Mitsuhiro, on Wednesday conferred the "Japanese Ambassador's Commendations" to Ms. SHIRAI Mariko, the Lahore Sogetsu Study Group and the Lahore Bonsai Society at a ceremony held at his Official Residence in Islamabad.

The Japanese Ambassador's Commendations are awarded to persons or organisations to commend their significant contributions or distinct service in accordance with

the work of the Embassy of Japan, said a press release issued here. Ms. SHIRAI Mariko, General Manager of Cox & Kings Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd., has played a role as the point of contact for Japanese travelers in Pakistan for many years. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador WADA praised her active contributions to the Japanese community in Islamabad and thanked her for building bridges between the two cultures and supporting the crucial work of the Embassy.

Body of unidentified woman found near Margalla Hills

ISLAMABAD (APP): The body of an unidentified woman was found on Wednesday along the road in the Margalla Hills, about 1.5 kilometers from Monal, the victim was allegedly gunned down by unknown assailants. The police said, the woman had been shot in the head by unknown outlaws. The Kohsar Police, led by SHO Shafiqat Fayaz, reached the scene and shifted the body to Polyclinic Hospital for further investigation. The police have collected the fingerprint samples of the deceased to determine her identity.



ISLAMABAD: Former Chief Justice Sindh, Justice Munir Alam addressing a seminar on Artificial Intelligence at Islamabad Judicial Complex.

Hoti approaches PHC against mega corruption scandal involving purchase of wheat in KPK

By M. Ilyas

PESHAWAR - Former federal minister Khawaja Muhammad Khan Hoti reached the Supreme Court against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's concealment billions of rupees in wheat procurement. According to the sources, PTI's Tiger Force played the role of front man in the purchase of wheat from Punjab during the wheat crisis under the alleged patronage of the Food Minister, while the most financial benefit was given to the Food Minister and the Food Secretary. According to the sources, in the beginning of the second quarter of this year, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had decided to purchase three lakhs metric tons of wheat from the open market, but only two lakhs metric tons of wheat had been purchased from within the government itself. There were rumors of corruption.

The purchase of wheat was stopped on these complaints. This allegation became public these days that

the Minister and senior officials of the Food Department adopted such a strategy to wash their hands in the flowing Ganga in which they kept themselves behind to hide themselves while the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) men of the Tiger Force were put forward.

Sources say that the Tiger Force contacted the big farmers of Punjab and bought wheat from them for a huge commission.

Sources say that this corruption can be estimated from the fact that when the Punjab government announced not to buy wheat from local farmers, the farmers bought Rs 2900 per ton in the open market at that time Rs 3900 instead of Rs 2900 per ton buying this cheap wheat was announced by the provincial food department. Purchased wheat per ton at Rs 3900. From which it can be estimated how much corruption has occurred in the purchase of wheat. Political sources are also claiming that the alleged support

of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to the Minister of Food and the officers of the department in this fight.

These constituencies argue that Dera Ismail Khan, which is the Chief Minister's constituency. In fact, the bulk wheat purchased is only shown in the files. While in reality there is not so much wheat at all. Since the initial investigation into the matter began, the responsible officers of the local food department have been mysteriously missing. Interestingly, the government is not making the necessary efforts to recover these missing officers. Sources claim that these officers will remain absent as long as the apprehension of inquiry persists. However, if the government so desires, their arrest can be made. During the investigation of these "missing officers", not only the officers involved in the scandal of the food department will be found out, but also the role of the Chief Minister in this matter will also be revealed.

Daniyal says: Leaked chat exposes PTI's anti-state narrative

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Daniyal Chaudhry on Wednesday said that leaked messages between Rauf Hasan and Jibran Ilyas confirmed that the events of May 9 were a planned conspiracy by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Talking to a private news channel, he said that these messages show May 9 was not a spontaneous incident, but rather a pre-meditated action aimed at undermining the army and state institutions.

Murree transporters warned against overcharging

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Murree, Agha Zahir Sherazi has warned the transporters against not complying with government prescribed policy after fuel price cut. He asked the transporters to reduce the fares on every route and display the fare lists. He directed the relevant authority to take strict action against transport owners who do not reduce travel fares.

The government has recently reduced the petroleum prices according to which, diesel has been reduced by Rs 13.6 paise and petrol by Rs.10 per litre.

ICT admin cracks down on begging; 23 arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administration has launched a crackdown on professional beggars across Islamabad, resulting in the arrest of 23 individuals. The arrests were made as part of efforts to curb begging activities in the Federal Capital, said the spokesman of ICT administration. In a recent move to address the growing issue of begging in Islamabad, the district administration, under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner (Rural), has arrested 23 professional beggars. The arrests were carried out in the jurisdictions of Lohibher, Sihala, Korai, and Humak police stations.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan

Nawaz Memon urged the citizens to discourage professional beggars.

He emphasized that such activities could create an undesirable environment and could often be linked to organized groups. The administration has taken this step to not only clear the public spaces but also to ensure that vulnerable people, who may be exploited through begging networks, were not harmed. Memon called on the public to avoid giving money to individuals begging in public places, as it could inadvertently support these networks. Instead, he encouraged people to support recognized charitable organizations that work to address poverty and provide assistance to those in need.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers busy in building construction work near F9 Park in the Federal Capital.

AIOU sets October 15 as last date for admissions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has set October 15 as the last date for the 2nd phase admissions of Autumn semester 2024.

According to the AIOU, the programmes offered in this phase include Associate degree in Arts (BA General), Associate degree in Commerce (B.Com), Associate degree in Education, BS (ODL) programs, B.Ed programs, BBA, postgraduate diploma and certificate courses.

Admission forms and

prospectus of all the programs are available on the university website.

The students can visit regional offices or call the university helpline at 051-111112468 for further information.

The deadline for submitting admission form is 15th October. Please note that applications for admission can only be submitted online.

Detailed information about all the programs offered is also available on the university website.



GADDANI: Team of IMO visiting Gaddani Ship Breaking Yard

NADRA facilitation center starts working at ICCI

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Wednesday said that the business community was the real driving force of the national economy and urged the government to address the issues faced by them on priority basis. Addressing a ceremony held to inaugurate the newly established NADRA Facilitation Center, he urged the government to ensure ease of doing businesses to facilitate the local trade and business to achieve sustainable economic development and growth.

He expressed the firm commitment to work for the development of business welfare of the business community in order to achieve economic growth and social prosperity, said a press release. Ahsan Zafar lauded the role of Chairman NADRA for establishing facilitation center and hoped that this fully equipped center offering range of services, including, CNIC, Family Registration Certificate, and Birth Certificate to the community will greatly benefit the members and contribute to chamber's success.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a meeting with MPs & Officers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at Parliament House.