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SC reserved seats ruling can't be implemented after amendments to Election Act: NA speaker

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

be substituted or withdrawn."

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

spiration and strength for both countries.

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

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

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



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

Lebanon attacks:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

essential services and humanitarian assistance to address the challenges faced by the Gaza people.

Spokesperson Baloch told the media that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would participate in the high-level segment of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York from September 23-27 where he would reaffirm Pakistan's steadfast commitment to multilateralism and express support for the role of the United Nations in forging global peace, security, and prosperity.

He will also emphasize the importance of addressing long-standing issues on the agenda of the UN Security Council, including the question of Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The two sides agreed to maintain regular contacts.

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

Bilawal stresses need for constitutional court to ensure fair judicial system

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

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

"Lawyers have always

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

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

CM Maryam announces PHA in every city, revives traditional festivals

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has announced the establishment of Parks and Horticulture Authorities (PHA) in every city across the province and ordered the revival of traditional festivals.

During a meeting with members of the Sahiwal Division Assembly, CM Maryam Nawaz was praised for launching public welfare projects. She directed the immediate operationalization of a cardiology block in Sahiwal, completion of the medical college faculty, and the creation of Dolphin Force units in every city.

Additionally, she or-

dered the swift restoration of Baba Farid Ganj Shakar's shrine.

CM Maryam Nawaz emphasized that significant improvements are underway across all sectors. She reassured the public that no appointments had been made through favoritism, and that a new department dedicated to price control had been established, bringing inflation down for the first time through the government's efforts. Addressing the unpopular decision to refrain from purchasing wheat, she explained that although it was criticized, the move led to lower flour and bread prices.



ISLAMABAD: Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, MNA took the charge for the post of Parliamentary Secretary of Information and Broadcasting. On arrival at the Ministry he was welcomed by Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ambreen Jan and senior officers of the Ministry. He was briefed on the functions of the Ministry.

Speaker's letter to CEC denotes supremacy of Parliament: Atta Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday said that National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq had eventually upheld the supremacy of the Parliament by writing a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on the issue of reserved seats. He paid tributes to the Speaker on the initiative and said that it must not be misconstrued.

"There are specific questions over the Supreme Court's verdict about the reserved seats, which need to be duly considered and

redressed," the minister said while talking to the media.

Terming the Speaker's letter a "milestone in the parliamentary history", he said it was articulated unequivocally in the Constitution that "the Parliament is supreme and has the sole jurisdiction to enact and amend laws". It were the people who elected their representatives to the Parliament with an exclusive right to legislate or amend the Constitution, he added.

The minister said there should not be a trespass in terms of institutional domains in order to invigorate the parliamentary system in the country.

Registrar office objects on petition against proposed amendment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court's registrar office on Thursday returned the petition against proposed constitutional amendment after raising objections on it.

The registrar office of the top court has raised eight objections against the petition. It stated that the proposed amendment has not been presented in the house.

It further said that members of the parliament could not be made as respondents as it was their prerogative to approve any bill.

It said that legislation is the right of legislature and it cannot be restrained from it. The petition against proposed constitutional amendment is presumptive.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the reviewing meeting in Planning and Development Board.



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

Ahsan highlights importance of developing 'exemplary' governance model for ICT

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday underscored the importance of developing an 'exemplary' governance model for Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

"Islamabad's size is neither too large nor too small, making it a suitable area for implementing innovative governance practices that can serve as a model for other provinces," he said while chairing the PM Committee on ICT Governance Model, a news release said.

Among others, the meeting was attended by key officials, including Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Health,

Awais Manzoor Sumra, Secretary, Ministry of Planning, Secretary of Education, Additional Secretaries from various line ministries, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, and the Director of the Capital Development Authority (CDA).

During the meeting, Chief Governance Javed Sikandar presented governance models adopted by countries such as the USA, Brazil, Australia, Mexico, Nigeria, Malaysia, and India.

The minister noted that Islamabad's manageable size offered an ideal environment to pilot governance reforms that could later be replicated in other regions.

He highlighted the unique governance challenges faced by ICT due to the absence of a provincial assembly and administrative autonomy.

He called upon the committee to explore whether Islamabad required a provincial-like government structure or whether a more robust local government model would be a better alternative.

Furthermore, the minister expressed concern over the duplication of responsibilities among various entities, such as the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the Ministry of Interior, and line ministries, which led to inefficiencies in governance.

IGP confirms status of missing PTI MNAs in court

ISLAMABAD (INP): In the case concerning the disappearance of six PTI MNAs, Islamabad IGP Ali Nasir Rizvi has submitted a report to the Islamabad High Court, revealing that three of the MNAs are at home, and one is abroad. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq presided over the hearing, where the IGP stated that he had contacted the relevant DPOs to gather information.

According to the DPOs, MNAs Aurangzeb Khechi from Vehari, Usman Ali from Sahiwal, and Zahoor Qureshi from Khanewal are all at their homes. However, MNA Riaz

Khan is currently outside the country. Official responses from the DPOs are pending.

The court has adjourned the hearing until Monday, pending further responses.

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

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

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

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



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

Advisor Health briefed on the Sehat Card Program

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

During the briefing, the Health Advisor was informed about the treatment packages offered under the Sehat Card Program. The Secondary Care Package provides Rs 40,000 per person and Rs 200,000 per family, while the Tertiary Care Package offers free treatment up to Rs 400,000. The Advisor was also briefed that Rs10.5 million families in KP were receiving free treatment at 753 public and private hospitals under the Sehat Card Program. So far, Rs. 88 billion had been spent on the free treatment of 3,529,487 individuals. It was further highlighted that the provincial government was bearing monthly expenses of Rs. 2.5 billion and annual costs of Rs 30 billion for free treatment under the program.

DC Dera vows to provide prompt relief to citizens

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

57 new cases of Dengue recorded in Rawalpindi

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

ANF foils attempt to smuggle drugs, weapons

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

Governor lauds establishment of technical training lab at Gomal University

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

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



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

Child protection unit inaugurated in Mardan

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

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

International News

Putin says Russia is ramping up drone production tenfold

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

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

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

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

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

laden with explosives. For just a few hundred dollars, soldiers on both sides can inflict vast damage on the other side. A large-scale Ukrainian drone attack on Russia triggered an earthquake-sized blast at a major arsenal in the Tver region on Wednesday. Putin said that Russia was making almost weekly advances in drone technology and needed to also develop its drone defences, essentially technology which senses, confuses and then shoots down the attacking drones.

"The key task is to produce a wide range of aerial unmanned vehicles, to establish serial production as quickly as possible," Putin said. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

Ammunition from India enters Ukraine, raising Russian ire

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Artillery shells sold by Indian arms makers have been diverted by European customers to Ukraine and New Delhi has not intervened to stop the trade despite protests from Moscow, according to eleven Indian and European government and defence industry officials, as well as a Reuters analysis of commercially available customs data.

The transfer of munitions to support Ukraine's defence against Russia has occurred for more than a year, according to the sources and the customs data. Indian arms export regulations limit the use of weaponry to the declared purchaser, who risks future sales being terminated if unauthorised transfers occur. The Kremlin has raised the issue on at least two occasions, including

during a July meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Indian counterpart, three Indian officials said.

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

Taliban in control of 39 Afghan embassies globally

Monitoring Desk KABUL: The Taliban administration is in control of 39 Afghan embassies and consulates globally three years after it took over Afghanistan and the previous Western-backed government collapsed, the acting foreign ministry said on Thursday. No international government has formally recognised the Taliban administration, though China and the United Arab Emirates have officially accepted its ambassadors in their capitals.

Many governments, especially Western nations including the United States, have said the path to any formal recognition of the Taliban will be stuck until they change course on women's rights and re-open girls schools and universities to girls and women and allow their full freedom of movement.



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

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

Monitoring Desk BEIRUT: Israel said on Thursday it bombed Hezbollah sites in Lebanon, piling pressure on the armed group already reeling after a series of deadly explosions targeting its communications systems that it blamed on Israel. Those coordinated blasts killed 37 people across two days, including two children, and wounded more than 2,900 others, according to Lebanon's health minister, heightening fears of another full-blown war in the region.

Turkey accuses Israel of expanding Gaza war to Lebanon

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

The latest batch of device explosions killed 25 people and wounded more than 450 others on Wednesday, officials said. The blasts came a day after the simultaneous detonation of pagers used by Hezbollah killed 12 people, including two children, and wounded up to 2,800 others across Lebanon, in an unprecedented attack blamed on Israel.

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

During media briefing here, he said the US did not want the conflict to escalate in the Middle East. "I want to tell you that we are not involved in the incidents yesterday and today in any way."

Japan firm says no longer makes radio reportedly used in Lebanon

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

US not involved in device explosions in Lebanon: White House

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

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

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

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

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

Monitoring Desk MADRID: Spain has denied involvement in negotiations between Venezuelan opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez and President Nicolas Maduro's government for his flight to Spain, before which he signed a letter saying he accepted Maduro's victory in the country's July election. The letter included an undertaking to limit political activity once in Spain and was signed at the residence of the Spanish ambassador to Caracas, where Gonzalez had taken refuge before his departure.

In a news conference on Wednesday, the head of Venezuela's National Assembly, Jorge Rodriguez, held up printed photographs of what he said was the moment the document was signed in his presence as well as that of his sister, Vice President Dely Rodriguez, and Spain's ambassador to Venezuela, Ramon Santos. However, Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares told re-

porters in Brussels on Thursday that his government did not invite anyone to visit Gonzalez at the ambassador's residence. "The Spanish government, and of course the ambassador, did not take part in any negotiation of any document of any type," Jose Manuel Albares told reporters in Brussels. Gonzalez, who was granted political asylum in Spain earlier this month, said in a video message released on Wednesday the letter was signed under "coercion, blackmail and pressure".

On Thursday, a senior figure in Spain's opposition People's Party (PP) said Madrid had been complicit in removing Gonzalez from Venezuela, thereby ensuring Maduro would stay in power. "Beyond watching someone being blackmailed live, it's clear that Spain is involved in perpetuating Maduro as a dictator," PP Vice Secretary Esteban Gonzalez Pons said in a radio interview.

Int'l Rahmatul lil Aalameen moot starts today as Ministry makes comprehensive arrangements

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFEPT) have finalized comprehensive arrangements for the 'International Rahmatul lil Aalameen WA Khatamun Nabiyin Festival', which is scheduled to commence on Friday.

This international festival, aimed at promoting Seerat-un-Nabi and its teachings, will be hosted by the National Rehmatal-lil-Aalameen Authority (NRKNA) at Skills University, Islamabad from September 20-22.

A wide array of programmes will be conducted during the three-day event, including the 'International Seerat Conference' and a 'Seerat Kitab Mela' (Book Fair), which will showcase a vast collection of Islamic literature, with a special focus on Seerat-un-Nabi and related themes.

Secretary FEPT

Mohyuddin Wani, along with National Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen WA Khatamun Nabiyin Authority Chairman Khurshid Nadeem briefed the media about the arrangements and salient features of the conference and other activities on Wednesday.

Inter Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC) Executive Director Dr Ghulam Ali Mallah, National Book Foundation Managing Director Murad Khan Mohmand, FBISE Chairman and FDE Director General Junaid Akhlaq were also present at the press conference.

The speakers at the press conference highlighted the importance of such initiatives to further spread the message of peace, tolerance, and the true essence of Islam.

It was told that the event would witness scholars, researchers, and acade-

micians from around the world, discussing and reflecting on the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Mohyuddin Wani underscored the significance of the festival in promoting religious harmony and education.

He noted that the event was an opportunity for the youth to engage with the rich legacy of Islamic thought and to cultivate an understanding of the Prophet's (PBUH) message of mercy and compassion.

The event will be open to the public, with attendees encouraged to participate in the diverse array of programmes planned.

With Seerat Book Fair, exhibitions, panel discussions, and academic sessions, the event promises to be an enriching experience for all.



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

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

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

President House press release.

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

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

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

It was emphasised that there was enormous

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

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

He stated that the upcoming visit of the Russian Prime Minister to Pakistan, in October, would provide another opportunity to fur-

ther strengthen bilateral relations. He further said that Russia had tremendous respect for all religions and Muslim culture, and had condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran.

Meanwhile Pakistan and Russia on Thursday agreed on enhancing collaboration to strengthen educational ties, building on the positive momentum of their relationship over the past two decades.

The initiative was taken during the visit of a high level delegation of Russian Federation led by Andrey Korneev, State Secretary - Deputy Minister of Education of Russian Federation, and Konstantin

Mogilevsky, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of Russian Federation, to the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT).

The delegation included the Consultant of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia, Associate Professor of Ural State Pedagogical University, and officials of the Russian Embassy in Pakistan.

Secretary FEPT Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani briefed the delegation about the achievements and challenges faced by Pakistan in the field of education.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for States, Frontier Regions and Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Engineer Ameer Maqam, addressing to elders of Afghan Refugees during visit of Urban Cohesion Hub Karachi.

Ameer Maqam says

Proposed constitutional amendments to be tabled after achieving consensus

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

While addressing to elders of Afghan Refugees and later talking to media during visit of Urban Cohesion Hub Karachi here, he said that negotiations were under way with the political parties and consultation

process was continue in connection with the proposed amendments aimed at introducing reforms in judicial system and ensuring swift justice to the people of the country.

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

ment of the country and the nation.

The Federal minister was of the view that some elements were opposing the amendments only for the sake of political number scoring.

Ameer Maqam said that Pakistan has been hosting more than 3 million Afghan refugees which included around 1.4 million legal migrants and thousands of illegal immigrants for over 40 years.

Pak Ambassador presents credentials to US President Joe Biden

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

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

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

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

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

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

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AIOU hosts int'l conference on endangered languages

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is organizing the 28th International Conference on Federation of Endangered Languages from September 25 to 27.

According to the AIOU, experts from 22 countries, including 15 foreign delegates, will participate in the conference. A total of 42 national and international scholars will present their research papers.

The Department of English, AIOU is organizing this 28th International Conference on Federation of Endangered Languages (FEL) in collaboration with the Forum for Language Initiatives (FLI).

Senator Irfan Siddiqui will be the chief guest at the inaugural session.



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

PTA launches four-day training of trainers prog.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) launched a four-day 'Training of Trainers' (ToT) program for officers from PTA, UNICEF, Telenor Pakistan, the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC), and the NCERT.

According to the news release, the initiative is part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with UNICEF Pakistan and reflects PTA's commitment to Child Online Protection.

The program aims to raise awareness about the online risks children face and equip officers with the tools to help parents effectively manage their safe children's digital activities.

This training was conducted as an ongoing 10-day training program for 15 master trainers, who will train 210 facilitators to educate students, parents,

and teachers, promoting digital literacy and online safety.

The training covered critical topics such as online safety, Dark Web threats, and responsible internet usage. Experts from TikTok and Tencent shared insights into safety tools and practices on their platforms.

Addressing the training session, Dr Khawar Siddique Khokhar, Member Compliance & Enforcement PTA, emphasized the importance of collective efforts to protect children in the digital space.

He reaffirmed the PTA's commitment to providing parents and educators with the necessary tools to ensure children's online safety and promote responsible internet use.

Member C&E PTA, UNICEF and Telenor representative also awarded the certificates to the participants.

Islamabad Police recruits next of kin of martyrs, officers

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police has initiated the recruitment process of children of martyrs and officials who died during the service in the capital police department under the Prime Minister's assistance package.

The announcement was made following a special meeting of the recruitment board, held on the directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, led by DIG Headquarters Syed Mustafa Tanveer, a public relations officer said while talking to APP on Thursday.

The recruitment board

convened to discuss and approve the inclusion of the children of martyrs and officials who died while in service while protecting the lives and property of citizens. Expressing his deep respect and admiration for the fallen heroes, IGP Nasir Rizvi said that, "The martyrs and officials who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty are invaluable assets of the police department.

He further said that, their dedication and selflessness serve as an inspiration to us all. Islamabad Police will forever cherish the memory of our heroes and ensure their families are cared for at every level."



ISLAMABAD: Students and teachers pose for a group photo at annual Mehfil-e-Milad ceremony at IMCG (PG)G-10/4.

Transporters, consumers welcome petrol price reduction

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a welcome move, the government's decision to slash petroleum prices and introduce discounted fares of transports brought smiles to the faces of citizens nationwide on Thursday where mostly citizens called for the continuation of these measures to alleviate the financial burden on the general public.

The government's decision to reduce petrol prices has been widely welcomed by transporters and consumers across the country, a report aired by PTV news channel said.

Transporters have assured prompt implementation of reduced fares, while consumers are thrilled

about the decreased financial burden, said a citizen.

Industry experts predict that the decision will stimulate economic growth, increase consumer spending and will benefit the transportation sector.

"This is a great decision by the government. We will immediately implement reduced fares to benefit commuters," Rahim Khan, President, Karachi Transport Association said. "We appreciate the government's move to reduce petrol prices. This will help increase our profit margins," M. Iqbal, Transporter, Lahore added.

"The price slash will enable us to provide affordable transportation to citizens.



Senator Jan Muhammad presiding over a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on poverty alleviation & social safety at the Headquarter of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Islamabad.

NUST, PEF sign MoU to support financially challenged students

ISLAMABAD (APP): National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and the Professional Education Foundation (PEF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support financially challenged students enrolled at the university. The MoU was signed in a ceremony attended by the officials of NUST and PEF to collaborate for this joint initiative. Speaking on the occasion, Rector NUST, Engr Javed Mehmood Bukhari commended the collaborative efforts and emphasized, "The support of philanthropists is crucial for NUST's mission to become a need-blind institution, ensuring that no student is forced to leave their education due to financial constraints."

Chairman of PEF, Hafiz Ul Haq announced an expansion of support, including an increase in the number of scholarships, streamlined processes.

Senate Functional Committee held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Functional Committee on Devolution Thursday discussed matters related to ministries of Kashmir Affairs, Narcotics control and National heritage. The Committee which met here under the chairmanship of Senator Dr. Zaqqa Suhrawardy, was given a detailed briefing by ministries of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Narcotics control and National heritage & culture.

Respective ministries gave a detailed progress and output of last two financial years along with budget details, attached departments and number of employees.

At the outset of the committee meeting, the chairperson of the committee observed that all the ministries carry high importance and the committee would like to have a detailed overview of the overall working and performance to achieve national goals and chalk out a comprehensive plan

Arrest of PTI MNA: Secretary NA others put on notice

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued notice to secretary National Assembly (NA) and others and sought reply within 10 days in connection with case pertaining to arrest of PTI MNA Zain Qureshi from Parliament House.

Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamer Farooq heard the case against detention of Zain Qureshi Thursday.

The CJ IHC required this incident happened when. Counsel Taimore Malik said the members of parliament were arrested on September 9. The court remarked we obtain report from NA. The court while issuing notice to interior ministry, chief commissioner Islamabad.

KP Assembly delegation visits Parl. House

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 30-member delegation from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly visited the Parliament House on Thursday, they were warmly welcomed by senior officials of the Upper House.

During the visit, the delegation toured the Senate Museum and viewed a documentary showcasing the history of the Senate.

The members praised the museum's collection, which featured statues of prominent political figures and historical photographs, describing it as an outstanding display of the nation's political heritage, said a news release.



ISLAMABAD: School children gather around street vendors to take their favorite junk food in the Federal Capital.

DIG directs officer to combat crime efficiently

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Syed Ali Raza, on Thursday held an important meeting with rural zone police officers.

According to police spokesperson, the meeting was attended by SP Rural zone, SDPOs, SHOs, and crime control police teams.

During the meeting, DIG Islamabad reviewed the performance of all police officers in detail and issued a show cause notice on poor performance.

On this occasion, while issuing directions to the officers, Syed Ali Raza said that in the upcoming meeting, the performance of all the officers will be reviewed and there will be no compromise on the addition of crimes, he added.

During the meeting, DIG Islamabad issued di-

rections to police officials, crime control teams to prevent incidents of robbery, dacoity, and theft, the spokesperson added.

He said under the supervision of the SHOs, these teams will work to arrest absconders, proclaimed offenders, target offenders, and other criminals.

The teams will also take effective action to prevent incidents of robbery, dacoity, and theft, he added. He said that the progress of the crime control teams will be reviewed daily.

All police officers are expected to be more effective in combating criminal elements, he added.

The DIG further mentioned that police officers who perform effectively well will be commended, while those showing negligence or poor performance will face departmental action, he said.



Delegation of members of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa visiting senate museum at Parliament House Islamabad