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IMF board approves \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility for Pakistan

PM Shehbaz Sharif expresses satisfaction at programme's approval, hopes this will be Pakistan's last programme

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Wednesday approved a \$7 billion new bailout package after Pakistan promised to overhaul its agriculture income tax, transfer some fiscal responsibilities to provinces and had to take the most expensive loan in the nation's history.

The Executive Board of the IMF approved the 37-month Extended Fund Facility totaling \$7 billion. It also authorised to immediately release the first loan tranche of nearly \$1.1 billion. It is the 25th IMF programme that Pakistan has obtained since 1958 and 6th EFF.

The IMF board has approved the programme

without addressing one of the root causes of taking these loans — the need for restructuring of the external and domestic debt that consumed 81% of Pakistan's tax revenues in the last fiscal year.

The new bailout package targets achieving the macroeconomic stability by consolidating public finances, rebuild foreign exchange reserves, reduce fiscal risks from state-owned enterprises, and improving the business environment to encourage growth led by the private sector.

To qualify for the programme, the government imposed Rs1.4 trillion to Rs1.8 trillion in additional taxes, increased electricity prices up to 51% and com-

mitted to bring transparency in the affairs of the Sovereign Wealth Fund.

APP adds: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed satisfaction over the approval of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) package of US\$7 billion for Pakistan.

The prime minister, in a statement issued by the PM Office, said that the process for economic reforms was underway and after attaining economic stability, efforts would continue to achieve the goals of economic growth and development.

He said the boom in investment and business activities, which was the result of hard work by the

government's economic team, was a welcoming sign. "Besides notable diplomatic accomplishments, another significant achievement has been the surge in foreign remittances sent by Pakistani expatriates," the prime minister remarked.

He believed that it could be the last programme with IMF if such progress continued.

The prime Minister thanked the friendly countries, especially Saudi Arabia, China and the United Arab Emirates for extending support concerning the IMF package.

He also extended gratitude to IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and her entire team.

The PM also thanked

the entire government economic team, Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar; Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb; Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir; Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik; Pakistan's Ambassador in China Khalil Hashmi; the ambassadors of China, UAE, and Saudi Arabia in Pakistan; and Secretary Finance for their efforts and hard work to get the programme approved.

The prime minister thanked all the provincial governments, especially Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah and Balochistan CM Sarfaraz Bugti.



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of 79th session of United Nations General Assembly.

PM urges UN Chief for implementation of UNSC Kashmir resolutions

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday met United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and called on him to use his good offices for the implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, and ensuring the right to self-determination of the Kashmiris.

The prime minister, in the meeting held on the sidelines of the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly, briefed the UN secretary-general on the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He underscored Pakistan's serious concerns over India's egregious actions in the IIOJK and

stressed upon the need to resolve the dispute to ensure lasting peace and stability in South Asia.

Prime Minister Shehbaz welcomed the initiative by the Secretary General Guterres to organize the "Summit of the Future", and expressed his hope that its outcome would help the developing countries in bridging the financial gap for implementation of SDGs and climate goals.

He condemned Israel's genocidal campaign against the Palestinians, and called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.

The prime minister also urged the international community to hold Israel accountable and reaffirmed Pakistan's support for the

establishment of a viable and sovereign State of Palestine.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also underscored the need for stemming the rising tide of Islamophobia, and discrimination against Muslims worldwide.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to actively contribute towards international peace and security as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the year 2025-26.

Secretary General Guterres thanked the prime minister for Pakistan's active engagement at the United Nations as well as for its role towards international peace and security in the form of its UN's peacekeeping force.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the Global Sustainable Transport Forum-2024, through a video message, in Beijing China.

Pakistan committed to promoting sustainable, environment-friendly transportation system: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday reiterated Pakistan's commitment to promoting the development of a safe, sustainable, efficient and environment-friendly transportation system in the country.

The president, addressing the Global Sustainable Transport Forum-2024, through a video message, being held in Beijing from September 25-26, 2024, said that Pakistan would work closely with China to achieve the goals of sustainable development to usher in an era of peace and prosperity.

He emphasized that the world needed resilient infrastructure for efficient, environment-friendly and low-

carbon transport solutions to fulfill the needs of the people.

He appreciated China's lead role in promoting and advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly recognizing the critical importance of the transport sector.

Highlighting the initiatives taken by the government, President Zardari apprised the Forum that Pakistan had introduced pink buses specifically for women to provide a safe, comfortable and accessible mode of public transportation.

He underlined that rural accessibility to all-weather roads in Pakistan witnessed significant improvement,

reaching 92%. Improved rural accessibility could potentially contribute to promoting sustainable development as well as providing essential services to the rural population, he added.

The president apprised the participants that Pakistan was facing the challenges of sustainable maintenance of its infrastructure and the effects of climate change.

He highlighted that over the last five years, devastating floods, heavy rainfall and extreme weather conditions had severely damaged Pakistan's transport infrastructure including roads, rails, bridges and other critical transport networks that isolated millions of people, particularly in rural areas.

Votes are primary evidence of election results: CJP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa has observed in a judgment that casted votes are the primary evidence of the election results and what is recorded by a Presiding Officer or a Returning Officer in the requisite forms is not final.

The top court issued a four page written judgment regarding dismissal of an appeal against election results in PB-14 Nasirabad Balochistan. The verdict is authored by the chief justice of Pakistan.

It said, "The Presiding Officer of each polling sta-

tion after the closer of elections counts the votes and is then required to prepare Form-45. The Returning Officer after receipt of all the Form-45s from the Presiding Officers calculates the votes and issues Form-47."

The order said, "The learned Judge of the Tribunal independently examined the case from all angles and attended to the allegations levelled by the appellant and correctly concluded that his allegations were not established, and that the election results were fair."

Pakistan, Bangladesh agree to expand bilateral ties

NEW YORK (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attended a ceremony to mark 50 years of Bangladesh's membership of the United Nations on the invitation of its Chief Advisor Dr Muhammad Yunus.

Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi accompa-

nied the prime minister. Dr Muhammad Younis warmly welcomed Prime Minister Shehbaz and members of his delegation at the ceremony held on Tuesday night on the sidelines of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The two leaders agreed to promote cooperation and Bangladesh in various fields. There was a positive discussion regarding the expansion of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Ahsan Iqbal chairs maiden meeting of Education Task Force

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday chaired the inaugural meeting of the Education Task Force and expressed serious concerns over the current state of education in the country.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chief Secretaries from all provinces, and representatives from the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, UNDP, FCDO, UNESCO, the World Bank, ADB, Malala Fund,

ITA and Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute, a news release said.

Citing alarming data from the Education Index, the minister stressed the need for urgent and immediate actions in the education sector.

He highlighted that approximately 25 million children in Pakistan were currently out of school, and the literacy rate stood at a mere 60%, which is a matter of grave concern.

The minister emphasized that the government's aim was not just to enroll children in schools but to provide them with quality education.



LAHORE: Mr. Jiang Zaidong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif

Maryam, Nawaz meet Chinese envoy, discuss technology, investment coop

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif met Jiang Zaidong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, to discuss enhancing cooperation in technology, business, and investment.

During the meeting, Nawaz Sharif emphasised the importance of the Pakistan-China friendship, stating, "China is our reliable friend and we are proud of our relationship with this great nation." He highlighted ongoing welfare projects led by Maryam Nawaz in Punjab, expressing readiness for Chinese collaboration in infrastructure and technology.

CM Maryam Nawaz underscored the potential for creating "economic

miracles" through partnership with China, proposing the establishment of "Special Chinese Economic Zones" to attract investment. She noted, "We consider the success of China as our own success," and emphasized the value of learning from the Chinese model to combat poverty.

Ambassador Jiang Zaidong reaffirmed China's commitment to its partnership with Pakistan, praising the advancements made during the PML-N government. He expressed enthusiasm for including Punjab in the upgraded China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) vision, with a particular focus on investment in agriculture. Jiang highlighted ongoing initiatives, including training for 1,000 Pakistani farmers in modern agricultural techniques.

PTI Founder asks govt to announce appointment of next CJ

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Founder Imran Khan has asked the government to announce the appointment of the next Chief Justice soon.

During an informal conversation with journalists at Adiala Jail, Imran Khan stated that he fully supports Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, the most senior judge of the Supreme Court.

The PTI founder said that the purpose of the constitutional court is to diminish the power of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the government is bent on destroying the entire judiciary.

Imran Khan further commented that to cover up election fraud, they want their own judges.

Gilani meets Russian envoy discuss regional, international issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Russian Ambassador in Pakistan Albert Khorev called on Chairman Senate Yousuf Raza Gillani at Parliament House here on Wednesday.

During the meeting, they discussed regional, international issues of mutual interest and bilateral relations.

Yousuf Raza Gillani said Pakistan values its relations with Russia and is keen to further promote multilateral cooperation with Moscow. On behalf of Chairperson Of Russian Federation Council, the Russian Ambassador presented a letter of felicitation to the Chairman Senate.

FO issues travel advisory for Lebanon

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Foreign Office on Wednesday advised the Pakistani nationals to exercise extreme caution and avoid traveling to Lebanon in the wake of Israeli attacks.

Similarly, the Pakistanis "presently residing in Lebanon are advised to travel out through commercial flights which are still available," the FO Spokesperson said in a statement.

Those Pakistanis, who could not leave Lebanon owing to some specific reasons, should exercise extreme caution and relocate to safe areas, he added.



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with the Crown Prince of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on the sidelines of the 79th United Nations General Assembly Session.

PM reiterates Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen Kuwait ties

NEW YORK (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday held a bilateral meeting with the Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and expressed Pakistan's keenness to further strengthen ties between Pakistan and Kuwait.

In the meeting held on the sidelines of the 79th United Nations General Assembly Session here, the prime minister affirmed the longstanding cordial relations between

the two brotherly countries. The two leaders also reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, ranging from political, economic and defense cooperation to people-people exchanges.

Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed his desire to engage with Kuwait in mutually beneficial economic investments under the rubric of the Special Investment Facilitation Council. The two leaders affirmed to closely collaborate bilaterally, as well as on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Terrorists exploiting Baloch women for committing terrorism in Balochistan: Adeela Baloch

QUETTA (APP): The Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), in a successful bid, arrested Adeela Baloch who was being trained to become a suicide bomber from Turbat city of Kech district who revealed that the terrorists were blackmailing Baloch women to trap them for committing terrorism in the province.

Addressing a press conference along with her parents here on Wednesday Adeela Baloch said that she was a nurse by profession and her job was to help people and save precious lives but she was brainwashed by terrorists to commit the opposite of that and become a murderer.

Adeela said she was not the only one who had been led astray by these people, adding that she

was brainwashed in such a way that she got ready to become a suicide bomber and didn't even think how many innocent people would lose their lives because of her suicide attack.

"Anti-state elements are misguiding the youth and lured them into joining terrorist groups under false promises. They showed me false hopes of a new and happy life," she explained, adding that once she joined them, she realised that the life in the mountains was nothing but hardship.

Adeela said she went to the mountains to join the terrorists' groups without telling her family. Adeela further revealed that she wasn't the only one who was misled by the terrorists.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal chaired the inaugural meeting of the Education Task Force.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Point of no return?

Is this the end? The state, as envisioned in the Constitution, is being dismantled in real-time. The government has made it clear it will not accept or implement a ruling issued by the full bench of the Supreme Court.

Social media and television channels have begun broadcasting open attacks on the judiciary, without any worry for the consequences. They are being shielded by the government's own adversarial stance on the matter. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court judges have once again gone public with their disagreements, openly criticising and challenging each other through letters and observations. As things unravel, the judiciary has, for all practical purposes, been rendered defunct. If the bastion falls, there will be no turning back.

The government seems not to care that it has very little legitimacy in the eyes of the public. The engineering and machinations through which its creation was achieved, and which continue to be done to ensure its continuity and sustenance, have left little room for it to be seen in a favourable light. Additionally, its legislative agenda has laid bare the interests it truly serves.

Meanwhile, parliament has demeaned itself by allowing itself to be used to uproot the established division of power. Lawmakers continue to remind us that 'parliament is supreme', as if merely repeating the phrase ad nauseam will confer supremacy upon it. The truth is that they are almost ready to serve the country on a platter to forces that have no patience for democracy or parliamentary niceties and procedure.

To top it all off, the main opposition party remains so obsessed with its leadership's troubles that it has found little time to connect with ordinary citizens, many of whom have been looking to it to give voice to their struggles.

It is within this context that the public had looked to the Supreme Court to act as a final arbiter in one of the key politico-legal disputes of our time. A full court was called to hear the matter, and it eventually issued a ruling. Most of the judges agreed that a wrong had been done and justice must be delivered; they only disagreed on how. Regardless, it was always the majority's verdict that was prevail.

Now, no matter where he personally stood on the matter, it is the chief justice's responsibility to ensure his institution and its edicts' respect. He should be wary that his public disagreements with other judges are being used as ammunition by the government, and should know he is being expected to take a stand for his fellow judges, many of whom once took a stand for him.

When he was appointed chief justice, he was simultaneously burdened with an immense responsibility. He must demonstrate he is worthy of bearing it.

Constitutional breakdown

Rida Hosain

It was in 19th-century Britain that A.V. Dicey wrote that the British parliament is sovereign, and no person or body has the right to override legislation of parliament. Since then, even the courts in England have watered down the absolute and extreme terms of the theory and called it 'out of place' in modern times.

While our constitutional dispensation is wholly distinct, the present government is adopting Diceyan concepts of sovereignty. The 1973 Constitution was adopted by the people of Pakistan, and provides at the outset 'we the people' give to ourselves this Constitution. It is the people's document that reigns supreme.

The Constitution creates and establishes a balance between the role of the judiciary, executive, and legislature. The government seeks desperately to upset this balance by undermining judicial independence, and demanding judicial obedience.

The unique part of our Constitution is the status afforded to fundamental rights and judicial independence. Any law inconsistent with fundamental rights shall be void. Democracy, fundamental rights, parliamentary form of government, and an independent judiciary have also been declared as salient features of the Constitution. Per past precedent, even any constitutional amendment to the extent that it violates such salient features shall be struck down.

Fundamental rights and an independent judiciary work together, a judiciary that is not independent cannot protect and enforce fundamental rights.

In 2015, the Constitution was amended to allow the trial of civilians by military courts. Justice

Qazi Faez Isa (as he was then) struck down the constitutional amendment, and held: "the people made it absolutely clear that they did not want their representatives to dilute their fundamental rights". As regards judicial independence and separation of powers, he found that judicial power can only be exercised by the judiciary.

On the 1973 Constitution, he held that unlike the ones before it, the Constitution endures: "the 1973 Constitution has grown in stature and has found acceptance in the hearts and minds of the people of Pakistan so much so that even the onslaughts on democracy and the judiciary by Gen Ziaul Haq and Gen Pervez Musharraf could not dislodge it."

At that time, Justice Isa was not swayed by the fact that two-thirds of both Houses had passed the amendments. The government of today tries to apply faulty principles of sovereignty to justify its attempted destruction of judicial independence, and continued wreckage of democracy and fundamental rights.

Despite express and specific directions, implementation of the reserved seats order is being obstructed. Amendments to the election laws were bulldozed through parliament with the singular purpose of undoing the reserved seats verdict. The ruling alliance wants to impose on the people an unrepresentative legislature.

In granting PTI reserved seats, the court interpreted constitutional provisions. This cannot be undone through ordinary legislation. Bizarrely, the amendments have been given retrospective effect. A political party cannot be asked to comply with requirements which, put simply, did not exist at the time of elections.

Then, through a

rushed ordinance which was approved by the cabinet, the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023, has been amended. The most striking part of the amendment is that bench constitution power now vests with the chief justice of Pakistan, the next senior most judge, and a CJP nominee.

During hearings regarding the validity of the law, Justice Muneer Akhtar said the effect would be to make parliament 'master of the roster'. The court had surrendered its independence and autonomy in so far as its internal procedure was concerned. By succumbing in their endeavour to exclude Justice Akhtar from the bench-making process, the government has completely vindicated his dissent.

Finally, the proposed constitutional amendments have been partly defended by the law minister. It was Justice Muneer who borrowed Hans Kelsen's view that "a successful coup d'état was an internationally recognised method of changing a constitution", thus the doctrine of necessity was given birth in our jurisprudence, and devastating years followed.

The idea of one centralised constitutional court is also a Kelsenian one, and he championed a single exclusive institution to deal with all constitutional questions (a concept the government is trying to transplant into our common law jurisdiction). The legislature, in the words of Quaid-i-Azam, has the "gravest responsibility" as to how it takes decisions. Instead, attempts are being made to engineer a two-thirds majority, to make independent judges powerless; and to create an institution that would make the Supreme Court redundant. This should unite us all. — Courtesy Dawn

Agents of terror

Mahir Ali

Over the past week, the Netanyahu regime may have succeeded in its endeavours to provoke a wider war. It isn't difficult to imagine what the Western reaction would have been to, say, Iran, Russia or China booby-trapping an adversary's communication devices. In the case of Israel, shock is superseded by awe.

Yet even admiration for the technical ingenuity of Mossad has not prevented some commentators from acknowledging the terrorist aspects of a tactical success that qualifies as a war crime under international protocols to which Israel is a signatory. That mass-casualty attack has been supplemented with conventional air strikes that have already claimed hundreds of lives. Hezbollah will almost certainly feel obliged to respond, despite being massively outgunned. The big question is whether Iran will stay aloof.

The US State Department notoriously maintains a list of 'state sponsors of terrorism' that currently features Cuba, North Korea, Iran and Syria. Israel has obviously never been included. Nor has Pakistan — although it was previously seen as one of several 'safe havens' for militants. But its backing for the Afghan mujahideen in the 1970s-80s, co-sponsored by CIA and the Saudis, was never an issue. Nor its initial nurturing of the Taliban.

Israeli excesses have rarely elicited any objection from Washington, never mind the terrorist antecedents of at least two of its prime ministers, Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, and the indulgent attitude of all other leaders towards international and 'domestic' operations by its agencies that qualify as terrorism by any reason-

able definition. Quite apart from the terror it routinely perpetrates or sponsors in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Israeli military and its offshoots have also created or encouraged terrorist movements or actions across its neighbourhood. The most egregious instance of this tendency was the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982 by Lebanese Falangist militiamen supervised by IDF general Ariel Sharon, who was officially reprimanded, but his bloodlust did not prevent him from becoming PM.

Back then, far-right US president Ronald Reagan ordered Begin to halt the 'holocaust' in Beirut. The Israeli PM bristled, but obeyed, perhaps influenced by the fact that many Israelis took a stand against their nation's horrific conduct in Lebanon. This year's demonstrators are understandably keen to bring home the hostages Israeli armed forces failed to protect on Oct 7 last year, but all too many of them are keen on the IDF stepping up its genocide in Gaza, and perhaps, continuing it in the West Bank, even southern Lebanon.

No one bothers to deny that the formidable Israeli war machine has been sponsored by the US for the past half-century or more. A year before his assassination in 1968, Martin Luther King declared "my own government" to be "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today". That accusation remains valid, but the transcontinental bloodshed conducted by the US has frequently been supplemented by the violence of its local auxiliaries or mercenaries.

The very nation that purports to be an arbiter of international disputes and a key to their resolution in fact qualifies as the world's most formidable

perpetrator and sponsor of terrorism through much of the 20th century, and into the 21st.

It is not alone but its record — from the Philippines to Italy, Iran, Guatemala, Congo, Cuba and Indonesia as well as Timor, Vietnam, Chile, Cambodia, Afghanistan and Iraq — is unmatched in modern history. Hubris and hypocrisy are the key defining features of the American empire, which encompasses auxiliaries such as the UK, Canada and Australia, alongside key European nations and a bunch of hangers-on in the Global South.

It's favourite adopted child, though, may occasionally be subject to mild, mostly meaningless admonitions, but is always welcome to supplies of the latest lethal weaponry, and liable to be excused whenever it oversteps the mark, which is quite routine.

Unlike almost all of his predecessors, Benjamin Netanyahu does not have a storied military past; his terrorist tendencies have surfaced largely during his extended prime ministerial tenure. His primary motivation at the moment is to stay in power, not least to stave off legal challenges to his record of corruption — which barely intrudes into his moral turpitude as a politician.

It remains to be seen whether Hezbollah or Iran will wisely continue to ignore Israel's repeated provocations or disastrously trigger some kind of mutual assured destruction. But all bets are off as long as Israel proceeds with the Gaza genocide and the creeping annexation of the West Bank. The US won't be able to evade culpability unless it conjures up the courage to halt arms shipments to its primary Middle Eastern proxy as it pursues its misanthropic aims. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

16 sectoral council to be reactivated for industrial promotion: Jam Kamal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, here on Wednesday, said that the Ministry of Commerce is reactivating 16 sectoral councils to prepare comprehensive plans and policies for industrial development and trade promotion in the country.

Addressing the 7th Pharma Export Summit and Award 2024, the minister mentioned that the suggestions from the sectoral councils would be presented to the export development board, headed by the Prime Minister, for their swift implementation.

He added that each sectoral council would have its own secretariat to determine ways and means and take measures to enhance trade and industrial activities in the country, noting that such initiatives would also help promote the local pharmaceutical sector.

He emphasized that the pharmaceutical industry plays a pivotal role in the country's economic growth and development, and the government is fully committed to supporting the sector's development, adding that sufficient

resources were available for economic progress and social prosperity in the country. The government is formulating comprehensive policies to address the issues faced by the local pharmaceutical sector. He highlighted that public-private partnerships are vital for making the local pharmaceutical industry more competitive in the international market.

He noted that local pharmaceutical exports registered about 13 percent growth during the last financial year, underscoring the industry's critical role.

Atif Ikram says: Govt action against non-filers is right decision, burden on taxpayers should be reduced

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industries Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the government's decision to take action against non-filers is correct while tax burden should be reduced on tax payers. Action against non-payers of taxable income should have been decided earlier. Action should be taken against taxpayers and facilitating officers involved in tax evasion, he expressed these views while talking to

Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Vice President Tariq Jadoon, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail and others.

President Federation Atif Ikram said that tax collection must be increased to improve the economy of Pakistan, to increase the tax revenue it is necessary to increase the number of taxpayers, tax net does not increase by imposing more taxes on taxpayers rather people start evading taxes, so instead of increasing the tax rate.

Bank Alfalah gets global recognition with 2 GIFA awards

ISLAMABAD (APP): Bank Alfalah has earned international acclaim by winning two awards at the 2024 Global Islamic Finance Awards (GIFA), highlighting its position as a leader in the Islamic banking sector.

The Bank received accolades for its contributions to Islamic banking, including the Islamic Banker of the Year 2024 award and the Best Islamic Banking Window Operations Award 2024 under the GIFA Market Leadership Awards category, said a press release.



ISLAMABAD: The delegation of Belarus called on Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain.

Dar reviews progress on transfer of OGDCL shares to Sovereign Wealth Fund

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday chaired the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Transfer of OGDCL Shares with the Privatization Commission.

The committee discussed the transfer of Oil & Gas Development Company Ltd (OGDCL) shares to the Sovereign Wealth Fund and measures for

operationalization of the Fund.

The Deputy PM emphasized that the Advisory Committee envisaged under the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund Act 2023, would consist of leading experts in finance, economics or other relevant fields to achieve the objectives under the Act.

Minister for Economic Affairs Division (EAD).

NTDC successfully launches SAP Finance Module

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) has achieved a significant milestone in its digital transformation journey with the successful implementation of the SAP Finance Module, a key component of its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

A ceremony marking this achievement was held at NTDC's office in Shaheen Complex, where the Information Technology department team initiated the Go-Live

for the Finance Module, signaling a major step towards modernizing the company's operations, said a press release.

Deputy Managing Directors Engr. Qaiser Khan (P&E) and Engr. Rasheed A. Bhutto (AD&M) congratulated the teams of Information Technology and Finance Directorates on this success.

They directed the development of comprehensive training programs, including videos and manuals, for NTDC employees nationwide.

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 764 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 764.28 points, a positive change of 0.94 percent, closing at 82,247.92 points against 81,483.64 points on the last working day.

A total of 422,163,158 shares were traded during the day as compared to 369,620,812 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 18,380 billion against Rs. 17,062 billion on the last trading day.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, MSC Maeva, Bentley-1, Al-Deebal and Scarabe carrying Container, Palm oil, LNG and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal, Engro Elengy Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Thursday. Meanwhile two more ships, Clipper Trent and Hafnia Express scheduled to load/offload Rice and Gas oil.

Pakistan, Belarus discusses JVs to set up tractor plant in country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Belarus agreed on Wednesday to extensively discuss different options for a joint venture (JVs) to establish a joint tractor plant in the country to uplift the local agriculture sector and enhance productivity.

Consensus on this initiative was reached during a meeting between Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain and Belarusian Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food

Vadim Shagoiko, said a news release. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister of Industry Andrei Kuznetsov, Secretary of Food Security Ali Tahir, and Secretary of Industries Saif Anjum.

Both sides agreed to collaborate on a foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) project to protect cattle, as well as on the capacity building of agricultural engineers in machinery design.

Pakistan's exports to US increase by 1.62% in 2 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United States (US) witnessed an increase of 1.62 percent during the first two months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding months of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to the US were recorded at US\$949.855 million during July-August (2024-25) against exports of US\$934.666 billion during

July-August (2023-24), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, the exports to the US decreased to \$473.838 million in August 2024 against the export of \$494.774 million in August 2023.

Meanwhile, on a month-to-month basis, the exports to the US witnessed a nominal decrease of 0.45 percent during August 2024 as compared to the exports of \$476.017 million in July 2024, the SBP data revealed.



ISLAMABAD: Managing Director, PTDC Aftab ur Rehman Rana addressing a meeting regarding celebration of "World Tourism Day" organized by FPCCI Central Standing Committee on "Tourism Economy" at FPCCI office.

Biggest internship program launched for agriculture graduates: CM Maryam

FAISALABAD (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz has said that Pakistan is an agrarian country and the PML-N has the credit to launch the biggest internship programme to utilise the untapped potential of agriculture graduates by offering them about 1000 internships, and enabling them to use their knowledge and skills to put the country on the road to expeditious progress and prosperity.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the

agriculture graduates internship programme at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) here on Wednesday, she said that the PML-N was a pro-people political party, which had always preferred public welfare and presented a betterment agenda instead of taking personal gains.

She said that some elements defamed politics through their negative deeds, but the PML-N promoted positive politics in the country, which was imperative for national

progress and prosperity.

She said that the previous rulers abused the young generation for their ulterior motives. They raised hollow slogans but never provided employment opportunities to the youth on merit. She said, "We have planned the biggest internship programme for the agriculture graduates with a monthly stipend of Rs. 60,000 per intern. These graduates were appointed purely on merit and their stipend would be enhanced gradually."



FAISALABAD: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan addresses during annual prize distribution ceremony of Aziz Fatima Medical & Dental College at a local hotel.

Women's role imperative for national progress, prosperity: Governor

FAISALABAD (APP): Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Wednesday said that women were sharing 52 percent population and their proactive role was imperative to materialize the dream of national progress and prosperity.

Talking to media persons during inaugural ceremony of a display & facilitation center for business women at Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FWCCI) here, he said that Pakistan was passing through a crucial stage. He said the government was

concentrating for women empowerment. In this connection, various programs were chalked out to facilitate this community in all sectors including business, he added. He said that women were bestowed with tremendous abilities and capabilities. Hence, they should come forward and prove their mettle in national development, he added. Responding to a question, he said that another constitutional amendment had become imperative to remove the ills prevailed because of the 19th Amendment which had totally eroded the very spirit of the 18th Amendment.

Shahid murder case: Court remands co-accused in police custody

LAHORE (APP): A local court on Wednesday handed over a co-accused, involved in the murder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and businessman Dr. Shahid Siddique, to the police on a 5-day physical remand.

Earlier, the police produced the co-accused, Akbar, before a judicial magistrate in the Model Town courts. The investigation officer requested the court to grant a 10-day physical remand of the co-accused for the recovery of a mobile phone and money from him.

16 dead, 1403 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least sixteen people were killed while 1403 injured in 1330 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of them, 578 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 825 victims with minor injuries were treated on the spot by Rescue Medical Teams.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi called on by MPA Sardar Ehsan Ullah Khan Mainkhel at Governor House.

Governor KP writes letters to ambassadors, flays attack on convoy of foreign dignitaries

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has written condemnation letters to ambassadors of 12 countries regarding attack on convoy of foreign dignitaries in Swat KP few days ago.

According to letters, issued here on Wednesday, "I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to address the recent tragic incident in Swat involving a convoy carrying foreign dignitaries. The attack, which resulted in injuries and loss of life, has left our community in shock and mourning."

"The government is

actively investigating the circumstances surrounding the attack and will work tirelessly to bring those responsible to justice. We understand the importance of safeguarding foreign visitors and are reinforcing our security measures to prevent such incidents in the future."

"As Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, I want to convey my profound relief that, as state guests, you are safe during this onslaught.

Your protection and safety are our top priority, and we are committed to ensuring a secure environment for you and all foreign visitors."

IGP approves promotion of 54 cops from Multan region

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has approved promotion of 54 policemen from the Multan region.

According to a police spokesperson, 18 assistant sub-inspectors (ASIs) will be elevated as sub-inspector, 18 head constables as ASIs, and 18 constables as head constables.

A ceremony will be held shortly to present the new ranks to the promoted officers. The IGP said that this year, over 2,000 promotions would be awarded across various ranks, including 600 sub-inspectors, 700 ASIs.

Two persons killed in separate firing incidents in Tank

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Two persons were killed in separate firing incidents in Tank, police and Rescue 1122 officials said on Wednesday.

A police spokesman said that unknown armed persons entered into the house of Hidayat Ullah Khan, brother of Shaheed Mureed Akbar (SMA) police station SHO Sami Ullah Khan Barakzai in Barakhel village within the limits of SMA police station and opened indiscriminate fire.

As a result, Farman Ullah son of Hidayat Ullah was killed on the spot.

US, KP govts celebrate youth empowerment and land reforms

PESHAWAR (APP): U.S. Consul General Shante Moore celebrated the successful partnership between the United States and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) at a closing ceremony of a Sports Gala, highlighting the transformative impact of the Land Registration in Merged Areas activity, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

The Sports Gala, organized under the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-supported Land Registration in Merged Areas (LRMA) Activity, brought together local leaders, community members, and youth

participants to showcase the enthusiasm and potential of young athletes from the Merged Areas.

The event highlighted the region's progress toward a brighter future and the transformative impact of land registration initiatives.

Addressing the gathering, U.S. Consul General Shante Moore emphasized the crucial role of youth in shaping the region's future. "This Sports Gala isn't just about competition. It's about fostering a sense of belonging, unity, and hope."

For the people of the Merged Areas, especially the youth, hope is what drives progress.



LAHORE: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, distributing certificates to students at the COP29 Simulation Program held at Aiwan-e-Iqbal.

CM KP wants rapid development of tribal districts: Law Minister

KOHAT (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate has said that the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gundapur wanted rapid development of the entire province, especially the merged tribal districts and other merged areas.

That was why, he said a particular program "Grand Tribal Jirga" for the rapid development of the merged tribal districts and other merged areas has been

initiated. This he said while addressing the Awami Jirga of Dara Adamkhel as a chief guest, which was organized by Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram. Deputy Commissioner Kohat while highlighting the aims and objectives of the Jirga, said that the purpose of holding the "Awami Jirga" is to get the opinion and proposals of the elected representatives of Dara Adamkhel Tehsil, tribal leaders, elders and common man on this program for the rapid development of the merged districts.

International News

Israel has landed heavy blows on Hezbollah

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: It has been a devastating week for Hezbollah and the people of Lebanon.

Bombs hidden in the group's pagars and walkie-talkies killed dozens of people and wounded thousands — many of them Hezbollah members. Israeli strikes on Beirut killed two of Hezbollah's top commanders. And Israel has bombed what it said were 1,600 militant sites across large parts of Lebanon, killing hundreds of people and displacing thousands.

Israel says its objective is to secure its northern border so that tens of thousands of people who fled under Hezbollah fire nearly a year ago can return to their homes. But it's far from clear that its recent operations — as tactically successful as they were — will bring that about.

Lebanese health authorities on Tuesday raised

the death toll from two days of Israeli airstrikes targeting Hezbollah militants to 558. Israel's military says it will do "whatever is necessary" to push Hezbollah away from Lebanon's border with Israel. "No one either in or out of the defense establishment has any clue as to how to translate these brilliant operational achievements into political benefit, into a real victory that will stop the war in the north," columnist Nadav Eyal wrote in Israel's Yedioth Achronot newspaper.

"As long as Hezbollah retains any firepower, the northern border will not be able to return to normal," Eyal said.

Hezbollah began firing into Israel the day after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack triggered the war in Gaza. Its stated aim was to pin down Israeli forces in the north to help its ally Hamas, which — like Hezbollah —

is backed by Iran. The Lebanese militant group has said it would halt the attacks if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, which appears increasingly unlikely.

Hezbollah's response to the past week's escalation has seemed meager. The hundreds of rockets and drones it has fired into northern Israel — including areas much farther from the border than it hit previously — have caused few casualties and only scattered damage. Early Wednesday, Hezbollah fired a longer-range missile that targeted Tel Aviv for the first time, marking a clear escalation. The Israeli military said it intercepted the projectile, and there were no reports of casualties or damage.

Experts say Hezbollah is holding more such weapons in reserve.

Monday's footage of Israeli strikes sending up plumes of dust and smoke seemed grimly familiar.

Iran's Pezeshkian says Tehran ready to work with world powers to resolve nuclear standoff

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Iran is ready to end its nuclear standoff with the West, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian told the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, while calling for an end to Russia's war in Ukraine through dialogue.

Iran's clerical establishment hopes to see an easing of US sanctions that have crippled the country's economy.

"We are ready to engage with participants of the 2015 nuclear deal.

If the deal's commitments are implemented fully and in good faith, dialogue on other issues can follow," Pezeshkian said.

Then-President Donald Trump abandoned the 2015 nuclear pact between Tehran and six world powers in 2018 and reimposed tough sanctions on Iran. Efforts to

revive the pact have failed.

The 2015 deal, which then-President Donald Trump abandoned in 2018, had capped Iran's uranium enrichment at 3.67% purity and its stockpile of this material at 202.8 kg (447 pounds) — limits Tehran has since far exceeded.

For Britain, France and Germany, who remain party to the nuclear deal, there is a sense that Tehran's leadership will not change course and that a broader accord encompassing the nuclear programme and Iran's geopolitical role is unrealistic for now.

The United States, its European allies and Israel accuse Tehran of using its nuclear programme as a veil for efforts to try to develop weapons.

Iran says its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only.

Trudeau set to survive vote of confidence in Canadian parliament

Monitoring Desk
OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau looks set to survive a vote of confidence on Wednesday after his main political rival appeared to fail to muster enough support to end nine years of Liberal Party rule.

Legislators in the House of Commons are due to vote at about 3.30 pm ET (1930 GMT) on a motion by the official opposition Conservative party declaring a lack of confidence in Trudeau's minority Liberal government.

Trudeau, whose popularity has slumped amid unhappiness over rising prices and a housing crisis, became more politically vulnerable this month when the smaller New Democratic Party tore up a 2022 deal to keep him in power until the 2025 election.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses the 79th United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters in New York, U.S.

'Big threats on my life by Iran,' Donald Trump claims

Monitoring Desk
GEORGIA: Former US president Donald Trump said on Wednesday that he has received threats to his life from Iran.

"Big threats on my life by Iran. Moves were already made by Iran that didn't work out, but they will try again," the Republican presidential nominee said on Truth Social. He also said the entire US military is "watching and waiting".

Trump thanked the US Congress for unani-

mously approving additional funding for the Secret Service, noting that he is now surrounded by more men, guns, and weapons than ever before.

Trump's comments came after gunshots were heard near his location in Florida on September 15, though officials later confirmed he was safe.

The September 15 incident, which authorities have said is being treated as an apparent assassination attempt.

US to provide another \$424 million in Sudan aid

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The United States will give a further \$424 million in humanitarian aid to the people of Sudan, US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield announced on Wednesday.

War erupted in mid-April last year from a power struggle between the Sudanese army (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces ahead of a planned transition to civilian rule.

China's PLA conducts rare publicized test launch of intercontinental ballistic missile

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China said on Wednesday it had successfully conducted a rare launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean, a move likely to raise international concerns about the country's nuclear build-up.

The ICBM, carrying a dummy warhead, was launched by the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force at 8:44 am Beijing time (0044 GMT) on Wednesday and "fell into expected sea areas."

Afghanistan wants to join BRICS, says Taliban govt

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban government is keen to join the BRICS economic forum, a spokesman said on Tuesday ahead of the group's summit in Russia. The summit of emerging economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa will meet on October 22-24 in the southwestern Russian city of Kazan.

"Countries with major resources and the world's biggest economies are associated with the BRICS forum, especially

Russia, India, and China," said Hamdullah Fitrat, a government deputy spokesman.

"Currently, we have good economic ties and commercial exchanges with them. We are keen to expand our relations and participate in the economic forums of the BRICS," he said.

The Taliban authorities have not been officially recognised by any country but have growing relations with founding BRICS nations, including China and Russia.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy tells UN Russia must be forced into peace

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday that the war between Russia and Ukraine cannot be calmed by talks alone, but that Moscow must be forced into peace.

Zelenskyy has sought the support of Western leaders for what he calls a "victory plan" to end the war that began when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of his country in February 2022.

Zelenskyy said the war would end one day but not because "someone got tired of the war" or through a trade with Russian President Vladimir Putin, a ref-

erence to proposals that Ukraine cede some territory seized by Russia to settle the conflict. "This war can't be calmed by talks. Action is needed," Zelenskyy said, thanking nations who have provided Ukraine support.

"Putin has broken so many international norms and rules that he won't stop on his own, Russia can only be forced into peace, and that is exactly what's needed, forcing Russia into peace, as the sole aggressor in this war, the sole violator of the U.N. Charter," Zelenskyy said. Zelenskyy took aim at North Korea and Iran for providing arms to Russia for the war, calling them "de facto accomplices" of Moscow.

Sri Lanka's new leader must balance ties between regional powerhouses India and China

Monitoring Desk
COLOMBO: The Marxist lawmaker who won Sri Lanka's presidency faces a key challenge in how to balance ties with his country's two most crucial partners, India and China, as he seeks to draw foreign investment and pull the economy out of the doldrums.

Anura Kumara Dissanayake, 55, won the weekend election in an extraordinary political upset against an old political guard that voters blame for tipping the country into its worst economic crisis two years ago. Dissanayake must now deliver on promises to improve Sri Lankans' lives, clean up government and ease austerity measures imposed by international lenders.

But looking beyond Sri Lanka's borders, he also must navigate the rivalry between regional powerhouses India, the country's next-door neighbor, and China, which Dissanayake's party traditionally has leaned toward.

World's busiest shipping routes, Sri Lanka has long been eyed by the two regional rivals. Sri Lanka governments have swung between the two camps, and New Delhi and Beijing have intensely jockeyed for influence in the island nation of 22 million.

"Dissanayake will try to keep both India and China at an equal distance" but his ability to balance them is likely to be tested in the coming weeks, said Veeragathy Thanabalasingham, a Colombo-based political analyst.

"It's going to be a tightrope walk," he added. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping both congratulated Dissanayake soon after he won.

The victory was by the National People's Power coalition led by Dissanayake's People's Liberation Front — also known as Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, or JVP — which considers itself Marxist, though it now expresses support for a free market economy.

Located on one of the

Pak, Turkiye agree to strengthen economic, security cooperation

PM Shehbaz felicitates Erdogan on fiery Palestine-focused UNGA speech; IMF deal in final stages

NEW YORK (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday met Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wherein two sides agreed to further strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, investment, defence, and security domains.

In the meeting held on the sidelines of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly here, the two leaders discussed bilateral matters, regional and global developments, according to a PM Office press release.

They assessed preparations for the upcoming 7th session of Pakistan-Turkiye High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) to be held in Islamabad in the near future. The two leaders also discussed regional and global developments, especially the ongoing genocide and the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. They called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and end of hostilities.

Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated Turkiye's firm and consistent support for the op-

pressed people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

President Erdogan expressed his admiration for Prime Minister Shehbaz's economic policies, which had played a crucial role in stabilizing Pakistan's economy and commended his leadership and commitment to economic reforms.

Furthermore, he also extended his heartfelt birthday wishes to the prime minister who celebrated his 73rd Birthday this week.

Prime Minister Shehbaz congratulated President Erdogan on his passionate address to the 79th session of the UN General Assembly that centred on the Palestinian crisis. "The way the Turkish president highlighted the issue touched the hearts of all those listening to him in the Assembly hall," he told reporters after the meeting. In his emotional address, Erdogan said that the values of the United Nations' system and the Western world were dying in Gaza as the conflict continued there, calling for an "alliance of humanity" to stop

Israel's aggression. The Turkish leader strongly criticized Israel over its military campaign in the Gaza Strip and on the Western countries for their support to Israel.

"Along with children in Gaza, the United Nations system is also dying, the truth is dying, the values that the West claims to defend are dying, the hopes of humanity to live in a fairer world are dying one by one," Erdogan added.

Commenting on the country's economic situation, Prime Minister Shehbaz told the media that agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was in the final stages of approval as Pakistan had accepted all its conditions - some of them quite tough.

In this regard, he profusely thanked China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, saying without their support this would not have been possible. The premier said his government had accepted the economic challenge to the country and now, with collective efforts of the government and all institutions,



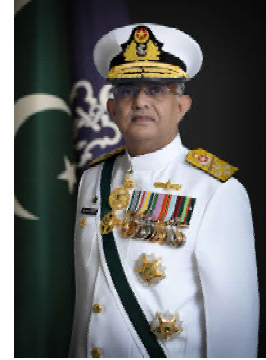
NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meet with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the 79th United Nations General Assembly Session.

Message from CNS Admiral Naveed Ashraf on occasion of world maritime day - 2024

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: World Maritime Day, a significant reminder of maritime safety, security and environmental conservation is marked annually, urging nations to work together for sustainable maritime practices. This year, IMO has selected 'Navigating the Future: Safety First' as the theme for World Maritime Day, which is observed on the last Thursday of September each year. This theme reflects IMO's work in the aforesaid areas and its drive towards ensuring regulatory development processes are integrated with the fast paced technological changes and innovation. This year is also significant as it marks the 50 years since the adoption of 1974 SOLAS Convention, which is the key IMO treaty regulating maritime safety.

Since shipping transports about 90% of global trade by volume; it also obligates safe, secure and efficient international shipping industry for future sustainable green economic growth. It is therefore, evident that improving the safety of ships and reducing their Green House Gas (GHG) emissions must go hand in hand. Both are critical to achieving a sustainable and efficient maritime industry. This year's theme



is also closely linked to UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aligned with several of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To achieve them, we need to keep pace with the digitalization and automation that are revolutionizing the shipping industry. This calls for introduction of newer technologies for enhancing safety, security and efficiency, optimizing performance, reducing environmental impact and ensuring sustainability. These measures can greatly help in improving overall efficacy and competitiveness of the shipping industry, making it possible to design, construct and operate ships more efficiently, handle more cargo, reduce costs and enhance customer satisfaction.

The thrust on 'safety' in this year's theme has

been an integral component of Pakistan Navy operations and processes, next only to their efficient conduct, which is continuously reviewed to address any gaps that may arise. Pakistan Navy has instituted exacting measures to ensure 'safety first' principle, onboard as well as ashore. Our efforts towards maritime safety bear testimony to our unwavering commitment and emphasis on implementation of SOPs, in their true letter and spirit.

On this World Maritime Day, as we take stock of our shared maritime achievements, let us also look forward with determination and resolve to align our national objectives with the ongoing global shift towards sustainable and green marine practices. I urge all the stakeholders to embrace these evolving trends and reiterate Pakistan Navy's commitment in ensuring maritime safety and upholding environmental mandates.

Let us recommit to the principle of maritime safety and reaffirm our solemn pledge that in pursuing, 'Navigating the Future: Safety First', we shall spare no effort, neither in spirit nor in action. I look forward to a profound and cumulative response by all stakeholders.

Culture of depriving women from property should end: CJP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday ordered to immediately transfer the inherited property to a widow in a case of property dispute.

During the hearing of the case of transfer of inherited property in the Supreme Court, the court ordered the widow Shamim Akhtar to transfer the inherited property immediately.

The SC also imposed a fine worth Rs500,000 on the opposing parties for perjury and bogus litigation, which has to be paid within three months.

Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa said that if the fine is not paid, the revenue department will recover the amount from the property of the respondents. He said that the

simple case of inheritance has been made complicated, the culture of depriving women of inheritance should come to an end.

He said that action should be taken against the parties for giving bogus and fake testimonies. The CJP noted that the trial has been going on for 26 years.

The CJP said that he wants the parties not to commit any more sin by depriving the widow from her right. Whoever wants suppress the property, he said.

The CJP said that lawyers should also not take such false cases.

It should be noted that Shamim Akhtar's husband Mehrban died in 1998. Mehrban's second wife Aksar Jan's nephews claimed that the property had been gifted.



NEW YORK: Chief Advisor (Head of Government) of the Interim Government of Bangladesh Dr. Muhammad Yunus receives Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the reception to commemorate 50th Anniversary of Bangladesh's membership in the United Nations.

Australian HC highlights shared history, future collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins, on Wednesday, in his address at Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) delved into the theme 'Australia's Strategic Environment and Relations with Pakistan'.

In his speech at IPRI's forum 'Diplomatic Reflections', he highlighted the deep historical ties and future collaborative efforts between the two nations, a news release said.

Hawkins began by drawing attention to the rich history that binds Australia and Pakistan. He noted that the links between the peoples of Australia and today's Pakistan date back

more than a century. From 1860 to 1920, approximately 2,000 camelers from Balochistan played a crucial role in exploring Australia's deserts, transporting essential supplies to remote towns, building railways, and supporting gold mining.

These Baloch camelers also introduced Islam to Australia, constructing the country's first mosque in Maree, South Australia, in 1884.

The High Commissioner also commemorated the Pakistani soldiers, then part of the British Indian Army, who served alongside Australian troops at Gallipoli during World War I.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Pakistan Fahad Bin Sulaiman Bin Khalaf Alkharusi called on the Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

Minister presides over consultative meeting on GB airport affectees

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam on Wednesday presided over the consultative meeting of high-level committee regarding affectees of the Gilgit-Baltistan Airport.

Federal Secretary for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Wasim Ajmal Chaudhry, Additional Secretary Khalid Ali Raza Gurdizi, Joint Secretary Muhammad Hamid Khan, Ministry of Defence, Civil

Aviation and Law and Justice, Gilgit-Baltistan Government and officials of the Ministry of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan attended the meeting, said a press release.

The officials briefed the federal minister about the agenda of the meeting. The minister said that this issue will be resolved amicably. In this regard, he said that all relevant departments and ministries should meet and find a solution to the problem in the next meeting.

DIG Islamabad says: Efforts afoot to make Islamabad safest city

ISLAMABAD: DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza held an important meeting with Saddar Zone police officers at his office. The meeting was attended by SP Saddar zone, SDPOs, SHOs, and crime control police teams. During the meeting, DIG Islamabad reviewed the performance of all police officials in detail and awarded officers for good performance while also issued show cause notices on poor performances.

On this occasion, while issuing directions to the officers, he said that in the upcoming meeting, the performance of all the officers will be reviewed and there will be no compro-

mise on the increase of crimes.

He issued directions to police officials and crime control teams to prevent incidents of robbery, dacoity, and theft in their jurisdiction. Under the supervision of the SHOs, these teams will work to arrest absconders, proclaimed offenders, target offenders, missing gang members and other criminals. The special teams will also take effective action to prevent incidents of robbery, dacoity, and theft. 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.



BEIJING: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan addressing during the opening session of Global Transport Forum 2024, in Beijing.

BRI, CPEC projects to benefit China and Pakistan equally: Aleem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan Wednesday said that projects initiated under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project (CPEC) will benefit both Pakistan and China, equally.

Addressing the opening session of the Global Sustainable Transport Forum 2024, which was held in Beijing China, the minister observed that trade corridors of CPEC with the support of China are the guarantor of our strong infrastructure and better transport system.

He further said that our safe future lies in green energy and clean technology and we have to integrate our ports and highways keeping in mind the future requirements.

Aleem Khan, in his address at the two-day Glo-

bal Sustainable Transport Forum clarified that the improvement of the communication system not only promotes the economy but also the culture and society while the economic improvement of transportation, employment provision and national development agenda are the imperatives.

He said that Pakistan is a supporter of the promotion of Public-Private Partnership and green technology through bilateral cooperation with China.

Aleem Khan pointed out that after the Corona epidemic 2019, along with other changes global logistics have also been modified which took new dimension and integrated improvements in transport sectors through E-Commerce and digital methods.

He said that there is no doubt that Pakistan is facing major challenges of urban population growth

and environmental degradation and we need to increase our resources.

The safety of the citizens must also be taken into consideration for the improvement of transportation system, he added.

He specially thanked China's Transport Minister Li Xiaopeng and appreciated the holding of this Forum which will provide the delegates of the participating countries with opportunities to benefit from each other's experiences and to collaborate in future.

Deputy Prime Ministers of Nepal and Thailand also participated and addressed the Forum. This two-day Forum is hosted by the Minister of Transport of China, Li Xiaopeng who in his address expressed special thanks to Pakistan and assured further increase in the development of mutual cooperation and bilateral relations in all fields.



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Students group photo after a Performance During the 75th National Day of the People's Republic of China, Organized by the Overseas Chinese Association of Pakistan.

Shazia Marri says: Constitutional Courts essential to address existing legal challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Information Secretary Shazia Marri Wednesday said that establishing Federal Constitutional Court would effectively address the existing legal and judicial challenges in the country. Addressing a press conference along with Senator Palwasha Khan, she said that formation of Federal Constitutional Court is mandatory and PPP has very clear stance on the issue.

Shazia Marri said that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has been advocating for the establishment of a Federal Constitutional Court for quite some time and recently, the PPP has raised this demand of establishing Constitutional Courts with full force. She urged the government to consult with all the stakeholders on the proposed constitutional package. "The PPP has been presenting its stance

with conviction and has come to know about the ongoing constitutional amendments," she said.

Shazia Marri said the idea of a Constitutional Court has been mentioned in the Charter of Democracy (CoD) and it has been part of the PPP's manifesto since 2007.

She stressed the necessity of a Federal Constitutional Court to ensure swift, speedy and fair justice. "The PPP workers sought justice for Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto after a wait of 45 years."

She criticized the current judicial system is often preoccupied with political and constitutional cases, which leaves little room for addressing the grievances of the general public.

Shazia Marri said the justice system in the provinces is also crumbling, and proposed that a constitutional court should be established in every province.

IHC moved against MDCAT test

ISLAMABAD (APP): A petition has been moved before the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking orders for re-conduct of Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT).

The petition has been filed by six medical students including Ammar Naeem, Shahzaib Wazir and Saba Imaan.

The petition prayed the court to issue directives for re-conduct of the exam or they should be given grace marks on out of syllabus questions in the test.

The petition has mentioned Ministry of Health and President Pakistan Medical, Dental Council (PM&DC), Vice Chancellor Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto University and chairman National Medical and Dental Board as respondents in the case. The petitioners said that the MDCAT took place in capital on September 22, in which 26, 27 MCQs out of 200 were out of Syllabus.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal addressing as the chief guest during the 11th Parliamentary Forum on Population, in Islamabad.

Pakistan's development efforts hampered by rapid population growth: Ahsan

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: "Population growth is outpacing the development of the country, and we must address this issue urgently to secure our nation's future. If we continue to neglect population planning, our development efforts will be futile. We need to prioritize population management as a national agenda by building a national consensus", said Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiative Ahsan Iqbal while addressing the eleventh meeting of Parliamentary Forum on Population (PFP), organized by the Population Council with the support of United Nations Population Fund.

He also emphasized on quality of human resources, not just their quantity, which determines a nation's progress. "We must recognize that producing healthy

and educated children is essential for competing in a global landscape; we cannot afford to raise a generation that is unhealthy and illiterate."

The Federal Minister assured parliamentarians that tax exemptions for contraceptives would be provided in the next fiscal year, acknowledging the importance of removing financial barriers to improve access to family planning services. He also emphasized the importance of women's empowerment, noting that educated women are more likely to have a stronger voice in family decision-making. Chairperson of the Forum Senator Sherry Rehman, while addressing the Forum, said, "Population planning should be integrated into the broader health agenda, with media and parliamentarians

playing vital roles in raising awareness". She expressed the need for advocating policy changes and sharing best practices among stakeholders to strengthen collective efforts in population management. She also emphasized the expansion and revitalization of LHWs programs across provinces which will enhance the reach and effectiveness of population management efforts. She also urged parliamentarians to lead public awareness campaigns by utilizing platforms like social media. The Parliamentary Forum on Population (PFP) was launched in March 2020, with the aim to raise parliamentary awareness on population management as a development imperative, sustain cross-party political commitment and advocate for population stabilization.

Delegation of under-training officer's visits Safe City Islamabad



ISLAMABAD: The under training officers of Intelligence Bureau Academy Islamabad combined intelligence course visited Safe City Islamabad, a public relations officer said. The delegation visits the command and control center, the data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the Police operations center hall. They were fully briefed about the procedures and advantages of this project.

Furthermore, the delegation was informed that Safe City Islamabad is playing a significant role in various departments through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Data Hub Unit, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan System, and the "Pucar-15" emergency helpline.

The delegation was also apprised of the functionality and benefits of the Safe City cameras in the city. The modern cameras of Safe City are playing a crucial role in ensuring the safety of the city, preventing crimes and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens.