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Supreme Court ruling on reserved seats cannot be implemented under new law: 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returned candidate once given for joining a political party shall be irrevocable and cannot be substituted or withdrawn."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.



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 gen-

erations 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 inspiration 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. The President hoped that China was poised to achieve significant milestones in the coming decades, which would not only bolster its development but also reshape the global landscape in politics, economics and culture in positive ways.

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 activ-

ism. "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.

Discussing the need for a constitutional court, Bilawal stated, "The mandate of a constitutional court would be to interpret constitutional matters. Through the 18th Amendment, a system for appointing judges was established. It took me 50 years to seek justice for Shaheed Bhutto's case."

He criticised former chief justices Iftikhar Chaudhry, Saqib Nisar, and Gulzar Ahmed for perpetuating a system where nepotism influenced judicial appointments.



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.

Murad, Mark Maloney discuss polio eradication drive in high risk UCs

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah

in his meeting with Rotary Foundation Chairman Mark Maloney emphasized the provincial government's unwavering commitment to eradicating polio. "Despite our hectic efforts Sindh continues to detect polio cases due to frequent cross-border travel from neighbouring countries. "We are confident that our initiatives will yield positive results," the CM said and added that his government had initiated vaccinations for all malnourished children to strengthen their immunity.

Murad Shah thanked the Rotary Foundation for their support in Pakistan against polio. At this, Maloney said that the Rotary has established 23 permanent immunisation centres across Pakistan and is providing support in high-risk union councils (UCs)

within Sindh.

The Rotary Foundation is facilitating social mobilization and fostering confidence-building among families who have previously refused vaccinations in high-risk areas," said Maloney. Chief Minister Shah said that a recent special campaign in 85 high-risk union councils of Karachi has been initiated where a fractional injectable polio vaccine (IPV) was successfully administered with the full mobilisation of government officials. He lauded the active participation of deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners in converting refusal teams and supporting polio cases in their outreach.

Shah also lauded the role of over 5,000 police personnel who ensured a secure environment for frontline workers during the campaign.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Chairman of the Rotary Foundation, Mark Daniel Maloney during meeting held at CM House in Karachi. Sindh Health Minister, Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Rotary Trustee Aziz Memon and other dignitaries seen attending the meeting.

Sharjeel Inam Memon says Government found solution to Karachi's traffic problems

Independent Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has announced that the Sindh government has found a solution to Karachi's traffic problems. Major bus stands are being relocated out of the city, and illegal bus stands are being removed.

To alleviate traffic congestion, a free shuttle service has been introduced to transport passengers to the bus terminal outside the city.

The heavy traffic that was impacting the city's traffic system. For the first time in Pakistan's history, the Excise and Taxation De-

partment held a fund raising auction for the issuance of premium number plates, and the Sindh government received Rs 67 crore in the first phase.

Speaking to the media at the Sindh Assembly Media Corner, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that the funds obtained from the premium number plates are being allocated to the world's largest housing project for flood victims, as envisioned by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Excise Taxation and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses to media persons during press conference, held at Sindh Assembly building in Karachi.

Chief Secretary for resolving complaints regarding use of GSMC development funds

HYDERABAD (APP): Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Hyder Shah has stressed the need for improving coordination at the divisional level on the development projects in the budget of Sindh. He expressed these views while addressing media representatives at Press Club Hyderabad on Thursday. In compliance with the directives of chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during the visit of Hyderabad, Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Haider Shah visited Hyderabad, accompanied

by Commissioner Hyderabad Bilal Ahmad Memon, DIG Hyderabad Tariq Razzak Dharijo, Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Zainul Abidin Memon, and SSP Hyderabad Dr. Farrukh Ali. Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Haider Shah praised Hyderabad's journalism, acknowledging the positive criticism.

Reflecting on his tenure as commissioner, He expressed gratitude for the appreciation received from the public for his efforts to provide relief.

Governor Tessori announces to host conference on Khatme Nabuwat soon

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori has announced that he will soon organize a conference on Khatme Nabuwat in the governor's house.

He made this announcement on the occasion of a Mehfil-e-Milad organized in connection with the ongoing Eid Milad-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him) celebrations at the Sindh Governor's House.

On this occasion, the Governor said that participating in Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) programs gives him peace of mind.

He further said that the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a guiding light for us and there is a solution to all problems in Nizam-e-Mustafa (PBUH).

Mufti Madani Bashir, well-known Naat Khuwa'n Qari Waheed Zafar Qasmi and Muhammad Khawer Naqshbandi participated in the event and recited Naat-e-Rasool (PBUH). A large number of people including women and children were present in the Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) program.

The Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) programs are being organized in the Governor's House in the holy month of Rabi-ul-Awwal.

French envoy meets Nasir, investment opportunities in Sindh discussed

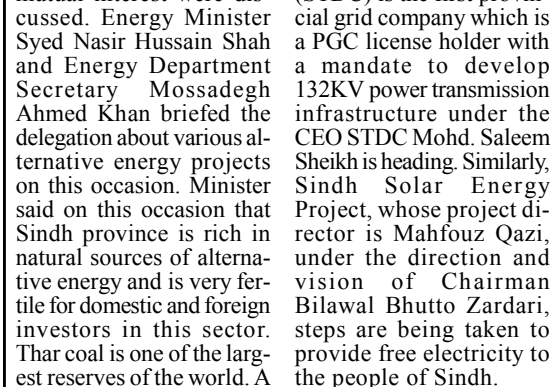
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KARACHI: Minister of Energy, Development and Planning Sindh Syed Nasir Hussain Shah today met French Ambassador Nicolas Galey along with a delegation at the Energy Department office. Matters of mutual interest were discussed. Energy Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah and Energy Department Secretary Mossadegh Ahmed Khan briefed the delegation about various alternative energy projects on this occasion. Minister said on this occasion that Sindh province is rich in natural sources of alternative energy and is very fertile for domestic and foreign investors in this sector. Thar coal is one of the largest reserves of the world. A

test of Thar coal has been conducted by the world's largest and most authoritative institute, according to the report, Thar coal is of high quality and is also very suitable for gasification. Sindh Transmission and Dispatch Company (STDC) is the first provincial grid company which is a PGC license holder with a mandate to develop 132KV power transmission infrastructure under the direction and vision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, steps are being taken to provide free electricity to the people of Sindh.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Excise Taxation and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses to media persons during press conference, held at Sindh Assembly building in Karachi.



HYDERABAD: Chief Secretary of Sindh, Syed Asif Haider Shah addresses during ceremony organized by High Court Bar Association held in Hyderabad.

Seerat-un-Nabi Conference to be held on 22nd September

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KARACHI: The Seerat-un-Nabi Conference to be held on 22nd September 2024 at 05.00 pm in Muhammad Ibrahim Jyo Auditorium, Liaquat Memorial Library, Opp: Liaquat National Hospital, Karachi. The Hon'able Chief Minister Sindh will grace the occasion as chief Guest and notables from all walks of life especially politicians, diplomats, Ulema, Mashaikh, Scholars and other prominent personalities will attend the conference.

Murtaza Wahab refutes JUI senator's statement about Bilawal

KARACHI (INP): Murtaza Wahab has said that JUI's Senator Kamran Murtaza has attributed wrong things about Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Murtaza Wahab, who has also been the spokesman of the Chairman People's Party, refuted statement of the JUI's senator and said that Bilawal Bhutto had discussed the constitutional court with Maulana Fazlur Rehman in his meeting with the JUI leader.

PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto held three meetings with JUI chief and attributing such things with the party chairman is wrong, Wahab said.

"He didn't see the draft but the points of the proposed constitutional amendment," Bilawal's spokesman said.

IRSA Act not to be amended after Sindh PA resolution: Nisar

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party Sindh President Nisar Khuroo on Thursday claimed that after passage of the resolution by Sindh Assembly, there was no chance of amendments in Indus River System Authority Act.

Speaking to the media persons, Nisar Khuroo said as per universal laws, tail end areas have the first right over the water and Sindh province lies at the tail of the River Indus.

He said by passage of the resolution in Sindh Assembly, people of the province had clearly given decision regarding reported amendments in the Act.

Commenting on the GDA's protest, Nisar Khuroo said after Sindh Assembly's resolution, such protest was beyond the comprehension.

Responding to a question regarding proposed Constitutional amendment, Khuroo said constitution of the Constitutional Court was part of the Charter of Democracy and Pakistan People's Party wants such court be instituted to deal with constitutional matters.

He said that Pakistan People's Party will remain in contact with all the political stakeholders so that constitutional amendment can be made with consensus.

Daily Voice of Masses
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Lingering concerns

Days later, the possible repercussions of what could have been had the government's planned amendments to the Constitution been bulldozed through parliament are still being discussed.

One thing seems clear: the government must have anticipated how strong the blowback would be if the details of its legislative coup were to leak beforehand. Senior political leaders have spoken about the lengths to which it went to cover its tracks, to the extent that it told different stakeholders different things about its plans. It appears that it had good reason to be nervous.

Ever since the reported draft amendments have emerged, lawyers, politicians, academics and analysts from across the political divide have united in expressing their disappointment and disgust. Many are still trying to come to terms with the audacity with which the proposals were put to paper. The intent behind them seems so naked in its ambition that no amount of window-dressing could have ever made them palatable.

Meanwhile, after their humbling at the hands of Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the government, its allies and their shills are no longer as gloating and aggressive as they seemed over the weekend. Having attempted and failed to make drastic changes to the Constitution to favour a handful of individuals, they are now lecturing all and sundry that their 'constitutional package' was, in fact, solely for the public's benefit.

After refusing to show anyone — even their own allies and ministers — a draft of the amendments they were planning, they are now waxing lyrical about the need for parliamentary debate and scrutiny of all important legislation. However, the damage may have already been done. The legal community, for instance, now suddenly seems to be highly agitated. The strong words in which many of its most respected members have condemned the government's move should be taken with the seriousness they deserve.

It is unclear for now whether the government will make another attempt to tweak the Constitution. Embarrassed after failing to muster the numbers during the high-stakes drama that played out all weekend, it will need time to regroup. It has also shown its hand and lost the element of surprise. This alone may force it to abandon the strategy altogether, especially after the strong pushback it has received from the legal community. Whatever the case may be, it would be well advised not to make another attempt in the manner it did last time.

There is a reason why the Constitution is a protected document that requires two-thirds of parliament's strength to acquiesce to any changes. Attempting to override this protocol by hiding legislative proposals and coercing other lawmakers to vote for them not only hurts our democracy but also signals that those making the changes may not be acting in good faith.

The other love

F.S. Aijazuddin

Bureaucrats wed twice — to a natural spouse, and also to an extracurricular distraction.

One was reminded of this intellectual infidelity when reading a volume of modern (ie, post-revolution) Persian poetry — Honeyed Poison — translated by a Pakistani diplomat, Malik M. Danish. A graduate from Lums, Punjab University and Georgetown University, Danish is the latest in a line of officials who will be remembered for their literary contributions.

One could begin with names like the Mu-ghal emperor Akbar's wazir Abul Fazl. He spent his spare hours chronicling his master's court and its functions. Closer in time and to home, though, is the 19th-century engineer Kanhaiya Lal. He worked in the Public Works Department for 30 years before retiring as superintendent engineer in 1885.

His legacies to the architectural visage of Lahore have survived time — Government College, Montgomery and Lawrence Halls, the then Mayo School of Arts, to name a few. 'Si monumentum requiris, circumspice'. (If you seek [his] monument, look around you.) Kanhaiya Lal's equally enduring achievement is his book Tareekh-i-Lahore, first published in 1884 (a year before his retirement), and republished many times.

Since then, there have been Syed Muha-mmud Latif's magisterial histories of the Punjab (1891) and of Lahore (1892). Latif's official responsibilities, though, were as an extrajudicial assistant commissioner.

Lepel Griffin (once chief secretary Punjab, 1880) assembled the genealogies of the Punjab chiefs in 1890. In it, he sifted the proof of research from the fiction of family legends. (His modern counterpart — the former high commis-

sioner to Pakistan Sir Nicholas Barrington — absorbed himself in Islamabad, pruning the family trees of Pakistan's prominent families.)

Sir Charles Aitchison, even while lieutenant-governor of the Punjab, found the time to compile his 11-volume Collection of Treasures, Engagements, and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring Countries (1862-1892). Subsequent research into Punjab's history continued with the History of the Punjab Hill States by another official, J. Hutchison, and his colleague, J. Ph. Vogel (1933).

More recently, Dr M.S. Randhawa (an ICS officer), Parsi lawyer Karl Khand-al-a-vala and Dr B.N. Goswami (who left the ICS for academia), through their seminal research — brought painting done in the Punjab hills into the plains of the art world's consciousness. Some like G. Mueenuddin (once of the ICS, later our chief negotiator in the Indus Waters Treaty) had much to tell, if only his pen had not been so shy.

Every retired bureaucrat in Pakistan feels impelled to publish their version of a history they could not prevent. They believe that their book — whether a biography or an autobiography — will ensure them the bronze of recognition, if not the gold of immortality. Not all can disguise to paraphrase American poet and essayist Mark Strand that 'their expressive part [was] rather tedious — never curious or responsive, but blind and self-serving'.

Strand foresaw perhaps the recent publication of memoirs by a former bureaucrat, responsible in the 1990s for the ingenious yellow cab and yellow tractor schemes, and later the squalid birth of the IPPs.

There was a time when bureaucrats saw themselves as modern Medicis — patrons of the

arts. B.A. Kureishi and Mukhtar Masood spring to mind. Which one of their successors today would expend their energies on restoring the Lahore museum?

Kureishi sponsored Sadequain there as an artist in residence. Squirrelled in the museum's basement, Sadequain produced many inimitable masterpieces. His tour de force — its painted ceiling — has become Lahore's distant echo of the Sistine chapel.

Who today would commission two of Pakistan's greats — Sadequain and Sha-kir Ali — to paint a mural, each in his unique style? They hang in the Punjab Public Library, a contest using brushes, a visual bait bazi between Akbar's singer Tansen, and his rival Bajju Bawra.

Malik Danish found his Persian muse in a language teacher at Jhelum and then in Dr Athar Masood, a fellow bureaucrat with a passion for Persian poetry. Danish is a br-ave scholar to venture into Persian poetry when the very word 'Iran' releases thunderbolts of sanctions from Washington, D.C.

If one had to isolate a few stanzas from among Danish's 20 poets — the 'frightened flowers' in a traumatised Iran — they would be from Mehdi Akhavan-e-Sales' Lament. He speaks for every Iranian and Pakistani: 'My house has caught fire, a deadly fire/ which is burning the engravings/ I etched with my heart's blood.'

Or Qeyser Aminpour's moving advice on behalf of fellow authors to readers everywhere: 'My hairs are turning white/ as pages of my book are turning black.' He concludes: 'Read my works/ Dot by dot/ Word by word/ Line by line/ and count the verses in my Divan/ Hair by Hair.' -- Courtesy Dawn

Debatable debate

Shahzad Sharjeel

Is leadership about oratory, rabble-rousing, long marches, or dharna in our context? Although political campaigns worldwide rely on debating ability, so do debating societies; these are forums for expanding discourse. While political activists and leaders must be engaging, recourse to incitement and invective only reflects a lack of substance.

Immediately after the first US presidential debate this election season, commentators and pundits felt Kamala Harris succeeded in goading Donald Trump into areas his camp would have him steer clear of. Her strategy was to make Trump implicate himself, and he did just that.

Traditionally, deep thinking with a proper mix of action set leaders apart from philosophers. In the subcontinent's context, Abul Kalam Azad and Bahadur Yar Jang were the best orators, but the leaders were Gandhi, Nehru, and Jinnah.

Among the recent world leaders, Barack Obama was that rare combination of being bookish yet communicating lucidly. However, even his ability to 'connect with the people' was questioned as, according to his critics, he could sometimes be 'too cerebral'. The dumbing down of discourse, ostensibly in the public interest, affects the quality of debate worldwide, the Democratic and Republican candidates' debates being no exception.

The battle of wits, at times dimwits, has come down to name-calling, slurs, and digging up past peccadillos and hush money trails. Regardless of the public laundering of candidates' alleged misdeeds — war crime, tax eva-

sion, sexual offences, murder, rape, etc — they continue to be voted in worldwide. The more they expose themselves, the more their ilk identifies with them, promoting a slimy culture.

Interestingly, earlier in her vice presidency, Ms Harris was not considered the sharpest tool in the drawer by commentators; however, compared to the failing mental alertness of her boss, Joe Biden, and now her competitor, Trump, she appears even-keeled.

Imagine a US-style debate between leading contenders for power in Pakistan. The debate would contain everything but a solution to myriad problems. There would be hardly anything in the debate for their audience other than the realisation that they are equally adept at pointing out challenges and their adversaries' contributions to it but unable to propose a tangible way out of the morass.

Deep thinkers are loath to speak and debate and cannot organise a rave in a brewery, let alone a political party. The charming orators can indulge in much rabble-rousing but cannot think to save their lives. Usually, after fulminating and bluffing their way to power, they gather a team of thinkers, also called strategists and technocrats, to run the actual business of governance. Lately, even the proverbial one-eyed leader has been missing, and it is a case of the blind leading the blind.

Take revenue collection, for instance. The leadership across the civil-military spectrum refuses to cough up its fair share of taxes. It is constantly hamstringing by one vested interest or another, usually surrogates, in broadening the tax base. Thus, the leadership makes half-hearted

attempts to bring external experts to run the FBR. It turns out that the external experts entrusted with the shake-up got so shaken so fast by the interest groups that they required a check-up from the neck up.

In a two-way or even a three-way debate, what would PML-N, PTI and PPP candidates say about the tax-to-GDP ratio, SOEs draining the exchequer, the energy sector, governance, reliance on the Fund pro-gramme, the investment climate, civil-military disequilibrium, etc? One good thing that might come out of such a debate is a public realisation of the sheer impossibility of the country's situation. It would also expose the jostling for office as nothing but a power grab.

While discussing public discourse, ignoring the recent PTI gathering near Islamabad is difficult. What the KP chief minister said to a cheering crowd of thousands is too repulsive to repeat. His leader Imran Khan's endorsement from behind bars is unsurprising. He may not be the pioneer of abuse in public discourse, but to borrow from the subcontinent's musicology, he definitely merits the status of the 'Barey Khan Sahib' of the 'Gaali gharana'. The party chairperson, Barrister Gohar, apologised on the floor of the House for the misogyny-laden language used at the rally, and as expected, Imran Khan quickly dubbed all such apologists 'cowards'.

Whether in one-on-one debates, televised speeches, or public rallies, what is said and how it is said reveals the workings of the state or the lack thereof. It also reflects on the audience; their leadership choice measures their self-esteem. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Rana Ihsan says: National economy inching towards 'growth' from stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industry Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan Thursday said the national economy had begun to show steady progress due to the prudent policies introduced by the incumbent government, marking a shift from stability to 'growth'.

"All economic indicators are moving in the right direction," he said while addressing a news conference after the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) 100 Index gained over 1,500 points, surging to 81,900, which he called a 'superb performance' and a 'big achievement.'

He noted that the stock exchange's positive trajectory reflected market-based sentiments and the confidence of investors and entrepreneurs in government policies.

"This indicates that the agreement with the IMF will be achieved successfully, hopefully by September 25, and the national economy will continue on its growth trajectory," he expressed confidence.

The coordinator added that Pakistan's shift from 'stability' to 'positive' regarding its debt liability and external

challenges was also being acknowledged by the world's top credit agencies like Fitch and Moody's.

Sharing some official statistics, Ihsan Afzal said during the first two months of the current fiscal year, the country's export sector witnessed a remarkable increase, with textile and clothing exports rising by 13 percent year on year basis, IT services by 27 percent, and overall exports by 7.2 percent during July and August.

During the same period, he said the country's remittances increased by 44 percent, reaching \$5.9 billion, which

he termed a 'massive surge' reflecting the confidence of overseas Pakistanis in government policies.

Similarly, he mentioned that the current account deficit declined remarkably, standing at \$0.2 billion, while the exchange rate against the dollar remained stable and fluctuated according to market trends.

Additionally, 14 sectors in the Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) area showed positive growth, surging by almost 2.38 percent year on year, he added. The coordinator also highlighted the reduced inflation rate of 9.6 percent.



ISLAMABAD: Russian Deputy Minister of energy and Deputy Minister Economic development held a meeting with Pakistani delegation led by Dr. Musadik Malik.



AJMAN: Hussain Muhammed, Consul General met Salem Al Suwaidi, Director General of the Ajman Chamber at the Chamber's headquarters. Ali Rashid Al Kaitoob, Executive Director of the Studies and Investment Development Sector at the Ajman Chamber and Ali Zeeb Khan, Trade and Investment Counsellor Pakistan Consulate were also present during the meeting.

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 997 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 997.95 more points, a positive change of 1.24 percent, closing at 81,459.29 points against 80,461.34 points on the last working day.

A total of 459,037,985 shares were traded during the day as compared to 400,195,963 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 18.610 billion against Rs. 15.904 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 469 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 145 of them recorded gains and 239 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 85 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 35,184,576 shares at Rs 8.01 per share, K-Electric Limited with 23,819,654 shares at Rs 3.99 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 22,930,170 shares at Rs 1.33 per share.

Envoy says: Enhancing Pak-Swiss trade ties top priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Swiss Ambassador to Pakistan George Steiner on Thursday stressed that strengthening bilateral trade relations and economic cooperation was his top priority.

Efforts to the effect would ultimately benefit the people of both nations, he said addressing the the launching ceremony of Swiss homeopathic medicines in Pakistan, according to a press release.

He praised the successful partnership between Pakistani and Swiss companies, and expressed the hope for increased collaboration and investment from Swiss companies, leveraging Pakistan's 25 million population and diverse industries.

He, however, said PIA has halted Peshawar to Karachi operation for the last several months, due to which the business community has not only faced difficulties but also inflicted huge revenue loss to the national carrier PIA.

Jam, US trade representative discuss bilateral trade expansion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday held a virtual meeting with United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai to strengthen bilateral trade relations between both countries.

The minister highlighted that the US is Pakistan's leading trade destination and expressed desire to further expand this partnership, said a news release.

He underscored the country's agricultural strengths particularly in mangoes and dates, and noted the potential for growth in value-added agro-services.

Katherine Tai acknowledged Pakistan's contributions, particularly its agricultural exports, and praised the quality of Pakistani mangoes.

She also mentioned the potential for US beef exports to Pakistan, given the large demand in the market.

Both sides discussed issues of mutual interest, agreeing to further strengthen their trade relations. During the meeting, it was confirmed that the next Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) meeting would be scheduled soon, along with discussions on agriculture, textiles, women's empowerment, IT and E-commerce.

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim
KARACHI (APP): Five ships, Maersk Pittsburgh, Maersk Cairo, Lotus-A, CD Fortune and FSM scheduled to load/offload Container, Sand and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively during last 24 hours. Meanwhile two more ships, Tirua and MSC Adelaide are arrived at outer anchorage port on Thursday. Eleven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a chemicals carrier 'Chemroad Jupiter' left the port on today morning, while five more ships.

Russian Deputy PM's visit to boost trade: PFC CEO

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq Thursday said that Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk's visit will further promote trade ties between the two countries with a special focus on energy sector and infrastructure, paving the way for closer economic collaboration in the future.

Commenting here on the visit, he said Overchuk's visit comes at a crucial time when both countries were looking to deepen economic cooperation in key areas, including energy, transportation, and logistics.

He said Russia, as one of the world's largest energy producers, was keen to expand its energy exports, while Pakistan was looking to secure reliable energy sources for its growing industrial needs.

SCCI demands resumption of Peshawar-Karachi PIA flight operation

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) has expressed concern over closure of PIA flight operation from Peshawar to Karachi and demanded for its immediate resumption. Fuad Ishaq, president of the SCCI, in a statement issued here on Thursday, said PIA was operating only one flight from Peshawar to Karachi

PBS capacity building, data digitization vital for service delivery

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Muzammil Aslam has reiterated the commitment of the economic team to bolster provincial resources, particularly towards education and health sectors.

He expressed these remarks during the inaugural meeting of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) led National Network of Economic Thinktanks (NNETT) Advisory Committee.

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

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Mariyam 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. Mariyam 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.

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.

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.

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 Empowerment 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 Mariyam Aurangzeb.

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.

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.

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.

Child protection unit inaugurated in Mardan

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Child 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.

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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.

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.

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,

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.

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.

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.

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-

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Minister of Energy (Power and Petroleum Divisions) Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister of Communications Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Senator Sherry Rehman, and senior government officials were also present during the meeting.

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.

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

Global artists to join Sindh's cultural celebration from September 26: Asif Hyder Shah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Hyder Shah Thursday said that the World Culture Festival will leave a lasting legacy, promoting cultural exchange, preserving traditional arts and inspiring creativity which will be a benchmark for future cultural festivals in Pakistan.

shared appreciation for cultural heritage, he said.

The World Culture Festival Karachi will revitalise the city's cultural landscape, cementing its status as a cultural hub, he said, adding, that this event will put Karachi on the global cultural map and will attract cultural enthusiasts.

He said that this cultural festival will promote cultural diplomacy, strengthening ties between Pakistan and participating countries.

Secretaries also extend their gratitude to participating artists, sponsors, and partners.

Talking to private news channels, he explained that the 35-day festival will commence on September 26 where the festival will provide a platform for local artists to showcase their talents alongside international performers.

He said we are thankful for the support and collaboration that has made this festival possible.

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This opportunity not only will further boost their confidence but also expose them to global audiences, paving the way for future collaborations and cultural exchange, he added.

By bringing together artists from 40 countries, the festival fosters global connections and inspires a

shared appreciation for cultural heritage, he said.

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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.

SMIU Syndicate meeting held

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Madressatul Islam University's 30th meeting of Syndicate was held here on Thursday under the chair of the Vice Chancellor Dr Mujeeb Sahrai. Various academic, administrative and financial matters were discussed in detail and budget for fiscal year 2024-25 was recommended to the Senate of the varsity. The Syndicate appreciated the vice chancellor, deans, faculty and officers of the university for successfully organising the 1st and 2nd Global Research Congresses and 11 international conferences during the last two years. The Syndicate also lauded Government of Sindh's decision of giving second tenure to Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai as vice chancellor of SMIU.

remarked that during the last four years SMIU has come out from financial crisis and now has a surplus budget. Additionally, during the said period enrollment has increased from 1800 to more than 5500.

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ISLAMABAD: British Deputy High Commissioner Saeed Ghani speaking at a seminar.

British Deputy High Commissioner says: Pakistan's blue economy could generate over \$100 billion in revenue

KARACHI (APP): The British Deputy High Commissioner in Karachi Sarah Mooney said that incorporating blue economy in the national economy is of utmost importance for a country like Pakistan.

She stated this while addressing as a chief guest at a World Maritime Day 2024 seminar organized by the Directorate of Electronic Media and Publication (DEMP) in collaboration with Maritime Training Institute at a local hotel on Thursday.

She said the blue economy industry had not been used up to its full potential, while it has the potential to generate a revenue of more than \$100bn.

Director General Press Information Department PID Erum Tanveer said that Pakistan's unique geographic position-bridging the East and West, with warm, deep-water ports and a 1,000 km-long coastline-places us at the center of global maritime affairs. It also makes us acutely aware of the challenges we face in today's rapidly changing climate.

Sarah Mooney said that Russia has a coastline of 1001 km, which is home to many different species of marine animals, plants and mineral resources.

She said Climate change is a global challenge with profound implications for our oceans, coastlines, and communities.

Sindh govt to pay Rs 1.5bn for repair, restoration of over 100 roads in the city: Ghani

Independent Report KARACHI: Sindh Local Government Minister, Saeed Ghani, has said the repair work has been launched to restore the road network in Karachi that was damaged in the recent monsoon rains. The Local Government Minister stated this on Thursday while talking to media persons here at the Sindh Assembly building. Ghani informed media persons that the Sindh government would pay Rs 1.5 billion for the repair and restoration of over 100 roads in the city under the control of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation. He said the Sindh government was likely to release another grant of around Rs two billion for the repair of the

damaged roads under the administrative control of different towns in the city. He said the reports were likely to be received from 25 towns in Karachi by the coming Monday containing details of the roads damaged due to rains in their respective jurisdictions.

The Local Government Minister maintained that the Sindh government was under an obligation to restore the road network in Karachi irrespective of the finances required for the purpose. He said that a meeting held the previous day with the Sindh Chief Minister in the chair had also decided that drainage systems would also be rebuilt along with restoration of the damaged road network.

During the course of proceeding, the Chief Justice remarked that how did the applicant know that a wrong result has been prepared. He said that after the box is opened, form 45 or 75 has no importance.

The CJP said that the most important evidence in elections is the vote. Form 45 is filled by the presiding officer.

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KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Central Information Secretary, Shazia Marri present flowers bouquet Peoples Party (PPP) Women Wing President, Faryal Talpur during meeting held at Zardari House in Karachi.

DC chairs meeting to review performance of anti polio campaign

HYDERABAD (APP): Shaheed Benazirabad Deputy Commissioner Shahriyar Gul Memon chaired a meeting at the DC Office's Darbar Hall to review the performance of the recent anti-polio campaign, EPI, surveillance, and Lady Health Workers Program.

He emphasized improving micro-planning and training for polio teams.

Regarding the vaccination program, Memon directed focal persons to promptly resolve issues and take action against underperforming vaccina-

tion of children against various diseases. He also asked for refusal, newborn, and fully vaccinated child data to be sent to the DC Office.

Memon expressed satisfaction with the Lady Health Workers Program, calling it a crucial health sector program that needs enhancement. He directed officials to submit a report on medicine and other issues within three days for resolution.

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KARACHI: Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Spokesman, Sardar Abdul Rahim along with others addresses to protesters during GDA and allied parties protest demonstration against building new canals to draw additional water from the Indus River, anti-people policies decisions and amending the Irsa Act, held at Karachi press club.

Proposed constitutional amendments to be tabled after achieving consensus: Ameer

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.

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. There was no other country in the world that has hosted such a large number of refugees for such a long time, he added.

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 betterment of the country and the nation.

The federal and provincial governments as well as national and international organizations were striving hard to resolve the issues of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and holistic measures were being taken for their repatriation to Afghanistan, he said adding that repatriation of Afghan nationals illegally staying in Pakistan was policy of the government but we are not using coercive measures for achieving the objective.

Speaking at a meeting held at the office of the Commissioner of Afghan Refugees in Karachi, Muqam urged the international community to increase funding and support to meet the growing needs of Afghan refugees, which require substantial resources, according to a news release on Thursday.

It is deplorable that some elements had overlooked the sincere efforts taken by government and people of Pakistan for assistance and welfare of Afghan nationals and they were proactively pursuing an agenda of creating rifts and inciting hatred between the brotherly neighbors.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with MNA Khursheed Ahmed Junejo during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

Sharjeel Memon calls PTI 'social media terrorists'

KARACHI (INP): Senior Sindh Minister and PPP leader Sharjeel Inam Memon on Thursday said that the PTI was a 'social media terrorist'.

had indulged in maligning Army Chief General Asim Munir and the chief justice of Pakistan. "We can respond to their hate campaign."

Speaking to reporters in Karachi, Sharjeel said it was the parliament's job to introduce amendments in the constitution. "There was a mention of amendments in the Charter of Democracy as well," he said, and added, "It has been PPP's stance that the constitution should be amended after taking all parties in the parliament on board."

Sharjeel accused the PTI leaders of blackmailing the state institutions to seek an NRO for their incarcerated leader Imran Khan and ultimately his release.

"The 18th Amendment was also passed after a consensus was developed between the parties," he recalled.

He said efforts were still being made to convince JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to support the amendments proposed by the ruling coalition. "If he understands our point of view, he will definitely support us," he hoped.

On the other hand, the federal government has also decided to meet with the leadership of Jamaat-e-Islami.

The minister said it was unfortunate that the Afghan Consul General's officials did not rise from their seats at a ceremony held in Peshawar while the national anthem was being played.

He was of the view there was no harm in talking to the PTI on the subject. He said that the PTI

"KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur ought to have asked them to stand up," he opined.



KARACHI: Sarah Mooney, Deputy High Commissioner of the British High Commission, receives a memento during the World Maritime Day seminar organized by DEMP and MTI at a local hotel.

ACP stages children's theatre play 'Ali and the Dragon'

KARACHI (APP): Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi and Rang Manj collaborated to organize the children's theatre play "Ali and the Dragon" at Auditorium II.

include popular plays for children like "Ali Baba aur Chalis Chor," "Aladdin," "Sindbad," and "Sultan," all of which have received great appreciation. Sabeen also recalled the early days when they performed in schools with limited resources, including no electricity or basic facilities.

The play witnessed enthusiastic participation from students of various schools, who thoroughly enjoyed the performance.

She expressed her gratitude to President Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi Muhammad Ahmed Shah, acknowledging his significant efforts in reviving theatre and his unwavering support for their initiatives. The story of "Ali and the Dragon" revolves around a kingdom ruled by a kind-hearted king, where the people are troubled by a dragon that destroys their crops, pushing them to the brink of starvation. Desperate to save his people, the king promises a grand reward to anyone who can defeat the beast. A brave young man, Ali, along with the skilled royal chef, Shaheen, embarks on a daring quest to confront and defeat the dragon.

Amir JI Karachi, Munham Zafar strongly condemning the incident has demanded of the authorities to bring the culprits to book.

Two sisters electrocuted to death by real brother, accused held

Two sisters were electrocuted to death by their real brother over domestic issues. Police arrested the accused.

The incident took place in Muhajir Colony, B-Section police station jurisdiction in Nawabshah.

The culprit identified as Kamran Ali killed his two sisters Razia and Aleesha by electrocuting them.

Police reached the scene and arrested the murderer of sisters.

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