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Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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Federal Cabinet approves plan to boost Gwadar Port's operations

PM hails 2% policy rate cut, says it will boost economic activities

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs to direct all government departments to route 50% of their imports, such as wheat, sugar, and fertilizer, through the Gwadar Port.

Earlier, the prime minister had issued the directives to increase the Gwadar port operations to ensure development and prosperity of the Balochistan province. He also directed that 50% of all public sector

imports should be ensured through the Gwadar Port.

The meeting of the cabinet was held here under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The cabinet also instructed to increase the volume of exports from Gwadar Port in the future. A subcommittee of the cabinet will be formed to submit a quarterly report on imports and exports through Gwadar Port to the cabinet.

The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Communications,

approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Pakistan and Sri Lanka for the issuance of a commemorative postal stamp to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The Ministry of Industries and Production presented a report from the Cabinet Committee on Sugar Exports. The cabinet expressed satisfaction that, due to a well-timed decision on sugar exports, the coun-

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan addresses the 23rd meeting of the Ministers of the Member States of the SCO 'Responsible for Foreign Economic and Trade Activities'.

Pakistan Chairs 23rd meeting of SCO ministers responsible for foreign economy, trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Commerce Minister, Jam Kamal Khan chaired the 23rd Meeting of Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States responsible for foreign economy and trade activities on Thursday.

Pakistan hosted this gathering in its capacity as the chair of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, the second-highest forum of the organization, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

The ministerial meeting was preceded by the 47th Meeting of the Commission of Senior Officials (CSO) of SCO Member States on 10th and 11th September 2024, also held in Islamabad.

In his opening remarks,

Jam Kamal Khan, welcomed his counterpart Ministers from the SCO fraternity to Pakistan and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the laudable aims and objective of the SCO to promote peace and prosperity in the region.

While acknowledging the global economic challenges facing the region, he emphasized the vital role of the SCO in addressing these issues through cooperation and constructive engagement. To this end, he conveyed Pakistan's strong commitment and readiness to contribute to and collaborate with all Member States to achieve our shared goals.

"Let us seize this opportunity to forge stronger

Continued on page 2

CM Sindh calls on President Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah Thursday called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr and discussed matters relating to mutual concerns.

Chairman Pakistan People's Party and MNA, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Provincial Minister Sindh Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Khan Maher were also present in the meeting.

Overall situation and ongoing development projects in Sindh came under discussion during the meeting.

The president directed to expedite the work on the development projects in the province.

Additionally, the security situation and law and order in Sindh were also reviewed during the meeting.



GWADAR: Commandant 12 Corps Balochistan Lt. General Rahat Naseem Ahmed Khan addressing an interactive session held at Gwadar University

SBP slashes policy rate by 200bps to 17.5%

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan, Thursday, slashed policy rate by 200 basis points to 17.5 percent owing to sharply declining inflation and moderate pick up in the economic activity during the past months.

The central bank, in the monetary policy statement issued here, informed that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) reviewed overall economic and financial situation and decided to decrease the policy rate to 17.5 percent effective from September 13, 2024. The MPC observed that both headline and core inflation fell sharply over the past two months with a disinflation pace exceeding the committee's expectations, mainly due to the delay in the implementation of planned increases in administered energy prices and

favorable movement in global oil and food prices. The inherent uncertainty related to these developments warranted a cautious monetary policy stance, the committee acknowledged and underscored the importance of the tight monetary policy stance in driving the sustained decline in inflation over the past year.

The MPC also reviewed key developments since its last meeting that have implications for the macroeconomic outlook including sharp decline in global oil prices, stability in SBP's FX reserves despite weak official inflows and continued debt repayments, decline in secondary market yields of government securities, improved inflation expectations and

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Info Minister vows to address challenge of climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar has expressed government's commitment to address the challenge of climate change in collaboration with international partners.

He was addressing a news conference flanked by Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam in Islamabad on Thursday.

The Minister said contribution of Pakistan in global carbon emission is miniscule, but unfortunately, the country is included in the list of those nations which are suffering badly due to the hazardous impacts of climate change.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over meeting of Provincial Cabinet

Zero out of schools children campaign launched: Chief Minister reiterates Govt's resolve to make all closed schools functional; gives task to Secretary Education

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has reiterated his government's resolve to make all closed schools functional and in this regard, gave task to the Secretary Education.

He said that he wants to see at least 90 percent schools functional in two months.

He asserted that we would make deductions in our public sector development programme (PSDP), but would make all the schools functional.

He announced that by the grace of Allah Almighty, we would open all the schools and would get all out of schools children admitted in the schools.

He said that we would provide whatever resources are required, but would

want every child in the schools. He said that he is ready to recruit even 10,000 teachers on contract and announced the minimum wage of Rs. 37,000 for the teachers.

The Chief Minister was addressing the zero out of schools children campaign and celebration of the international literacy week arranged by the Education Department here at the Sikandar Jamali Auditorium located in the Civil Secretariat on Thursday.

The Provincial Minister for Education, Ms. Raheela Hameed Durrani, other ministers, parliamentary secretaries, members of the assembly, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, administrative secretaries of Education and other departments were present at

the ceremony. The Chief Minister said that he is delighted to be part of the zero out of schools campaign.

He said that it is his utmost endeavour to get all children admitted in schools.

He urged the non governmental organizations and other social welfare organizations to pay attention towards Balochistan.

He said that we have to move ahead instead of making criticism.

He pointed out that large number of children are also out of the schools because of the child labour.

While the delay in recruitments of teachers in Education Department and absenteeism of the teachers are also very important is-

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ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Chairman Pakistan People's Party and MNA, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, is also present in the meeting.

CM rules out any big change in provincial cabinet; says portfolios of one or two can be reshuffled

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has ruled out any big change in the cabinet and said that the portfolios of one or two ministers can be changed.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the media persons soon after the session of provincial assembly here on Thursday. The Chief Minister said that the provincial government and opposition are doing their respective jobs. He said that the lighter things happen between the government and

opposition. He said that the legislation has been made in the provincial assembly. The Chief Minister maintained that the repair works have been started in the Quetta city.

To a query, the Chief Minister said that if name of any person has been put in the fourth schedule, then there's also a procedure to exclude it from the list.

The Chief Minister made it clear that there is no possibility of big change in the provincial cabinet. However, the portfolios of one or two ministers can be changed.

Quetta police official kills blasphemy suspect in jail

Monitoring Desk
QUETTA: A Quetta police officer allegedly killed a man being held in custody on suspicion of blasphemy charges, police officials said on Thursday. Quetta Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Muhammad Baloch said that the police officer accused of the killing had been arrested. The officer had accessed a police station where a man accused of blasphemy was being held by pretending he was his relative before opening fire on him. The man accused of blasphemy had been taken into custody earlier in the week and moved to a more heavily fortified station due to an enraged mob demanding that he be handed over to them.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam addresses a press conference on 'Recharge Pakistan Project' at the PTV Headquarters.

Balochistan cabinet approves Prosecution Act, amendment in Advisory Council of BRA

Independent Report
QUETTA: Provincial cabinet chaired by CM Sarfraz Bugti finalizes recommendations for appointment of VCs of two universities; gives option of merger of federal levies employees in provincial levies, nomination of a family member for employment nearing retirement

The Balochistan cabinet has approved the Prosecution Act 2024 and amendment and revival in the Advisory Council of Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA) here on Thursday.

The Balochistan cabinet accorded these approvals in its meeting chaired by the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti here at the CM's secretariat on Thursday.

The members of the

provincial cabinet, advisors, parliamentary secretaries as well as the Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan and other concerned high ups were in attendance at the meeting.

The Provincial cabinet gave final shape to the recommendations for appointment of the vice chancellors of two public sector universities of the province.

It was decided in the cabinet meeting that the interviews would be conducted for appointment of Vice Chancellor of the Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences.

The cabinet gave option of merger of federal levies employees in provincial levies and nomination of their one family member for employment nearing retirement.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of International Maritime Organization Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM Shabbaz praises friendly nations' support IMF board to review Pakistan's \$7b loan on September 25 after key conditions met

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has confirmed that its Executive Board will meet on September 25 to discuss the approval of Pakistan's \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The loan is crucial for stabilising Pakistan's economy, which has been grappling with rising inflation and dwindling reserves.

IMF spokesperson Julie Kozack announced the meeting during a press briefing on Thursday, saying, "We are very happy that we can say now that the board meeting is scheduled for September 25."

This announcement comes after Pakistan secured the necessary financing assurances from developing and emerging economies.

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Governor Balochistan calls on Governor Kamran Tessori

KARACHI (APP): Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail called on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori here at Governor House on Thursday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

Governor Kamran Tessori said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was taking interest in the development of Karachi.



He said that the exchange of delegations from Balochistan would be beneficial for taking benefit to each other's experiences.

Governor Balochistan also praised the ongoing IT classes and other projects under the Governor's Initiative launched by Kamran Khan Tessori and said that he was very impressed by these initiatives.

Governor Mandokhail expressed pleasant surprise by ringing the "Bell of Hope".

Governor Sindh informed Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail about the aims and objectives of "Bell of Hope".

Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail inspected the ration bags and also praised the initiative of Governor Sindh.

Governor Mandokhail also planted a sapling in the Governor's House as part of the tree plantation campaign on the occasion.

K-P CM's call to talk with Afghanistan: Defence Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Thursday criticized Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's statement about holding direct dialogue with Afghanistan, calling it a direct attack on the federation.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he said that no province has the authority to hold direct talks with any foreign country.

He also highlighted the

initiatives taken by the Speaker of the National Assembly to ensure the supremacy of Parliament.

The Minister said the Sunni Ittehad Council had not lost their representation due to the Speaker's issuance of production orders.

He urged that the tradition set by Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq should continue, stressing the importance of following rules and laws.

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Churna Island designated MPA, boosting marine conservation efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP): After years of dedicated marine protection efforts, Churna Island has finally been designated as the second Marine Protected Area (MPA) by the Government of Balochistan.

This long-awaited decision marks a significant step in protecting the island's rich marine biodiversity and reflects the sustained efforts and achievements of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Pakistan towards coastal and marine protection in Pakistan, a news release said.

IUCN Pakistan, which serves as the convener of the National Coordinating Body (NCB) - a joint-stakeholder platform chaired by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC), has been actively engaged in coastal conservation and governance across the country.

The marine initiative launched by IUCN Pakistan in 2016 under the Mangroves for Future (MFF) program, with support from NCB and its members, including the Forest & Wildlife Department, Government of Balochistan, has worked diligently over the

years on strategic research, identification, and enhancement of marine protected areas in Pakistan.

These efforts resulted in attention towards four proposed locations for MPA which included Astola Island, Churna Island, Miani Hor, and Gwadar Bay. The proposed areas were considered vulnerable to human activities and interventions, endangering their preservation and fragile ecosystems.

The developments by IUCN Pakistan and NCB members led to the historic milestone of Astola Island's official recognition as the first-ever Marine Protected Area in Pakistan.

Following Astola's designation, the approval of Churna Island as an MPA showcases the consistent efforts by the Forest and Wildlife Department, the Government of Balochistan, primarily supported and assisted by IUCN Pakistan's strategic expertise.

Churna Island serves as a significant marine hotspot, renowned for its rich marine life, including 25 species of coral reef, 250 fish species, several migratory bird species, endangered whale sharks, and sea turtles.

The MPA designation

will provide the necessary legal protection to Churna Island's surrounding water, regulating human activities such as fishing, tourism, and industrial pollution, which have posed a threat to the island's ecosystem in recent years.

IUCN Pakistan's vision and approach towards marine protection serves as a sustainable model for preserving biodiversity, promoting responsible resource use, and ensuring long-term conservation of marine ecosystems. Along NCB members, IUCN is actively contributing through further programs and studies to establish and implement management plans for both Churna Island and the previously declared MPA, Astola Island.

Country Representative, IUCN Pakistan, Mahmood Akhtar Cheema commended the Balochistan Forest and Wildlife Department for its efforts in achieving the important milestone for marine conservation. This designation is expected to have lasting positive impacts on Pakistan's marine biodiversity and the coastal communities that depend on these ecosystems for their livelihood.

Pakistan chairs 23rd meeting...

Continued from page 1 partnerships, enhance regional cooperation, and pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for all our peoples", he added.

In their national statements, the SCO Ministers also deliberated in detail and shared their views on the prospects and measures to deepen the economic and trade cooperation among SCO countries.

The collective vision of the SCO Ministers was articulated in the Ministerial Statement adopted by the Meeting, which inter alia underscored the importance of fair trade practices and the pursuit of sustainability in economic development.

The statement also emphasized the need to counter the protectionist trade measures, promote innovation and cooperation in digital technologies as well as strengthen trade ties within the SCO region.

To this end, they underscored the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and called for strengthening a WTO-based non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. Acknowledging the worsening impact of climate change, the Statement also emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation in accordance with UN Sustainable Development Agenda to mitigate its impact on regional economies.

One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the approval of the Pakistani proposal on Cooperation between the Trade Promotion Organizations (TPOs) of the SCO Region. Implementation of this Pakistani proposal will meaningfully enhance collaboration between the TPOs of SCO member States, facilitate greater trade integration and create new economic opportunities across the region.

Chief Minister reiterates...

Continued from page 1

sues. He regretfully pointed out that our teachers want that their posting is made in nearby their homes.

He said that we are preparing system for recruitments of the teachers at district level.

He said that all the teachers would be recruited on merit. Nor we would allow anyone sell jobs, adding he asserted.

He on the occasion vowed to end menace of cheating in examinations.

The Provincial Minister for Education and Chief Secretary also addressed the gathering and expressed deep concern over the increased number of out of schools children in the province and vowed to play their part to address the issue.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister and others also distributed school bags among the children.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti inaugurating special campaign for admission of children in education institutions under Out of School Children Campaign

Pakistan strongly condemns Israeli airstrikes on Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone in Gaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday strongly condemned the airstrikes by Israeli occupation forces on the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone in Khan Yunis, Gaza, on September 10, which claimed the lives of 40 civilians. "Executed in an area designated as a safe zone for displaced persons by the Israeli occupation forces themselves, constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law," Foreign Office Spokesperson Miumt Zahra Baloch said in her weekly briefing.

She said the carnage in Khan Yunis, without prior warning and in defiance of basic protections, demonstrated a disregard for human life and Israel's genocidal designs against the Palestinian people. "The targeting of individuals seeking refuge in a designated safe zone represents a gross breach of international humanitarian law which necessitates the protection of civilian populations and humanitarian zones."

"We call on the United Nations Security Council to play its role in preventing Israeli occupation forces from continuing with their genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people and holding them accountable for their war crimes and crimes against humanity," the spokesperson added.

She said Pakistan also strongly condemned the re-

cent decision by the Delhi High Court to uphold the Indian decision to proscribe several political parties, advocating the rights of the Kashmiri people. Banning of indigenous political parties, she said, was part of India's relentless campaign to subjugate the Kashmiri people, stifle dissent, and consolidate its occupation of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The FO Spokesperson emphasized that the parties that advocated the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir were being silenced under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) - a law that had increasingly been used as a tool for repression of the Kashmiri people.

The Indian judiciary's role in "legitimizing these actions follows recent decisions sanctioning the suppression of legitimate political voices in Jammu and Kashmir. Last year, the Indian Supreme Court upheld the illegal and unilateral acts of 2019 in IIOJK," she added.

"We urge India to remove the ban on all political parties illegally outlawed in IIOJK; respect the rights and freedoms of the Kashmiri people; release all political prisoners and human rights defenders; and faithfully implement the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir," she said.

SBP slashes...

Continued from page 1 confidence of businesses and lower than target tax collection by FBR during July-August 2024.

Taking into account these developments as well as the potential risks to the inflation outlook and the latest rate cut decision, the MPC assessed that the real interest rate will still remain adequately positive to bring inflation down to the medium-term target of 5 to 7% and help ensure macro-economic stability.

Taking stock of developments in the Real Sector the MPC observed that recent high-frequency sales indicators reflected a moderate pick up in the economic activity as domestic cement and POL sales increased in August while manufacturing firms reported increased capacity utilization. The latest business sentiment surveys also support the assessment of a moderate pickup, it added.

The MPC noted that the outlook for the agriculture sector has weakened due to an expected shortfall in cotton production but the continued ease in inflationary pressures and the unfolding impact of recent policy rate cuts will support the growth prospects in the industry and services sectors. "On balance, therefore, the real GDP growth outlook remained in line with the MPC's earlier assessment of 2.5 - 3.5 percent for FY25," it added.

President for further expanding trade ties with Sweden, Belgium

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday stressed the need to further enhancing the bilateral trade and economic ties with Sweden and Belgium.

He was talking to the envoys of Sweden and Belgium who presented their diplomatic credentials during a ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The president received credentials from the Ambassador-designate of Sweden, Alexandra Berg Von Linde, and the Ambassador-designate of Belgium, Charles-Idesbald Van Der Gracht De Rommerswael, who also held separate meetings with him.

President Zardari facilitated the two envoys on their appointment and expressed the hope that they would play their role in further improving mutually beneficial cooperation with Pakistan.

Talking to Ambassador Charles-Idesbald Van Der Gracht De Rommerswael, the president highlighted that Pakistan greatly valued its relations with Belgium.

He said that Belgium was an important trading partner and Pakistan wanted to further enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation with the country. During the meeting with Ambassador Alexandra Berg Von Linde, President Zardari said that Pakistan and Sweden enjoyed friendly and cooperative relations based on mutual respect and understanding. He underlined the need to further strengthen the bilateral relations for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

Earlier upon their arrival at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the envoys were presented the guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

MNAs call on PM; reiterate support to govt's public welfare initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Members of the National Assembly from different constituencies called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday.

The parliamentarians who met with the prime minister included Dr Zulfikar Bhatti, Chaudhary Ifkhar Nazeer, Rana Iradat Sharif, Wajid Pullain Baloch, Rana Muhammad Hayat and Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, according to a PM

Office press release. They apprised the prime minister of the progress in ongoing public welfare projects in their respective constituencies.

Lauding the prime minister for bringing in economic stability in the country, the parliamentarians also reiterated their cooperation for the initiatives aimed at the national development and public welfare.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti issued orders for implementation on the demands made by a disabled artist, Naser Ahmed, who reached the provincial assembly to sell his own children.

IMF board to review Pakistan's...

Continued from page 1

opment partners. The \$7 billion loan package had been under discussion since May, and a staff-level agreement was reached in July. Despite this, Pakistan faced delays in finalising the IMF Board's approval. The government has had to meet stringent IMF conditions, including the imposition of a record Rs1.8 trillion in new taxes and electricity price hikes of up to 51%.

Among other conditions, Pakistan agreed to halt the establishment of any new special economic or export processing zones. The country also accepted that tax incentives for existing zones would not be extended after expiry. These measures are part of a broader set of industrial policy changes that, critics say, effectively transfer

control of key economic decisions to the IMF.

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad confirmed that the country arranged over \$2 billion in external financing from lenders other than the IMF.

"All those assurances and external financing have already been arranged by the government, and I don't see any further hurdle now in taking our case to the board," Ahmad said during an analyst briefing on Thursday.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, addressing the federal cabinet earlier in the day, praised the progress in negotiations with the IMF. "We are moving in the right direction with the Fund, and I am hopeful for a positive outcome," he said, while also acknowledging the harshness of the imposed measures.



QUETTA: Malik Amir Dad Khan and Naecm Khan Khilji leading a rally in favour of Pakistan Army organized by Balochistan Awami Khidmatgar Organization

Federal Cabinet approves...

Continued from page 1 try not only earned valuable foreign exchange, but sugar prices remained stable, and sugarcane farmers were adequately rewarded for their efforts.

The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, also approved the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of the Korangi Fish Harbour Authority, Karachi.

The cabinet instructed that all provinces should be given representation on such government boards. Additionally, the cabinet directed that any government-owned corporations with incomplete boards should be fully constituted as soon as possible.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of National Health Services, the cabinet approved the appointment of Muhammad Yaqoob, Assistant Director of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan, as the Federal Inspector Drug Balochistan.

Likewise, on the recommendation of the Planning Ministry, the federal cabinet approved an amendment to the Cabinet resolution dated October 30, 2013, regarding the appointment of Planning Commission members from the open market.

Under this amendment, the salaries of Planning Commission members will now be set under the Special Professional Pay Scale-II (SPPS-II) instead of the Management Pay Scale.

Furthermore, the cabinet also approved setting the salary of the Chief Economist of the Planning

Commission, to be appointed from the open market, under the Special Professional Pay Scale-I (SPPS-I).

The cabinet, based on the recommendations of the Revenue Division and according to the Supreme Court of Pakistan's orders, approved the Federal Public Service Commission to conduct departmental promotion exams for the posts of Inspector Inland Revenue (BPS-16).

The cabinet endorsed the decisions made in the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) meeting held on August 29, 2024.

The cabinet also ratified the decisions taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises held on September 2, 2024.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) decision to reduce the policy rate by 2%, lowering it from 19.5% to 17.5%. He expressed optimism that this move would stimulate exports, investment, business, agriculture and overall economic growth in the country.

The prime minister expressed hope that the policy rate could gradually decrease to single digits, in line with the country's inflation rate.

Speaking on the ongoing discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he noted that the negotiations were progressing smoothly.

K-P CM's call...

Continued from page 1 Recalling past events, he pointed out that during the PTI regime, the former Speaker denied production orders of the arrested members.

The Minister also informed the House of the victimization carried out by the PTI government, stating that Rana Sanaullah Khan, Maryam Nawaz, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif, and Asif Ali Zardari's sister had been arrested in fake cases.

Asif further mentioned that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was consulted on important legislation during the PDM government.

He said that now is the time to promote a politics of tolerance in the country.

Leader of the Opposition, Omar Ayub thanked Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for issuing production orders for detained members.

Rana Ansar raised concerns about the non-implementation of the maximum wage by the labour department, especially for female workers.

Former Speaker Asad Qaiser alleged that his party members were being victimized and stressed that legislation should be made for the welfare of the people, not for individual interests.

He called for institutions to operate within their respective domains and suggested forming an all-party committee to investigate the mishandling of parliamentarians.

TENDER NOTICE

The Director Planning & Development, Livestock & Dairy Development Department Balochistan, Quetta invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. **TSE-242509539991 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB Tender Fee Rs.1000/-**

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Animal Food & Medicine (Total Item(s) Count: 11)	2%

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** 1 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 5,000,000 in Previous 1 Years Turn over of at least 8,000,000 PKR in 1 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List Sales Tax Certificate The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan JV is not permissible Submission of the required Bid Security In case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and non-responsive Submission of the required Bidding document Fee Valid / Renewed Copy of Drug Sale License Registration with Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan as Drug Manufacturer & Drug Seller Registration with DRAP Authorization from the Manufacturer/ in favor of the Bidder A: -Non-Declaration of substandard, spurious, adulterated, mis-branded or any other section of the Drug Act 1976 imposed or declared absconder by any Drug Court in Pakistan OR Regulatory body of any quoted items within last two years. B: - Supplies must be made at most reasonable prices for bulk order which must be below the Trade price of that products. C -Bidder must agree to serve the contract/Supply within 30 days from the date of Supply Order. D: Shelf-life of each Vaccine must not be less than 18 months (from the date of supply of Vaccine). E: The firm/bidder/Manufacturer must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency during last two Fiscal Years F: Must unconditionally agree with all the instructions, terms & conditions specified in the bidding documents & contract agreement. G: Supplies must be labeled and packed in accordance to the Drugs (Labeling and packing) Rule, 1986. H-Declaration by the Bidder/Firm/Manufacturer that: i. the Veterinary Vaccine supplied by his firm will be according to the specification mentioned in the "Bidding Documents/ Terms & Conditions" and if any deviation found any time, the Firm/bidder will be responsible and the Livestock Department Balochistan has right to take legal action against the Firm. ii The Supply of Veterinary Vaccine by successful firm/bidder/Manufacturer maybe checked/analyzed from DTL, Quetta or any other recognized Laboratory for confirmation of its accurate ingredients(Composition) at any time and the Cost of analysis and all other expenditures will be totally borne by the Firms/bidders iii. The Sub-standard/below quality supply of Veterinary Vaccine will be rejected and the firm will bound to supply the Veterinary Vaccine according to the composition, if failed the Bid Security/Performance Security will be forfeited and the cost of the loss will be totally borne by the bidder and the Livestock Department Balochistan has right to take legal action against the firm/Bidder Proof of the (Good Manufacturing Performance) GMP and (Quality Assurance) QA System Provision of Vaccine Detail **Procedure Of Procurement:**Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk **Issuance of tender Documents:** Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk **Last Date of bid submission:** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by **30 September, 2024** till 11:00 AM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at 12:00 PM on EPPS System Address: Executive Engineer (Buildings) C/W P P & H Department, District Killa Abdullah Phone no: 0826920040 Fax no: Email: executiveengr@killaabdullah.gov.pk

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (BUILDINGS)
C/W P P & H Department,
District Killa Abdullah

PRQ No.1011/12-9-2024

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EXTENSION OF DATE

This office was called NIT for various development schemes which was published in various newspapers under PRQ No.689 / 27-8-2024 & uploaded on BPPRA website under TSE Nos. TSE-242508528973 & TSE-242508529243, in which the date of submission & opening was fixed on 11th September 2024. Due to some indispensable reasons the date of submission & opening has been extended and now the said tender will be submitted & opened on 18th September 2024. All other conditions as mentioned in Bidding Documents will remain same.

Executive Engineer (Buildings)
CWP&H Department District
Loralai

PRQ No.1012/12-09-2024

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TENDER NOTICE

TSE-242509547893 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Executive Engineer (Buildings) C/W P P & H Department District Killa Abdullah invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee Rs.1000/- and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/CoSt
1	Construction of Judicial Complex Killa Abdullah at Jingle Pir Alizai.	575,004,541/-

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work Turn over of at least 402,503,178 PKR Amount in 2 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Audit Report of Firm is Must 3. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk **Issuance of tender Documents:** Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk **Last Date of bid submission:** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by **30 September, 2024** till 11:00 AM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at 12:00 PM on EPPS System Address: Executive Engineer (Buildings) C/W P P & H Department, District Killa Abdullah Phone no: 0826920040 Fax no: Email: executiveengr@killaabdullah.gov.pk

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (BUILDINGS)
C/W P P & H Department,
District Killa Abdullah

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President, PM pay tribute to Aziz Bhatti Shaheed for his gallantry, sacrifice

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid tribute to Major Raja Aziz Bhatti Shaheed (Nishan-i-Haider) lauding his gallantry and sacrifice while safeguarding the country during the 1965 India-Pakistan war.

In their separately issued statements on the 59th martyrdom anniversary of Aziz Bhatti Shaheed, both the president and prime minister said that the whole nation saluted the great soldier for his matchless sacrifice and valor.

The president said that Aziz Bhatti fulfilled his responsibilities of defending the country bravely fighting the enemy in the 1965 India-Pakistan war.

"The entire nation pays homage to its hero for sacrificing his life to protect the motherland. His eternal sacrifice is a bright example for us.

We renew our pledge that we will be ready to make every possible sacrifice for our country," President Zardari stated.

In his statement, Prime Minister Shehbaz said, "Aziz Bhatti thwarted the enemy's evil designs with his bravery in the September 1965 war. His unshakable determination to defend his homeland forced the enemy to retreat, who otherwise had dreamed of capturing Lahore.

He said that Aziz Bhatti Shaheed stood firm against the enemy, undaunted by their numerical superiority.

"His great sacrifice for the country's defense will be honored and kept alive forever in the history of Pakistan. His passion and dutifulness to fight the enemy without caring about his own life is an ideal example for the generations to come," the prime minister said.

He said that the whole nation paid tribute to Aziz Bhatti Shaheed and other soldiers for sacrificing their lives to defend the country, which they would never forget.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah and Member of the National Assembly Syed Naveed Qamar call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Parliamentarians inspect & lauds facilities at IMCB I-8/3

ISLAMABAD (APP): A parliamentary delegation, accompanied by educationists, visited Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) I-8/3 to inspect the recently completed renovation and restoration work. The project was undertaken by the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) through a special initiative led by the Ministry of Education and Professional Training.

The delegation included Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) Nuzhat Sadiq, Nafeesa Shah, Khawaja Izhur ul Hassan, Senator

Guurdeep Singh, Director General of Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI) Maj Gen Qaisar Suleman, and Rector of National University of Technology (NUTECH) Lt Gen (Retired) Moazzam Ejaz, Dr. Ghulam Ali Mullah, Executive Director of the Inter Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC), along with DG Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) and Chairman FBISE, Junaid Akhlaq, were also present.

Prof. Shahid Mahmood Abbasi, Principal of the College and Director Colleges (FDE), warmly received the delegation and accompanied them

on a tour of the newly renovated facilities.

Secretary of Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani, who played a key role in the project's development, showed particular interest in the improvements made to the college. The extensive renovation includes a state-of-the-art computer lab equipped with 40 computers, a fully furnished library, a new gym with modern machines, a dispensary, smart classrooms, updated washroom facilities, and a refreshed exterior of the main building, Foreign language courses.

Pakistan can not afford revolution of anarchy: Irfan Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)'s Parliamentary leader in the Senate, Senator Irfan Ahmad Siddiqui on Thursday said that Pakistan can not afford the revolution of unrest, abuse and anarchy.

While speaking in response to opposition members' concerns over raids on the arrest of parliamentarians from the lower House premises two days ago, he condemned the incident and said that the Speaker National Assembly had formed the committee to probe the matter, however, he said that Pakistan would survive, Parliament will live and reviling does not bring revolutions.

He reminded the PTI-backed lawmakers that the constitution of 1973 was in place and it was also in place during 2018-21 when they had sent all opposition members behind bars including me, but no PTI members said any word of condemnation over illegal practices.

Irfan questioned "How many sit-ins, and attacks were carried out on Britishers and Hindus during the Pakistan movement on the orders of Quaid Muhammad Ali Jinnah"

Siddiqui further asked whether Quaid Azam ordered their followers to fall petrol bombs on British institutions, the Army, Gandhi and Nehru.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Spain, Jose Antonio de Ory, Chairperson KKAWF, Cristina Afridi, ambassadors, diplomats, members of civic society at the launch of the Declaration of Oviedo a global initiative on drug use prevention held at the residence of Spanish Ambassador.

SC disposes off contempt case against Vawda, TV channels

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday withdrew its show-cause notices served to TV channels while accepting their unconditional apology and also disposed of a contempt case against Senator Faisal Vawda.

A four-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa heard the contempt of court case against Faisal Vawda and TV channels. Justices including Irfan Saadat Khan, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Shahid Bilal were also part of the bench.

During proceedings, the TV channels submitted unconditional apology and assured that it would also be on-air.

TV channels' lawyer Faisal Siddiqui said that they would also improve the self-accountability mechanism, adding that these remarks should have not been on-air repeatedly in media.

The chief justice remarked that we didn't want to send anyone to jail but everyone should have sense of responsibility. He remarked that the apology tendered by Faisal Vawda and Mustafa Kamal was not given appropriately in the media.

Canadian HC meets Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon Thursday met with Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Engr Amir Muqam and discussed mutual interest issues including bilateral ties here at the ministry.

Secretary SAFRON Zafar Hasan and Joint Secretary Agha Waseem Ahmed also attended the meeting, said a press release.

The minister and the High Commissioner discussed number of matters relating to refugees including management, repatriation and common matters during the meeting.

Amir Muqam said that Pakistan's already ailing economy was immensely burdened due to hosting three million Afghan refugees and added Pakistan wanted dignified repatriation of Afghan refugees.

He said that Pakistan deeply values Canada's interest in resettlement of Afghan refugees.

Pakistan was in dire need of financial assistance to maintain documented Afghan refugees in the country, he added.

Punjab, CDA collaborate to address Islamabad's water shortage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Punjab government on Thursday joined hands to tackle Islamabad's water scarcity issue. A meeting in that regard was held under the Chairmanship of CDA Chief Muhammad Ali Randhawa.

The meeting attended by the Secretary Irrigation Punjab via Zoom, explored ways to utilize excess water from Rawal Dam.

The panel discussed supplying 2 million gallons of water per day to Islamabad from Rawal Dam, a request made by CDA to the Punjab government two years ago.

The CDA's Water Management Wing and Punjab Small Dam teams will jointly finalize the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for water supply, with final approval pending the decision on the water supply procedure.

Pirzada takes notice of Illegal use of Ministry resources

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada has taken serious notice of the illegal use of vehicles and staffers of the Ministry of Housing and Works. He has directed that all former officers still using the ministry's staffers and material resources in violation of the rules be notified in writing and asked to return them immediately.

Reaffirming his commitment to zero tolerance for corruption within the ministry, the minister said that any level of corruption found will be rooted out during his tenure. He also instructed the administrative wing to take action in this regard and submit a report within a few days. Earlier, the minister was briefed that several retired senior officers were still utilizing ministry vehicles and staff.



ISLAMABAD: The visiting Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Mr Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco, call on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

NCRC launches social media awareness campaign against early child marriages

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) has launched a social media awareness campaign against early child marriages and its harmful impacts on the society.

Talking to APP on Thursday, an official of NCRC informed that the purpose of the campaign was to highlight Pakistan's national and international commitments regarding child rights as well various gaps in the prevailing laws.

The official observed that Pakistan is over legislated country however there are many hurdles in implementation of various laws.

However, the present government is working to address and overcome systematic and societal challenges in the way of implementation of such laws.

"Lack of education is also one of the major contributing factors in the early marriage of children in Pakistan which needs to be addressed", the official said.

Pakistan is ranked as the 6th highest in the world in early girl marriages (before 18 years) while 71 percent of girls in family do not

have any say in who and when they will marry, the official added.

The NCRC in Pakistan is a statutory body tasked with promoting and protecting children's rights in accordance with national laws and international conventions like the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Pakistan has ratified.

The official highlighted the NCRC role in addressing one of the critical issues of early child marriages, a persistent problem in Pakistan, especially in rural areas.

ICT admin gears up for Eid Milad with citywide celebrations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has planned to celebrate the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) with the series to programmes and decorations in a befitting manner in the Federal Capital.

In this regard, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon has chaired a key meeting and discussed plans for the upcoming Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH). They also discussed city security, cleanliness arrangements and public participation in the different rallies and seminars.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) and the members of District Peace Committee.

The officials focused on ensuring the city is well-prepared for the celebrations. Security measures and overall readiness were key points of discussion, with the DC stressing the importance of maintaining order throughout the city.

In line with the events, the DC announced that the city would be illuminated with lights to mark the occasion.

Islamabad police nab main suspect in murder case

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police investigators of Homicide Investigation Units (HIU) of police station Shahzad Town on Thursday arrested a suspect involved in a murder case and put him behind the bars.

According to a police spokesperson, on August 20, the accused shot to death Murtajiz Hussain in the limits of Shehzad Town police station.

He said DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza took strict notice of the incident and ordered the arrest of the accused.



ISLAMABAD: Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon calls on Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Engr Amir Muqam at Ministry.

IHC adjourns plea against PTI founder's plea

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday adjourned hearing of petition of PTI founder against his potential trial in an army court till September 16. IHC's Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) founder. During the hearing, the additional attorney general requested the court to first decide the objections raised by the Registrar.

Punjab, CDA collaborate to address Islamabad's water shortage

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IGP Islamabad chaired important meetings at CPO

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired important meetings at the Central Police Office (CPO) in Islamabad.

IG Islamabad issued orders to all police officers to arrest accused involved in theft, robbery, murder, street crime, and other wanted absconders and target offenders.



ISLAMABAD: The meetings were attended by DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, AIG Establishment/General Abdul Haq Umrani, SSP Operations Arslan Shahzaib, all zonal SPs, and other police officers.

Salik reaffirms Pak commitment to fight religious extremism, promoting interfaith harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fighting religious extremism and to promote interfaith harmony across the nation.

He made these remarks during a meeting with Indonesia's Chargé d'Affaires, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma who called on him here at the ministry.

During the meeting, they discussed various proposals for promoting religious harmony, respect for humanity, and tolerance.

Minister Salik said the Muslim world is in dire need of unity and solidarity. Given the challenges and circumstances faced by Muslim countries today, he said there is a pressing need to promote religious harmony, tolerance, and unity.

"Islam teaches us about the unity of the Ummah, respect, brotherhood, peace for humanity, and camaraderie," he added.

Indonesia's Chargé d'Affaires, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma said there is an urgent need for dialogue between religions and cultures to establish peace in the world. He said the attitude of tolerance and respect is an essential component of Islamic teachings.

In the meeting, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation to eliminate extremism and promote interfaith harmony.



ISLAMABAD: Indonesia's Chargé d'Affaires, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma call on Federal Minister for Inter-faith harmony Chaudhary Salik Hussain.

AIOU students to be included in PM's Laptop Scheme: NA assured

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Thursday assured the National Assembly that students of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) would be included in the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme.

Responding to a Calling Attention notice raised by Shahida Begum regarding the non-inclusion of AIOU students in the Prime Minister's laptop scheme, the minister said that the final decision has yet to be taken about the PM's Laptop Scheme.

However, the minister assured the assembly that these concerns would be addressed in the final decision-making process.

Siddiqui clarified that while a final decision is yet to be made, the government is committed to ensuring AIOU students benefit from the program.

He highlighted that the PM's Laptop Scheme, initiated in 2013, has previously distributed over 10,000 laptops to students, including those from AIOU and Virtual University (VU).

NCSW announces training opportunity on "Gender and Child Rights" for journalists

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), in collaboration with UNICEF Pakistan, has announced an exciting training opportunity on "Gender and Child rights" for journalists across Pakistan.

According to the NCSW, the Media Fellows with a minimum of seven years of experience are invited to participate in specialized training focusing on gender and child rights. This initiative aims to foster a more responsible and informed media narrative surrounding these important social issues.

Journalists interested in applying can submit their applications via the provided link.

The deadline for applications is set for September 20, 2024.

Participants will have the chance to enhance their skills and contribute to a media landscape that prioritizes inclusivity, gender parity, and empowerment.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing at the inaugural session of the high-level event on "Enhancing the Water Quality Monitoring System to Achieve Sustainable Development Goal-6 (SDG-6) in Pakistan"

Senate body warns population growth jeopardizes sustainable development in five year plan

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Senator QuratulAin Marri chaired the meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Special Initiatives held today at Parliament House.

The Senate Committee deliberated on the socio-economic objectives of the 13th Five Year Plan (2024-29). Joint Chief of Economic Policy, Zafar ul Hassan, highlighted the challenges shortlisted for the 13th Five year's plan. Senator QuratulAin Marri astoundingly remarked that the Planning Division should focus on the biggest of all challenges i.e. "Population Control" which is not mentioned in the list. She stated that no country could achieve sustainable development with a population growth rate of 2.5%. It is high time that the country should devise a comprehensive plan to mitigate the trickle-down effect of population explosion. Joint Chief of Economic Policy also highlighted the objectives for the 13th Five-year plan. He emphasized that the Federal Government has set objectives of improving the quality of human capital, preventing hunger and malnutrition, enhancing the use of technology, and making agriculture more productive and efficient. The Chairperson of the Committee asserted that the country should also empathize and facilitate the "Services Sector," following the example of Bangalore, India, as the demand for services is increasing manifold. Zafar ul Hassan remarked that the balance of payments poses constraints towards the expansion of the services economy. Furthermore, the Committee discussed the ongoing status of land acquisition for 5,000 acres for a 1,200 MW solar plant at Tehsil Choubara, District Layyah. Deputy Commissioner for Layyah, Ameera Baidar, informed that land prices in Choubara Tehsil have increased manifold due to the recent increase in solar tube wells. Senator QuratulAin Marri remarked that the price mentioned by the District Administration is twice as high as the price evaluated by the committee. The Deputy Commissioner pointed out the forest land is also located in the region which is more suitable for the solar project and mentioned that the said forest land has also been proposed by the District Administration to the Secretary of Settlement (Punjab) for the allotment of land.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Friday September 13, 2024

Lakki police protest

The protest sit-in by hundreds of police personnel in KP's Lakki Marwat district entered its third day on Wednesday, with no sign of an amicable resolution.

The law enforcers have taken to the streets to protest rising militancy in their district, and surrounding regions. They say they feel vulnerable, and want the counterterrorism drive in the area to be led by them, instead of the military. Police officers from surrounding districts, including Bannu, D.I. Khan and Tank, have joined their protesting colleagues, while political parties, tribesmen and civil society groups have also expressed solidarity with them. Efforts by the local administration to end the impasse have failed, and traffic between this part of KP and the rest of the country has been suspended.

The policemen's concerns are not without merit. According to figures published recently, KP experienced 29 terrorist attacks in August alone, in which 25 lives were lost. Lakki Marwat and its surrounding districts have been particularly affected by terrorism, with most of those targeted being police personnel, security men and government officials.

Therefore, if policemen have come out on the roads to protest, it shows that the state of law and order in the area is clearly a matter of grave concern. If police morale is low and law enforcers have to publicly air their grievances, it reflects a failure of the administration and the security forces to crush militancy in the affected areas. It is also significant that the local civilians are backing the policemen's demands.

Unfortunately, the KP administration and security forces seem too consumed with political matters to address the issue of militancy with the seriousness and urgency it deserves. Police personnel are on the front line in the campaign against militancy, and their concerns cannot be dismissed. As the protesting law enforcers have demanded, they should be empowered to deal with terrorist groups.

The fact is that it requires a combined effort involving the police, Counter-Terrorism Department, intelligence agencies and the military to wipe out the terrorist menace before the matter gets out of hand. As they negotiate with the protesting policemen, members of the administration must keep their concerns — as well as those of the local civilians, who pay a high price whenever there are kinetic operations — in mind to evolve a dynamic and effective CT plan.

Both the KP government and security forces must lend a sympathetic ear to these demands, as the province cannot expect a demoralised police force to deal with the militant threat. Let the police lead CT efforts, backed by the military where required, so that terrorist groups are cleared from the areas. And after kinetic operations to uproot terrorist groups, the civilian administration needs to implement the 'build' phase successfully.

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

Pakistan's battle against climate change cannot be fought without support from the private sector. The private sector and the government in Pakistan have dramatically different ways of working. Yet, they, like two sides of the same coin, coexist and can create an ecosystem for each other's climate action.

Pakistan's financial needs for climate action are very high. Projected climate disasters, environmental degradation, and air pollution can cause GDP to fall by at least seven per cent.

For this, Pakistan will need \$152 billion for adaptation and \$196bn for decarbonisation by 2030, as projected by the Climate Change and Development Report of the World Bank. None of the growth rate projections can promise this. The new \$7bn Extended Fund Facility with the IMF aims to support Pakistan's efforts in achieving macro-economic stability. It does not set any targets for economic growth rate nor for investments in climate resilience.

Realising that the financial gap cannot be filled

with additional borrowing, various government ministries have frantically moved to augment their capacity to access international climate finance (IFC). To achieve scale, the government sector will need to learn how to leverage private sector financing as equity. While the policy documents often mention private sector engagement, they fail in operationalising the ways and means of working.

A cursory look at the Rules of Business that govern the mandates and functions of all government divisions, reveals that engagement with the private sector is not mentioned for the ministries of climate, economic affairs, finance, and planning, the key ministries dealing with the climate economy. The only reference to the private sector in the Rules of Business for these ministries is related to the Public-Private Partnership Authority (P3A), housed at the Planning Commission.

Since there is no explicit bar, each ministry could have pursued its own focus and terms of engagement with the private sector for climate-related interventions. This void has per-

sisted in their recent initiatives that include setting up climate finance-specific units. This is a practice that is broadly followed by those provincial governments that have approved climate policies and are setting up climate units aimed at accessing IFC.

The Board of Investment is perhaps the only institution that is specifically charged to attract both local and foreign investment by providing a conducive environment for business operations. It has undergone several reforms since 2013, a year after the climate change policy was first approved. The BoI is mandated to improve the business environment and ease of doing business. Housed at the Prime Minister's Office, none of its initiatives were aimed at climate-smart investments or engaging them to leverage international climate finance. Clearly, the highest level of political support is desperately needed.

Likewise, the P3A was established to provide an enabling legal and regulatory framework for developing and implementing public-private partnership transactions. According to the Plan-

ning Commission's Manual for Development Projects 2024, neither the legislation nor the subsequent procedures for P3A's functioning have embedded climate priorities. In India, its counterpart is located in the economic affairs department, supporting the integration of climate considerations by prioritising infrastructural resilience, and strengthening national infrastructure and monetisation pipelines, both aimed at leveraging private sector investments. As an arm of the Planning Commission, the P3A Pakistan sits in a remarkable position to help climate-proof public sector development programmes.

The commerce ministry does not feature in Pakistan's climate change parlance, even if it is grappling with Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms that will potentially affect the country's three foremost formal private sector forums: the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FPCCI), Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), and Pakistan Business Council (PBC). The ministry is the focal agency for all.

Pakistan's private sector broadly falls in three categories. First, large business houses, including the approximately 200-member-strong OICCI, representing the interests of foreign investors, and the 96-member PBC. Both have undertaken preliminary studies on SDGs, climate change, and gender participation. Because of their size, and alignment with international standards, they attract IFC and similar investors. In the government's lexicon, however, they are often approached for CSR resources, instead of long-term partnership for climate action.

Second, the FPCCI is an association of 277 trade bodies, 72 chambers, 28 women's chambers, 15 chambers of small traders, and 156 all-Pakistan trade associations, apparently including some SMEs. The FPCCI's governance, a relic of the Ayub era of backdoor permits and concessions, impairs its ability to play a significant role in promoting climate resilience through initiatives and advocacy efforts, particularly for transparently informing climate-related policies. It can potentially spearhead collaboration with national

and international organisations to promote climate resilience and for adopting the Environmental, Social, and Governance framework. Already, several members are pursuing ESG; some are striving for energy or water conservation, and a few are aspiring to net-zero emissions targets.

Third, SMEs account for about 90pc of all enterprises and employ 78pc of non-agricultural labour. It is estimated that they collectively contribute 40pc to GDP and 25pc to total exports of manufactured goods. They are most frequently and directly exposed to climate-triggered disasters, yet no action reaches this bottom of the pyramid to protect them and their assets from climate risks and disasters.

There is no national-level platform serving them. The Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, the focal point for SME development, is also in the grip of a governance crisis. Some uncoordinated training programmes notwithstanding, SMEDA seems to have lost the desire to strengthen the sector's climate resilience. — Courtesy Dawn

Dar's diatribe against the IMF**Khurram Husain**

In remarks reported widely in the media, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has been quoted complaining that the IMF is playing politics with Pakistan and changing the goalposts at critical moments to delay the disbursement of funds.

Those who know him and have spoken with him over the years know his propensity to speak at length off the cuff and also know that he harbours great mistrust, bordering on animus sometimes, towards the IMF. This is not the first time he has rolled out the 'geopolitics' card when talking about delays in getting Fund approval for disbursement of the next tranche. He did the same as finance minister in 1999 and again in 2022, 2023.

But is it true? More likely what Pakistan is facing is an absence of geopolitics on the IMF board. Between 2001 and 2021, the country had more or less a free run of things at the Fund, when programme approvals came swiftly and reviews went smoothly and waiv-

ers were granted without too much trouble. It is not difficult to note what these dates denote: the arrival and continued deployment of American troops in Afghanistan. Since August 2021, when the deployment ended, so did Pakistan's 'special treatment' at the Fund.

Dar wishes to argue that the Fund held out completion of the reviews under the last Extended Fund Facility "for eight months", as he did in his reported remarks given in London, due to geopolitics. He has been quoted as saying the Fund wanted to push Pakistan into a default. His reference was to the months he was finance minister from September 2022 till June 2023. A Fund review did indeed stall during those months with the programme drawing to a close, with the last few reviews unfinished.

But if the IMF was trying to push Pakistan into default, why did the same Fund mobilise so expeditiously to arrange a Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) in July 2023, literally weeks after the Dar government handed

over power to an interim set-up? Why try to push a country into default, then move rapidly to rescue the same country at the last minute and prevent such a default?

The answer is simple. The Fund was not trying to push Pakistan into default or playing geopolitics. It was simply trying to get some commitments to be upheld, which were not being upheld, and in the absence of geopolitics, Pakistan's traditional resort to external bailouts had shrunk considerably.

Consider a few numbers to get a sense of how things moved from that July to today. Take a look at where Pakistan's projected macro targets were meant to be as per the projections in the September 2022 review, when Dar was finance minister, and July 2023, when he handed over power to an interim set-up.

In September 2022, FBR revenues for the ongoing fiscal year (FY25) were projected to be Rs9.7 trillion. In the July SBA, this projection had risen to Rs11tr. One could look at these num-

bers and argue that the Fund shifted the goalposts by raising the revenue target by more than a trillion rupees.

But then look at the other side of the equation. In September 2022, current expenditures for that year were meant to come in at Rs11.1tr by year-end. This projection had then been revised up to Rs12.3tr during the review, an upward revision of more than one trillion rupees! By the time the year ended in June 2023, current expenditures came in at Rs14.4tr, overshooting their newly revised target by more than two trillion rupees!

Targets were strictly adhered to in the SBA of July 2023, the main reason why the country was able to pull back from the brink of a catastrophic default. But the memory of agreeing to targets then — either failing or refusing to abide by them, and thereby prolonging the spell of macroeconomic uncertainty in the country — could be easy to forget. Go through the targets one by one. From fiscal to external sector, the

story in the past few years is the same: weak ownership of the stabilisation programme.

None of this should be surprising. The government that took power following the April 2022 vote of no-confidence inherited an economy poised for massive instability with a runaway situation on the current account and the fiscal deficit. Faced with a ferocious political contest at the same time as it had to undertake a painful economic adjustment, the government dithered.

Prior to this, the outgoing government of the PTI had similarly found it very difficult to unwind the Covid stimulus and resume the Fund programme, and as its political challenges mounted in the run-up to the vote of no-confidence, its commitment to adhere to Fund targets diminished. In a sense, from 2020 onwards, all governments (except for the interim set-up) have been unable to really walk the path of adjustment, due in large part to the intensity of the political competition plaguing the country since

then.

It might be tempting for Dar to blame the IMF for this, but it is difficult to believe that this inability to adhere to commitments would be without consequences. The more the country dithers on its own commitment to its own macroeconomic stabilisation, the less its creditors will feel assured that this country can meet its external debt service obligations in a timely manner. The more this feeling grows, the more assurances they will need before becoming engaged with this country.

It is as simple as that. It is very difficult to believe that there is any geopolitical interest of any country out there which is advanced by watching Pakistan default. Such an event serves neither the foreign policy interests of any of the larger powers Pakistan is in debt to, nor does it serve the economic interests of anyone. More than outsiders, the government must realise that safeguarding the hard-fought stability of our time is its singular responsibility.

'Lambo' Nayar**F.S. Aijazuddin**

No one stood taller among the pique of Indian political columnists than Kuldip 'Lambo' Nayar. Ironically, he received that nickname from the shortest of Indian prime ministers — Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Born in Sialkot, Nayar lived a long life, dying in New Delhi in 2018 at the age of 95. He had a career crammed brimful with history. Initially an Urdu press reporter, he served as editor of The Statesman, saw prison during Mrs Indira Gandhi's Emergency (1975-77), became Indian high commissioner to Great Britain in 1990, and sat in his country's Rajya Sabha in August 1997. His syndicated columns appeared in over 80 newspapers.

Just before his death, he compiled pen portraits of Leaders and Icons from Jinnah to Modi (2019). (He felt tempted to rename his book 'Heroes, Neros, and Zeros'.) That slim volume included his recollections of Indian and Pakistani leaders — M.K. Gandhi to N. Modi, and from M.A. Jinnah to Z.A. Bhutto. He knew them all — perhaps, only too well.

Nayar's personal 'trysts with destiny' began early. In 1945, as a young student, he heard M.A. Jinnah speak to a sparse audience in Lahore. Nayar asked him whether after independence, Hindus and Muslims might be 'at each other's throats'. Jinnah disagreed, countering that the two new nations would live in amity, like postwar Germany and France.

On Jan 30, 1948, he walked in Birla House, the scene of Gandhi's assassination, noticing "a few drops of blood glistening in the receding light".

He interviewed K. Abdul Ghaffar Khan —

the Frontier Gandhi — who startled Nayar by asking him pointedly: "Kya aap log baniya hotay ho?" (Are you Indians still traders?)

In February 1999, he travelled to Lahore in PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee's peace bus yatra from Amritsar to Lahore. An advocate of Indo-Pak unity, he renewed his commitment each year by lighting a peace candle on Wagah border on Aug 14-15.

Nayar had unbridled admiration for Jawaharlal Nehru's commitment to democracy and secularism. He thought less of Indira Gandhi, and even less so after being imprisoned by her for his abrasive articles. Nayar could see that Sanjay Gandhi held sway over her. He asked Sanjay how long did he think he and his mother could get away with their authoritarian tactics? Sanjay replied: "In my scheme of things, there were to be no elections for three to four decades."

Kuldip describes Z.A. Bhutto as "brilliant, audacious, and adventurous [but] arrogant". Bhutto asked Nayar, now that he had met Indira, Sheikh Mujib and himself, did he not agree that he (Bhutto) "deserved to be prime minister of the sub-continent?"

At Shimla, Nayar insists, "Bhutto had accepted the ceasefire line as an international border, meaning thereby that Pakistan would retain the territory it held in Kashmir (called Azad Kashmir), and India the rest of the Valley, Jammu and Ladakh". (PM Modi's subsequent abrogation of Article 370 had early roots). Nayar's plethora of Pakistani friends included Faiz Ahmed Faiz whose verses (if not his recitation) he admired. Nayar believed that Faiz's "humanity was his religion". He asked Faiz who was his favourite

singer. To his surprise, Faiz did not say Iqbal Bano nor Noor Jehan. He opted for Nayyara Noor.

On one of his trips to Lahore, Kuldip Nayar asked to meet Noor Jehan. He was taken to a film studio in Model Town. Not recognising her at first (he remembered her as the Baby Noor Jehan of her Bombay days), he began by asking how many songs had she sung. Her witty response—"Nahi gaano ka shumaar hai, aur na hi gunahon ka" (Neither can I remember the number of records, nor count the number of sins I have committed).

Nayar met Nawaz Sharif during his exile in Jeddah. He did not accept Sharif's assertion that he knew nothing about Kargil. (Nayar drew a comparison with Bhutto's denial about prior knowledge of the 1965 war.)

After Sharif's ouster, Nayar interviewed A.B. Vajpayee. Vajpayee told him: "Nawaz Sharif sacrificed himself for us." Referring to the back-channel talks between R.K. Mishra and Niaz Naik, Vajpayee added: "We were almost there." Years later, PM Manmohan Singh expressed the same regret over the failure of the S.K. Lambah/Tariq Aziz talks.

Like many others, Nayar commented on Sonia Gandhi's use of Manmohan Singh as her "stalking horse". He too noticed "how unhappy Manmohan Singh looked when occupying the chair ahead of Sonia Gandhi, his benefactor". After Nayar's death in 2018, his ashes crossed Wagah border where he had lit candles each year, and then were immersed by co-patriots in the river Ravi.

Before his death, Nayar predicted that PM Modi "is not likely to take any initiative on Pakistan". Neither then, nor it would appear ever again in PM Modi's political lifetime. — Courtesy Dawn

Informal jobs**Neda Mulji**

In the last decade, informal jobs have mushroomed in Pakistan. Part of the reason is the high income tax levy which makes small firms contain costs by hiring cheap labour for informal jobs. Historically, societies have not been able to grow economically without a structured job market. In Tanzania, Ethiopia and the Czech Republic, for example, cheap labour coupled with the scarcity of capital made informal labour predominate even in industry. Clearly, these economies have suffered stagnation as opposed to Taiwan and Vietnam, where the main driver of growth was the formal jobs sector.

With fast automation in all sectors, labour-intensive economies are likely to spiral further downward. Traditionally, in Pakistan, low-cost labour has meant quick income for families that have many mouths to feed. However, this can at best be a survival mechanism for a fledgling economy. Hope for growth can only come from a sound industrial policy that not only creates formal employment but also upgrades the skill level required for those jobs.

Education and training remain the key drivers of economic, industrial and social development as we have seen in many successful economies. Those that have run into roadblocks after a period of intense growth — such as the Philippines and Argentina — have been burgeoning informal economies. Both economies, once successful, struggled due to the exponential growth of their informal sectors, relying on low-skilled labour.

From street vendors to low-wage domestic

staff, unskilled handymen, we have seen the unregulated growth of low-wage jobs in Pakistan. Those in low-skill jobs will always be at a disadvantage due to the unsustainable nature of the work, lack of contracts and zero social or legal protection. What's worse is the lack of economic mobility where generations will be trapped in the disadvantaged strata of society.

For sustained industrial growth, STEAM-based and digital literacy programmes need to be established for quick labour mobility — a paradigm shift from low-paying, low-skilled jobs to learning the ropes for more demanding, high-paying jobs. Developments in technology will essentially result in large gaps between those who are unable to rise to the job demands — therefore falling prey to wage stagnation or lay-offs — and those who can upgrade their skills.

In the absence of a higher education system that can develop the skills required by industry, the government will need to establish programmes to upskill workers in a public-private partnership model. Last year, in a bid to contribute to technological development, 100,000 laptops were handed out on a merit basis to university graduates. Initiatives like these are a case of 'too little, too late'. It is not so much access to technology that is required but the skills to be able to use the technology. Access can be provided on the job. Yet, without training, technology will still be out of reach for many.

This brings us back to the critical need for education and training to address the skills gap, for growth to be enabled in all sectors of the

economy. Higher education institutes worldwide provide part-time jobs to students that enables them to earn a little extra, develop basic skills that will lay the ground for their professional lives and also to help them engage in some networking with industry professionals. Part-time jobs at university have a range of benefits, from learning time-management and interpersonal skills to acquiring work discipline; the students are already on a springboard to support their careers.

In Pakistan, however, the jobs that should be open to students are usually taken by less skilled, low-wage earners. In an informal economy, we can't strictly classify jobs as open to 'students only'. There are huge opportunities that we haven't tapped into. We haven't yet explored the options available for certifying students for jobs because all these and much more are being managed in an informal capacity by untrained workers.

In many countries, students work in libraries, cafeterias, or as administrative and research assistants in a paid capacity. There are university portals that list the available on-campus jobs, and any certification options such as for first-aid worker jobs. This is where students find preparatory ground for soft skills that will be required in a more formal job environment. Students can also undertake shadow work or apprenticeships within the university IT, marketing or curriculum planning teams.

Gradually, we may be able to stem the tide of informal employment and bring more citizens into the safety net through training and regulation. — Courtesy Dawn

Women possess immense potential for skill development, art and design: Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that women possess immense potential for skill development, particularly in the fields of art and design.

Their creativity and innovative thinking drive advancements and bring fresh perspectives to the industry. Investing in women's talents not only enhances their personal growth but also contributes significantly to cultural and economic progress.

Empowering women in art and design can lead to groundbreaking contributions and a richer, more diverse creative landscape.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said this in a meeting delegation from the Arts and Design Department of Shaheed

Benazir Bhutto Women University at the Governor House.

The delegation, including Schrish Zafar, Anela Mudassar, Saima Naseer, Sania Siraj, and Nida, discussed various proposals aimed at enhancing the province's soft image through art and design.

The delegation highlighted the lack of infrastructure at the university, including designated spaces for practical activities, display centers, and classrooms, which has hindered research and practical work for the students.

They informed the Governor about a proposal sent to the Higher Education Commission, JICA, and the Museum Department, adding the HED also had not seen any progress since 2021 in this

regard. Additionally, the delegation proposed establishing a Biennale 3D Installation Exhibition in Peshawar.

During the discussion, the Governor assured full support for the department and recommended preparing a comprehensive new proposal.

He also suggested informing him about countries that support fine arts. The Governor committed to engaging with the Higher Education Commission and relevant departments regarding funding and development partners for a display center at the Peshawar Museum. He emphasized that such art exhibitions would positively showcase the province and the country on the global stage and promised robust support for promoting these activities.



LAHORE: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood, speaking the seminar on Exemplary Ways In Education System In Light Of Prophetic Teachings at Arfa Karim Tower.

Japanese envoy Mitsuhiro calls on Governor Sindh, discusses bilateral relations

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori hosted a meeting with Japanese Ambassador Mitsuhiro Wada at the Governor House on Thursday. The two dignitaries exchanged views on enhancing bilateral relations, investment and trade between Japan and Pakistan, along with other mutual interests.

During the meeting, Governor Kamran Tessori emphasized that Japanese investors should capitalize on the vast potential across various sectors in the province. He highlighted Sindh's highly educated, skilled, and hardworking

youth as an attractive resource for investment. He further assured that comprehensive support is being provided to investors through the Special Investment Facilitation Center (SIFC).

Governor Tessori expressed a strong desire to increase trade with Japan. Ambassador Wada affirmed that Japanese investors are keen on exploring different sectors in the province. He also commended the ongoing initiatives under the Governor's leadership, noting their positive impact.

In a symbolic gesture, the Japanese ambassador

planted a tree at the Governor House as part of the tree-planting campaign, and later inscribed his thoughts in the guestbook.

While speaking to the media after the meeting, Governor Kamran Khan Tessori stated that efforts would be made to strengthen the collaboration between the Japanese investors and local business communities.

He also mentioned that he would discuss with the federal government the possibility of providing further facilities to Japanese business communities.

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PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi called on by faculty members of Sarhad University of Science & Information Technology at Governor House.

Rana Mashhood says: Country's development depends on youth prosperity

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Youth Program Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan on Thursday said that enemies wanted to create a division between the public and the state institutions. "Seeds of hatred are being sown between the people and the institutions, and a campaign is being run against them," he added.

He was addressing a seminar on "Exemplary Ways in Education System in Light of Prophetic Teachings" held here at Arfa Karim Tower.

Recalling the past, he stated that Pakistan had attracted students from around the world due to its high-quality education system and today, there was a visible decline on proper training and values.

Rana Mashhood said: "We are left with only those who talk a lot but

lack of action. There are many who deceive with their words but the real heroes of character are rare," he remarked. In a message to the youth, Rana Mashhood emphasized that future of the youth is the most important for progress and development of the country. "If our youth prosper, Pakistan will prosper."

Concluding his speech, Mashhood stressed the importance of reigniting the spirit of the Two-Nation Theory and holding the Pakistani flag high. He called for following the greatest character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), urging Pakistanis to serve as a role models for the world once again. "It is time to revive our values and stand united for Pakistan's future," he said.

Governor signs summary of appointments for Advisor, Sp Assistants

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday signed the summary for the appointments of Advisor and Special Assistants to the Chief Minister.

Governor Kundi has approved the appointment of four special assistants including Mussavir Khan, Muhammad Sohail Afridi, Naik Muhammad Khan Humayoon Khan, and one Advisor Itisham Ali to the Chief Minister (CM) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Following the Governor's approval and signature, the summary has been sent back for implementation.

IGP issues Rs 2.4m for treatment of injured cops

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has released Rs. 2.4 million for medical treatment of policemen injured in the line of duty.

According to details, Rs. 1 million were released for treatment of constable Muhammad Salman Asghar of Sialkot, Head Constable Ashfaq Ahmad from Lahore has been awarded Rs. 700,000 for his medical expenses, while Constable Muhammad Zafarullah has been given Rs. 300,000. Additionally, Constable Muhammad Asif from Rawalpindi has been granted Rs. 300,000, and ASI Qamar Abbas allocated Rs. 100,000 for his treatment.

These officers sustained injuries while confronting criminal elements during their professional duties.

FIA arrests two 'human traffickers'

LAHORE (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested two fugitives in crackdown on human-trafficking here on Thursday.

According to a spokesman for the agency, the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Lahore arrested Tahir Kamal and Yasir Shahid, the former was arrested in a raid in Lahore, where he was found to be involved in illegally sending individuals abroad. He collected Rs. 312,000 from a man on the pretext of sending him to Azerbaijan for job. However, he neither sent the victim of fraud abroad nor returned the money. He had been a judicial absconder since 2023.

Sindh Govt intensifies efforts to launch electric taxis across province

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh government has intensified efforts to launch electric taxis across the province. Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon held meeting with representatives from the Chinese automobile manufacturer GAC and Dewan Motors here on Thursday. Transport Secretary Asad Zamin, Dewan Yousif Farooqui, Chu Song from the Chinese company GAC, Chen Wen, Zafar Hassan and other officials participated in the meeting. During the meeting, Chu Song, General Manager of the Chinese company GAC, gave a detailed briefing on electric vehicles. Various options for introducing electric taxis in Sindh were discussed.

Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon assured full cooperation and support for the Chinese company's investment.

He stated that the Government of Sindh will provide all necessary infrastructure and facilities for electric taxis, including setting up charging stations, streamlining the regulatory process, and creating a business-friendly environment for investors.

He stated that the introduction of electric taxis will not only provide safe and modern travel options for people but will also help protect the environment by reducing carbon emissions. Additionally, the new taxi service will create new employment opportunities.

Sharjeel Memon said that a Pink Taxi service will be launched to provide safe and reliable travel for women passengers. The Government of Sindh aims to launch these electric taxis as soon as possible, allowing citizens to benefit from the latest eco-friendly travel facilities.

Post-induction training course participants visit PSCA

LAHORE (APP): Officers taking part in the post-induction training course visited the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), here on Thursday.

According to details, Operations Commander SP Shafiq Ahmed briefed the delegation about the institution's working. The trainee officers were taken to various departments, including the Virtual Centre for Child Safety and the Women's Police Station.

The delegation also reviewed the modern features of the 15 Emergency Helpline Centre and the operations of the monitoring centre. The officers were briefed about the working of the Artificial Intelligence Traffic Management System. Operations Commander Shafiq Ahmed informed the delegation that the Virtual Women Police Station, established to ensure the protection of women.

Regional Director ANF calls on Governor Punjab

LAHORE: Regional Director Commander Anti-Narcotics Punjab Brigadier Sikandar Hayat Chaudhry called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan and discussed measures on drug prevention in educational institutions of Punjab during a meeting at the Governor's House, here on Sunday.

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that youth are the asset of the country, adding that it is the responsibility of the government to provide them with a secure and conducive learning environment. He said that as chancellor he is taking various steps for the betterment of universities. He said that all possible measures will be taken to eradicate drugs from the campuses. The Governor Punjab said he has issued

instructions to the vice chancellors of the universities to implement prohibition of smoking in campus premises and hostels in letter and spirit. This initiative will help in promoting a clean and conducive learning environment for the student, he added.

He said that counseling of students who would be found involved in taking drugs would also be ensured. He also emphasized the need to organize anti-drug awareness campaigns in educational institutions across Punjab. Brigadier Sikandar Hayat Chaudhry briefed the Governor Punjab about the efforts and future strategy of the Anti-Narcotics Force. He reiterated his commitment to purge the educational institutions of the menace of drugs.



KARACHI: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mitsuhiro Wada calls on Sindh Governor, Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House.

Governor Kundi takes action against sale of universities land in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Thursday imposed ban on the sale or lease of land by universities throughout the province.

This directive comes following a court order from the Peshawar High Court, which has issued a stay order on the sale or lease of university land in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Principal Secretary has issued written instructions to all

universities in the province, advising them not to take any step regarding the sale or lease of land. Governor Kundi emphasized that he will not allow any university to sell even an inch of its land for as long as he remains Chancellor.

Kundi criticized the party that had previously proposed converting the President's House and the Prime Minister's House into universities, existing them of destroying existing universities instead.



LAHORE: Regional Director Commander Anti-Narcotics Punjab Brigadier Sikandar Hayat Chaudhry called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor's House.

Sikh community has special respect for Hazrat Mian Mir (R.A): Ramesh

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora, while addressing an interfaith harmony conference, said here on Thursday that the message of Hazrat Mian Mir (R.A) is for all of humanity, as it is continuation of the message delivered in the farewell sermon of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH).

He said that societal conditions would only improve when all citizens would teach respect and tolerance for one another. Hazrat Mian Mir (R.A) holds a special place in the Sikh community, as he was a close friend of the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, the minister said. The messages of humanity from Guru Arjan Dev and Mian Mir will always be respected and followed, he added.

He stated that the land of Pakistan is the soil of Sufis, saints, and gurus,

which promotes peace and love, with a heritage spanning thousands of years. He noted that the relationship between Sikhs and Pakistan is deep and must be understood. Ramesh Singh Arora also pointed out that the concept of monotheism in Islam and the Sikh belief in one God are closely connected. In today's world, it is essential to spread the message of peace and love from Mian Mir, Data Ganj Shakar, and Guru Nanak to counter the conspiracies against Pakistan. Various scholars and spiritual leaders also spoke at the conference, highlighting the need to restore the true role and identity of the shrines in social welfare. The guidance needed to form a welfare state could only be derived from the principles of the Sufis. The historical role of the shrine in guiding and supporting the common person must never be forgotten.



PESHAWAR: Awami National Party (ANP) KPK President, Mian Iftikhar Hussain addresses to media persons during press conference, at Peshawar press club.



LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari inspecting the newly constructed building of DGPR, Punjab Secretary Information and DGPR Shenshah Faisal Azeem is also present.

Rs320m allocated for third phase of Drug Free Peshawar: Finance Advisor

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has allocated a sum of Rs 320 for the rehabilitation of drug addicts in Peshawar.

This was informed by Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance, Muzammil Aslam during a high-level meeting that was attended by Excise Minister, Mian Khaliq ur Rehman, Secretary Excise, Fayyaz Ali Shah, Secretary Social Welfare and Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Mehsud.

The Advisor continued that in the first two phases of "Drug Free Peshawar" project, a total of 2397 drug addicts were rehabilitated of whom 170 were from Punjab and Sindh provinces. Besides, he said 19 women and 104 children were also provided rehabilitation services during the first two phases.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government will continue this project as those willing to abandon drug

on the rehabilitation of a single drug addict.

For the project, he said services of the well-reputed private rehabilitation centers would also be hired and soon advertisements will be published in national newspapers to select a standard quality rehabilitation center for this cause. He said the department of Social Welfare, Excise and Commissioner Office will simultaneously work on this project.

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MULTAN: Punjab Minister for Health and Chairman Cabinet Committee for Law and Order Khawaja Salman Rauf presides over the meeting to review arrangements for Eid-Milad-un-Nabi (SAWW). Punjab Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan, Home Secretary Punjab Noorul Ameen Mengal, Additional IG South Punjab Muhammad Kamran are also present.

PWD secretary holds 34th annual Country Engagement Working Group meeting

LAHORE (APP): Population Welfare Department (PWD) Punjab Secretary Salman Ijaz chaired the 34th annual Country Engagement Working Group (CEWG) meeting, organized by the Federal Ministry of Health at a local hotel here on Thursday.

Secretary Health Syed Muazzam Ali, Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan, Secretary Health KP Imdad Ali, Secretary Health Azad Kashmir Attaullah, Programme Specialist UNFPA Dr Jameel, DG Welfare Punjab Saman Rai, Director Federal Population Welfare Department Dr. Shabana Begum, DG Gilgit-Baltistan Arif Tahsin, senior government officials from various departments from Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-

Baltistan participated in the meeting. The PWD secretary briefed the participants about the ongoing plans regarding population welfare across the province. By committing to Pakistan Family Planning (FP) 2030, the province is a member of the global family planning community and implementing the FP commitments through strengthening its partnership networks, resource mobilization, better governance and monitoring.

The CEWG is led by all the provinces of Pakistan, according to which all the provinces are bound to hold a meeting every quarter which is chaired by the secretary PWD of the respective province, he added.

The CEWG was formed in 2016 to take forward the efforts.

17 killed, 1353 injured in 1302 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least 17 people were killed and 1353 injured in 1302 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 570 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 783 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that 756 drivers, 44 underage drivers, 146 pedestrians, and 470 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics showed that 264 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 278 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Faisalabad 94 with 99 victims and at third Multan with 76 RTCs and 76 victims.

China, Pakistan ink landmark leather industry pact, boosting Sino-Pak collaboration, trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Economic Net reported. Leather industry plays a crucial role in Pakistan's economy as it is one of the topmost foreign exchange earners for the country. It's widely recognized that China and Pakistan are complementary in leather industry. Through cooperation with China such as establishing joint ventures, modern Chinese technologies can be used to improve Pakistan's leather processing and product quality while Pakistan offers unique advantages of abundant raw materials, low labor costs, etc. Recently, the interactions between China and Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and the Trade Minister of Tajikistan exchange souvenirs during a sideline meeting at the SCO Summit. Discussions focused on enhancing bilateral trade volume and mutual interests.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh in a group photo at International Maritime Sustainability Exhibition & Conference Pakistan IMSEC-2024.

Pakistan's blue economy has potential to become a driving force for growth, resilience: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday said that Pakistan's blue economy had the potential to become a driving force for national growth and resilience, citing the opportunities in fisheries and maritime trade to the exploration of offshore resources like petroleum and gas.

The deputy prime minister, addressing the International Maritime Business and Finance Conference held here, said that to enhance Pakistan's share in the blue economy, efforts were being made under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to modernize the fisheries and shipbreaking industry using advanced technology. He told the gathering that the government had already removed sales tax on fisheries processing plants and fishery seeds. Highlighting the significant investment opportunities offered by the country's ports, he said the oceans

supported around 85% of global trade and also played a critical role in meeting the sustainable development agenda. Dar said that as a maritime nation, Pakistan viewed the Arabian Sea as its fifth neighbor and a vital component of its economic and strategic paradigm. Pakistan's unique geopolitical and geographical position offered immense potential for trade with economic zones offering opportunities for coastal

tourism, aquaculture, biotechnology, energy, and health. He said Pakistan was transforming ports into hubs of regional and international trade and efficient green transshipment as a maritime single window was operational to enhance the efficiency of ports. The deputy prime minister said that Pakistan was committed to working for environmental protection in the maritime industry and sought support.

Pakistan, Russia to sign agreement for enhancing agri, industrial cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Russia are set to sign a memorandum of understanding to promote agricultural cooperation aimed at developing the local agriculture sector and enhancing the productivity of agricultural products. Russia will also provide technical assistance for modernizing fertilizer manufacturing plants in Pakistan to boost the output of fertilizers and meet local agricultural input requirements. This consensus was reached during a meeting between Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain and Russian Ambassador Albert P. Khuriev, said a press release. During the meeting, matters of mutual interests, with focus on enhancing cooperation in the industrial and agricultural sectors, as well as promoting trade and investment relations between the two countries came under discussion. Rana Tanveer emphasized Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations with Russia, particularly in trade and investment. He assured that Pakistan would offer all possible support to Russian investors to advance bilateral trade and investment ties. The minister highlighted that modern agricultural machinery and other inputs were essential for increasing agricultural productivity. He noted that bilateral cooperation in agriculture would facilitate technology transfer.



ISLAMABAD: Albert P. Khuriev Russian Ambassador to Pakistan called on Federal Minister for Industries & Production and National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain.

CCoSOEs approves categorization of NHA and Pakistan Post

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) on Thursday approved categorization of the National Highway Authority (NHA) and Pakistan Post Office besides approving other proposals. According to press release issued by finance division, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the CCoSOEs meeting. The meeting was attended by Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada; Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahmad Khan Cheema; Minister for Petroleum, Awais Ahmed Leghari; Governor State

Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Additional Attorney General for Pakistan, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Federal Secretaries, and senior officers from relevant ministries and departments. According to the statement, the Ministry of Communications presented a proposal regarding the categorization of NHA as an essential State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) under Paragraph 9 of the SOEs (Ownership and Management) Policy, 2023. The proposal was reviewed in the light of the justifications presented by Ministry of Communications, and was approved by the CCoSOEs.

and economic impacts. After careful consideration, the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) approved the proposal, categorizing the NHA as an essential SOE. The Ministry of Communications also proposed the categorization of the Pakistan Post Office Department (PPOD) as a strategic and essential State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) under Paragraph 9 of the SOEs (Ownership and Management) Policy, 2023. The proposal was reviewed in the light of the justifications presented by Ministry of Communications, and was approved by the CCoSOEs.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairs the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) at the Finance Division.

Senate body reviews progress on key infrastructure projects, calls for enhanced accountability

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Senator Saifullah Abro convened today at Parliament House. The meeting began with a detailed update on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee in its previous meetings. The Adl. Secretary of Economic Affairs Division provided an overview of ongoing and completed

projects in the communications sector, covering national highways, motorways, and road infrastructure. These projects, carried out under multilateral and bilateral agreements, and with support from UN agencies, included information on proposals, the tendering process, current progress, interest paid by the federal government or departments, and other relevant details dating back to 2002. The Committee also reviewed a summary

of ongoing and completed communication sector projects, including 16 projects funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with disbursements of 1,331.04, and 5 projects funded by the World Bank, with disbursements of 1,754. Chairman Senator Saifullah Abro suggested that adding tender process updates to date to the report would provide greater clarity.



PESHAWAR: A skilled worker making traditional Afghan jewelry at his workplace in Afghan Market.

Delegation of int'l major investment companies meets Shafay Hussain

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of major investment companies from America, Europe and Great Britain met Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain to discuss investment opportunities in the province, at Punjab Investment Board Committee Room. The provincial minister informed about the possibilities of investment in the industrial estates of the province and the facilities being provided. A joint investment agreement was also signed between the providential group and a multinational group from the United States, Europe and the United Kingdom. According to the agreement, there will be an investment of 1.5 billion dollars in energy, mining, real estate development, agriculture and other sectors in Punjab. This will be the largest foreign direct

investment by a multinational group. The head of the delegation said that there is a vast scope for investment in Punjab and "We will take advantage of the investment opportunities." Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain said that the Punjab government welcomes the joint investment agreement between the multinational group and the providential group, and the government will facilitate to implement the agreement. He said that foreign investors have special privileges in Special Economic Zones of Punjab. Investments in Special Economic Zones are exempted from income tax for 10 years and one-time duty free import of machinery, he added. The minister said that there is a very favorable environment for investment in Punjab. "In the last 5 months,

Reduction in policy rate to help boost economic activity: Baig

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly Mirza Ikhtiar Baig on Thursday said reduction in policy rate would help boost economic activity in the country. Decreasing policy rate by the State Bank would have positive impact on the business sector, he said while talking to a news channel programme. The steps have also been taken to review the agreement with Independent Power Producers for rationalizing the power rate, he said. Consistency in the policies would open new avenues for jobs in the market, he stated. The government was also taking steps to increase exports, he added.

Vegetable market in Ravi City to be best market of Asia

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani has said that a vegetable market would be set up in Ravi City, which would be the best market of Asia. According to official sources here on Thursday, the minister said that for the ease of labourers and pedlars, the route of Metro and Speedo would be operated up to the market.

Petroleum prices reduced by Rs 47.54 per litre since May: NA told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum Division Dr Musadik Masood Malik on Thursday apprised the National Assembly that petroleum prices in the country had witnessed Rs 47.54 per litre decrease since May. Responding to various questions, the minister said, "Pakistan purchases fuel at international market rate, however, we get some discount on its premier." "Under an agreement, we are purchasing diesel from Kuwait at

international rate with discount on premier. Sometime, we get relaxation in payment period of the fuel cost from friendly countries", he added. The minister said fuel prices were directly linked with the international market, besides dollar-rupee parity. Since the inception of incumbent government, the Pakistani rupee had stabilized against dollar, he added. Musadik said the benefit of reduction in fuel prices at international market were always passed on to the people.

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 365 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday turned around to bullish trend, gaining 365.82 points, a positive change of 0.47 percent, closing at 79,017.62 points against 78,651.80 points on the last working day. A total of

584,276,012 shares were traded during the day as compared to 532,732,689 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 16.364 billion against Rs. 14.735 billion on the last trading day. As many as 439 companies transacted their shares in the stock market.



MULTAN: Project Director DHA Multan, Brigadier Ahmed Rizwan Ghumman during MoU signing ceremony with CEO Hashoo Group Shaker Bhura for joint development projects.

Rupee gains 10 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Thursday appreciated by 10 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.44 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.54. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279 and Rs 280.85 respectively. The price of Euro decreased by Rs 1.05 to close at Rs 306.46 against the last day's closing of Rs 307.51, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 02 paise and closed at Rs1.95, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.41 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs362.93.

Mari for strengthening Sindh's Agricultural industry through CPEC

SUKKUR (APP): Vice Chancellor (VC), Sindh Agricultural University, Dr. Fateh Muhammad Mari on Thursday emphasized the crucial need to fortify the agricultural industry in the province by leveraging the opportunities presented by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and other cutting-edge scientific initiatives. He stressed that the agricultural sector, which is the backbone of Pakistan's economy, must be revitalized and modernized to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Dr Mari highlighted the vast potential of CPEC to transform the agricultural landscape of Sindh, citing the project's focus on infrastructure development, technology

transfer, and market access. He urged the agricultural community to capitalize on these opportunities to enhance productivity, improve quality, and increase exports. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of embracing scientific innovations and technologies to drive growth and sustainability in the agricultural sector. He mentioned the need for research and development, capacity building, and collaboration between academia, industry, and government to address the complex challenges facing agriculture in the province. By strengthening the agricultural industry through CPEC and scientific projects, Dr Mari envisioned a future.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Saifullah Abro, Chairman Senate Standing Committee On Economic Affairs presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

At least 34 dead as Israeli planes hit UN school and homes in Gaza, hospitals say

Monitoring Desk

DEIR AL-BALAH: Israeli airstrikes across Gaza overnight and Wednesday hit a UN school sheltering displaced Palestinian families as well as two homes, killing at least 34 people, including 19 women and children, hospital officials said. A UN official said six staffers were among the dead.

The war in Gaza is now into its 11th month, with tens of thousands of people dead, and international efforts to mediate a cease-fire between Israel and the Hamas militant group have repeatedly stalled as they accuse each other of making additional and unacceptable demands. In the occupied West Bank, Israeli troops launched raids in several towns backed by airstrikes, continuing a crackdown across the territory that the military says is targeting fighters but has wrecked

neighborhoods and killed civilians. One airstrike killed five people the military said were militants threatening its troops. A second strike on a car killed at least three people, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

An attacker crashed a fuel truck into a West Bank bus stop near the Israeli settlement of Givat Assaf, killing an Israeli soldier, the military said. Officials said soldiers and an armed civilian "neutralized" the attacker.

The strike on the UN's al-Jaouni Preparatory Boys School in the Nuseirat refugee camp killed at least 14, including two children and a woman, officials from Awda and al-Aqsa Martyrs hospitals said. At least 18 other people were wounded, they said.

The Israeli military said it was targeting Hamas militants planning attacks from inside the school. The

claim could not be independently confirmed.

One of the children killed was the daughter of Momin Selmi, a member of Gaza's civil defense agency, which rescues wounded and retrieves bodies after strikes, the agency said.

Gaza's schools are packed with tens of thousands of Palestinians driven from their homes by Israeli offensives and evacuation orders. The al-Jaouni school, one of many in Gaza run by the UN agency for Palestinians, or UNRWA, has been hit by multiple strikes during the war. UNRWA said six staffers aiding the displaced, including the manager of the shelter, were killed. "Humanitarian staff, premises & operations have been blatantly & unabatedly disregarded since the beginning of the war," the agency's director, Philippe Lazzarini, wrote on X.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is accompanied by U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink as he prepares to depart the train station in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Saudi Crown Prince, Chinese PM discuss cooperation in several sectors

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman discussed cooperation in several sectors including energy, investment and trade in a meeting in Riyadh on Wednesday, the Saudi state news agency SPA reported.

Earlier, Li had urged Beijing and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to accelerate free trade

negotiations. Li made his remarks in a meeting in Riyadh with GCC Secretary General Jassem al-Budaiwi, Chinese state news agency Xinhua said. SPA reported that al-Budaiwi had stressed the importance of moving forward and finalising the trade talks in the "near future".

The free trade negotiations have stalled over concerns by Saudi Arabia about cheap Chinese imports, with sources telling Reuters in May that the talks were at an impasse.

Tehran did not deliver missiles to Russia, foreign minister says

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Iran's foreign minister said on Wednesday that Tehran had not delivered any ballistic missiles to Russia and sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States and three European powers would not solve any problems between them.

"Once again, US and E3 act on faulty intelligence and flawed logic. Iran has NOT delivered ballistic missiles to Russia. Period... Sanctions are not a solution, but part of problem."

Trump says debate was 'rigged'

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump on Wednesday claimed — without providing evidence — that the debate between him and rival Kamala Harris was "rigged."

"It was a rigged deal, as I assumed it would be, because when you looked at the fact that they were correcting everything and not correcting with her," he said on right-wing news channel Fox News.

He also panned pop megastar Taylor Swift for endorsing Harris shortly after the debate, saying, "I was not a Taylor Swift fan... she's a very liberal person."

Blinken says US will keep pressing Israel to spare Gaza humanitarian sites

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: The U.S. secretary of state said Thursday the United States will continue to press Israel to do more to spare humanitarian sites in the Gaza Strip, a day after an Israeli airstrike on a U.N. school complex sheltering displaced Palestinians killed 14 people there, including six U.N. staffers.

Meanwhile, Turkey announced its own probe into the death of a Turkish-American activist who was shot and killed by Israeli forces last week while protesting settlements in the occupied West Bank. And a Syrian pro-government media outlet and an opposition war monitor said an Israeli strike hit a

car in southern Syria on Thursday, killing two people.

The deaths at the U.N. school on Wednesday came amid a spate of Israeli airstrikes across Gaza that killed at least 34 Palestinians, according to local officials. Among those killed were 19 women and children, they said.

The Health Ministry says more than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the Israeli-Hamas war began. It does not differentiate between fighters and civilians in its count. The war has caused vast destruction and displaced about 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, often multiple times.

North Korea launches multiple ballistic missiles off Korean peninsula

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: After months of trading provocations with South Korea and a recently renewed vow to keep growing its nuclear arsenal, North Korea sent its most aggressive message yet when it fired numerous ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan on Wednesday, as confirmed by both South Korea and Japan.

North Korea fired multiple short range ballistic missiles into waters east of the Korean peninsula on Thursday, Seoul's military reported, days after the nuclear-armed North marked a state anniversary.

Seoul's Joint Chief of Staff said it had detected multiple "short-range ballistic missiles launched into the East Sea around 07:10 from Pyongyang today

(2210 GMT on Wednesday)," referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

It said it was analysing details of the launch and "closely sharing information on the North Korean ballistic missile with the USA and Japanese authorities, while strengthening surveillance and vigilance in preparation for further launches".

Japan's defence ministry also confirmed the launch of at least one suspected North Korean ballistic missile, with the coastguard warning vessels to take care.

It is Pyongyang's first apparent weapons test since July 1, and comes days after the isolated, nuclear-armed country marked a key anniversary celebrating the founding of the ruling regime.

Pope Francis, in Singapore, urges fair wages for migrant workers

Monitoring Desk

SINGAPORE: Pope Francis on Thursday urged political leaders in Singapore, a leading global financial hub, to seek fair wages for the country's million-plus lower-paid foreign workers.

In likely the last major speech of an ambitious 12-day tour across Southeast Asia and Oceania, the 87-year-old pontiff expressed concern for Singapore's rapidly ageing population and its migrant workforce, centred in the construction and domestic services industries.

"I hope that special attention will be paid to the poor and the elderly... as well as to protecting the dignity of migrant workers," the pope said in an address to about 1,000 politicians and civil and religious leaders.

"These workers contribute a great deal to society and should be guaranteed a fair wage," he said. There were 1.1 million foreigners on work permits in Singapore who earned less than S\$3,000 (\$2,300)

per month as of December 2023, including 286,300 domestic workers and 441,100 workers in the construction, shipyard and process sectors, government data shows.

Many of the migrant workers come from nearby countries such as Malaysia, China, Bangladesh and India. Many also come from the Philippines, a majority Catholic country.

A Singapore NGO that provides services for migrant workers, Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics, welcomed the pope's remarks, saying they were in "full agreement" with his call for fair wages.

Singapore's workforce ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Concern for migrants has been a common theme for Francis. Earlier on his trip, he asked leaders in Papua New Guinea to work for fair wages as that country becomes a major target of international companies for its gas, gold and other reserves.

Greek PM says German border plan will be burden for Greece

Monitoring Desk

ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said on Thursday that a German plan to impose tighter checks at its land borders amounted to unilaterally scrapping Europe's open-border Schengen zone and would burden frontline states such as Greece.

Germany said this week that the checks within what is normally a wide area of free movement — the Schengen zone — would start on Sept. 16 and initially last for six months, as the country tries to clamp down on irregular migration.

"Germany had an extremely tolerant and I would say socially generous policy against migrants which is now triggering a big social backlash," Mitsotakis said in an interview with a Greek radio station.

"The response cannot be unilaterally scrapping Schengen and dropping the ball to countries which sit on Europe's external borders," he said.

Instead, the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, a revamped migration system which recognises the importance of guarding

Europe's external borders, should be implemented, Mitsotakis said.

Greece was on the frontline of Europe's migration crisis in 2015-16 when more than a million refugees — many of them fleeing civil war in Syria — arrived, mainly via Turkey. Most eventually moved on to Germany and other Western European destinations.

The number of arrivals in Greece has since fallen sharply but many migrants, mainly from Libya and Egypt, still reach Greek shores before also heading towards western Europe.

Mitsotakis' conservative government, which won a second term last year, has tightened its migration policy since 2019.

A cement and barbed-wire fence that Greece is extending along its northern border with Turkey to prevent migrants from entering the country will be completed within a year, Greek Citizen Protection Minister Michalis Chrisochoidis told state television on Thursday. "We are doing our duty to Europe, we're guarding our borders," Chrisochoidis said.



A cargo truck of the International Committee of the Red Cross burns after a Russian military strike in the village of Virolubivka, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, near a front line in Donetsk region, Ukraine.

China to 'crush' foreign encroachment in South China Sea: military official

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China will "crush" any foreign incursion into its sovereign territory including in the South China Sea, a senior Beijing military official said on Thursday on the sidelines of a defence forum.

Washington and Beijing have verbally sparred over China's increasingly assertive approach in disputed maritime regions, including the South China Sea.

In recent months, Chinese vessels have engaged in a series of high-profile confrontations with Philippine ships in the waters, which Beijing claims almost in their entirety despite an international court ruling that its assertion has no legal basis. Speaking to a small group of journalists including AFP at the Xiangshan forum, Chinese army Lieu-

tenant General He Lei said: "We hope that the South China Sea will remain a sea of peace." But, he said, "If the United States moves its pawns behind the scenes, if it pushes countries to the front line, or if the United States itself ends up on the front line, then we in the Chinese People's Liberation Army [...] will never have any patience".

"We in the Chinese People's Liberation Army will resolutely crush any foreign hostile encroachment on China's territorial, sovereign and maritime rights and interests with firm determination, staunch will, strong capability and effective means," he said.

On Wednesday, China and the Philippines held what they called "candid" talks on South China Sea issues.

Guinea Bissau President Embalo says he will not run for a second term

Monitoring Desk

BISSAU: Guinea Bissau's President Umaro Cissoko Embalo said on Thursday he would not run for a second term in elections in November.

Embalo, 51, was elected in January 2020 to succeed outgoing president Jose Mario Vaz. He defeated runner-up Domingos Simoes Pereira with 54% of the vote and would have been eligible for another term in office.

The unexpected announcement could trigger a power vacuum and heighten political instability in the coup-prone country of around two million people.

At the end of a council of ministers on Thursday night, Embalo said his wife had dissuaded him from running again.

Hardliners lead in Jordan polls, but far from majority

Monitoring Desk

AMMAN: Jordan's leading Islamist opposition party has won 31 out of 138 seats in the kingdom's parliament, tripling its representation in the house, according to official election results released on Wednesday. The Islamic Action Front, the political offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, came ahead of other parties and factions in the legislature after Tuesday's vote, but fell shy of forming a majority. The result is a historic win for the Islamists and their largest representation since they gained 22 out of the 80 seats in the then parliament in 1989. The IAF had 10 seats in the previous parliament elected in 2020 and 16 seats in the 2016 legislature.

Hamas says ready to implement ceasefire without new conditions

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: The Palestinian Hamas group said on Wednesday that its negotiators reiterated its readiness to implement an "immediate" ceasefire with Israel in Gaza based on a previous UN proposal without new conditions from any party.

The Palestinian group said in a statement that their negotiation team, led by former official Khalil al-Hayya, met mediators on Wednesday including Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and Egypt's intelligence chief Abbas Kamel in Doha to discuss the latest develop-

ments in Gaza.

Talks have so far failed to reach a deal to end the 11-month-old war. Linger- ing issue include control of the Philadelphi corridor, a narrow stretch of land on Gaza's border with Egypt, persisting.

CIA Director William Burns, who is also the chief US negotiator on Gaza, said on Saturday that a more detailed ceasefire proposal would be made in the next several days.

The previous proposal put forward by US President Joe Biden in June laid out a three-phase ceasefire in return for the release of Israeli hostages.



Rescue workers help stranded people from a flooded area at the border town of Mae Sai, following the impact of Typhoon Yagi, in the northern province of Chiang Rai, Thailand.

Rohingya refugees in India on hunger strike over 'prolonged' detention

Monitoring Desk

GUWAHATI: More than 100 Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar including women and children have been on hunger strike since Monday to protest at their indefinite detention at a camp in northeastern India, authorities told Reuters.

More than one million Rohingya refugees fled to countries including Bangladesh and India after a military-led crackdown in Myanmar in 2017. They

have little hope of returning home, where they are largely denied citizenship and basic rights.

The protesters include about 103 Rohingya Muslims and 30 Christian Chin refugees, also from Myanmar, and many have refugee cards issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said a Rohingya who is in touch with the protesters in Matia Transit Camp in Assam state.

Indonesian leader spends final weeks of his term in unfinished new capital

Monitoring Desk

JAKARTA: Indonesian President Joko Widodo will from Thursday spend the final weeks of his term in the country's planned new capital, Nusantara, amid doubts about the continued pace of development of his flagship \$32 billion megaproject.

The massive infrastructure undertaking on the island of Borneo has suffered a series of setbacks, including construction delays, land issues, and a lack of foreign investment. This June the two top officials overseeing Nusantara abruptly resigned.

Jokowi, as the outgoing leader is known, reit-

ated on Thursday that it could be decades before Nusantara is finished.

"It could take 10, 15, or even 20 years," Jokowi told top military and police officials during a meeting in Nusantara's recently completed eagle-shaped palace.

"Moving to the new capital is not only about moving to a new building, palace or location," he added. "But is a change of mindset and working patterns."

Intended to ease the burden on the congested, polluted and densely populated current capital Jakarta, the parliament passed a law to move its capital in 2022.

Tunisia coast guard recovers bodies of six African migrants

Monitoring Desk

TUNIS: Tunisian coast guards recovered the bodies of five African women migrants and a baby in waters off the town of Monastir, a judge said on Thursday.

Judge Farid Ben Jha told Reuters that the bodies had been recovered late on Wednesday and that the migrants had come from sub-Saharan Africa.

California wildfires burn dozens of homes, ski resort

Monitoring Desk

WRIGHTWOOD: Three Southern California wildfires torched dozens of mountain homes, tore through a ski resort and forced thousands to evacuate in towns and cities east of Los Angeles on Wednesday.

Around 40 homes and cabins burned in the villages of Mount Baldy and Wrightwood and flames damaged lifts at the nearby Mountain High ski resort, the Los Angeles Fire Department reported.

The San Bernardino County blaze, named the Bridge Fire, exploded to 48,000 acres (19,000 hectares) in 48 hours, becoming the largest in the state. By Wednesday afternoon the three fires had blackened over 105,000 acres of scrub, brush and forest.



Demonstrators protest against the participation of Republican presidential nominee and former U.S. President Donald Trump in the National Association of Black Journalists convention, outside the venue in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.

Pakistan committed to conserving marine ecosystem: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday reiterated Pakistan's commitment to conserving its marine ecosystems and coastal areas by addressing challenges such as sea pollution and climate change.

He said that maritime pollution was a major concern for Pakistan as it was negatively affecting aquatic life, causing a decline in the growth of the country's fisheries sector.

The president expressed these views while talking to the visiting Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh, Chairman Standing Committee on Climate

Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman, and senior government officials attended the meeting.

Welcoming the Secretary-General, the president said that focusing on the blue economy was a cornerstone of national development strategy as Pakistan was keen on modernizing its fisheries and ship-breaking sectors under the Special Investment Facilitation Council. He said that Pakistan was taking effective steps to tackle the effects of climate change. He said that Pakistan intended to improve its marine ecosystem and would welcome IMO's assistance and expertise in this regard. In order to mitigate the impacts of climate change, he highlighted that Pakistan had planted mangroves over a million acres in Sindh and

also sold carbon credits in the international market. He informed that plans were afoot to plant mangroves on another 2 million acres of land. The president also highlighted Pakistan's strong commitment to adhering to IMO regulations and standards for maritime safety, security and environmental protection. He said that Pakistan was looking forward to exploring potential areas for future collaboration with IMO, including technical cooperation and expertise-sharing to improve Pakistan's maritime sector.

The Secretary-General said that Pakistan had great maritime potential, adding that IMO would continue to support Pakistan in advancing collaborations and promoting a sustainable and efficient maritime industry.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the Federal Cabinet meeting.

EU special envoy meets Azam Nazeer Tarar to discuss religious freedom

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law & Justice, Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar held a meeting with Ambassador Frans Van Daele, the EU Special Envoy for freedom of religion and belief.

EU Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kionka, Political Counsellor Rukiye Kumurcu and Cooperative Associate Lorion were also present in the meeting.

The discussions centered around enhancing cooperation on religious freedom, protecting minority rights, and advancing legislative reforms in Pakistan.

Ambassador Daele praised Pakistan's efforts to promote freedom of religion but highlighted ongoing challenges faced by religious minorities, such as forced marriages and conversions. He emphasized the need for enhanced safeguards to better protect vulnerable groups.

In response, Federal Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar reaffirmed Pakistan's dedication to these protections, highlighting constitutional guarantees under Articles 20, 22, and 28, which ensure equal rights for all citizens regardless of their religion. He also highlighted the role of the Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Agency (ZARRA) in coordinating law enforcement efforts, raising public awareness and facilitating prompt action to address cases of missing or abducted children and those at risk of forced marriages.

The Child Protection Institute (CPI) and provincial child protection bureaus further contribute by creating safe environments for at-risk children, particularly those vulnerable to forced marriages or exploitation, and ensuring they receive essential support and protection, the minister said.

The minister also outlined Pakistan's broader commitment to human rights through the National Action Plan on Human

Rights, which focuses on policy reforms, access to justice, and adherence to international treaty obligations. He emphasized the role of independent bodies like the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), which recently received A-status accreditation from the UN's GANHRI, further strengthening Pakistan's human rights mechanisms.

Additionally, he said that a toll-free helpline (1099) provides legal advice on human rights violations, and the government has also implemented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to prevent the misuse of blasphemy laws, ensuring equal protection for all religions. He said that provincial efforts are also underway to secure places of worship and investigate cases of forced conversions.

The EU delegation praised Pakistan's comprehensive efforts in safeguarding vulnerable communities.

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The EU delegation praised Pakistan's comprehensive efforts in safeguarding vulnerable communities.

IMO Secretary General calls on PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco Thursday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

The prime minister warmly welcomed Secretary General Velasco and reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening collaboration with the IMO.

He underlined Pakistan's desire for expanding fisheries and maritime trade, exploring offshore resources, promoting coastal tourism, and fostering a sustainable shipbreaking industry.

The prime minister said that his government was prioritizing the blue economy as a central pillar of its economic development strategy.

He highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in attracting investments and introducing modern technologies to advance fisheries and the shipbreaking sector. Through these efforts and with the support of IMO and international partners, Pakistan's visibility on the maritime map of the world would be further enhanced, he hoped.

PM Shehbaz Sharif renewed Pakistan's firm commitment to work with the international partners and the IMO to contribute to global efforts aimed at reducing maritime emissions. Secretary General Velasco appreciated the prime minister's leadership and Pakistan's proactive approach towards leveraging its maritime resources for economic progress and its role in the global maritime community.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador-designate of Sweden, Ms Alexandra Berg Von Linde, presenting her diplomatic credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

CM Bugti directs to implement demands of artist Naseer soon

"Painful to see banner about sale of children of Naseer Ahmed"

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has issued orders for implementation on the demands made by a disabled artist, Naseer Ahmed, who reached the provincial assembly to sell his own children.

The Chief Minister met the disabled artist who had announced to sell his own children due to his prolonged disability and financial problems and reached the assembly on a wheel-chair with his children carrying the banners "children for sale".

The Chief Minister paid hearing to the demands of artist and issued on the spot directives to resolve the issues being faced by him.

He ordered to provide electric wheel chair besides

providing him the financial compensation.

He also directed to provide him best medical treatment to the artist.

Speaking to the artist, Chief Minister said that his children are his own whom no one can buy from us.

He said that the banner about selling of children was so painful that he couldn't take even a single step.

The Chief Minister assured Naseer Ahmed that he would bear the expenses of his children being his responsibility. Meanwhile, he took away the banner inscribed with the slogan of "children for sale" from the children of the artist and comforted them.

Later, Naseer Ahmed was shifted to the CMH by an ambulance immediately.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Economic Affairs Minister Ahmad Khan Cheema and Minister of State Ali Pervez Malik also attended the meeting.

In the meeting, they discussed the ongoing federal government projects in Sindh and public welfare initiative being taken by both Sindh and federal governments.

PM, Sindh CM discuss political situation, development projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah and Pakistan Peoples Party leader Syed Naveed Qamar on Thursday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Economic Affairs Minister Ahmad Khan Cheema and Minister of State Ali Pervez Malik also attended the meeting.

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PTA blocked 465 mobile SIMs in Katcha areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Ms Shaza Fatima on Thursday told the Senate that the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority had blocked some 465 SIMs used by dacoits in the Katcha areas of Sindh, including the districts of Shikarpur and Ghotki. Replying to a question of Senator Haji Hidayatullah Khan in the House, she said that mobile numbers/SIMs, IMELs and 113 CNICs (Computerized National Identity Cards) were blocked on the directions of the Ministry of Interior, Directorate General of Inter Services Intelligence and Signals Directorate of General Headquarters.

The minister said that during the year 2023-24, around 5,294 mobile numbers/SIMs, 4507 IMELs and 113 CNICs were blocked and blacklisted.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Finance Babar Khan presiding over meeting of Finance Committee of Balochistan Mineral Resources Limited

ADC visits girls high school to review educational issues in Gwadar

QUETTA (APP): On the special directive of Deputy Commissioner Hamood-ur Rehman, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) (Revenue) Sar Buland Khan visited Government Girls High School Kalanchi-Para area of Gwadar where he reviewed the educational issues in details.

During the visit, Sar Buland Khan observed the shortage of teachers in the school. The ADC was apprised about the education related issues from the

headmistress, teachers and students during inspecting the classrooms.

He also appreciated the school bags and other educational materials provided under UNICEF and assured that the district administration is taking all possible measures to improve the quality of education in the district.

Sar Buland Khan also assured that no compromise would be made on quality of education and immediate steps would be taken to solve the problems.

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Event promoting peace through cultural heritage held

QUETTA (APP): A significant event focusing on promoting peace through cultural heritage was organized on Thursday at Quetta Press Club. The program, a joint collaboration between the Christian Study Centre (CSC), the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), and the Society for Human Equity and Empowerment, aimed

to highlight the role of composite heritage in fostering social connectors and inclusivity in society.

Farkhanda, Director of NCHR Balochistan, emphasized the inclusive nature of Balochistan's rich culture, stating, "Balochistan has a deep-rooted tradition of equality, where every human being is respected, irrespective of background."

She highlighted the importance of using cultural heritage as a tool for peacebuilding.

Sheehan William, a key speaker, addressed the alarming rise in extremism and intolerance in society. "It is crucial to counter these narratives with approaches that promote inclusivity and celebrate composite heritage."



HUB: Spokesman of President Ali Zardari and Provincial Advisor for Trade and Industry Mir Ali Hassan Zehri inspecting construction of Sakran Road



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti along with Provincial Education Minister Raheela Durrani distributing school bags among students at the ceremony of launch of Zero Out of School Children Campaign Balochistan & Celebration of International Literacy Week.

Presides over meeting of district accounts, treasury officers: Shaoib Nausherwani directs to ensure transparency in financial and administrative affairs

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shaoib Nausherwani has directed to the concerned high ups to ensure transparency in financial and administrative affairs. He stressed the need to make the service delivery system efficient and public-friendly as per the vision of Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti. In this regard, the role of treasury officers is very important.

He was chairing the meeting of district accounts and treasury officers here the other day.

The Secretary Finance, Babar Khan, Director General Treasury, Muhammad Afzal Khoshti and other concerned high ups were in attendance.

The meeting discussed the issues of district treasury offices in detail and discussed ways and means to make the service delivery efficient besides resolving other issues being faced by the offices.

Addressing the meeting, Mir Shaoib Nausherwani maintained that we would continue to implement the zero tolerance policy against corruption. He asserted that no

one can be allowed to indulge in the corruption and maladministration whatsoever.

He said that there are clear vision of the Chief Minister to make Balochistan corruption-free province bringing reforms in all sectors and improving the service delivery system.

The Minister Finance exhorted the treasury officers to play their effective role to implement the public-friendly vision of the provincial government. He assured to resolve the issues being faced by them on priority basis.



QUETTA: President Quetta Press Club Abdul Khaliq Rind meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (ret'd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai

Ministers says Young generation will have to play role in dealing with climate change, its effects

Independent Report
QUETTA: Adviser for Climate Change, Naseem-Ur-Rehman Mullakhel and Provincial Minister Education Raheela Hameed Durrani said that the young generation would have to play their role in dealing with climate change and its effects. They said Balochistan is the most affected area in terms of climate change, the young generation has to be ready to deal with these challenges.

They expressed these views as guests while addressing at a Provincial local conference of youth was organized on the topic of climate change with the support of International Water Management Institute, FAO, BRSP and Revival of Balochistan Water Resources in the provincial capital of Quetta BUIITEMS University on Thursday. Scholars working on climate change, faculty members of universities and a large number of young students participated in the event.

The aim of the seminar was to sensitize youth on climate change impacts and challenges. Dr. Arshad Khan, Deputy Country Head of International Water Management Institute, delivered a detailed lecture on water conservation, supply and better use on this occasion. In the conference, Vice Chancellor BUIITEMS Dr professor Khalid Hafeez, Forest Secretary Dostain Jamalini, Secretary religious affair Muhammad Ishaq Jamal Pro VC BUIITEMS Dr. Abdul Rahman, RBWR's Yelee Beekma, Dr Naeem Shahwani, IWMI's Dr. Azam Kakar, BRSP's Abdul Qahir, IDSP's Safdar Hussain Climate Specialist Urooj Khan and Dr Aneela also attended the conference.

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QUETTA: Central leader of BNP and others addressing a Press conference

Court reserves verdict in bail pleas of PTI founder, Bushra Bibi

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Accountability Court (AC) of Islamabad on Thursday reserved its verdict on bail petitions of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and his wife Bushra Bibi in the 190 million pound graft reference.

Accountability Judge Nasir Javed Rana, however, rejected the acquittal plea of PTI founder in the same reference after hearing arguments from both sides at the Central Jail Adiala Rawalpindi.

The accused were produced before the court.

Bushra Bibi's lawyer Usman Riaz Gil gave arguments on the bail petition of his client.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) prosecutor pleaded that the PTI founder had misguidedly misled the cabinet during his tenure as prime minister and hid the facts about 190 million pounds' scam.

He prayed the court to terminate the acquittal plea of the accused.

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New tradition set for countering baseless propaganda: DC

Get her new born daughter vaccinated against polio marking immunization campaign

Independent Report
QUETTA: In order to counter baseless propaganda against the anti-polio vaccine and raise much needed awareness about immunization, the Deputy Commissioner Lasbela, Ms. Humaira Baloch has set new tradition by getting her new born daughter vaccinated against polio virus that marked the start of anti-polio campaign in the district.

The simple but impressive inauguration ceremony of anti-polio campaign was held at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Lasbela.

In the ceremony, Deputy Commissioner Lasbela, Humaira Baloch brought her new born daughter namely Zar Mah Baloch and got her administered anti-polio drops.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner said that polio is a fatal disease which we have to fight together and got status of polio free zone for Pakistan.

She dispelled the baseless propaganda and wrong narrative about the anti-polio vaccine. She mentioned that the uneducated and illiterate persons are misled through wrong narrative and baseless propaganda about the anti-polio vaccine.

She stressed that we have to make the anti-polio campaign successful together.

Also present on the occasion were Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Siraj Baloch, District Health Officer and other concerned officials.

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DC Chaman for resolving passport issues of people

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner of Chaman Captain Raja Athar Abbas on Thursday directed to the passport officers that it should be made easy to make passports for people who meet the rules and regulations of the passport office and fulfill other requirements.

He expressed these views while paying a surprise visit to the passport office and sub-office NADRA Center.

On this occasion, a detailed briefing was given by the Passport Officer to the Deputy Commissioner regarding the process of

making a passport.

Meanwhile, he also visited the new sub-office NADRA Center in the city and reviewed the functioning of the passport office and sought information from the people.

On the second day of the new sub-office, many people have been issued identity card tokens.

On this occasion, the DC said, "Our main objective is to provide convenience to the people so that the service of the public could be performed without any waiting and inconvenience."

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