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SC's detailed verdict declares PTI eligible for reserved seats Election authorities denying major political party recognition infringes electorate's rights: SC

Constitution doesn't prevent any party from fielding candidates; Judgment nullifies ECP's decision to allocate seats to other parties.

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Monday released its detailed verdict on the July 12 order in the reserved seats case, which had declared the PTI a parliamentary party. The 8-5 majority July order had declared ex-premier Imran Khan's PTI eligible for seats reserved for women and minorities, dealing a major setback to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's ruling coalition. Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah had announced the majority verdict, which was supported by seven other judges: Justices Munib Akhtar, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Ayesha A Malik, Athar Minallah, Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Shahid Waheed and Irfan Saadat Khan. The case had been heard by a 13-member bench — Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail had penned a minority judgment; Justices Aminuddin Khan and Naem Akhtar Afghan in their ruling had rejected the pleas for reserved seats; and Justice Yahya Afridi had also dismissed the Sunni Ittehad Council's petitions. Despite the 8-5 split, all 13 judges had declared the PTI a parliamentary party as they ruled that out of a list of 80 MNAs, 39 belonged to the PTI while

41 were given the chance to resubmit their party affiliation.

The 70-page judgement released today, available on the SC's website, was authored by Justice Shah, who is set to succeed incumbent CJP Isa as the top judge in October.

The verdict states: "When election authorities engage in actions [...] such as unlawfully denying the recognition of a major political party and treating its nominated candidates as independents, they not only compromise the rights of these candidates but also significantly infringe upon the rights of the electorate and corrode their own in-

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QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti in a group photo with Provincial Ministers Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Parliamentary Secretary Nawabzada Zareen Magsi on eve of Pashtoon Culture Day

Provincial Ministers greet CM on Pashtun Culture Day:

National solidarity can be promoted by highlighting cultures at national level, maintains Chief Minister

Mir Sarfraz Bugti says all nationalities living in Pakistan are playing role in country's development & prosperity with national spirit; vows to improve service delivery by making departments efficient; urges Provincial Ministers & Parliamentary Secretaries to play effective role in solving public issues

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the national solidarity can be promoted by highlighting cultures at the national level.

He said that culture plays key role in highlighting identity of every area. He said that there is a lesson of love, respect, harmony and compatibility in the Pashtun culture.

He said that all the nationalities living in Pakistan

are playing their role in its development and prosperity.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the Provincial Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries who met him and extended greetings of Pashtun Culture Day here at the Chief Minister's secretariat on Monday.

Those who met the Chief Minister were included Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Mir Sadiq Umrani and Parliamentary

Secretary, Nawabzada Zarin Khan Magsi.

The Provincial Ministers discussed with the Chief Minister about the performance of their respective departments besides taking up the issues being faced by the people.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that it is our priority to bring improvement in the service delivery through departmental reforms in the province so as to resolve the

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Maliki.

Pashtun culture day celebrated in style in Quetta, different other parts of Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Pashtun Culture Day was celebrated in style in Quetta and different other parts of Balochistan province on Monday.

Different colourful and cultural programmes and activities were organized to mark the celebration of Pashtun Culture Day.

These events were organized by different political parties and independent groups marking the celebrations on the Culture Day.

The Pashtun National Network organized the colourful Pashtun Culture day event at the Darbar Marriage Hall where the Governor Balochistan,

Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail was the chief guest.

Clad in the beautiful typical Pashtun attire, Jaffar Mandokhail participated in different programme.

Similarly, the Pashtun Culture Day programmes were also arranged at Sadiq Shaheed football ground and Quetta Metropolitan Corporation lawn the same day.

The Pashtun Culture Day programme was arranged by Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) at Sadiq Shaheed football ground while at QMC lawn, the event was organized by Pashtunkhwa National Awami Party (PKNAP).

Governor withdraws order about summoning of BA's session

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has withdrawn order regarding summoning of session of Balochistan Assembly.

According to the notification of provincial assembly's secretariat, the Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has withdrawn his order regarding the session of assembly, which was summoned at 03:00 PM, on Tuesday (today).

US envoy meets Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz

LAHORE (INP): US Ambassador in Pakistan Donald Blome on Monday visited Jati Umra in Lahore and met with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and former prime minister and PML-N President Nawaz Sharif.

Punjab CM Maryam welcomed the visitor on arrival.

Matters related to mutual interest came under discussion at the meeting.

Also in attendance were Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal and Senior Punjab Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb.



President Asif Ali Zardari, Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al-Maliki and Chief Minister Punjab and Governor Sindh are cutting cake on the National Day of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), in Islamabad.

President Zardari says

Pakistan committed to further strengthening ties with KSA

PM reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to collaborate with KSA to promote peace, stability, development in region

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in the areas of economy, trade, defence, culture, education and people-to-people contacts.

The president expressed these views while addressing the National Day Reception of KSA, hosted by Saudi Embassy to celebrate the 94th Anniversary of the National Day of the KSA here. The event

was attended by the federal ministers, diplomats, dignitaries, and civil and military officers.

While extending heartfelt felicitations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud and the people of Saudi Arabia on their National Day, the president highlighted that both brotherly countries enjoyed excellent relations in various fields and had always sup-

ported each other during challenging times.

The president expressed deep appreciation for the vision of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the significant progress achieved by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He remarked that the bold initiatives taken by the Crown Prince would propel the country towards greater progress and prosperity. The president wished Saudi Arabia continued success on this transformative journey.

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QUETTA: Different delegations meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Azam Tarar says Lot of questions still unanswered in SC reserved seats judgement

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Monday said that a lot of questions were still unanswered in the detailed judgement announced by the Supreme Court in the reserved seats case.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), he said, had not been a party in the reserved seats case at any forum, including the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Peshawar High Court (PHC) or the SC.

He said courts were used to give decisions on principles that who had filed the case and what relief was prayed by the petitioner.

Such questions were not answered in the reserved seats case as the apex court seemed to have not examined those aspects, the law minister said while ad-

ressing a press conference.

Azam Tarar said that independent candidates had joined the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) willfully and that their move was irreversible as per the law.

He said that the ECP was an independent institution working under constitutional oath and it had to render its responsibility under the law.

Similarly, he said, that the legislation was the sole prerogative of the Parliament. The judgement had not commented on the amendments in the election law, he added.

The minister said that the review petition had not become ineffective after the announcement of detailed judgement in the reserved seats case. The question that the instant decision had

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Naqvi visits Saudi Embassy on National Day of Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday visited the Saudi Embassy on the occasion of National Day of Saudi Arabia in the diplomatic enclave.

He was received by the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia on his arrival. Interior Minister met with the Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Ahmed Al-Maliki.

The Interior Minister congratulated Ambassador Al-Maliki on Saudi Arabia's National Day and expressed good wishes for the Saudi Royal Family and the people of Saudi Arabia.

He thanked the Saudi Government and ambassador for their cooperation during difficult times, saying, "Saudi Arabia has always stood by Pakistan, whether during floods, earthquakes, economic or other challenges.

Their support has been unparalleled."



QUETTA: Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Chairman, Mehmood Khan Achakzai take keen interest at a stall during ceremony on the occasion of Pashtun Culture Day, at Sadiq Shaheed Ground in Quetta.

Sends birthday wishes to PM Shehbaz President Xi reaffirms time-tested Pak-China ties

PM thanks President Xi for "gracious gesture" of birthday greetings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday sent a congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, extending his warm birthday wishes and reaffirming the promotion of China-Pakistan strategic cooperation and the construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CEC).

The letter received by Prime Minister Shehbaz on his 73rd birthday from President Xi is an extraordinary development in solidifying the diplomatic relationship between both countries, according to a PM Office press release.

Conveying his good wishes to the prime minister, Xi said that Pakistan and China had been enjoy-

ing a strategic partnership through thick and thin marked by mutual trust and support which remained unaffected by any changing international scenario.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for extending the warm wishes on his 73rd birthday.

"I am grateful for this gracious gesture that reflects the iron brotherhood and All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Pakistan and the People's Republic of China," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline in response to a congratulatory letter he received from President Xi.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addressing an important press conference.

Lt Gen Asim Malik appointed new DG ISI

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lieutenant General Muhammad Asim Malik has been appointed as the Director General Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) succeeding current Chief Lieutenant General Nadeem Anjum, and he will assume his new responsibility on September 30.

Lieutenant General Asim Malik is currently serving as Adjutant General in GHQ who has previously commanded the Infantry Division in Balochistan and the Infantry Brigade in Waziristan.

He has also received Sword of Honor in his course, whereas apart from this, he has also been

Lieutenant General Asim is also a graduate of Fort Leavenworth and Royal College of Defence Studies and has also served in the Military Operations Directorate before his current assignment.

Health was speaking on occasion of his visit to the Health Ministry in the Civil Secretariat on Monday.

It may be mentioned here that it was the maiden visit of Bakh Muhammad Kakar after his appointment as the Minister Health.

The Secretary Health Saleh Muhammad Baloch briefed the Minister about the provision of services and ongoing projects of the Health department.

GoB taking serious steps to provide better medical facilities to masses, says Minister Health

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Health, Bakht Muhammad Kakar has stated that the government is taking serious steps to provide better health facilities to people in the province.

He said that the government is endeavouring to ensure departmental reforms for provision of quality services of health in the province.

The Minister for

Everyone must abide by Constitution of country:

Chairman PkMAP stresses need on imparting basic education to kids in respective mother languages

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chairman Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Mehmood Khan Achakzai has underlined the need to impart basic education to the children in their respective mother languages.

He stressed that basic education should be imparted to the children in their mother languages so that they are able to understand better.

He said that the whole world is agreed on that human being learns better in one's mother language and progresses.

The Chairman PkMAP also said that we have learnt nothing from our past, rather we kept on follow-

ing the old policies and practices. He stressed that everyone must abide by the constitution of Pakistan. The Constitution should be supreme and Parliament should be the source of power.

These and similar other views were expressed by the Chairman PkMAP while speaking to the media persons on occasion of his participation in the Pashtun Culture Day programme arranged by the PkMAP at Sadiq Shaheed Football ground on Monday.

The leaders of party, workers and other people belonging to different walks of life participated in large number.

Latest article in Israeli newspaper further exposed Imran's links with Jewish lobbies: Daniyal Chaudhary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Daniyal Chaudhary said on Monday that the recent article published in Israeli news had further exposed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan Jewish lobbies.

Addressing his first press conference after assuming charge as parliamentary secretary, Daniyal Chaudhary said that Israeli newspaper Jerusalem Post through an article written by Harry Richer has once again exposed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Chairman Imran Khan's Zionist connection.

Barrister Daniyal said that in the article, the newspaper had clearly stated that Imran Khan was the only leader in Muslim Ummah who could play a central role "in changing both public opinion and military policy" in Pakistan towards Israel.

He said that Zionist lobbies believe that Imran Khan and his party could represent Israel in Islamic world in a better way.

He remarked that Imran was already representing Jewish sentiments as his children were with them and he had supported Zac Gold-

smith against Pakistani Sadiq Khan in London mayoral elections.

He lamented that whenever Pakistan was on the path of stability, the anti-Pakistan lobbies became active to weaken it.

Daniyal Chaudhary said that the article had connection with the lobbyist firms hired by Imran Khan on behalf of India in the US to weaken Pakistan. He said that the objective of Imran Khan was to run a defamation campaign against Pakistan in international media and get legislation done against Pakistan in the US Parliament. He alleged that the firms hired by Imran were involved in activities against Pakistan's interests and they formulated strategies to weaken it economically. They were also involved in conspiracies to weaken Pakistani armed forces which were not only defending it against external threats but also internal conspiracies. He said that the objective behind May 9 attacks and burning the monuments of martyrs was to weaken the spirit of patriotism among the forces.

He said that PTI leader Rauf Hassan was also found involved in anti-state propaganda.

He said that the May 9 conspiracy was hatched to create hatred against the national institutions.

He quoted JUI-F Amir Fazlur Rahman as saying in a talk show that he had been saying for many decades that Imran Khan and his party were in the hands of Zionists who were working to weaken Pakistan.

Referring to a PTI Minister's statement about fake licences of PIA pilots, he said it ruined the national airlines within no time. He questioned on whose instructions that anti-Pakistan statement was given. Similarly, he said that chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced to hold talks with the regime of Afghanistan, bypassing the federal government.

Daniyal Chaudhary also referred to the book of late Hakeem Saeed who had written that Jewish lobbies had selected Imran to safeguard their interests in this region and they had invested hundreds of billions of dollars on him. He said that many Muslim countries like Libya, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq were destroyed and anti-Pakistan forces were hellbent to weaken its armed forces to target Pakistan in future.



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of Uzbekistan, Mr. Oybek Usmanov, meeting President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

OGDCL achieves highest ever quarterly dividend in company's history

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Board of Directors of Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) Monday announced the financial results for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024.

According to news release the OGDCL achieved net sales revenue of Rs. 463.698 billion, with a profit after tax of Rs. 208.976 billion, translating to earnings per share (EPS) of Rs. 48.59. This strong financial performance reflects OGDCL's commitment to operational excellence amidst a challenging economic and energy environment. The Board of Directors announced a final cash dividend of Rs. 4.00 per share (40% for the year ended June 30, 2024).

This is in addition to the interim dividends of Rs. 6.10 per share (61% already paid to shareholders during the year. Notably, the final quarterly dividend of Rs. 4.00 per share is the highest quarterly dividend in the Company's history, bringing the total cumulative dividend payout to 101%.

During the fiscal year, OGDCL contributed Rs. 218 billion to the national exchequer through taxes, dividends, and royalties.

The Company made five significant hydrocarbon discoveries during the year, further enhancing its portfolio. These discoveries were made in key areas across Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, continuing OGDCL's focus on expanding its resource base to support the country's energy needs.

In terms of production, OGDCL achieved an average daily output of 33,117 barrels per day (BPD) of crude oil, 717 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of gas, and 717 metric tons per day (MTD) of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Without the production curtailments by SNGPL and UPL, crude oil production could have reached 33,495 BPD, gas production 771 MMSCFD, and LPG production 736 MTD, reflecting potential increases of 1,107 BPD (3.1%), 7 MMSCFD (0.9%), and 16 MTD (2.2%), respectively, over last year's figures.

Bilawal chairs PPP spokespersons meeting

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday chaired a meeting of the party's spokespersons at the Bilawal House to discuss constitutional matters.

PPP spokespersons including Ajiz Dhamra, Musa Geelani, Nabil Gabol, Nawabzada Iftikhar, Sharmila Farooqui, Shehla Raza, Sarbuland Khan and others attended the meeting.

Asifa Bhutto Zardari, PPP Women's Central President Faryal Talpur, Sherry Rahman, Shazia Marri, Nisar Khoro, Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Shah, Murtaza Wahab, Saeed Ghani and Chaudhry Manzoor were also present in the meeting.

Pharma Summit to be held tomorrow

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 7th Pakistan Pharma Summit and Awards-2025 will be held on September 25 (Wednesday).

The summit is expected to be attended by over 400 senior executives and experts of the pharma industry from all over the country, and abroad.

The theme of this year's conference is "Digital pharma transformation: enhancing efficiency in uncertain times".

National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq will be the chief guest at the inaugural session, while Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath will be the guest of honour.



KARACHI: Warmly welcomed by Pakistan Navy officers and sailors upon arrival of Qatar Emiri Naval Forces Ship (QENS) ALKHOR visited Karachi for exercise ASAD ALBHAR-111.

Pakistan committed to further...

Continued from page 1
President Zardari expressed gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its continued support to Pakistan and as well as hosting nearly 2.7 million Pakistanis, who are making contributions to the Kingdom's social and economic development.

He expressed confidence that the bilateral relations between the two brotherly nations would continue to further strengthen in the years to come. He emphasized that both countries would work together for the advancement of their nations, the unity of the Muslim Ummah, and the promotion of peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to a strong and enduring friendship with Saudi Arabia, pledging to work together to promote peace, stability and development in the region.

on mutual respect, cooperation, and shared values that have withstood the test of time, the prime minister said in a video message on the occasion of the National Day of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The message was aired at the National Day Reception of KSA, hosted by Saudi Embassy to celebrate the 94th Anniversary of the National Day of the KSA.

He said the bilateral relation was unique and went beyond common interstate interactions, as the countries had consistently supporting each other in times of need standing in solidarity during natural disasters and crisis, reflecting the depth of the fraternal bond that exist between the two countries.

"The people of Pakistan join me in acknowledging from the core of our hearts, the Kingdom's generosity in helping stabilize Pakistan's economic situation from time to time."

He said "on behalf of the government and the people of Pakistan, I

warmly congratulate the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdul Aziz and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, as well as the brotherly people of KSA on the joyous occasion of their 94th national day.

The prime minister paid tribute to the visionary leadership of King Salman bin Abdul Aziz who steadfastly guided the KSA towards progress and prosperity while upholding the sacred responsibility of the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

"We also highly commend the sagacious and far-sighted vision of Mohammad bin Salman whose initiatives have positioned Saudi Arabia as a beacon of modernity, innovation and economic growth."

He said the KSA with its vision 2030 and the theme "We Dream We Achieve" under the dynamic leadership of King Salman bin Abdul Aziz and Prince Mohammad bin Salman was assuming a global leadership role.

National solidarity can be...

Continued from page 1
issues being faced by general public.

The Chief Minister urged the Provincial Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to play their effective role in resolving issues of the people.

He also asked them to establish effective system of answerability and check and balance in their respective departments.

In addition to this, the Chief Minister exhorted the Provincial Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to form effective mechanism for giving hearing to the public issues. He expressed the government's resolve to improve the service delivery by making departments efficient as sustainable solution of the public issues is possible through good governance.



QUETTA: Students performing traditional dance (Pashtu Attan) on occasion of Pashtun Culture Day.

Election authorities denying...

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stutational legitimacy."

"The importance of free and fair elections in a democracy cannot be over-stated. The judiciary's role in ensuring electoral integrity and upholding the will of the people is essential for sustaining public trust in the democratic process," the order read.

The SC asserted that the "court's power to do 'complete justice' is a critical tool in preventing democratic backsliding and protecting democracy effectively."

The eight-judge order also expressed "some doubts about whether the Commission has the power to reject the certificate of intra-party elections submitted by a political party under Section 209, and whether the Commission exercised its discretion under Section 215(5) justly, fairly and reasonably in PTI's case, adding "fundamental right of citizens to vote for the political party of their choice was at stake."

"Similarly, we have certain reservations about how the matter of intraparty elections — a matter of internal governance of party — can trump the fundamental rights of citizens to vote and of political parties to effectively participate in and contest elections through obtaining a com-

mon symbol for their candidates, guaranteed under Articles 17(2) and 19 of the Constitution.

"However, since these questions are sub judice in the review petition filed by PTI against this Court's judgment dated 13 January 2024, we abstain from examining and expressing our definitive view on them," the verdict said, referring to the SC ruling denying the PTI its party symbol.

The verdict stated that Justice Mazhar wished to "make clear that nothing in this paragraph is intended to or will impact upon the hearing of the review petition."

ECP actions
In its majority verdict, the SC also observed that the returning officers (ROs) and the ECP's numerous "unlawful acts and omissions" had "caused confusion and prejudice to PTI, its candidates and the electorate who voted for PTI."

"PTI's nominated candidates were wrongly shown independent candidates in the list of contesting candidates (Form 33) by the returning officers and were also wrongly notified as independent returned candidates in the Section-98 notification by the Commission," the judgment read.

It noted that "after the intra-party elections (which were not later ac-

cepted by the Commission), Gohar Ali Khan had assumed at least de facto charge of PTI's functions and affairs as its chairman".

Therefore, the SC said, the "acts performed by him on behalf of PTI" before January 13 — when the court restored the ECP verdict of not letting PTI retain its electoral symbol for the general elections — were "fully valid and effective".

"In the present case, [...] the unlawful acts and omissions of the Returning Officers and the Commission, which have caused confusion and prejudice to PTI, its candidates and the electorate who voted for PTI, are numerous," the order read.

ECP failed to perform its role as "guarantor institution" of democratic processes

The SC verdict noted that ECP "in its role as a guarantor institution and impartial steward, is tasked with ensuring the transparency and fairness of elections to maintain public trust in the electoral system".

"This is essential for the legitimacy of elected representatives and the stability of the political system. The Commission must uphold democratic principles and the integrity of electoral processes by ensuring that elections truly reflect the will of the

people, thereby preserving the democratic fabric of the nation," it stressed.

"Unfortunately, the circumstances of the present case indicate that the Commission has failed to fulfil this role in the general elections of 2024," the apex court observed.

It highlighted that the ECP as a "constitutional 'electoral management body', is not merely an administrative entity but a fundamental 'guarantor institution' of democratic processes, with a constitutional status akin to a 'fourth branch of government', adding it must 'fully recognise its constitutional position and the critical role it plays in a democracy'".

It went on to state: "Another matter that has surprised us during the proceedings of these appeals is the way the Commission participated in and contested the matter before us as a primary contesting party against SIC and PTI."

The verdict noted the ECP's prime function, under Article 218(3) of the Constitution, is to "organise and conduct the election and to make such arrangements as are necessary to ensure that the election is conducted honestly, justly, fairly, and in accordance with law, and that corrupt practices are guarded against".

27,437 registered tube well connections being switched to solar in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal and Provincial governments of Balochistan have taken special Initiatives for solarization of 27,437 registered tube well connections in the province.

Official sources told APP here that they have already signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on July 08, 2024 for solarization of the agricultural tube wells.

In first stage, a detailed survey along with coordinates of 581 Agri dominated feeders, was started jointly by Energy Department Government of Balochistan, QESCO teams and representatives of Zamindar Action Committee (district wise) with the help of Law Enforcing Agencies (LEAs).

As per priority, survey of 50 Purely Agri-domi-

nated feeders has been completed along with other Agri-dominated feeders and up till now survey of 64% feeders has been completed.

It is worth mentioning here that the compensation of up to Rs. 2.01 for solarization of each tube well will be provided. The total estimate is approximately Rs. 55 billion which will be borne by the Government of Pakistan & Government of Balochistan at a ratio of 70% & 30% respectively.

They said that five RFO/Gas/Imported Coal based IPPs of 3,742 MW had been commissioned in the different areas of Balochistan so far through Private Power Infrastructure Board (PIPB's) facilitation, while a 300 MW imported coal based Power Project located at Gwadar was under process of Financial Closing /395

PTI founder files petition against CJP again

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan has filed petition again against Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa under the charges of alleged bias in practice and procedure committee.

The petitioner has taken plea filed on Monday that CJP Qazi Faez Isa is biased against PTI and Imran Khan. CJP should not become part of any case against me and my party. CJP still thinks the reference against him a personal attack. It was told in the petition wife of CJP Qazi Faez Isa has given statement against Imran Khan on several occasions. SC had returned first petition of Imran Khan. Resorting to SC on July 26 Imran Khan had requested Qazi Faez Isa not to head any bench which is hearing case against him, his wife Bushra Bibi and any member of his family.



QUETTA: Young Lawyers Forum for Judicial Reforms President Fatima Nazir advocates addressing a press conference.

Lot of questions still...

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not been taken as per the petitioner's prayer, was required to be addressed, he added.

The minister said that the Peshawar High Court had given judgment as per the law.

He said that strict words had been used against two judges who had given dissenting notes, but it would not dilute their opinion. The difference of opinion was grace of any verdict, he adding citing that a number of dissenting notes had been written in various cases in the past.

Azam Tarar said that the question that how the relevant sections of the law would be overruled to allocate the reserved seats to the PTI, was also not answered.

The independent candidates, he said, had themselves closed their case after joining the SIC. There had never been a debate on the allocation of reserved seats to the PTI during the whole proceedings of the case, he added.

He said that only one question was to be adjudged in the case that whether the SIC was entitled to the reserved seats or not. Independent candidates also never claimed that they belonged to the PTI, he added.

The law minister said that the full court of the SC had viewed the Practice and Procedure Act, and accepted that legislation was the sole prerogative of the Parliament. The full court also did not declare that the Parliament could not amend laws, he added.

EXTENSION IN DATE OF TENDER SUBMISSION

Reference to PRQ No. 895, 896, 897, 898 and 899/ 07-09-2024 published in various Newspapers dated 07-09-2024 under TSE #2425095421, TSE #242509541113, TSE #242509541133, TSE #242509541123, and TSE #242509541103. Now, the last date of bid submission has been extended to 27th September, 2024 at 11.30 A.M. The bids will be opened manually on the same day at 12.30 P.M. All other terms and conditions shall remain same.

Director Electricity (North)
Energy Department

PRQ No.1148/23-09-2024

www.dpr.gov.pk @dpr_gov @dprgob @dprbalochistan

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-24250955683 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 – ROADS CW PP&H DEPARTMENT DISTRICT KOHLU 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 Works	E/Cost
1	Construction of Lt. Shaheed Jahangir Road	40,000,000

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 2 Assignment of similar nature of work Turn over of at least 200,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-3 and above (Upto 500 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE10(i) (General Civil Engineering Works) , CE01-(j) (Road and Pavements Drainage & Retaining Structure) . **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee. 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 10 October, 2024 till 12:00 PM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at 01:00 PM on EPPS System Address: Behind Allied Bank MAIN RCD ROAD TEHSIL HUB DISTRICT HUB Phone no: 0853363462 Fax no: 0853363122 Email: xenroadlasbela@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (ROADS) CWPP&H, DEPARTMENT District Kohlu

PRQ No.1167/23-9-2024

www.dpr.gov.pk @dpr_gov @dprgob @dprbalochistan

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-242509552173 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 Roads Provincial B & R Lasbela invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates
Tender Fee Rs.2500/- and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Works	E/Cost
1	CONSTRUCTION /CULTVERTS, RETAINING WALL/BREAST-WALL, CUTTING STAIRCASE WITH RAILING FOR ANIL KUMBH HINGLAJ MATAROAD DISTRICT LASBELA 2ND REVISID (PSPDP NO- 1058/22020.1302/2023-2024.	379,754,599

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 2 Assignment of similar nature of work Turn over of at least 200,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-3 and above (Upto 500 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE10(i) (General Civil Engineering Works) , CE01-(j) (Road and Pavements Drainage & Retaining Structure) . **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee. 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 10 October, 2024 till 12:00 PM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at 01:00 PM on EPPS System Address: Behind Allied Bank MAIN RCD ROAD TEHSIL HUB DISTRICT HUB Phone no: 0853363462 Fax no: 0853363122 Email: xenroadlasbela@gmail.com

Executive Engineer Roads CW PP&H Department Lasbela

PRQ No.1149/23-9-2024

www.dpr.gov.pk @dpr_gov @dprgob @dprbalochistan

Belief in Finality of Prophethood fundamental component of every Muslim's faith: Ch Salik Hussain

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Monday said that belief in the Finality of Prophethood was a fundamental component of every Muslim's faith.

Addressing a gathering of religious scholars, he called for early release of the detailed verdict of the Mubarak Sani case.

Salik underscored the crucial role of religious leaders, stating, "The true lead-

ers of religion are the esteemed scholars and spiritual guides, not those who take up arms against the state."

He stressed that for securing the future of the younger generation, the government, institutions, and religious scholars must work together. He expressed confidence that a unified message of peace, solidarity and harmony from religious scholars would have a far-reaching impact on the nation.

The minister also warned against the misuse of Islam for nefarious purposes, urging that efforts be made to stop such practices. He called for the implementation of scholars' recommendations regarding the fight against terrorism.

He also shared that the government had initiated consultations with religious scholars and leaders from other faiths to eliminate terrorism. "With the help of scholars and other religious

leaders, we can overcome these challenges," Salik added.

He commended the religious scholars and saints for rejecting the narratives of extremists and terrorists, calling for an end to the exploitation of religion for terrorist activities.

He remarked, "Anyone or any group that takes up arms against the state is a terrorist, and we must unite as a nation to eradicate the scourge of terrorism."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain meeting with religious scholars.



Redressal of public grievances top priority; says IGP Islamabad

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, held a Khuli Katchery at the Central Police Office Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

During the katchery, he listened to the issues of citizens and police officers and issued directives on the spot for their resolution.

He said that resolving citizens' issues on merit is our top priority. Negligence and carelessness in duties will not be tolerated. Any citizen facing any issue related to the police can come to the Khuli Katchery. My office is always open for my citizens, the IGP said.

IG Islamabad further directed the concerned officers to resolve the citizen grievances on merit within the stipulated time frame and report back to the Central Police Office.

He directed all SDPOs and SHO's to adhere to the designated office hours and prioritize resolving citizens' issues.

On this occasion, the IGP Islamabad said that the Islamabad Police are taking various measures for the facilitation of citizens. The daily holding of Khuli Katchery helps in resolving issues on a priority basis, he added.

Moreover, all zonal officers and SHO's are directed to meet citizens during the designated office hours and resolve their issues promptly and on merit.

Senator Rubina Khalid urges youth to spearhead transformative change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Monday urged the youth to spearhead transformative change in the country.

She was speaking, as a chief guest, at the Pashtun Culture Day celebrations at Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST), Islamabad.

Accompanied by Head of Campus, Khusrav Khan, Chairperson BISP urged students to spearhead transformative change in

Pashtun society and Pakistan.

Addressing the gathering, Rubina Khalid emphasized the vital role of youth in revitalizing Pashtun culture's foundational pillars: respect for elders. She also advised the students to utilize social media responsibly for fostering constructive dialogue and community engagement and harnessing education to promote inclusivity, social cohesion, and national progress.

"Pashtun culture's essence lies in its values of honor, and respect.

Tabish received many awards in his lifetime and was finally decorated with the coveted award of Tamgha-i-Imtiaz by the government of Pakistan in 1998.

He died on September 23 in 2004 in Karachi.

Death anniversary of Urdu poet Tabish Dehli observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 20th death anniversary of eminent Urdu poet and broadcaster Tabish Dehli was observed on Monday.

Born on November 9, 1911 as Syed Masood-ul-Hasan Tabish "Dehli" to Munshi Zakauddin, he is regarded as one of the leading classical poets in Urdu literature.

He started his career as a newsreader with All India Radio in 1941 and continued working with Radio Pakistan after partition.

Tabish received many awards in his lifetime and was finally decorated with the coveted award of Tamgha-i-Imtiaz by the government of Pakistan in 1998.

He died on September 23 in 2004 in Karachi.

Intl day of Sign languages observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Day of Sign Languages is being celebrated globally on Monday to raise awareness about the importance of sign language and advocate for the cultural identity of the deaf community.

The United Nations General Assembly established the day in 2018 to promote and protect the rights of people with hearing impairments. This year's theme, "Sign up for Sign Language Rights," urges world leaders to officially recognize and promote sign language rights within their respective countries. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) has called on government officials to sign this year.

KSA symbol of strength, progress: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, said on Monday that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a symbol of strength and progress around the world.

In a statement on the 94th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, he said, "On behalf of the National Assembly and the people of Pakistan, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this joyous occasion." "Saudi Arabia's contributions to global peace, economic development, and the preservation of Islamic heritage are recognized and appreciated worldwide" he added.

He expressed special greetings to King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Speaker of

Shura Council Dr. Abdullah Al-Sheikh and the nation of Saudi Arabia commending their exemplary leadership and vision.

Ayaz Sadiq emphasized Saudi Arabia's vital role as the custodian of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, expressing profound gratitude for the Kingdom's hospitality towards millions of Muslim pilgrims each year. He acknowledged the importance of this sacred responsibility, highlighting the Kingdom's commitment to ensuring a safe and enriching pilgrimage experience for all. Reflecting on Saudi Arabia's achievements over the past 94 years, the Speaker said the Kingdom contributes to socio-economic development within the region and the Muslim world are commendable.

Adviser Law says: Pakistan set to become first parliament to recognize climate change as constitutional right

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Law and Justice, Barrister Aqeel Malik, on Monday said that inclusion of climate change as a constitutional right was the landmark step in the 26th Constitutional Amendment.

In addition, the 26th Amendment will play a crucial role in strengthening the judicial system, he said while speaking to a private news channel.

"This will be the first parliament in the world to grant constitutional recognition to climate change," he said. He further noted that the amendment has been unfairly criticized, with its true meaning misunderstood and the government's real intent misinterpreted.

"He said that work on the 26th amendment has been ongoing since March and April.

Housing ministry rebuts media report on 45% hike in rental ceiling

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Housing and Works Monday rebutted as "entirely incorrect and misleading" a news item published in a section of press regarding a 45% hike in the rental ceiling for government employees.

Referring to a media report "Govt employees get 45pc rent bump", the spokesperson said that the Ministry of Housing and Works had issued no such office memorandum.

It said that there was a fictitious and artificially generated office memorandum circulating on social

media on the basis of which the story has been reported.

Earlier, it was clarified from the office of the Public Relations Officer at the ministry that the said document was not true.

The Estate Office under the ministry is currently conducting a survey of market rent rates of residential accommodations at six specified stations including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta that is not final yet and nothing has been notified so far.

COMSTech-Mauritania to collaborate through joint S&T Capacity Building Program

ISLAMABAD (APP): COMSTech- the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation has announced research fellowships for students, scholars and institutions in Mauritania in order to strengthen the ties and build scientific capacity in Mauritania.

COMSTech shares a long-standing brotherly relationship with Mauritania and this program will further strengthen the scientific cooperation between the two countries. Under the COMSTech-Mauritania Program, Research Fellowships will be offered to young researchers and early

stage scientists/engineers in Mauritania to enable them to spend six months at a relevant center of excellence in many listed institutions of OIC member states, especially Pakistan. The purpose of these fellowships is to enhance the research and development capacity of promising researchers and engineers from Mauritania at the beginning of their research career, helping them to foster linkages for further collaboration in their fields.

World-class Green-Tech Hub will transform Pakistan's energy into landscape: Romina Khurshid Alam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam has announced that the first Green-Tech Hub (G-TH) will be launched soon as a state-of-the-art facility to transform Pakistan's energy landscape and reducing its carbon footprint by fostering green technologies, renewable energy solutions and eco-friendly innovations in the country.

Addressing a webinar on 'Creation of G-TH' as a chief guest, organized by the PakLaunch.com in collaboration with the climate change & environmental coordination ministry, the PM's coordinator further said that the G-TH, an initiative backed by the Government of Pakistan in collaboration with private sector stakeholders, academic institutions, and international green technology

leaders, aims to position the country as a regional leader in sustainable innovation, according to a press statement issued on Monday.

During her address, she also revealed that efforts are also being made by the climate change & environmental coordination ministry to showcase highly innovative and impactful projects at the Pakistan Pavilion during the two-week UN-led global climate summit (COP29).

The climate summit is scheduled to begin from Nov. 11 in Baku, Azerbaijan, which is expected to be attended by 40,000 to 50,000 delegations from over 192 countries.

"Showcasing the initiatives at the upcoming UN-led global climate conference aims to attract potential global and local in-

SC rejects petition against imposition of regulatory duty on raw material

We will not interfere in financial policy, Court remarks

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) while dismissing the petition against imposition of regulatory duty on raw material has remarked we will not interfere in the fiscal policy of the government.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked federal government can impose regulatory duty. This is policy matter of federation. This has to be resolved by the federal government upon what material regulatory duty has to be imposed.

He gave these remarks while hearing the appeal pleas against imposition of regulatory duty on the raw

material imported from other countries for the packing of cloth.

The counsel for the petitioner remarked imposing regulatory duty on the raw material used for packing is discriminatory treatment.

Justice Ayesha Malik remarked our job is not to see financial policy.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked federal government can impose regulatory duty. This is policy matter of federation. This has to be resolved by federal government regulatory duty has to be imposed on what material.

The counsel for the petitioner said there is another raw material of this nature upon which regulatory duty has not been imposed.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked "ok then import that material upon which there is no regulatory duty. We will not interfere in financial policy. SC as court cannot hold talks regarding regulatory duty.

The court dismissed the appeal against high court decision. Earlier Sindh High Court had rejected petition against imposition of regulatory duty on raw material.

IRSA releases 218,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 218,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 142,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1537.16 feet and was 139.16 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 83,400 cusecs and 130,000 cusecs respectively.

Land record in capital to be digitalized on Punjab's pattern: DC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Irfan Nawaz Memon on Monday announced that the Capital administration had decided to digitalize the sale and purchase of property and land record across the federal capital on the pattern of Punjab.

He made these remarks while chairing a meet-

ing here. However, the Deputy Commissioner lauded the district administration's decision to make all stamp papers online to facilitate the citizens.

The meeting was attended by officers of Punjab Land Revenue Authority who briefed the deputy commissioner on Online Registration System.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers busy in fixing cemented blocks for preparing Pakistan Map on greenbelt at Zero Point.

NIM Islamabad delegation visits Safe City Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Mid-Career Management Course delegation from National Institute of Management (NIM) Islamabad visited Safe City Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

He said that the delegation visits the command and control center, the data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the Police operations center hall. They were fully briefed about the procedures and advantages of this project.

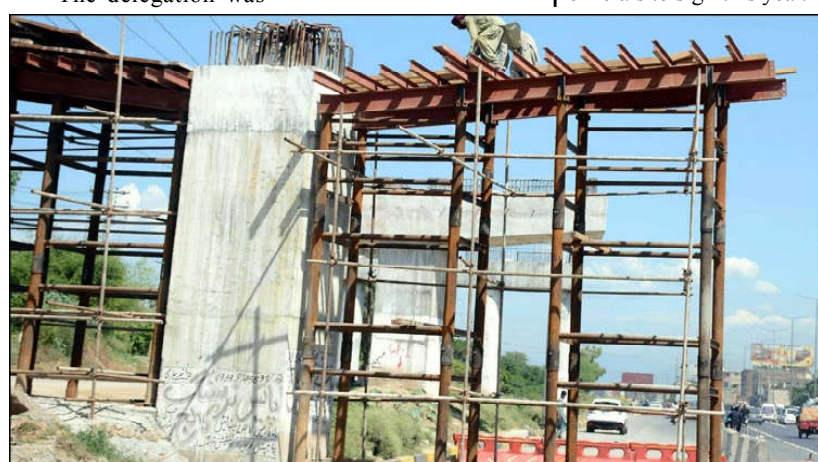
Furthermore, the delegation was informed that Safe City Islamabad is playing a significant role in various departments through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Data Hub Unit, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan System, and the "Pucar-15" helpline.

The delegation was

also apprised of the functionality and benefits of the Safe City cameras in the city. The modern cameras of Safe City are playing a crucial role in ensuring the safety of the city and preventing crimes and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens. 42% of crimes are resolved through the Safe City Command and Control Center.

Face recognition cameras have been installed at the entry and exit points of the city which are playing an important role in identifying suspicious elements, he maintained. The delegation also met with Director General (DG) Safe City Shakir Hussain Dawar and acknowledged the modern technical system of the Islamabad Police and its benefits. The delegation expressed special gratitude to DG Safe City Islamabad and his team for this successful visit.

ISLAMABAD: Labourer busy in construction work of bridge at IJP Road during development work in the Federal Capital



ISLAMABAD: Labourer busy in construction work of bridge at IJP Road during development work in the Federal Capital

Fancy tax scheme

Governments propose, bureaucrats dispose — often relegating ‘plans’ to an existing pile of schemes gathering dust. The ‘drastic measures’ suggested by the country’s tax bureaucracy to strengthen ‘enforcement and compliance’ are no different from similar, discarded strategies to boost revenue collection. To begin with, the new tax enforcement mechanism goes against the very objective of broadening the tax net and documenting the economy, as it is squeezing middle-class taxpayers further while letting tax evaders off the hook.

That is not surprising, since the new measure perpetuates a tax policy that burdens compliant taxpayers, instead of bringing tax evaders into the net. The enforcement scheme, approved by the prime minister, stops those who do not pay their income tax from purchasing assets such as cars, immovable property and financial instruments, and from opening bank accounts. However, it does not propose any step to abolish the category of non-filers that exists only in Pakistan. Likewise, FBR proposes penalising unregistered and non-compliant businesses — manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, etc — hoping that the new steps against non-filers and non-compliant businesses will force them to eventually become taxpayers. The scheme divides active taxpayers into two distinct classes: those who declare their annual income as less than Rs10m, and those who report an income above this threshold. The proposed tax enforcement and compliance project assumes, without any evidence though, that every taxpayer falling in the first category must have underreported their incomes and should be treated as tax thieves and at par with those who do not file their taxes.

Thus, they are also liable to face the same restrictions when they go shopping for cars and immovable property or invest their money in financial instruments, unless they can explain their ‘source of income’. They, nevertheless, are allowed to maintain bank accounts. However, no questions will be asked of those whose declare an annual income that is greater than Rs10m. For them, everything will be kosher.

More importantly, the mechanism increases the discretionary powers of the taxmen and opens new avenues of corruption for them, while simultaneously overriding the provisions contained in the laws to selectively and randomly audit the accounts of a certain percentage of taxpayers every year to detect underreporting of incomes. Similarly, the tax laws also provide for punitive actions against those who under-declare their incomes in their annual tax statements or do not pay taxes at all. If there are any legal loopholes, those should be plugged forthwith. We do not need new fancy mechanisms or schemes to tax those who do not pay their taxes or punish those who steal taxes. What we need is an equitable and just tax system, an efficient and honest machinery, and, above all, strong political will to broaden the base and boost revenues.

Maleeha Lodhi

At a time when the country is facing mounting economic, political and security challenges, the government has been expending most of its energy on either countering the opposition or trying to arbitrarily amend the Constitution. This has become a fatal distraction from governance. It is also counterproductive. Far from weakening the opposition, it is injecting greater resolve in opposition ranks to push back against the government’s actions.

On the constitutional amendment, the government beat a hasty retreat as it failed to muster the necessary parliamentary numbers for the sweeping changes it sought.

Earlier this month, the PML-N government and its allies made a frantic attempt to push a controversial constitutional package through parliament in a politically motivated move. It kept the contents of the amendment under wraps, allowed no debate, yet expected lawmakers to blindly support what they had not even seen.

The aim of the judicial

re-engineering was to undermine the independence of the superior judiciary and subordinate it to the executive. Members of the legal fraternity rightly condemned this as an assault on the Constitution. The proposed establishment of a constitutional court packed with judges and headed by a judge chosen by the prime minister will denude the Supreme Court of its jurisdiction in constitutional cases.

Another provision was designed to ensure the continuance of Qazi Faez Isa, who is due to retire in October, as chief justice. The move came after a series of clashes between the government and judiciary and official frustration with judgments seen as advantaging the opposition. But for all its frenetic efforts, the government faced a setback and was compelled to ‘postpone’ tabling the constitutional amendment for lack of the needed two-thirds majority. But it is now set to defy the Supreme Court order on reserved seats.

Meanwhile the government’s efforts to contain Imran Khan’s PTI have continued. It was ex-

Fatal distraction

plified by the restrictions and obstacles placed in the path of the party’s public rally in Islamabad and arrests of several of its leaders. Its Lahore jalsa encountered similar impediments. This was only the latest coercive measure taken against PTI, which over the past year has involved innumerable cases against its leaders.

Aggression, however, begets aggression. The opposition sought to resist such actions by becoming more combative. PTI lawmakers are adamant on continuing their protests in parliament and outside.

The PML-N-led government has failed to see it has more to lose from unremitting confrontational politics. The political calm needed for the country to solve its fundamental problems is obviously being upended by escalation in political tensions. This has fuelled uncertainty and left the public in a state of despondency. No surprise, then, that a recent opinion survey conducted by Ipsos found 89 per cent of people felt the country was headed in the wrong direction. Nine out of 10 Pakistanis lacked confidence in the country’s

future. Parliamentary proceedings have been reduced to theatrical displays of unseemly conduct and slanging matches between the treasury and opposition benches. Instead of debating the issues that confront the country and worry the public, parliamentarians on both sides of the aisle seek to demonise each other. Talk of a dialogue between the government and opposition has remained just that — talk about talks, with neither side showing any seriousness.

Every so often, statements in parliament by government leaders about a dialogue have not led to any outreach to the opposition. For their part, PTI leaders have reiterated they will only talk to the establishment as they see the government lacking any power or legitimacy. In any case, the constitutional amendment attempt, vigorously opposed by PTI, only widened the government-opposition divide.

All this has familiar echoes of the past — a government unwilling to engage with the opposition, jailing opposition leaders, trying to steamroll legislation and a desperate opposition in constant protest mode against a backdrop of economic gloom, weak governance and ubiquitous establishment pulling the strings from behind the scenes.

The economic challenge is, of course, the most consequential. The government might think that with the IMF expected to soon approve a \$7 billion bailout package, the worst of the country’s economic troubles will be over. But the real task lies ahead to implement a tough Fund programme and take other difficult measures to stabilise an economy that is not yet out of the woods.

What the government seems unwilling to acknowledge is that political turmoil and uncertainty puts any sustainable economic recovery at risk. It also makes it harder to implement necessary but

unpopular measures. An economic rebound can only be sustained by building a high level of confidence which requires a stable and predictable political environment.

The country’s deteriorating internal security situation also merits greater attention from the government. In the first eight months of the year, 757 people were reportedly killed in violent incidents. August was a particularly deadly month, with over 100 people killed in a fresh wave of militant attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On one day alone — Aug 26 — terrorist violence claimed the lives of over 50 people across Balochistan as militants stormed police stations, executed passengers on a bus, blocked roads and blew up railway tracks.

This should have prompted an urgent meeting of the National Security Committee. But the government did not convene one, while the interior minister made the astonishing claim that only one SHO (station house police officer) was enough to handle terrorism in the province. -- Courtesy Dawn

Resolving power sector woes**Shahid Kardar**

The task of the country’s population has been reduced to keeping power sector entities afloat, by bearing unaffordable tariffs. And yet the sector’s financial viability remains in doubt. How did we get here? The reasons include incompetence, misgovernance and unadulterated theft. The terms were poorly negotiated with investors.

Agreements with private IPPs were drafted with limited professional input, stained by issues of patronage and lack of transparency. The issues include currency mismatch — payments to them were denominated in dollars against revenue streams in rupees — generous concessions (for example, sovereign guaranteed returns on equity of 15 per cent in dollar terms and income tax exemptions during the contracted period), and the government covering all risks.

What’s more bizarre is that government-owned power plants, managed by non-professionals, were established on the same terms as those bestowed on privately owned ones. ‘Circular debt’ is the outcome of these fundamental issues

that have rendered the economy uncompetitive and thus a huge constraint to sustainable growth.

Examples of incompetence include the slow pace of expansion of transmission and distribution (T&D) systems compared with the installed capacity of generation. Their capacity today is merely 22,000 MW (add to it the Lahore-Matari transmission line operating at 40pc of its designed capacity), resulting in 50pc of the generation facility being utilised but still receiving capacity payment. This liability has become excruciating, with the idle capacity payment increased from 60pc to 85pc under the 2015 policy.

The currency mismatch has induced tariff increases following the sharp adjustment in the rupee’s value — from the rate when agreements were signed — and higher interest rates. This contributed to reduced demand, for reasons including the closure of several textile units and the shift off-grid by some with their own power arrangements. Sluggish growth and subdued demand necessitated that obligations for capacity payments be discharged by raising the rate per unit for

recovery from fewer consumers, a subject of widespread debate, if not anger. The burden is made more painful by taxes of almost 30pc of the electricity price.

The result is that whereas capacity utilisation costs are 30-35pc globally, ours are now 62-70pc. More importantly, 50pc of capacity payments are to government-owned generation plants. Of the remainder, 35pc goes to Chinese-imported, coal-fired, dollar-indexed projects, with the unit cost much higher than that of local coal-based plants. Other sectoral issues have been over-invoicing by IPPs, with the Central Power Purchasing Agency looking the other way, supplemented by Nepra’s lack of regulatory oversight. Several public sector Gencos are old and outdated plants, resulting in inefficient fuel consumption, with low utilisation (2.7pc in the case of Jamshoro) but with a bloated idle workforce.

To address the issues, the starting point should be the Gencos commissioned by the public sector. The old ones should be quickly phased out, thereby not only minimising the payout on capacities but also enabling the operation of efficient units. The terms should be renegotiated for the remaining, with lending banks (contract period, invoicing currency considering that even local resources are being priced in foreign currency, the dollar-indexed rate of return on equity, etc.). Public sector Gencos being dollar-based and dollar-indexed, the government cannot expect to negotiate different terms for privately owned IPPs. In fact, the government should take the entire associated debt onto its balance sheet to be serviced through general revenues, instead of burdening the economy’s competitiveness through high tariffs.

The decision to extend the tenure of the contracts of IPPs set up under the 1994 policy was a poor one. The sustainable choice is to persuade them — the contracted period having been completed and the debt paid off — that generated energy would be procured in rupees, and only if it is at competitive rates.

The units established under the 2002 and 2006 policies, mostly by Pakistanis, should be persuaded to accept upfront a significant percentage — not the full dues — of capacity-related commitments for the

remaining contracted period of roughly two to three years, with their debt obligations discharged. Thereafter, their contracts should be renegotiated along the lines proposed for the 1994 policy.

However, for Chinese IPPs launched in 2016-17 (guaranteed 20pc in dollars), a different treatment will be required as they would resist any revision in the contracts, arguing that their contracts factored in the lessons learned from the projects commissioned under the 1994 and 2002 policies. Two possible options could be: a) extend the contract period, and b) the release of some capacity to be freely traded in the market. Finally, taxes on bills should be lowered, employing several other options to control the fiscal deficit. These interventions will enable, in the medium (three to five years) term, full exploitation of rapid technological developments in renewable energy options.

These efforts should be complemented by adequate and timely investments to address the technical inadequacies and governance issues of T&D systems.

To this end, several reforms are required in service delivery, including: a) simplification of the tariff structure, which is littered with several bands for each consumer category and encumbered by a host of cross-subsidies; b) examining the potential to outsource DisCos’ management and installation of smart meters (the prepaid variety) to tackle the 17pc technical and distribution losses, corruption, consumer theft of electricity and the weak effort to collect bills amounting to some Rs600 billion (factors constraining this option, especially the single-buyer, single-seller in the value-chain, were discussed in the ‘Privatisation of DisCos’ in these columns); c) pricing energy on a marginal cost basis to stimulate demand and contribute to capacity payments (the scope will depend on the transmission system’s capacity); d) forcing public sector defaulters to pay up or get disconnected; e) withdrawing concessional electricity provisions; and f) adopting transformer-based load-shedding, instead of the present feeder-based one. -- Courtesy Dawn

Unsustainable demand**Waqas Bin Najib**

Pakistan’s energy problems are broader than those in the electricity sector. Our domestic natural gas reserves are depleting. We import liquefied natural gas (LNG) to meet the country’s increasing demand.

The demand for natural gas, like electricity, is becoming increasingly unsustainable. Households account for 35 per cent of the country’s total gas consumption. The power sector consumes 30pc, while industry uses only 15pc for various processes. The fertiliser industry consumes 8pc of the total.

Some industries use natural gas to generate power for self-consumption. These captive power industries, around 1,200 in number, account for 11pc of gas consumption. This equals 10,000 GWh of annual electricity consumption and roughly 3,000 MW of power capacity.

Transitioning this industry to the power grid will improve the electricity consumer mix, reduce transmission and distribution losses, and help lower electricity costs. The power sector can see a positive annual impact of over Rs350 billion. An estimated one per cent reduction in the average transmission and distribution (T&D) loss and improved revenue can reduce the average power tariff by 10pc.

However, like electric utilities, the industry is also a critical consumer of gas utilities. The industry’s transition will negatively affect the gas consumer mix and increase gas utility losses. Essentially, we will be transferring the issues of the electricity sector to the gas sector. If the transition is planned correctly, the gas sector could be in a better position

to manage risks than the electricity sector.

In terms of implementation, the main challenge for shifting the captive industry is the electric grid interconnection for independently operating industries. It is estimated that about 40pc of captive industries, particularly larger ones, do not have a grid connection. To shift these industries, they must be connected to the grid. Industry must provide land and pay the interconnection cost, which varies depending on the industry’s size. Smaller industries (less than 5 MW) will need an 11 kV feeder connection requiring substations, while larger industries will require a dedicated high-voltage grid station.

Electric utilities must assess the capacity of their T&D networks to supply power to industries moving to the electric grid. They must also guarantee a reliable and high-quality electricity supply, free from outages or fluctuations, especially for the continuous process industry, which cannot afford interruptions. This will necessitate improved asset management and operations. Utilities should also provide compact grid station options to minimise the land requirement and interconnection costs.

Most captive industries already have a grid connection, so they can be immediately shifted if grid capacity is available. However, a transition plan must be developed in consultation with the industries, especially those that do not have existing connections. Building the interconnections and enhancing the transmission and distribution grids will require careful planning and may take up to two years.

Gas utilities must also adapt to the changing

landscape to manage its impact. The government’s gas allocation policy significantly affects their financial viability. With reduced industrial consumption, losses will increase if the gas is redirected to domestic consumers. The policy should target lowering domestic gas consumption and transitioning the residential sector to LPG, a more efficient alternative. Any surplus gas should be allocated to the power and processing industries rather than the residential consumers.

Natural gas pricing will play a crucial role in managing the transition and reducing losses for gas utilities. Currently, the industry subsidises domestic gas consumption while paying for imported LNG. Like the electricity sector, the gas sector faces a ‘circular debt’ build-up due to unrecovered service costs.

The gas tariff should be based on the actual cost of service. Therefore, it is critical to move to a pricing model based on the Weighted Average Cost of Gas, which covers the total cost of gas procurement, including domestic and imported LNG. Some provinces with sufficient gas reserves have opposed the WACOG so far. However, in a policy framework aiming for uniform national pricing for all energy sources (petroleum, electricity, natural gas), it is logical to implement WACOG pricing for natural gas.

Without a planned transition, improved gas allocation, and change in gas pricing, the industry’s transition from gas to the electric grid will not be beneficial. Policymakers should consider all factors and develop a plan to improve service delivery to citizens, lower the industry’s energy costs, and stimulate economic growth. -- Courtesy Dawn

Climate under siege**Masood Lohar**

Following extreme heatwaves in almost every corner of the world, heavy rains and floods shocked the global community. This is becoming a pattern.

The recent past witnessed an unprecedented series of extreme weather events across South Asia and neighbouring regions, with devastating impacts on lives, infrastructure, and economies. A powerful monsoon system wreaked havoc, triggering catastrophic floods, landslides, and storms across India, Bangladesh, China, and Pakistan.

Not too long ago, a thunderstorm-laden monsoon swept into southern Sindh after causing significant damage in India’s Gujarat and Rajasthan regions. The monsoon, which has been unusually intense this season, brought with it torrential rains, strong winds, and widespread flooding across large parts of the country. Millions were reported to have been affected, with many residing in low-lying areas submerged and infrastructure damaged.

We saw people being displaced due to rising water levels, with power outages and road blockages hampering rescue and relief efforts. An emergency was declared in parts of the country, as the authorities urged residents to stay indoors. The disaster follows a broader pattern of extreme weather that has gripped the region. Lately too, heavy rainfall has been predicted in certain areas in the week ahead.

In India, the monsoon’s fury and torrential rains, especially in Gujarat and Rajasthan, also led to flash floods that engulfed villages and towns, resulting in significant loss of life and property, with thousands rendered homeless. Emergency services were

stretched to their limit, and conducting rescue operations in flooded areas and providing relief to affected populations was difficult.

Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, too, felt the impact, with landslides triggered by the relentless rains. Entire villages were buried under mud and debris, with rescue efforts hampered by treacherous conditions. Further rains were also forecast for the current month, raising fears of additional inundation.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh is already prone to flooding due to its low-lying geography, and it was no surprise that it was severely affected by this year’s monsoons. Incessant rains caused the major rivers — the Brahmaputra, Ganges, and Meghna — to overflow, leading to widespread flooding across large parts of the country.

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Maryam emphasizes CPEC's importance for Pak-China ties

Attends 75th National Day of People's Republic of China

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif said on Monday the significance of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a vital indicator of the robust and enduring relationship between Pakistan and China.

The CM views CPEC as a crucial development initiative that not only enhances economic ties but also reflects the deep-rooted partnership and mutual cooperation between the two nations. She expressed her views while participating in the 75th National Day ceremony of the People's Republic of China.

Republic of China, where she met Chinese Consul General Zhao Shirin to convey her congratulations on this significant occasion. The CM expressed greetings on behalf of the Pakistani people, stating, "On the occasion of China's 75th National Day, I extend my warm wishes to the Chinese people." She conveyed that the people of Punjab also send heartfelt congratulations to their Chinese brothers and sisters, expressing pride in attending the event.

She lauded the Chinese nation for achieving remarkable heights in development

and innovation while extending a hand of friendship to the global community. Maryam Nawaz emphasized that China's greatness lies in its unwavering commitment to peace, cooperation, and humanitarian well-being.

Highlighting the deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan and China, she remarked that their relationship was built on trust, respect, and a shared vision for a bright future. "Our bond is not merely based on strategic interests; it is a connection of hearts and souls," she asserted. The CM acknowledged China's significant achievements in lifting millions out of poverty and praised its role as a model for the world in technology, infrastructure, and industry. She noted China's indispensable contribution during global crises, affirming its commitment to providing resources to countries in need.

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, China has consistently promoted peace and development, exemplified by its Belt and Road Initiative, she said and added that the fruits of China's economic develop-

ment are benefiting people around the world and that China is emerging as a leader with a vision that transcends borders. CM Maryam Nawaz expressed pride in the strong and resilient friendship between Pakistan and China, affirming that both nations were progressing together towards prosperity and a peaceful future. She prayed for the continued strengthening of the Pakistan-China friendship. Zhao Shirin, the Chinese Consul General in Lahore, acknowledged the Chief Minister's people-friendly initiatives, highlighting projects like the IT City, cancer hospital, air ambulance services, and solar panel programs that provide real relief to the public. He commended the Punjab government for delivering excellent services to the people and called out "Long Live Pakistan-China Friendship." The ceremony featured the national anthems of both countries, traditional Chinese cultural performances, and the cutting of a cake to celebrate China's 75th anniversary. Various cultural presentations included Chinese music, songs of love for the homeland.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmed Khan and Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider along with Chinese Consul General Zhao Shirin and his wife cutting the cake to celebrate 75th National Day of the People's Republic of China.

CM Murad directs IT dept to introduce electronic mode of filing

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the Information, Science and Technology Department to work out a plan to deploy an e-Office application in the departments in different phases to increase efficiency, enhanced transparency, cost-effectiveness, improved data security and better collaboration.

He issued these instructions while presiding over a meeting here at CM House on Monday. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary

IT Noor Samoo, Secretary Service Gulam Ali Brahmani and others concerned. The chief minister said that he wanted the government departments should adopt an electronic mode of filing/correspondence system in replacement of a manual filing system, built to perform the function/business assigned to it in the Sindh Government Rules of Business, 1986.

Mr Shah said that he has a plan to introduce a paperless system in government departments by introducing a digital system or E-office. In the first

phase, the departments do their official work through a digital system and phase-wise connect other departments. Secretary Information, Science & Technology Noor Samoo told the CM that in the first phase deployment of the E-Office application would be made in the IS&T Department, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD), Minorities Department, Social Welfare Department, Rehabilitation Department, Mines and Mineral Development Department, Inter-Provincial Coordination Department.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over the Information Technology Department meeting, held at CM House.

Governor Kundi attends Bilawal's birthday celebration

KARACHI (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi attended a grand celebration in Karachi to mark the birthday of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The event was well-attended by senior party leaders, activists, and distinguished guests. During the celebration, a birthday cake was cut for Bilawal, and Governor Kundi offered heartfelt congratulations.

He praised Bilawal as a leader for the younger generation and highlighted how under his leadership, the PPP has introduced new dimensions to Pakistani

politics.

Kundi commended Bilawal's commitment to democratic principles and public service, stating that he is successfully carrying forward the legacy of his grandfather, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and mother, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed. Kundi said that the influence of former President Asif Ali Zardari's political acumen is evident in Bilawal's approach to politics.

He emphasized that Bilawal is actively working towards realizing the true vision of Bhutto Shaheed, focusing on public service and the stability of democracy.



KARACHI, PAKISTAN, SEP 23: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President, Haleem Adil Sheikh talking to media persons during press conference after case hearing, at Sindh High Court premises.

KP government urges immediate action on Kurram law and order situation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Home and Tribal Affairs Department has issued directives regarding the ongoing law and order situation in Kurram District.

According to an official letter addressed to the Commissioner of Kohat Division and the Regional Police Officer (RPO) Kohat, the competent authority has expressed concerns over the recurring unrest in Kurram over the past year, despite sporadic resolu-

tions through jirgas and law enforcement actions.

The letter highlights the need for a permanent solution to the conflict, proposing the formation of a grand jirga with elders from both sides of the dispute. It further urges the Commissioner and RPO to engage with elected representatives, including MNAs, MPAs, and local government officials, along with law enforcement agencies (LEAs), to pinpoint the exact demands and propose a way forward.

Active participation of Ulema, religious scholars stressed for reforms in society

PESHAWAR (APP): Minister of Hajj, Auqaf and Religious Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sahibzada Adnan Qadri on Monday stressed the imperative role of Ulema and religious scholars for reforms, establishment of peace and order in society. Presiding over a meeting of the Muttahida Ulema Board here, he said that the imperative role of

Ulema and religious scholars could not be denied in reforming a society, adding that the current provincial government regards the scholars with great value, so their financial problems and other issues could be addressed. He said that the development of Madrasahs and welfare of the Ulema was the first priority of the provincial government.

ANF unearths drug factory

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) unearthed a factory engaged in the production of drugs and intoxicated tablets, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that ANF in a successful operation against a factory manufacturing chemical drugs and intoxicated tablets managed to arrest two suspects.

Acting on a tip-off, a raid was conducted in Danishabad area, Peshawar and the factory was sealed while the ANF team recovered chemical drugs, intoxicated tablets and other equipment.

A thorough search of the factory led to the seizure of a tablet punching machine, various equipment such as punches, dryers, mixers and scales. During the operation, both the accused were caught red-handed while preparing intoxicated tablets at the site.

Ghandapur's software updated: Azma bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has said that KP Chief Minister Ghandapur's software has been updated in Lahore. Talking to the media at the Lahore High Court, she said that her case was adjourned because the FIA DG was not available. "Falak Javed's indecent remarks reflect her flawed upbringing. Her parents portray themselves as innocent whenever the law takes its course. Lawyer Azhar Siddique has been caught submitting fake affidavits

and forging signatures for three times," she added. Azma Bokhari noted that Advocate Azhar had accompanied the father of Falak Javed, who again discussed her fake video. She said that Falak encouraged other women to follow her lead. Bokhari said that the language used about the Punjab Chief Minister during the Islamabad rally was inappropriate. She questioned why Falak had deleted the fake video if she had done nothing wrong. "The PTI has a team that engages in such activities," she added.

Tessori greets Saudi royal family, people on National Day

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori on Monday extended greetings to the royal family as well as people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the 94th National Day.

Expressing best wishes for the Saudi royal family, Governor Tessori said that the whole Muslim world had a religious and spiritual bond with Saudi Arabia. He said that the strong relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were based on mutual respect to each other.



LAHORE: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan distributing gifts to Thalassemia patients during the visit at Sundas Foundation.

Speakers urge for empowerment of Local Government system in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Speakers at an orientation session here on Monday emphasizing the critical need for strong and empowered local governments system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to resolve the problems of people at their doorsteps.

Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) conducted a one-day orientation session for heads of local government representatives under the KP LG Act 2013.

The session focused on clarifying their roles and responsibilities while addressing challenges amid the current political and economic turmoil.

Notable attendees, including Deputy Speaker Suriya Bibi and former LG Secretary Hifz ur Rehman, advocated for the timely release of funds to empower representatives in effectively serving their communities and fostering development.

The session has been

conducted with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

Ms. Moonus Kayinat Zahra, Project Manager at CPDI, emphasized that strong local governments are fundamental to democracy. Despite constitutional provisions, local governments in Pakistan face numerous challenges, including over-centralization, inadequate funding, and limited citizen participation.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while the Local Government Act promotes citizen involvement, greater financial autonomy is essential for effectiveness.

Immediate release of funds by the KP LG Government is crucial for local representatives to serve their communities.

Additionally, she advocated for inclusive local government that amplifies the voices of women and marginalized groups.

Ms. Suriya Bibi, Deputy Speaker of the KP Provincial Assembly, delivered opening remarks emphasizing the critical need for strong and empowered local governments.

She highlighted the pressing issue of delayed fund releases for local government representatives, which exacerbates financial crises and hinders their effectiveness.

Ms. Bibi reaffirmed the commitment of the Provincial Minister for Local Government, Elections, and Rural Development, the chief minister, to strengthen the local government system and ensure timely fund disbursement.

She also advocated for inclusive governance that amplifies the voices of women and marginalized communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Dr. Taj Muharram, a senior academician, provided an insightful overview of the historical evolution and legislative frame-

work of local governance in Pakistan.

He focused on the development of the local government system, emphasizing its constitutional and legal foundations.

The session aimed to clarify key concepts for elected representatives, enhancing their understanding from a political science perspective and equipping them to navigate the complexities of local governance effectively.

Hifz ur Rehman, former Secretary of Local Government, Elections, and Rural Development KP, conducted an informative session on the roles and responsibilities of local government representatives under the KP Local Government Act.

He engaged participants in a focused discussion about the powers and functions of local government officials, using practical examples to illustrate key concepts and enhance understanding.



RAWALPINDI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi addressing students welcome event at Punjab College D-9 Campus.

CM KP directs to expand Sehat Card program

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Monday chaired a meeting on Sehat Card program and took important decisions aimed at improving healthcare accessibility in the province.

The meeting was attended by Health Advisor Ehtisham Ali, Finance Advisor Muzammil Aslam, administrative secretaries, officials from the health department, and representatives from State Life Insurance. Chief Minister agreed in principle to include life insurance for citizens under the Sehat Card scheme. He directed concerned officials to prepare a detailed plan for its formal approval at the earliest.

He also addressed complaints regarding the lack of heart surgeries at the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC) due to reduced rates under the Sehat

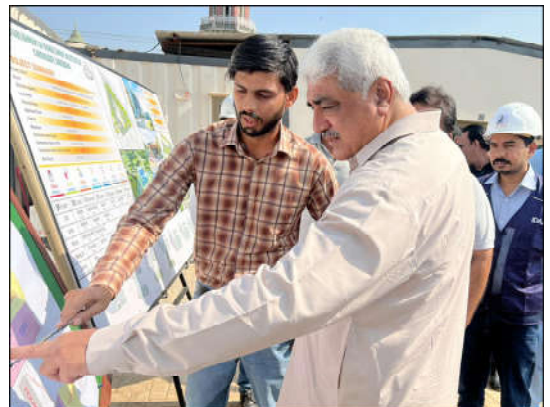
Card. He ordered Sehat Card officials to ensure these surgeries continue, assuring that all costs related to heart operations would be borne by the provincial government, leaving no financial burden on the patients.

Chief Minister said that government is committed to expanding the program to cover more diseases, and steps are being taken to include more reputed hospitals under the Sehat Card scheme.

He also emphasized that transparency would be a key focus in the expansion of the Sehat Card program.

He assured that all outstanding dues owed to State Life Insurance would be paid on a priority basis to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services.

He said that providing free and quality healthcare to the public is the government's top priority.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique being briefed about the master plan of Navaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology in Sargodha.

Mashhood says: Awareness drive on thalassemia to be launched across country

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan said on Monday that a vigorous awareness campaign was being launched across the country to spread awareness about thalassemia and hemophilia diseases.

During his visit at Sundas Foundation here, he commended the foundation's work as a shining example of selflessness and compassion, adding that the foundation was doing great services for humanity.

He praised the Sundas Foundation's dedication to providing free medical care and support to deserving patients.

The chairman also met with children undergoing treatment for thalassemia and other blood disorders and distributed gifts among patients. He termed the foundation work as a "beacon of hope" for underprivileged individuals suffering from deadly diseases.

The Sundas Foundation's mission was truly admirable, and their commitment to serving humanity was unparalleled, he added.

Rana Mashood appreciated the foundation's administration for bringing advance and latest medical equipments to fight with thalassemia and hemophilia, saying that government was committed to provide all possible facilities to such institutions as serving the humanity was the motto of their government.

He emphasized the importance of promoting pre-marital thalassemia testing to prevent the spread of the disease. "We will work together with the Sundas Foundation to create awareness about thalassemia and the importance of pre-marital testing. This is a critical step in preventing the spread of this disease, and we will do everything possible to support this initiative," he added.



LAHORE: Police officers are barricade the disabled blind persons while they are moving towards redzone during their protest demonstration for demanding employment, at Lahore press club.

Court proceedings badly hampered as prosecutors' strike continues in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The strike of public prosecutors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for their demands of raise in salaries, incentives and establishment of the Prosecutor General Office, has entered its fifth day on Monday here badly hampering the court proceedings.

In the wake of the strike, public prosecutors were not appearing before the courts in hearings and police were unable to submit challans.

The situation on one hand has badly affected the court proceedings while on the other hand public prosecutors were not ready to step back from their demands. President Public Prosecutors Welfare Association, Sangin Shah has said that till acceptance of all their demands and provision of needed facilities to

the female prosecutors at all the district court and offices were not ensured, the strike will continue across the province.

The litigants when asked said that the demands of the public prosecutors should be accepted by the provincial government as the strike was further adding to their problems in court related matters.

The strike has also disturbed the process of mutual investigation between the police and Counter Terrorism Department and the scrutiny of cases was halted. Besides causing disruption in proceedings of newly registered cases.

The prisoners waiting for a court trial of their cases were also faced with difficulties and burden on prisons increased as accused involved in petty cases were being sent to the jails.

UK trade commissioner meets Jam, discusses bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Kingdom (UK) Trade Commissioner Oliver Christian on Monday met with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan to explore avenues for enhancing bilateral trade.

The meeting highlighted the need for sectoral collaboration and a business-to-business matchmaking approach to target growth areas in both countries, said a news release.

Jam Kamal emphasized Pakistan's immense potential in the food sector, particularly through value addition. "Pakistan currently can get more foreign exchange by focusing on value addition," he added.

The minister underscored the government's commitment to expanding trade, particularly under the leadership of PM Shehbaz

Sharif.

He praised Prime Minister's dedication to achieving an ambitious export growth plan, aiming to increase exports from US\$30 billion to US\$60 billion.

He also highlighted Pakistan's success in organizing the FoodAg Expo in Karachi, where more than 800 foreign delegates participated.

"This was the first event of its kind, with such a large international presence, and it opened doors to significant business opportunities," he added.

Kamal cited Pakistan's growing exports in other sectors, such as IT, mining, horticulture, and dairy, and discussed the potential for future exports, including olive products.

"Pakistan is on its way to becoming a significant olive exporter, with

vast cultivation underway," he informed.

The UK Trade Commissioner acknowledged Pakistan's vast potential and extended full support for increasing the trade volume between the two nations.

Both sides emphasized the importance of the UK-Pakistan Trade Dialogue, a platform to be established soon to promote trade and investment.

As the UK diversifies its import sources post-Brexit, the minister highlighted Pakistan's potential to become a key supplier of food products to the UK, given its compliance with international standards.

This discussion marked a significant step in strengthening trade ties, with both parties expressing optimism for the future of UK-Pakistan trade relations.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Jam Kamal and UK Trade Commissioner Oliver Christian Discuss Strengthening Bilateral Trade and Exploring New Avenues for Partnership.

Dasu Hydropower Project's construction continues on 15 key work fronts

LAHORE (APP): WAPDA Chairman Engr Lt Gen (Retd) Sajjad Ghani has said that Dasu Hydropower Project is of immense importance for the country through indigenous yet clean, green and affordable hydel electricity, therefore, concerted efforts are needed for completion of the Project as per the timelines.

He expressed these views during his visit to Dasu Hydropower Project, being constructed by WAPDA on River Indus in Upper Kohistan District of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to WAPDA spokesman here Monday. The Chairman had a detailed visit of the various sites, which included left and right abutments of the main dam, under-ground power house and transformers cavern, main crushing and batching plants and re-located Karakoram Highway (KKH-1), and reviewed construction activities there.

The GM/PD Dasu Hydropower Project, the Consultants and the Contractors briefed the Chair-

Pak, China join hands to tap global Kiwifruit market potential

ISLAMABAD (APP): Agricultural experts have expressed optimism that Pakistan could become a significant player in the global kiwifruit market by collaborating with China, following an assessment of its potential during the recently concluded International Training Workshop on Kiwifruit Production in Sichuan.

A memorandum of understanding was reached between Sichuan Provincial Academy of Natural Resource Sciences and the University of Swabi, marking a promising beginning of Sino-Pak kiwifruit cooperation in a more in-depth form.

"Pakistan's kiwi industry has immense potential for growth and development. With its favorable climate, rich soil and abundant water resources, Pakistan can become a significant player in the global kiwifruit market," Dr. Ruidar Ali Shah from the University of Swabi told China Economic Net.

He further said Pakistan's strategic location allows for easy access to markets in the Middle East,

Central Asia and Europe, providing a competitive edge. He hoped that the future of Pakistan's kiwi industry and its potential to contribute significantly to the country's economy.

Dr. Muhammad Akhlagh from PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi said Pakistan's climate, especially in its northern and hilly regions, is suitable for growing kiwifruit, which requires moderate temperatures and adequate rainfall. The growing demand for kiwifruit in both local and international markets, coupled with Pakistan's large agricultural workforce, presents a significant opportunity for the country to develop a profitable kiwifruit industry.

At the two-week workshop, agricultural experts from overseas countries including Pakistan, Egypt, Nepal and Mongolia acquired China's expertise in kiwifruit germplasma resource collection and protection, new variety breeding, cultivation management, pest control, post-harvest storage and marketing.



HYDERABAD: Chairman Standing Committee Industry and Production MNA Syed Hafeezuddin addressing to press conference at press club.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, met with Mr. Ghulam Nabi Marri, National Coordinator International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Sahiwal Coal Power Plant transforms lives, communities through CPEC flagship project

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sahiwal Power Plant stands as a monumental achievement in Pakistan's energy sector and with a formidable capacity of 1320 MW, the plant has not only contributed to alleviating the country's energy needs but has also made extraordinary strides in fostering economic growth and community development in the nearby villages and the surrounding areas of Okara and Sahiwal.

Since its inception, the plant, operated by Huaneng Shandong Ruyi (Pakistan) Energy Pvt Limited, has been a beacon of progress, particularly in terms of employment generation, and

has been rightfully recognized for its contributions by the Punjab Power Development Board (PPDB), said a press release issued here Monday. Between 2017 and 2023, the Sahiwal Power Plant was honored by the Punjab Power Development Board (PPDB) for its exceptional role in creating over 5,000 jobs. This achievement highlights the plant's commitment to supporting the local economy and providing substantial employment opportunities in regions that have long been in need of such developments. This significant contribution has had a ripple effect, positively impacting countless

lives and invigorating the local economy. Among the many individuals whose lives have been transformed by the Sahiwal Power Plant is Rashid, whose personal journey exemplifies the impact of this industrial venture. Rashid joined the company in 2016 as an unskilled laborer, entering a challenging job market with limited prospects. At that time, his employment situation was precarious, and providing for his family was a constant struggle. However, Rashid's story took a remarkable turn due to the opportunities afforded by Huaneng Shandong Ruyi (Pakistan) Energy Pvt. Limited.

Punjab Governor says: Sugar industry has an important role in the country's economy

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan today attended the 56th Annual Convention of Pakistan Society of Sugar Technologists at a local hotel in

Lahore as Chief Guest. President Pakistan Society of Sugar Technologists Arif Hussain, Chairman Pakistan Society of Sugar Technologists Syed Muhammad Shafaat Zaidi and other members of the society were present in the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, said that the sugar industry has an important role in the country's economy. He said that we can improve

the economy by increasing exports in the cotton and sugar industry. He said that there is no shortage of natural resources in our country by the grace of Allah Almighty, adding that what is lacking is will to work

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 223 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 223.95 points, a negative change of 0.27 percent, closing at 81,850.50 points against 82,074.45 points on the last working day.

A total of 400,309,071 shares were traded during the day as compared to 482,373,803 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 18,690 billion against Rs.30,188 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 439 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 143 of them recorded gains and 237 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 59 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Pace (Pak) Limited with 30,381,268 shares at Rs5.39 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 29,117,310 shares at Rs 1.28 per share and Oil and Gas Development with 23,080,653 shares at Rs 138.61 per share.

Rupee sheds 03 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Monday depreciated by 03 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.86 against the previous day's closing of Rs 277.83.

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 280.7 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by 1.79 paisa to close at Rs 308.40 against the last day's closing of Rs 310.19, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.93.

BISP-IFAD to explore livelihood opportunities for BISP beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (APP): The internationally acclaimed Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have joined hands to explore avenues of co-operation for providing better livelihood opportunities to the beneficiaries of the programme. In this regard, a meeting was held between the Chairperson of BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid and National Coordinator IFAD, Ghulam Nabi Marri on Monday.

The meeting explored avenues for providing livelihood opportunities through human resource training and asset transfer initiatives.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the need to boost the agricultural sector across all provinces, with a special focus on Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), particularly in the merged districts.

She highlighted the importance of a strong partnership between BISP and IFAD to maximize the benefits for BISP beneficiaries.

The meeting explored avenues for providing live-

Gold prices ease by Rs 600 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 600 and was sold at Rs 271,900 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 272,500 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 471 to Rs 233,110 from Rs. 233,625 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 213,685 from Rs. 214,156, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs 2,950 and Rs 2,529.14, respectively.



KARACHI: Hamdard University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Syed Shahib-ul-Hassan, Syed Muhammad Imran Ali, Group VP B2B Strategy and Product Management PTCL and Ufone 4G and others attend a signing ceremony for the provision of PTCL managed ICT and Mobility solutions for the faculty and students of Hamdard University, held in Karachi.

Pakistan's regional exports increase 14.05% during July-August 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries increased by 14.05 per cent in the first two months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) compared to the corresponding months of last year.

The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a

small amount of \$664.129 million, which is 13.65 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$4862.017 million during July-August (2024-25), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighboring, leaving behind other countries such as Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan carried out its border trade with

the farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives. Pakistan's exports to China witnessed a decrease of 7.66 per cent from \$350,297 million last year to \$323,435 million during last year whereas exports to Afghanistan surged to \$146.655 million from \$88.393 million. The country's exports to Bangladesh also increased by 23.75 per cent to \$122.004 million this year.

Jubilee Life Insurance accelerates net zero transition with Spectreco

Independent Report KARACHI: In a pioneering move towards



bible Life's commitment to embedding sustainability at the heart of its business.

Stock markets rallied last week after the US Federal Reserve announced a bumper interest rate cut, as inflation is cooling.

"Visions of further rate cuts remain a supportive factor," said Patrick O'Hare, an analyst at Briefing.com.

But, he added, "there is some appreciation for the possibility that a market trading with a rich valuation could experience a consolidation period."

This Friday's release of the personal consumption expenditures index, the Fed's preferred inflation metric, could shed light on the next rate move.

Stock markets inch higher on rate hopes

LONDON (AFP/APP): US and European shares nudged higher Monday as investors were torn between hopes of further interest rate cuts and weak eurozone economic data.

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FPCCI President supports digital certificate initiative of center of Pak & Intel relations

ISLAMABAD: Atif Ikram highlighted the importance of Digital Transformation and appreciated team of Anna Munawwar Awan President COPAIR for this

modalities of Businessman Smart Card. He also showed interest to collaborate in mobile phone and laptop on smart installment plans



FPCCI President shared his plan for business growth and economic reforms and empowering digital Pakistan is the only solution. From FPCCI Vice President FPCCI, Tariq Khan Jadoon, Chairman Capital Office, Karim Aziz Malik, Coordinator FPCCI, Malik Sohail Hussain, Former Vice Presidents FPCCI Ms. Sameena Fazil, Ms. Naima Ansari & President Islamabad Women Chamber Rizwana Asif were also present at the event.

BMMC received approval for GEM board listing from PSX

KARACHI (APP): Burj Modaraba Management Company (BMMC) has received approval from the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) for listing Burj Clean Energy Modaraba (BCEM) on the Growth Enterprise Market (GEM), Pakistan's First Green Energy Fund.

This approval is a big step for Pakistan's Capital Markets, BMMC's ability to access direct investments through the Stock Exchange for sustainable energy investments will lead the way for clean energy project developers and investors to come together through BCEM. According to press release issued by BURJ Clean Energy Modaraba Company, The Initial Offering (IO) of Burj Clean Energy Modaraba (BCEM) .

274 dead, over 1,000 wounded in Israeli strikes on Hezbollah strongholds in Lebanon

Monitoring Desk
TYRE: Lebanese Health Minister Firass Abiad said the death toll in Israeli strikes Monday rose to 274, including 21 children, the bloodiest daily toll in nearly a year of cross-border clashes.

The toll stood at "274 dead, including 21 children and 39 women — that's who we know about until now", Abiad told reporters, adding "thousands of families from the targeted areas have been displaced".

The dead also included two rescuers, with 16 other emergency workers wounded, he said, adding that "two ambulances, a fire truck and a medical centre were targeted".

The attacks wounded 1,024 people who were treated in 27 hospitals, Abiad said.

About 5,000 people had been wounded "in less than a week" of Israeli attacks, he said, after

Hezbollah pagers and walkie-talkies exploded and an Israeli strike on Beirut's southern suburbs.

That number accounts for about half of the overall wounded toll of "10,000 to 11,000", he said, referring to nearly one year of cross-border clashes between the Iran-backed Hezbollah group and Israel after the eruption of the Gaza conflict. The conflict began when Hamas attacked Israel, with Hezbollah and other Iran-backed groups around the region drawn into the violence.

The Israeli military said it had struck around 800 Hezbollah targets on Monday.

"Since this morning, the IDF [military] has conducted proactive and extensive aerial strikes against Hezbollah terrorist targets in Lebanon," a statement said, adding that the strikes hit "approximately 800 Hezbollah terror targets in



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian visits one of the victims injured by pager explosions across Lebanon, in a hospital in Tehran, Iran.

UN chief Guterres 'gravely alarmed' by reports of RSF assault on al-Fashir

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is "gravely alarmed" by reports of a full-scale assault on the Sudanese city of al-Fashir by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and called on its leader to halt the attack immediately, a U.N. spokesperson said on Saturday.

Guterres warned any further escalation threatens to spread the conflict throughout the country's western Darfur region, the spokesperson said.

"He calls on Lt. General Mohamed Hamdan 'Hemedti' Dagalo to act responsibly and immediately order a halt to the RSF attack," U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement. "It is unconscionable that the warring parties have repeatedly ignored

calls for a cessation of hostilities."

War erupted in Sudan between the Sudanese army and the RSF in April last year, triggering the world's largest displacement crisis. U.N. officials have warned the worsening violence around al-Fashir threatens to unleash more intercommunal strife.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Saturday that the conflict will be on the agenda when President Joe Biden meets with United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Monday.

Sudan and the United Arab Emirates have clashed at the U.N. Security Council over accusations by the army-aligned Sudanese government that the UAE is arming and supporting the RSF.

Colombia rebel group imposes control in restive coca zone

TUMACO (AFP/APP): A veneer of calm has settled over Narino, one of the most violent regions of Colombia, where armed groups until recently waged bloody battles for control of vast coca fields.

The guerrilla group Segunda Marquetalia has taken control of the southwestern region—roughly the size of Belgium—using financial backing from Mexican cartels to unify myriad armed outfits, analysts say.

"The change has been spectacular, the groups have united, the violence has reduced considerably," said Jerson David, the president of a local association of subsistence farmers who work in the coca fields.

"Here, people grow coca according to the rules of the Segunda

Marquetalia," he added.

Nearly, workers carry sacks filled with vivid green coca leaves that will be crushed and mixed with gasoline and chemicals in a makeshift laboratory, making a paste that will later become cocaine.

Coca fields stretch as far as the eye can see around the town of Zavaleta. In 2022, the Narino region grew some 40 percent of the total coca in Colombia—the world's main cocaine producer.

In the town's center, packs of motorbikes roar down the main street, and men dripping in gold chains and with handguns at their sides stare suspiciously at strangers.

At the entrance to the town hangs an old banner: "Segunda Marquetalia wishes you a Merry Christmas."

Ukraine says it hit two Russian munitions depots overnight

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine said on Saturday it had hit two Russian munition depots overnight, in attacks that illustrated its growing capability to strike targets deep inside Russia.

Russian officials acknowledged the Ukrainian attack on one of the depots in southern Krasnodar region, saying it was carried out with drones. They introduced local emergency measures to mitigate the effects of the assault.

A statement by Ukraine's military general staff said the munitions depots were at Tikhoretsk in Krasnodar region and Oktyabrsky in the western region of Ivor.

"The (Tikhoretsk) facility is in the top three largest munitions storages of the occupiers, and is one of the key points in the Russian military logistical system," the general staff wrote in a statement on Telegram. It said Ukraine had information that a train carrying 2,000 tonnes of munitions, including from North Korea.

US soldier who fled to North Korea is free after sentencing

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US Army Private Travis King, who last year ran into North Korea and was taken into custody there, was sentenced to one year of confinement then freed based on time already served, his lawyer said in a statement. He pleaded guilty to five charges, and the sentencing was held at Fort Bliss in Texas.

The US Army charged King with crimes including desertion for running into North Korea in July 2023, assault against fellow soldiers and solicitation of child pornography, Reuters reported late last year.



NEW YORK: President of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva speaks during 'Summit of the Future' on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

Sri Lanka's new President Dissanayake promises change

Monitoring Desk
COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's leftist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake took office as president on Monday, promising change in the island nation long led by powerful political families which is emerging from its worst economic crisis in more than seven decades.

Millions of Sri Lankans had voted for the opposition parliamentarian, putting faith in his graft-fighting pledge and vow to bolster a fragile economic recovery.

"I pledge ... to demonstrate dedication to protecting and upholding democracy," Dissanayake, 55, said in inauguration remarks at the president's office, saying he was taking office at a challenging time in the Indian Ocean nation.

"Our politics needs to be cleaner, and the people have called for a different political culture," he headed. "I am ready to commit to that change."

Six dead after floods in central Japan: media

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Heavy rain that triggered floods and landslides on a Japanese peninsula recovering from an earthquake this year killed at least six people, local media reported Monday.

Public broadcaster NHK and other outlets said six were dead, while a fire department official told AFP that one had died and five were "in a state of cardio-respiratory arrest", a term used in Japan before a feared death can be confirmed by a doctor.

The regional government in Ishikawa on the Sea of Japan coast said two were missing and the status of eight people was unknown.

Heavy rain pounded Ishikawa from Saturday, with more than 540 millimetres (21 inches) recorded in the city of Wajima over 72 hours, the heaviest continuous rain since comparative data became available. The region is still reeling from a magnitude-7.5 quake at the start of the year, which toppled buildings, triggered tsunami waves and sparked a major fire. Floodwaters inundated emergency housing built for those who had lost their homes in the New Year's Day quake, which killed at least 374 people, according to Ishikawa government figures.



Sri Lanka's newly elected President Anura Kumara Dissanayake addresses a gathering after taking his oath of office at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo.

India reports first case of mpox from fast-spreading clade 1b variety

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India said on Monday that an mpox case involving a man in the southern state of Kerala was from the fast-spreading clade 1b variety, marking South Asia's first recorded case from the new strain. Health Ministry spokesperson Manisha Verma confirmed the strain after news agency ANI cited official sources as saying that the mpox case reported in the Malappuram district of Kerala last week belonged to clade 1.

The patient is a 38-year-old man who had travelled from the United Arab Emirates and was admitted to the government medical college hospital in the district, Kerala authorities said last week. The state health department did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for details of the case on Monday. India, the world's most populous nation, had so far not reported an mpox case from the new strain but federal authorities had issued an advisory this month to all states to remain vigilant and be prepared.

New World Bank Loss and Damage fund names first director

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The board of The Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage to help countries ravaged by climate-driven disasters named Senegalese finance specialist Ibrahim Cheikh Dion as its first director, the World Bank announced on Saturday.

The selection of Dion, a dual US citizen, marks a major milestone in the operationalization of the new World Bank-administered fund, whose creation in 2022 was a breakthrough for developing country negotiators at United Nations climate talks, overcoming years of resistance from wealthy nations. Now with

the Philippines recently selected as the home of the fund and Dion appointed as director, the fund can begin turning the \$800 million pledged to it at last year's COP28 climate summit in Dubai into "tangible funding ready for disbursement," according to the presidency of the next round of climate talks starting in November in Baku, Azerbaijan, known as COP29. COP29's president will call on countries to contribute more money.

Loss and damage had long been a contentious issue in the U.N. climate talks, with less-developed countries calling for a new fund that specifically assists countries.

Tehran ready for nuclear talks in New York 'if other parties are willing', foreign minister says

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran is ready to start nuclear negotiations on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York if "other parties are willing", Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Monday in a video published on his Telegram channel. The United States, under then-President Donald Trump, withdrew in 2018 from a nuclear accord signed in 2015 between Iran and six world powers, which restricted Tehran's nuclear programme.

Son of Uganda's president ends 2026 election bid

Monitoring Desk
KAMPALA: The son of Uganda's long-serving leader Yoweri Museveni said on Saturday he had abandoned plans to run for presidency at the next election in 2026, urging his supporters to endorse his father instead. President Museveni, who has led the country for 38 years, is widely expected to run for re-election even though he has not yet confirmed his candidacy. "I would like to announce that I will not be on the ballot paper in 2026," said Muhoozi Kainerugaba in a post on social media platform X, formerly Twitter.

Taiwan rattled by 5.3 magnitude quake, no immediate reports of damage

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: A 5.3 magnitude earthquake struck Taiwan's sparsely populated east coast county of Hualien on Saturday, the island's weather administration said, with no immediate reports of damage. The quake shook buildings in the capital, Taipei. It had a depth of 17 km (10.6 miles), the weather administration said. Taiwan lies near the junction of two tectonic plates and is prone to earthquakes. In April, Hualien was hit by the biggest earthquake to affect Taiwan in at least 25 years.

Eurozone business activity slumped in September: data

BRUSSELS (AFP/APP): Eurozone business activity declined for the first time in seven months in September, as France lost steam after the end of the Paris Olympic Games, a key survey said Monday.

S&P Global's purchasing managers' index (PMI)—a key gauge of the overall health of the economy—dropped to 48.9 in September, down from 51 in August.

Any reading below 50 indicated contraction.

"The eurozone is heading towards stagnation. After the Olympic effect had temporarily boosted France, the eurozone heavyweight economy,

UN adopts pact to tackle volatile future for mankind

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: UN members adopted a blueprint for the future on Sunday to tackle the myriad wars, environmental threats and technological challenges facing humanity that was hailed by the organisation as "groundbreaking" but panned by critics as unambitious.

Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who championed the "Pact for the Future" and its components, billed them as "landmark agreements—a step-change towards more effective, inclusive, networked multilateralism."

As an opener for the annual high-level week of the UN General Assembly,

which begins on Tuesday, dozens of heads of state and government gathered for the adoption, which faced last-minute opposition from Russia and its allies.

Leaders pledged to bolster the multilateral system to "keep pace with a changing world" and to "protect the needs and interests of current and future generations" facing "persistent crisis."

"We believe there is a path to a brighter future for all of humanity," the document says.

The pact outlines 56 "actions," including commitments to multilateralism, upholding the UN Charter and peacekeeping.

China 'testing us', says Biden in hot mic remarks to Quad allies

Monitoring Desk
WILMINGTON: US President Joe Biden was caught on a hot mic on Saturday telling the leaders of Australia, India and Japan that an aggressive China is "testing us," in remarks that risked undercutting a summit declaration that carefully avoided mentioning Beijing by name.

The comments came as Biden opened a farewell summit in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

"China continues to behave aggressively, testing us all across the region," Biden was heard in what were supposed to be behind-closed-doors remarks to the so-called "Quad".

Biden said that while Chinese President Xi Jinping was focusing on "domestic economic challenges" he was also "looking to buy himself some diplomatic space, in my view, to aggressively pursue China's interest."

But he insisted that recent "intense efforts" by Washington to reduce tensions, including a call with Xi in April, were helping to prevent conflict.

The hot mic blunder risked undermining careful diplomatic efforts by all four countries during the summit to insist that their grouping is about more than just providing a counterweight to China. In their joint statement after the summit, the four leaders made no direct mention of China, even as they expressed concern over tensions on its borders.

Iran walls off part of border with Afghanistan: state media

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran's military has built a wall along more than 10 kilometres of its eastern border with Afghanistan, the main entry point for immigrants, local media reported Monday.

"More than 10 kilometres of walls have been built on the border and another 50 kilometres are ready to be walled off," ISNA news agency said, citing General Nozar Nemati, deputy commander of army ground forces.

Iran shares a more than 900km border with Afghanistan, and the Islamic republic hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world.

This comprises mostly well-integrated Afghans who arrived over the past 40 years after fleeing conflict in their home country.

The flow of Afghan immigrants has increased since the Taliban took over in August 2021 after US forces withdrew.

Tehran has not given official figures for the number of Afghan immigrants, but member of parliament Abolfazl Torabi has estimated their number at "between six and seven million".

The authorities have recently increased pressure on "illegal" refugees, regularly announcing expulsions through the eastern border.

"By blocking the border, we want to control the country's entries and exits" and "better increase the security of border areas", General Nemati said.

In September, Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni said Iran would employ other methods including barbed wire and water-filled ditches in addition to the wall to block the border.

On September 13, the spokesman for the parliamentary National Security Committee, Ebrahim Rezaei, said police plan to "expel more than two million illegal citizens in the near future".

According to the official IRNA news agency, Afghans represent "more than 90 percent of foreign nationals" in Iran.

Scholz's party beats far-right AfD in east German state vote

POTSDAM (AFP/APP): German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats narrowly beat the far-right AfD in a state election Sunday in the formerly communist east, a rare bit of good news for his party.

Scholz's centre-left SPD won around 31 percent in the state of Brandenburg against the anti-immigration, pro-Russian Alternative for Germany, which scored about 29 percent, projections by public broadcasters said.

The result offers some respite for Scholz's embattled coalition government, which has sunk in opinion polls a year ahead of national elections.

The vote in Brandenburg has been closely watched because Scholz's SPD has ruled there ever since Germany's 1990 reunification. The chancellor's own electoral district is in the state capital Potsdam, outside Berlin. The AfD, which rails against asylum-seekers, multiculturalism, Islam and Scholz's three-party government, had hoped to replicate its recent electoral success in the east.

Three weeks ago, it stunned the political estab-

lishment by winning its first-ever parliamentary vote—in the eastern state of Thuringia—and coming a close second in neighbouring Saxony.

Despite its ballot box success, the AfD is unlikely to take power in any state, as all other mainstream parties have so far ruled out entering into a governing alliance with the party.

Brandenburg's popular SPD state premier Dietmar Woidke had kept his distance from party colleague Scholz during the campaign.

In office for more than a decade, Woidke had also thrown down a challenge to voters, by telling them he would quit if the AfD won.

The AfD, which failed in its aim "to send Woidke into retirement", nonetheless hailed its strong showing.

Party co-leader Tino Chrupalla said it had "taken gold once and silver twice" in three elections in the east this month.

A visibly relieved Woidke basked in the applause from the party faithful, celebrating the close win in a race where just weeks ago his party had trailed the AfD in the opinion polls.



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese speaks during the Quadrilateral Summit in Wilmington, Delaware.

Jaffar participates in Pashtun Culture Day celebrations: Culture is thread that binds together our past, present and future, Governor Balochistan

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandukhel has said that the dignity and honour of the "Shawl" is also necessary along with "Shimla" just because the Shawl represents half of the population of the Pashtun society.

The Governor added that Shimla and Shawl can reach new heights only with the joint efforts. He said that culture, being the collective memory of a nation, spans thousands of years. Values, experiences and history, which serve as the basis of our common identity and future progress. Culture is the thread that binds together our past, present and future. He expressed these views while addressing the participants of the prestigious ceremony held at Durbar Hall located

near Quetta Railway Station here on Monday.

Present on the occasion were the Provincial Minister for Health, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Advisor to Chief Minister for Environment, Naseem ul Rehman Mulakhail, Member Provincial Assembly Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai, a large number of women and youths including DG of Iranian Cultural Centre Abu ul Hassan Amiri, Nazir Mohammad Bareh and Dr. Tahir Bareh besides others.

On this occasion, students of Pamir Foundation and Pamir Grammar School dressed in Pashtun cultural clothes presented various items and cultural dance. Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandukhel said that culture has its own historical background and the roots of culture are in agri-

culture, which is known and popular as the Latin term cultura. He said that the history of the Pashtun nation is thousands of years old and the Pashtun language is among the forty major languages of the world.

Even today, the Pashtun nation is proud of its wonderful traditional clothes, delicious food, cultural dance, Jirga system, philanthropy and hospitality. Governor Balochistan congratulated the organizer of the event regarding the Pashtun Cultural Day, Nazir Muhammad Bareh and his entire team for organizing a successful function.

The governor of Balochistan also announced to give one lakh cash rupees to the boys and girls who perform traditional dances and skits on the stage.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandukhel in a group photograph with Parliamentarians, Bureaucrats, Member Civil Societies and Students on occasion of Pashtun Culture Day.

Poor governance, law & order in KP increase people's problems: Muqam

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam here Monday categorically stated that the deteriorating governance and law & order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have negatively impacted the lives of people besides marred development works.

He strongly indicated that if the situation does not improve in KP, the imposition of Governor Rule may be considered as a last resort for the sake of people.

Addressing a press-conference here, Engr Amir Muqam, who is also the Provincial President of the Pakistan Muslim League-N, maintained that Governor Rule was a constitutional provision that would

be considered as a last option if the ongoing grim situation in KP becomes uncontrollable. Expressing his deep concern over the deteriorating law and order situation, particularly in the southern districts and merged areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engr Amir Muqam referred to the recent IED blast in Malam Jabba Swat district that resulted in the death of one policeman and injuries to four others.

Muqam described the Malam Jabba blast was a deep-rooted conspiracy aimed at damaging the country's image. He accused the Chief Minister KP of focusing on agitation and leading public rallies rather than addressing governance and law and order issues in his province.

Muqam claimed that

for the first time, policemen in KP had been incited to protest, making it unsafe for people to leave their homes after night, especially in southern districts and merged areas of the province.

Strongly criticizing the KP government's poor performance especially in higher education sector in the province, where about 25 public sector universities are operating without Vice Chancellors, marring education standards and research works immensely.

Instead of appointing VCs, the Chief Minister KP had announced plans to sell university properties, which Muqam argued would lead to economic collapse for these cash-starved educational institutions in the province.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, GB, SAFRON and President PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engr. Amir Muqam addressing a press conference.

BRICS Moscow Seminar: Mushahid welcomes 'winds of Change in South Asia'

MOSCOW (APP): Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said "Pakistan looks forward to joining BRICS" & welcomed "winds of change blowing all across South Asia which reject hegemony, status quo and seek change" referring to recent radical changes in the Maldives, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

He expressed these views during a keynote address at BRICS seminar.

As a consequence, he said the so-called 'Indo-Pacific Strategy' is now drowning in the waters of the Indian Ocean', a news release said. BRICS (Brazil, India, China and South Africa) is an intergovernmental organisation comprising various nations including the BRICS and Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Senator Mushahid criticised the recent US sanctions against Pakistan and China, terming these 'immoral, unjust, unacceptable and illegal' as sanctions under International Law can only be imposed by the UN

Security Council. He also condemned "Western hypocrisy and double standards on Palestine". Senator Mushahid Hussain said the Global Order was marked by turbulence and transformation, with two contrasting narratives. China and Global South are focused on connectivity and trade and economic cooperation.

Senator Mushahid Hussain urged the BRICS Seminar to define a new narrative based on emerging ground realities to counter propaganda, fake news and disinformation. For the future, Mushahid put forward a 3-D Strategy for BRICS: Democratisation of the world order based on multipolarity, multilateralism, UN Charter and International Law, Demilitarisation of international relations, rejecting any new military alliances like 'Asian NATO', QUAD or AUKUS, Dedollarisation of the world economy and greater trade in non-dollar currencies as dollar was being weaponised.

PTI challenges practice and procedure ordinance in SHC

KARACHI (Online): PTI has challenged practice and procedure ordinance in Sindh High Court (SHC).

The petition said practice and procedure ordinance is sheer violation of Supreme Court (SC) decision.

The bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa had maintained ordinance can come only in the event of emergency.

It was further said in the petition it is decision of SC that no ordinance can be promulgated immediately after parliament session. CJP is violating his own decision. Government is involving the judges in the politics through ordinance. Ordinance be declared null and void and its implementation be stopped till the final decision of this case.

Students, faculty members of cadet college Mastung visit parliament house

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 21-member delegation of students and faculty from Cadet College Mastung visited Parliament House on Monday.

The delegation was welcomed by senior officials of the Upper House.

During their visit, the delegation toured the Senate Museum and watched a documentary on the history of the Senate, said a news release.

The students and faculty showed keen interest in the statues of prominent political figures and historical photographs displayed in the museum.

30 vehicles damaged in Clifton fire

ISLAMABAD (APP): More than 30 vehicles were damaged in a fire broke out early Monday morning at a plot in Clifton's Block 1, Shireen Jinnah Colony, Karachi.

According to a private news channel, the fire erupted near Qurtaba Mosque in a building in the Boat Basin police jurisdiction where several abandoned vehicles were parked. Upon receiving the alert, local police arrived at the scene and promptly called in the KMC Fire Brigade and Rescue 1122 teams.

Whole nation holds Pashtun culture in high regard, maintains Sardar Khetran

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Provincial Minister, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran has stated that the whole nation holds the Pashtun culture in high regard.

In his message on Pashtun culture day, the Provincial Minister congratulated the whole Pashtun and Pakistani nation on the Culture Day and said that Pashtun tribes



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola presenting shield to Company Secretary Islamabad of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Foundation Narjis Tahira

New reference of acquiring jewelry: PTI founder, Bushra Bibi to be indicted on Sep 26

RAWALPINDI (Online): Special Judge Central Shah Rukh Arjumand has provided to PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi copies of case in new reference of acquiring expensive Bulgari jewelry from Toshakhana.

The proceedings regarding arguments on bail pleas of both the accused has been adjourned till September 26 due to expiry of court's time.

The accused will be indicted in next hearing.

Both the accused were present in the court along with their counsels counsel Barrister Suleman Safdar.

FIA presented challan of the case in the court. List of 24 witnesses was also attached with it.

It has been said in the supplementary challan presented by FIA solid evidence is available against PTI founder and Bushra Bibi and the evidence proves that both the accused were involved in misconduct. Both the accused gained financial benefit through illegal sources and corruption. Former chairman PTI while misusing his position obtained Bulgari jewelry set at lower prices. Therefore, the court should summon the witnesses and move forward the trial.

Fawad demands immediate notification for Justice Mansoor Ali Shah as CJP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Federal Minister Fawad Chaudhry has called for the immediate issuance of a notification appointing Justice Mansoor Ali Shah as Supreme Court Chief Justice. Speaking to the media outside the Islamabad High Court, Chaudhry stated that lawyers were united against the constitutional amendment.

He warned that if Jus-



QUETTA: Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar presiding over a high level meeting of Health Department

Pak should embrace materials suited to environment: Inam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General, Inam Haider Malik on Monday said "Pakistan should must embrace not only traditional infrastructure but also materials suited to the country's environment."

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) hosted a seminar focused on "Disaster Resilient Infrastructure," in collaboration with Bahria University, aiming to address the pressing need for climate adaptation and infrastructure resilience in Pakistan.

day can not only address present needs but future ones as well."

In his keynote address, Lieutenant General Malik warned that if global temperatures exceed the 1.5°C threshold, countries like Pakistan would face unprecedented climatic disasters. "From glacial melting to recurring floods, we are already witnessing severe climate impacts," he said.

He cited the 2022 floods, which caused massive devastation, with over 8,000 miles of roads and 480 bridges damaged, leading to significant economic losses. Recovery and rehabilitation remain ongoing challenges.

The seminar featured experts from various fields, all underlining the importance of infrastructure resilience in combating climate change. Dr. Shafiqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), pointed out that it is not the disasters themselves but inappropriate infrastructure that leads to high mortality. "Pakistan is one of the ten countries most impacted by climate change."

Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik led discussions on the country's preparedness for future disasters, highlighting the critical threats posed by climate change and the steps being taken to mitigate its impact.

"Resilience won't come solely from the type of construction but from adapting to what we have," he emphasized. He lauded NDMA's technological efforts, including simulations of the 2022 floods and advanced weather forecasting, noting that "technology to-

Strongly criticizing the KP government's poor performance especially in higher education sector in the province, where about 25 public sector universities are operating without Vice Chancellors, marring education standards and research works immensely.

Instead of appointing VCs, the Chief Minister KP had announced plans to sell university properties, which Muqam argued would lead to economic collapse for these cash-starved educational institutions in the province.



Qatar Emiri Naval Forces delegation offering Fataha at Mazar-e-Quaid during visit to Karachi.

Tajikistan to import 40,000 metric tons of sugar from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tajikistan will sign an agreement to import 40,000 metric tons of sugar from Pakistan, while the Trade Corporation of Pakistan Sugar Mills Association and Tajikistan's State Reserve Material Reserve for materializing the agreement. The consensus to this effect was developed in a meeting between Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain and Director of State of Tajikistan Ahmadzoda Nurmuhamad Ato, who called on the minister and discussed matters relating to mutual interest and promotion of bilateral trade and investment. Head of Department of International Cooperation Tolibov M u h a m m a d j o n , Abdulatovovich and Agha Mullah Amounullah Representative General of Logistics Company ZFA General

Trading were also presented in the meeting, said a press release issued here Monday.

Saif Anjum, Secretary Ministry of Industries and Production also attended the meeting, it said adding that the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet had approved to export about 40,000 metric tons of sugar to Republic of Tajikistan.

Both the sides also agreed for establishing joint working group to promote bilateral trade relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan and agreed for initiating trade partnership in edibles goods, besides developing storage facilities along the boarder sides and taking measures for trade facilitation. Speaking on the occasion, Rana Tanveer said that Pakistan was ready to help the Tajikistan for fulfilling its requirements of edibles goods.



KARACHI: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JU-F) Chief, Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman exchanges views with Former Pakistan Captain and All-Rounder, Shahid Khan Afridi during meeting held in Karachi.

Kurram clashes claimed 12 lives, injured 22 in 3 days

PESHAWAR (APP): Clashes between the rival tribes in different areas of Kurram district have so far claimed at least a dozen lives and injured 22 others, said a police report on Monday.

Heavy and light arms were used by the tribesmen involved in the ongoing conflict that started after construction of trenches by the rival tribes in villages Boshhehra and Ahmadzai.

Police informed that the firing took place over construction on a disputed land, which intensified into exchange of heavy fire in the Balashkhel area. The clashes resulted in losses from both sides.

The rival tribes were engaged in heavy firing and shelling in Balashkhel, Khaar Kali, Trimanal, Baghki, Maqbal and Kanj Alizai.

Meanwhile, a bazaar in Sadda market, Kurram that belonged to one of the tribes involved in the con-

flict was blown up and fortunately, no casualty happened in this incident. Residents of the Bhagan tribe reportedly blocked the main Parachinar-Peshawar artery, creating troubles for commuters.

Elders of Turi-Bangash tribes urged the authorities to take quick action to resolve the issue amicably. They urged the government to take action against the violence mongers and restore law and order in the district.

Meanwhile, member of the National Assembly (MNA) Engineer Hamid Hussain and parliamentary leader of the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) staged a protest sit-in outside the Parachinar Press Club.

He said that the sit-in was meant to draw attention of the high-ups towards the repeated outbreaks of violence in Kurram district.

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