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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing the inaugural ceremony of nationwide Special Anti-Polio Campaign.

PM Shehbaz vows to make Pakistan polio-free through collective efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP)-Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday reaffirmed his commitment to making Pakistan polio-free, stating that with collective efforts, the disease will be completely eradicated and prevented from re-emerging in the future, ensuring a healthier future for the nation's children.

Dar alleges PTI govt policies led to resurgence of terrorism, economic crisis

No question of engaging with those who attacked state institutions, says deputy PM in London

LONDON (INP): With the country engaged in retaliatory measures following a recent spate of attacks, Senator Ishaq Dar alleged on Sunday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government's policy of 'appeasing and rehabilitating' extremist groups contributed to the resurgence of terrorism.

Pakistani forces kill eight Afghan Taliban in response to unprovoked border attack

RAWALPINDI: Afghan Taliban once again restored to unprovoked aggression on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and Pakistani forces, in a befitting response, killed eight Afghan Taliban.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail addressing convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University Balochistan Chapter

AIU a bright tower of higher education in Pak brightening minds of students of urban & remote rural areas: Governor

Jaffar Khan Mandokhail says AIU paved way for bright future by producing skilled human resource in accordance with requirements of modern market utilizing digital IT

Contrary to PTI's tall claims, masses rejected call for attending public rally : Tarar

Castigates rowdy PTI workers for pelting stones at police

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Sunday that contrary to tall claims of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership, the people of Pakistan had rejected its rally.



Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister interacts with British Parliamentarians of Pakistani origin in London.

Ruling coalition claims two-thirds majority for legislation in NA

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The ruling coalition claimed having a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly for legislation, government sources informed on Sunday.

PTI leaders call for Imran's release in Islamabad rally

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) concluded its highly-anticipated public gathering on the outskirts of Islamabad well after the deadline imposed by the district administration on Sunday.

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QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) is a bright tower of higher education in Pakistan which is equally brightening minds of the male and female students of the urbanized as well as remote backward and rural areas of the country with knowledge simultaneously.

that the students of all ages, religions and segments of the society can benefit from it. This University has also created opportunities of modern education and skills for all overseas Pakistanis ensuring that there happens to be no border of knowledge.

Over 150 graduates including 27 females were given the degrees and medals at the convocation. The Vice Chancellor of AIU, Professor Dr. Nasir Mehmood, deans of faculties and other concerned high ups as well as academicians, parents and close relatives of the graduates also attended the convocation.



He stated that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf had to resort to fake videos to give the impression of huge rally and uploaded false and fake posts on social media to cover up their attendance.

Alvi apologises for sharing old video of PTI rally

KARACHI (INP) - Former president and PTI leader Dr Arif Alvi has apologised over his post on X in which he shared an old video by claiming it was from the PTI's convoy making its way to Islamabad.

Crackdown against unregistered private water tanker operators continues in Quetta: Hamza

QUETTA: The crackdown is continued against the unregistered private water tanker operators in the provincial metropolis.

President reaffirms commitment to accessible education for all

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has renewed the commitment of government to make education accessible to all.

Asif claims evidence points to military trial for Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Defense Minister Khawaja Asif has stated that evidence against Imran Khan may lead to a military trial, with former ISI chief Faiz Hameed potentially turning into an approver against him.

No compromise to be made on quality, timely completion of development projects: Jattak

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Mir Ali Madad Jattak has stated that no compromise would be made on the quality and timely completion of the development projects.

Alvi apologises for sharing old video of PTI rally

He said on Twitter, "After a fact check, I have deleted two posts, as they were images from a previous occasion. I apologise for the error.

Alvi apologises for sharing old video of PTI rally

Social Media is too big to be bagged or shutdown. Only error corrections can tame this Leviathan."

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QUETTA: The seven-day anti-polio campaign is scheduled to be kicked off all over Balochistan from today (Monday).

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transit and fixed points. This information was shared by the Coordinator Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication, Inamul Haq here on Sunday.

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According to the EOC Coordinator, all the necessary arrangements have already been made for the polio immunization campaign. He said that all resources are being mobilized to ensure eradication of



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers for Food Haji Ali Madad Jattak inaugurating a road in his constituency. Provincial Ministers are also present

During the campaign, more than 2.655 million children below five years of age would be administered anti-polio vaccine.

Over 11,555 teams have been formed to administer the anti-polio drops to the children after visiting from home to home and at the

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## AJK Speaker dismisses Indian elections in Kashmir as a 'Farce' designed to deceive int'l community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the AJK Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar Sunday vehemently criticized the upcoming Indian elections in Kashmir, terming them a "drama" designed to conceal the territory's actual situation and condemned the polls as an attempt to create a false impression of normalcy in the region.

In an interview with PTV News, AJK Speaker, Latif Akbar has categorically dismissed the upcoming Indian elections in Kashmir as a "farce" designed to deceive the international community. He termed the polls as a desperate attempt by India to legitimize its occupation of the disputed territory and create a false impression of normalcy.

The AJK Speaker also highlighted the glaring contradictions in India's stance on Kashmir, pointing out that on one hand, India claims Kashmir to be an integral part of its territory, while on the other hand, it is holding elections to create a puppet government.

He termed this as a clear example of India's doublespeak and hypocrisy.

Akbar reiterated that the Kashmiri people would not be fooled by such tactics and would continue to demand their right to self-determination through a free and fair plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations. He urged the international community to see through India's farce and support the Kashmiri people's struggle for freedom and justice.

AJK Speaker Latif Akbar lamented that the Indian government's suppression of the Kashmiri people's freedom struggle has reached alarming levels. He pointed out that any Kashmiri leader or youth who dares to raise their voice against Indian occupation is immediately thrown into jail, subjected to torture, and denied basic human rights.

Akbar described the condition of Kashmiris as "deplorable" and highlighted the stark contrast

between India's claims of democracy and its actions in Kashmir. He noted that while India touts itself as the world's largest democracy, it has imposed a military siege on Kashmir, restricting the movement and assembly of its people and stifling their voices.

The AJK Speaker also drew attention to the plight of Kashmiri prisoners, many of whom are languishing in Indian jails without trial or due process. He demanded that the international community take notice of these human rights abuses and pressurize India to release all political prisoners and end its draconian laws in Kashmir.

Akbar emphasized that the Kashmiri people's struggle for freedom and self-determination would not be silenced or suppressed by Indian repression. He expressed confidence that the Kashmiri people would continue to resist Indian occupation and ultimately achieve their right to self-determination, despite the odds.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori presenting gift to family of a Shaheed during Naval Day. Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem is also present

## Dar alleges PTI govt policies...

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provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan. The two most vulnerable provinces saw a sharp rise in deadly attacks last month, according to data from the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS).

The digital database of security incidents managed by the Islamabad-based think-tank suggested an alarming situation as the number of attacks jumped from 38 in July to 59 in August. These incidents included 29 attacks in KP, 28 in Balochistan, and two in Punjab. The most recent and deadliest among the 28 attacks in the southwestern province resulted in 57 deaths and injuries to another 84 people.

Meanwhile, the deputy premier briefed the British Pakistani lawmakers on the government's roadmap to economic revival. He recalled that during the Nawaz Sharif-led government from 2013 to 2017, Pakistan had grown to the world's 24th-largest economy and was projected to become a member of the G20. "However, political instability, beginning in 2018, had derailed Pakistan's economic trajectory," he regretted.

Dar stressed that the government was committed

to putting Pakistan back on the road to economic growth and development that the country had been charting in 2017.

"The difficult and politically unpopular measures taken by the recent government are now beginning to bear fruit," he said, adding that the government has brought down inflation to a single digit and narrowed the current account deficit while stabilising the currency. "There was across-the-board institutional support for economic reform and the Special Investment Facilitation Council [SIFC], set up by the government last year, was drawing significant foreign investors' interest in Pakistan's energy, mining, IT and agriculture sectors," he added.

The foreign minister also asked the Members of Parliament for suggestions on how the government could draw more British foreign direct investment in Pakistan and increase the bilateral trade volume.

Highlighting Pakistan's recently introduced new visa-free policy to encourage Pakistani expatriates to visit Pakistan, Dar stressed that it was important for young British Pakistanis to stay connected with their roots.

## AIOU a bright tower of higher...

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and philosophy of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the university attributed to his name and those graduating from the mother institution, however, it is ranked among the prominent universities of the world because of its long-distance education system, he added.

He noted with pleasure that AIOU paved the way for bright future by producing skilled human resource in accordance with requirements of the modern market utilizing modern digital

information technology. Jaffar Khan Mandokhail congratulated the emerging graduates and their parents from the core of their hearts and said that the convocation is proof of their success, devotion and perseverance.

The Governor also appreciated and congratulated the Vice Chancellor of AIOU and his whole team for organizing successful convocation in Quetta and hoped that they would continue the journey of knowledge and consciousness in future.



ISLAMABAD: Kabadi teams of Islamabad Chamber and Farid Kabati Association in a final contest titled Kabadi League 2024 at Islamabad Sports Complex in the Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif administering polio vaccination to children to kickstart countrywide Special Anti-Polio Campaign.

## Nationwide anti-polio campaign starts from today

ISLAMABAD (INP): A nationwide anti-polio campaign of varied duration will begin tomorrow across Pakistan.

During the campaign, children up to five years of age will be administered anti-polio drops.

In Punjab, thirteen point nine million children will be vaccinated during week-long campaign in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad districts.

While in other districts including Attock, Chakwal, Multan, Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Muzaffargarh, DG Khan, Rajanpur, RY Khan, Okara, Sheikhpura and Gujranwala, children will be vaccinated during five day campaign.

In Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, Thirty-five thousand two hundred and fifty-nine polio teams have been constituted for five-day campaign which will visit door to door to ensure polio drops to each and every child.

In Sindh, the week-long drive will target 9.4 million children under the age of five across 30 districts of province including Hyderabad.

In Balochistan, for a week long anti-polio campaign more than eleven thousand teams have been constituted.

Provincial Coordinator Emergency Operation Center has urged parents, media and every citizen to play their role in making the anti-polio campaign successful.

## PPP renders great sacrifices for democracy: Nisar Khuhro

HYDERABAD (INP): The President of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Sindh and Member of Sindh Assembly Nisar Ahmed Khuhro has said that the PPP was the country's largest democratic party, having made significant sacrifices for democracy.

He maintained that party workers have endured imprisonment, lashes and even bullets, their contributions and sacrifices must be acknowledged. Khuhro expressed these views while addressing a public gathering in Tando Allahyar.

He said that the party was established by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and well managed by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, we have learned politics from her. He said that shaheed Benazir Bhutto always considered Tando Allahyar as second Lyari, for this we should make the party stronger in Tando Allahyar.

He also praised the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, saying that the young PPP leader has the full potential to steer the country through tough times.

## Mohsin Naqvi pays tribute to great sacrifices, unparalleled services of Pakistan Navy

ISLAMABAD (APP): In his special message on National Navy Day, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid glowing tribute to the great sacrifices and unparalleled services of the officers and personnel of the Pakistan Navy.

He added that September 8 is another glorious and memorable day in the defence history of Pakistan.

He said that the valiant personnel of the Pakistan Navy destroyed the enemy's naval power in the 1965 war.

The Interior Minister said that September 8 has a history of sacrifices, immortal passions, and extraordinary achievements, as on this naval forces of Pakistan also repulsed the enemy like the army and air force.

He stated that the heroes of the Pakistan Navy defeated the enemy and defended the maritime borders, adding that the officers and personnel of the Pakistan Navy, who protect the maritime borders, are our pride.

Mohsin Naqvi highlighted that the indelible role of the Pakistan Navy in the 1965 war will always be remembered in history with golden letters.

He emphasized that the Pakistan Navy is always ready to face all kind of challenges.

He reiterated that "Navy Day" is a day to pay tribute to the valiant soldiers of the Pakistan Navy.

He underscored that the Pakistan Navy is determined to keep the spirit of September 8, 1965, alive.

## Workshop on Space Law, Policy deliberated over space governance, legal frameworks

ISLAMABAD (APP): The most anticipated two-day workshop on Space Law and Policy, hosted by the National Center of GIS and Space Applications (NCGSA) was held at the Institute of Space Technology (IST), marking a significant milestone in the discourse on space governance and legal frameworks in Pakistan.

The event brought together a diverse group of participants from academia, industry, and government institutions to engage in meaningful discussions on critical issues related to space law and policy.

The workshop featured insightful sessions led by renowned subject matter experts, including Chairman of NCGSA, Dr. Najam Abbas Naqvi who provided a comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape of space law and its importance for Pakistan's space ambitions.

Senior Practice Manager for Space and Connectivity at Access Partner-

ship in Singapore, Hamza Hameed shared his expertise on international space treaties and agreements, emphasizing their relevance to Pakistan's national space policy.

Throughout the two-day workshop, attendees engaged in comprehensive discussions on critical aspects of space law and policy, integral to advancing Pakistan's position in the global space landscape.

The first day covered fundamental aspects of space law, including an introduction to international space treaties, space governance, and Pakistan's space policy framework.

The first day covered fundamental aspects of space law, including an introduction to international space treaties, space governance, and Pakistan's space policy framework. Muhammad Arham Khan, Divisional Head of International Affairs at SUPARCO, shed light on the intricacies of space governance, while Hafiz General Manager of International Affairs at SUPARCO, Muhammad Naveed discussed the development and implementation of Pakistan's National Space Policy.



HYDERABAD: Pakistan Cycling Federation President Syed Azhar Ali Shah in a group photograph with trophy winners of a cycle race from Karachi to Jhampir on National Highway on the eve of Defense and Air Force Day organized by SSGC near Jhirk.

## Globalization-Sovereignty paradox: Lessons from China's experience

ISLAMABAD (APP): Globalization, a concept popularized by Swamy in 2006, signifies the integration of economic, political, social, and cultural values across borders, effectively dissolving traditional boundaries. While national security once predominantly focused on military might, modern strategies must now encompass economic stability, diplomatic relations, and the preservation of national values.

The interplay of domestic, international, and transnational institutions has made contemporary governance increasingly intricate. The rising influence of non-state actors and transnational laws is fundamentally reshaping international law and governance, presenting a multifaceted challenge to state legal systems. This evolution is highlighted by significant shifts in the international financial system since the 1970s.

Financial liberalization, which gained momentum in the late 1990s, aimed to reduce state control and promote the free movement of capital. However, this shift has led to a widening wealth gap, with the richest quintet of countries now 249 times wealthier than the poorest. Dr. Raza Muhammad, president of the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) talking to APP, emphasizes the dual impact of globalization on national sovereignty.

"Globalization offers tremendous opportunities through technology, trade connectivity, and knowledge sharing," Dr. Muhammad

further explained. "However, it also imposes constraints, such as adherence to international regulations and potential threats to indigenous cultures. Additionally, the competitive pressures can lead to brain drain, challenging national economic stability."

The interconnected nature of globalization complicates the implementation of sovereignty strategies. Nations face the challenge of managing a web of external stakeholders with often conflicting agendas while striving to maintain their sovereign goals. The flow of ideas, goods, and people across borders frequently influences national decision-making and local practices.

China's experience provides a vivid illustration of this balancing act. The country's strategic attraction of foreign investments and expertise has fueled rapid growth in its technology sector. However, this growth has brought pressure to align more closely with global standards, affecting elements of China's sovereignty. Amid these challenges, China is also investing heavily in technological innovation and digital infrastructure, aiming to leverage these advancements to enhance its global influence and economic resilience significantly.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative, exemplifies the intersection of globalization and national sovereignty. CPEC is designed to de-

velop transportation networks, energy projects, and economic zones in Pakistan.

This ambitious project reflects both the benefits and challenges of global integration, highlighting the need for careful management of international partnerships.

Liu Wei, a technology entrepreneur in Shanghai, sharing her experience remarks: "Globalization has opened doors for my business to access international markets and cutting-edge technologies. However, it also means navigating complex international regulations and facing fierce competition. Balancing these forces while preserving our national identity is an ongoing challenge."

As globalization continues to evolve, states must adopt adaptive governance structures to manage their international relationships effectively. This involves engaging with diverse stakeholders, maintaining coherent policies, and ensuring that national interests remain a priority. Countries need to balance the benefits of global integration with the need to preserve their sovereignty and cultural identity.

In a world where interconnectedness is increasingly the norm, nations must navigate the complexities of globalization with a strategic approach. By carefully managing external influences and adapting their governance structures, countries can safeguard their sovereignty while actively participating in the global arena.

## Militarization has badly affected students' education in IIOJK: Report

ISLAMABAD (INP): Militarization has badly affected students' education in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). According to a report released by Kashmir Media Service on International Literacy Day, today, education of IIOJK children disrupted due to decades-long unresolved Kashmir dispute as the students are being harassed and humiliated by Indian troops instead of making it easy for them to achieve education.

In a separate development, police recovered a suspicious bag near the venue in Sangiani. The bag contained a hand grenade, detonator, electric wires, and other explosive materials. The bomb disposal squad was dispatched to the scene, and an investigation was underway.

In preparation for the rally, containers were strategically placed at key points to control traffic in the federal capital.

All routes leading to the red zone were blocked with only essential personnel permitted to use the

It said the Modi regime has banned hundreds of schools run by Falah-e-Aam Trust in the occupied territory to keep Kashmiri youth away from quality education.

The Modi regime's new education policy in IIOJK is a reflection of RSS ideology, the report said, adding how Kashmiri students pay attention to education when they are witnessing killings of their dear ones by Indian troops on a daily basis?

The closure of major routes between Islamabad and Rawalpindi caused significant inconvenience to the residents, despite the provision of alternate routes. Police are stationed along these alternate routes to manage traffic.

Additionally, the metro bus service between Rawalpindi Saddar Station and Pak Secretariat was suspended due to the rally in Sangiani, as directed by the district administration.

The PTI had previously postponed the gathering twice—first in July and then in August—due to revoked permissions. The latest postponement led to sharp criticism from party leaders and members, who expressed frustration over the repeated delays.

## PTI leaders call for Imran's...

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vocating for Imran Khan's release and the supremacy of the law and Constitution. "We will enter Punjab with 50,000 people from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa within a week," Marwat declared, adding that they would face any challenges, including tear gas, to achieve their goals.

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Seven-day anti-polio campaign...

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polio virus completely. He said that foolproof security would be provided to the teams to be engaged in the anti-polio drive.

The teams taking part in the campaign are included 9,247 mobile, 945 fixed sites and 595 transit points. He mentioned that in all 12 cases have been reported in first eight months of the current year in Balochistan. These polio cases have been reported from Quetta, Killa Abdullah, Killa Saifullah, Dera Bugti, Jhal Magsi, Zhob and Kharan.

He pointed out that the polio virus has also been detected in the environment of different districts of the province during year 2023 after two and half years. He said that three children suffering from polio virus also died in the province.

The EOC coordinator feared that polio virus may spread to other districts of the province. He said that the children are unsafe due to the presence of polio vi-

rus as such parents should not pay with lives of their children and get them administered the anti-polio vaccine.

In addition to this, the parents should also complete the course of immunization of their children along with the polio vaccine, the EOC coordinator pleaded.

Earlier, the Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan has already made clear that the anti-polio campaign would be made successful mobilizing all resources in the province. He warned that stern action would be taken against those creating hurdles in the immunization campaign.

He also assured that if needed, the deployment of Frontier Corps would also be made for making the campaign successful.

It may be mentioned here that the Chief Secretary had formally inaugurated the campaign by administering anti-polio campaign to children at the civil secretariat on Friday last.

## PM's climate change aide urges expansion of marine protected areas' cover

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Sunday urged the Sindh and Balochistan governments to boost efforts to conserve marine ecosystems.

Following the recent declaration of Churna Island as a Marine Protected Area (MPA) by the Balochistan government, Romina Alam called for additional MPAs to be established to achieve the global target of protecting 30% of the ocean area by 2030.

Alam also praised the Balochistan government's

move for the protection of Churna Island, stating it a "positive step towards protecting marine resources and promoting environmentally sustainable development."

Churna Island, known for its extensive coral habitats and biodiversity, is now Pakistan's second MPA. The island is home to over 50 species of corals, 250 species of fish, and numerous invertebrates and vertebrates.

She offered full support to the Balochistan government in conserving marine biodiversity and safeguarding the island's fragile

ecosystem and diverse wildlife.

With over 5,000 MPAs globally, covering more than 8% of the ocean, the Coordinator stressed the importance of adopting ecosystem-based management approaches to minimise human impacts and ensure sustainable use of marine resources.

She highlighted the urgency of protecting marine ecosystems and wildlife from climate change and human activities, emphasizing the need for collective action and shared responsibility to address these environmental challenges.

Alam noted that this initiative will help regulate anthropogenic activities that harm the marine ecosystems of the country and protect the islands from threats like overfishing, pollution, and climate change impacts.

She also highlighted Pakistan's commitment to advancing marine conservation efforts in collaboration with all relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, particularly through mangrove restoration, which has seen a 300% increase since 1992 in the country.



ISLAMABAD: A view of Islamabad Highway blocked with heavy shipping containers at Khanna Pul area due to security reason during PTI public gathering (Jalsa) at Sangjani, in the Federal Capital.



## IG Islamabad visit Safe City

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ISLAMABAD: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi visited Safe City Islamabad, where he reviewed the city's security through Safe City cameras.

IGP also visited various areas of the city, met with police officers on duty, and encouraged them.

## Secretary confident of Punjab govt's success in smog fight, fresh air for residents soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a recent statement, Punjab Secretary for Environment and Climate Change, Raja Jahangir Anwar Sunday assured that the government under CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's leadership is taking wise and stringent steps to combat smog and improve the air quality index in the province soon.

This proactive stance is expected to yield positive results, ensuring a better quality of life for the province's inhabitants, he said while talking to PTV news channel.

Raja Jahangir Anwar also disclosed that the Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with SPARCO will conduct its 4th comprehensive study on air quality.

This research aims to assess the current state of air quality in the province, identify pollution sources, and inform data-driven

policy decisions, he added.

Punjab Secretary announced a stringent crackdown on petrol pumps selling low-quality oil, stating that all such outlets will be shut down. Additionally, he revealed that regular inspections of all vehicles are being conducted across the province with the aid of Safe City cameras, he added.

The use of Safe City cameras for vehicle inspections demonstrates the government's commitment to leveraging technology in its environmental efforts, he mentioned. This innovative approach enables authorities to efficiently identify and address pollution sources, promoting a cleaner environment for the citizens of Punjab, he said.

By engaging private workshops, the government seeks to leverage their expertise and resources to enhance the inspection process, he said.

## 8 agents arrested in excise office crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administration has taken firm action against unauthorized agents operating outside the excise office, arresting eight individuals as part of a larger effort to tackle the issue.

In a recent operation led by Assistant Commissioner (AC) of the Industrial Area, eight agents were apprehended outside the excise office, said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration. The operation aimed to curb the influence of unauthorized intermediaries and encourage citizens to directly approach government offices for their tasks.

On the occasion, Director General of Excise, Irfan Nawaz Memon, urged citizens to bypass the agents and visit excise offices for their services. He emphasized that additional service counters have been set up to make it easier for people to complete their work directly.

## Senator Irfan calls for unity to address economic challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Irfan Siddiqui of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Sunday emphasized the need for collective efforts to address Pakistan's economic challenges and extended an invitation to all stakeholders to contribute suggestions for achieving economic stability.

Talking to a private news channel, he also made it clear that his party leadership will not compromise on the incident that occurred on May 9, indicating a firm stance on the

matter. Senator Irfan Siddiqui's statement also conveyed a strong message regarding the incident on May 9, asserting that the PML-N leadership will not waver in their stance.

Senator Siddiqui is signalling that any discussions or negotiations will not come at the cost of compromising on this issue.

The senator also clarified that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party's claims about PML-N holding or offering talks are misleading and untrue.

## PMYP committed to advancing literacy agenda: Rana Mashhood

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Sunday said that the PMYP was committed to advancing the literacy agenda across Pakistan.

Talking to the media in connection with International Literacy Day, he said that the PMYP office was making efforts to provide quality education through comprehensive skills development initiatives, ensuring lifelong learning opportunities for every citizen according to vision of the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

"I would like to emphasize the profound impact of literacy in empowering individuals and contributing to a more informed and prosperous society. Literacy is not just the ability to read and write; it is a fundamental human right that opens doors to economic opportunities, active societal participation, and personal growth," he added.

The Chairman PMYP further said that as part of the "Education Emergency" initiative, the government was focusing on enrolling approximately 26 million out-of-school children, to transform Pakistan into a global leader in education. This ambitious endeavor includes strategies such as providing free meals, scholarships, and various incentives to reduce dropout rates and encourage students to complete

their education, he remarked.

"We are also dedicated to integrating technology into our education system. By promoting technology-friendly literacy and skills development, we aim to equip our youth with the necessary competencies to excel in the digital economy. This initiative underscores our commitment to modernizing education and preparing young Pakistanis for future success", he said.

Furthermore, the government recognized the crucial role of collaboration with the private sector and civil society, Mashhood said and added that through strategic partnerships, "We seek to connect education with employment and self-employment opportunities."

## Education cornerstone of any nation's progress, prosperity: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Sunday said that education is the cornerstone of national development and prosperity.

In his message on International Literacy Day, he highlighted that Pakistan's Parliament has taken effective steps to promote literacy across the country.

According to the Constitution, he said, it is the government's responsibility to provide free education to children aged 5 to 16 years.

The Speaker reaffirmed that the current government is taking special measures to enhance the literacy rate in the country, stressing that increasing literacy is essential for social and economic development. He said, "An educated nation is the key to a prosperous future."

He called upon all stakeholders to collaborate in promoting literacy and encouraged the younger generation to equip them with education, as it plays a crucial role in the nation's progress and prosperity.

## Girl killed over domestic dispute in Nankana Sahib

ISLAMABAD (APP): Brother shot and killed his 17-year-old sister on Sunday over a domestic dispute in Nankana Sahib.

According to a private news channel and police, the police force reached the spot immediately after the incident was reported.

The accused managed to flee from the scene after the killing.



ISLAMABAD: Passers by looking at the wall painting at Rawal Chowk Interchange.

## ICT Police avert terror attack: Explosives & weapons seized in Sangjani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have successfully thwarted a potential terror attack by seizing a cache of dangerous weapons and explosives in the Sangjani area.

According to an ICT police spokesperson, heightened security alerts have been in place due to the ongoing threat of terrorism.

He said Search operations were being conducted in view of the threat of terrorism in the gatherings. Considering these circumstances additional personnel were deployed in different areas of the city, he added.

He said during a search operation in Sangjani, police discovered a suspicious bag. Upon examination, the bag was found to contain destructive explosives, hand grenades, detonators, and other explosive materials, he said.

He said the Bomb Disposal Squad of ICT Police was immediately called to the scene and successfully neutralized the explosives.

Following the operation, the area was cordoned off, and a high alert has been issued throughout the city, he said adding that increased checks are now being conducted at all city entrances and exits as part of the enhanced security protocol.

Police officials have urged citizens to cooperate with the increased security measures and to report any suspicious activity by calling 15. He said search operations are ongoing, and law enforcement agencies continue their efforts to ensure the safety and security of the city.

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## Journalists urged to use RTI for investigative reporting, countering fake news

ISLAMABAD (APP): A two-day seminar was concluded by the Friedrich Nauman Foundation for Freedom (FNF-Pakistan) on Sunday with the main objective to capacitate journalists on the use of Right to Information laws for investigative reporting and countering fake news.

The Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act, 2013, was passed by the Punjab Assembly in 2013 for promoting transparency in the working of provincial authorities by securing citizens' access to information, a news release said.

While addressing the participants, Muhammad Anwar, Head of Programs and Administration of FNF Pakistan, said journalists can promote investigative journalism through the use of RTI. This ultimately strengthens the credibility of their stories, he further added.

While sharing the leg-

islative landscape of RTI in Pakistan, Syed Raza Ali, Program Manager of FNF Pakistan, access to information is guaranteed under Article 19A of the Constitution and explained there are five RTI laws in Pakistan.

He further described, being the 4th pillar of democracy, journalists are the representatives of the people in terms of using RTI Act for investigating and publicizing information of public interest.

Accessing information through RTI Act, especially young journalists, can contribute to ensuring transparency in public, professional, and social spheres. Provincial public bodies are legally bound to provide the requested information within 14 working days under the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013.

In case the public bodies fail to provide the requested information, citi-

zens can lodge complaints before the Punjab Information Commission, Ali added. The Punjab Information Commission is an independent appellate authority that has the power to direct, summon, and penalize officials who obstruct the flow of information, he further added.

While talking about critical thinking to counter fake news, it is important for every journalist to know how to check facts and report, said Mr Ubaid Ur Rehman, a rights activist.

It is a time for news media to tack more closely to professional standards and ethics, to avoid the publishing of unchecked information. Investing in critical thinking is more important than ever, as it helps to limit the risks of disinformation posed by the advent of technologies such as the internet and artificial intelligence, he further added.



ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclists facing difficulties due to road blocked at Khanna Pul, during PTI public gathering (Jalsa) at Sangjani, in the Federal Capital.

## Recharge Pak building climate resilience thru Ecosystem-based Adaptation launch on Sep 10

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Recharge Pakistan project that aims to improve the resilience of some of the country's most vulnerable communities affected by the impacts of climate change, will formally launch on 10 September 2024 in Islamabad.

Championed by the Government of Pakistan's Ministry of Climate Change and the Federal Flood Commission, under the Ministry of Water Resources, this project has been made possible with the support of the Green

Climate Fund, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), The Coca-Cola Foundation (TCCF) and WWF, a news release said. The project will be implemented at select sites in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh and Balochistan provinces by the relevant provincial departments and WWF-Pakistan.

The project aims to address the country's current and emerging environmental challenges, such as super floods, widespread rains, heatwaves and droughts.

It seeks to demon-

strate the effectiveness of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and green infrastructure as innovative additions to the nation's traditional grey infrastructure solutions or the public systems built to manage water resources and storm water.

With a collective grant of USD 77.8 million, the project is the largest such investment at the national level, and is estimated to directly benefit more than 680,000 people and indirectly support more than 7 million people across the project sites in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: CDA worker planting saplings on green belt area at Rawal Chowk.

## Spice care in monsoon: Top tips from experts

ISLAMABAD (APP): In Asia, spices are not merely ingredients but the essence of cuisine. They enrich traditional dishes with flavors passed down through generations. Preserving their quality during the monsoon is crucial. Spices, mentioned in ancient texts like the Rig Veda, have been integral to culinary and medicinal practices. The spice trade influenced historical events and explorations by figures such as Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan, underscoring their global importance.

"Spices are the soul of our dishes and directly impact our success," says the chef of Balla Tikka House, Rawalpindi, known for Asian cuisine. "When spices lose their potency due to humidity, it's not just about flavor—it's a business risk. Compromised spices lead to compromised dishes, resulting in disappointed customers and lost revenue."

Executive Chef Imran of Islamabad Hotel emphasizes the need to maintain spice quality during the monsoon. "Fresh, aromatic spices make our dishes unique and memorable. Preserving their integrity is crucial for maintaining our reputation and customer loyalty."

Saima Javed, a spice enthusiast and food journalist, adds, "Women are especially passionate about spicy food. We're often the ones driving our families to the best dining spots because we crave bold, aromatic flavors. If restaurants don't maintain the quality of their spices during the monsoon, they risk losing a key part of their customer base. Our enthusiasm for

spices significantly influences where families choose to dine, making it essential for restaurants to preserve spice integrity to keep us coming back."

In Pakistan, the monsoon brings a surge in humidity and heavy rains, posing significant challenges for spice lovers and sellers alike. The moisture can cause spices to clump together, diminishing their flavor and aroma. Additionally, the damp conditions create a breeding ground for pests like weevils, which can further spoil these essential ingredients.

Chef Ahmed Khan from Islamabad's renowned Melody Food Street shares his expertise: "The integrity of spices used in dishes like Mutton Karahi cannot be compromised during the rainy season. Spices are critical to the dish's flavor.

When they lose their quality due to damp weather, it affects the entire dish. That is why we keep limited stock and buy fresh from the market to avoid storage issues." Spice vendors also face pressure. Mr. Zafar of United Pansar and Masala Store recounts the difficulties during the monsoon. "We store our spices in airtight containers and keep them in cool, dark places to preserve their taste and aroma," he says. This practice helps mitigate spoilage and maintain the spices' integrity. Similarly, store owner Mumtaz emphasizes meticulous storage. "Proper handling and storage of spices are crucial during the monsoon," she notes. Experts suggest transferring spices to airtight jars before the rainy season begins and storing them away from heat

sources and moisture.

The owner of Punjab Ifthikar Traders, a wholesale spice dealer in Rawalpindi, explains: "Protecting spice sacks from humidity is vital for maintaining quality. We use airtight packaging to prevent moisture, add moisture-absorbing packets, and store sacks elevated on pallets to avoid ground moisture and improve air circulation. We also employ climate-controlled environments or dehumidifiers for consistent dryness. Regular inspections help address dampness and pests, while tarps and protective sheeting shield the sacks from rain and high humidity in the open market."

By adhering to these guidelines, cooks and vendors can better preserve the enchanting qualities of Pakistani spices.



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted look Bus stand as commuters facing problems in travelling, as the road of the twin cities were blocked in the wake of PTI Jalsa at Sangjani in the Federal Capital.

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## Security challenges

The sentiment expressed was commendable, but will positive words also shape positive policies? That is the big question.

On Friday, at a ceremony to mark Pakistan's 59<sup>th</sup> Defence Day, Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir sent out an appeal for internal harmony, asking that the citizenry "not allow differences in political views to turn into hatred". Vowing to defeat those who sow chaos, despair and uncertainty among the people, the army chief hoped that strong relations between the armed forces and the public would serve as a foundation for defeating those trying to divide and conquer Pakistan.

"Whether facing hostile foreign elements or fighting the war against terrorism, carrying out relief activities in the face of disasters, or playing a role in projects related to the country's progress, the Pakistani nation has always strengthened the army's resolve," he noted. Given the fraught internal security environment, rekindling this relationship is necessary.

It was evident from the words of the army chief that the institution continues to place great value on its relationship with the people it is tasked with protecting. No security operation can be considered successful in a holistic sense unless it has buy-in and support from the people, and at a time when the country is dealing with a sudden resurgence of major security-related challenges amidst a period of social upheaval, securing this buy-in and support has become both urgent and necessary.

In this regard, it was quite encouraging to note that the federal government had simultaneously launched a campaign to engage the leaders of various religious communities in helping strengthen counterterrorism operations and combat extremism and intolerance. The approach, it is hoped, will counter the menace of violent extremism by addressing the ideological aspects of the problem while the armed forces' efforts take care of the rest via kinetic operations.

However, engaging religious leaders and launching fresh operations may not be enough. It has been clear for a while that local populations in areas currently most affected by terrorism and militancy still do not want grand operations, mainly because similar exercises in the past created externalities that inflicted very high costs on the affected populations.

Furthermore, some segments, especially some of the more vocal social movements in Balochistan that have been agitating for constitutional rights, fear that they may be bundled up with militants and made to suffer the same treatment decided for the latter simply because of their outspoken activism. There is an urgent need to address these fears and assure all those who eschew violence and militancy that their interests will be protected, and they will not be targeted under the state's counterinsurgency plans. If the state needs its people behind it, it should remain mindful and sensitive to their concerns.

### Muhammad Amir Rana

It is no longer surprising that parliament does not engage in meaningful debates on critical national challenges. It has become a platform for voicing concerns and hastily concluded discussions, as with the Balochistan crisis. This crisis, which led to the resignation of Sardar Akhtar Mengal, the head of his faction of the Balochistan National Party, and prompted the opposition to hold a multiparty meeting outside parliament, is a stark reminder of how urgent the need is for immediate and effective parliamentary discourse.

Civilian institutions have increasingly become mere post boxes, content with issuing simple statements on major crises to fulfil their moral obligations. Following the recent wave of violence in Balochistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired an apex committee meeting in Quetta, seemingly with the same intent of fulfilling a moral duty. The exact proceedings of the meeting remain unclear, as media reports mention only that "important decisions"

were made without providing any details on what those decisions were.

A few official media outlets added brief details in their reporting of the high-level meeting, mentioning plans to enhance the capacity of the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), police, levies, and related departments. The reports raised concerns regarding why a critical task like eradicating insurgency was being assigned to a police-led CTD, which operates under a limited mandate and lacks public trust due to allegations of extrajudicial actions. There were also concerns about how the CTD will act and respond. However, it is now understood that the CTD will not operate in isolation and work closely with other law-enforcement agencies (LEAs).

The ruling party either underestimates the crisis in Balochistan, or it does not have the courage to make decisions of national importance on its own. During his maiden visit to Balochistan after taking oath as prime minister in April 2022, PM Shehbaz had made a statement about raising the issue of missing persons "with powerful quarters". One

wonders what became of it. Likewise, the office of the president is a symbol of federal unity. Yet it has kept mum on the issue, even though the PPP had initiated a unique reconciliation initiative in Balochistan during its government from 2008 to 2013, called the 'Aghaz-i-Haqooq-i-Balochistan package'. Unfortunately, the bureaucracy, establishment and government had together made sure that the initiative flopped. The PPP is ruling Balochistan again, but it remains silent as it watches the situation unfold.

It has been a general impression that civilian governments and mainstream political parties intentionally do not interfere in security-related affairs to avoid the establishment's anger. They endorse whatever the establishment wants and just add a little note to it to save face in public. One understands that most mainstream political parties derive their strength from the powers that be rather than from the masses, but that does not mean that they must completely outsource all matters of national interest to the security establishment. Doing so does not absolve them of their re-

sponsibilities, and they cannot claim they were not involved in decision-making or were forced into compliance. History will judge them not only for their actions, but also for their silence.

Political parties can facilitate the process of inclusion by initiating a dialogue, even if certain powerful forces try to subvert the process and remain unyielding in their approaches and practices, even if those practices do not produce results. The establishment's limitations cannot serve as an excuse for political parties. If a political party fails to initiate an inclusion process and focuses solely on protecting its narrow interests, modern political science refers to it as a 'mafia'. Such groups do not qualify as legitimate political actors.

The vacuum left by political parties is eventually filled by highly motivated groups that draw their strength from ideology, identity, sociopolitical grievances and economic deprivation. This is precisely what is happening in strategically important parts of the country, where rights-based movements have grown stronger and

now claim to represent the people's will. The establishment and traditional parties are equally apprehensive about these movements, as they challenge the status quo. They both attempt to paint such movements as a threat to national security and are unwilling to engage with them.

There is no greater weakness than losing the ability to reason with one's own people. In the absence of an inclusive process, the people have learned to use social media as an effective tool to communicate with the authorities. However, state institutions seem more apprehensive about the power of social media than about listening to the people's voice.

The newfound ability to mobilise people without the support of political parties is a significant concern for the rulers, but it also signifies a shift in power dynamics.

Balochistan needs a dialogue with the power elites — whoever is part of that elite — and with the intelligentsia, civil society, media, and the people of Punjab. However, our state intuitions,

including the ruling political parties and parliament, are reluctant to take this initiative. If the opposition parties plan to organise a multiparty conference on Balochistan, the move should be welcomed and the ruling parties must appreciate it. One can anticipate the conference's outcome — the opposition parties will not cross a limit and will avoid confrontation with the establishment. However, their involvement will significantly enrich the discourse on Balochistan. Think-tanks and civil society can take up the dialogue thereafter, and the independent media can also add to the discussion.

Where state institutions, political parties and parliament fail to initiate dialogue, rights movements can step in to build consensus around their demands by organising national jirgas and conventions. Although the power elites may not embrace such gatherings, they will gradually become embedded in the community's collective memory, perpetually challenging the established norms of 'national interest'.

## A salve for Baloch wounds

### Abbas Nasir

Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal's resignation from the National Assembly may have been in the making for some time, given the lack of empathy of the governing party towards his province, but it finally came when he was blocked for two full days from airing his views on the floor of the house in the wake of last month's violence in Balochistan that claimed over 50 lives.

What else could you expect from the PML-N, one of whose members was chairing the session in the absence of the speaker, who was either busy elsewhere or escaping the embarrassment of the unsavoury task, possibly mandated by the party. These tactics culminated in someone pointing out the lack of quorum as the BNP-M leader rose to speak.

The Baloch leader was bound to raise issues about the security forces, the very entity responsible for ensuring enough PML-N members got into parliament to enable the party to form a government in

Islamabad and in Lahore. This looked like one of the many, many return favours.

But was it really a favour? I am reminded of the Urdu proverb naadan dost se daana dushman achha (a wise enemy is better than a foolish friend). I am sure you heard/watched the DG ISPR's news conference on Thursday.

While he addressed the August 26 upsurge in attacks by Baloch separatists, he also said: "We know that there is a sense of deprivation and perception of state oppression among the people of Balochistan." He said this perception was exploited by state enemies on foreign instigation and whenever the state took action, this perception was reinforced.

Against this backdrop, PML-N's denial of the floor to one of the few legitimately-elected representatives of the Baloch people could, and certainly did, reinforce the impression that Baloch voices would not be heard whether in parliament or elsewhere.

Akhtar Jan Mengal himself told this column

that when Mahrang Baloch came leading a peaceful march to Islamabad to agitate for Baloch rights, the state treated her like an enemy and used force to disperse the Baloch marchers.

"Peaceful Baloch women marchers were treated violently in the capital where they came with a belief in the federation and the Constitution, seeking a just solution to their problems, to find out about our missing and to find a salve for their wounds. And you sprayed them with water cannons, pulled the chadors from their heads and took them to police stations," he said, adding that if anyone had realised how much support the marchers had received on their journey through the province, they would have understood how counter-productive this mindless action was.

He said he tried for years to get Balochistan treated like any other province but was now admitting his failure. He felt let down by political parties, by the judiciary, by governments and by

the military establishment. The whole system and each of its elements has failed to deliver.

"This should have been addressed much earlier... for some reason I held on to a sliver of hope in this system. Balochistan is suffering and they don't seem to care. The only time they pay attention is when they need votes to pass a bill or a no-confidence motion. It is disheartening but the ball is no longer in our court — the young generation has taken the lead and will decide the future of Balochistan."

"The state will never understand Balochistan's plight, its pain... it's about exploiting its resources. I would like to believe it's not too late but sadly it is very late now. The horse has bolted, and the barn door is shut."

I am certain you have heard Akhtar Jan Mengal's thoughts on TV and in social media interviews, which he has given after submitting his resignation. I have reproduced some of his words here merely to underline the impassioned plea

continued use of the "iron hand" must also do a cost-benefit analysis of the policy in Balochistan where it has so far delivered blood and bodies on all sides. Surely, another approach need also be explored. It is our patriotic duty to do this.

A keen Balochistan observer pointed out the funeral prayers of Mahal Baloch, one of the two Aug 26 suicide bombers who used a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) to breach a security forces base, were attended by a large number of men and women who seemed unafraid to gather publicly in their hundreds.

That is the defiance the state can do without as it can potentially snowball. Public acceptance of militancy can only result in a greater spiral is what one analyst feared. Let's address legitimate Baloch grievances and move out of this quagmire or be content with more of the same. With pain guaranteed on both sides. We constantly refer to hostile foreign powers. Let's take this one weapon out of their hands.

## AI friendship

### Muna Khan

You don't forget your first love. Psychologists say it is because it is a life-changing experience and one that can impact your brain, leaving an imprint on its sensory parts. By the same token, you also don't forget your first break-up. These experiences are the first intense emotions we go through.

Imagine feeling this for a virtual companion. Before you wave me off as stark raving mad, I assure you technology has been creating solutions to finding the right companion for you in the form of matchmaking apps and now AI chatbots for companionship and intimacy.

I heard about one such app, which was created in 2017 in the US called Replika. As I am an avid podcast consumer, I heard about it on Black Box, a series by The Guardian on how AI is impacting lives. Replika sells itself as a "virtual friend" that is able to improve the emotional well-being of the user. You log on, create the avatar of the friend you want — name, body, personality and backstory — and presto, your friend is ready to engage with you through text, voice, augmented reality and virtual reality.

"What does it mean to have a friend inside your computer?" wrote Casey Newton in The Verge in 2015, before large language models became what they are today. Nearly a decade on, virtual beings are helping answer that question.

In an interview to The Verge earlier this year, Replika's founder Eugenia Kudyva said the app was not trying to replace real-life relationships but "create an entirely new relationship category with the AI

companion, a virtual being that will be there for you whenever you need it, for potentially whatever purposes you might need it for."

Millions of users signed up when it was launched and were using it for coaching, friendship, mental health and romance. I learned a lot about Replika from users on Reddit. Their conversations had one common thread — they felt seen and heard by their companion. I read so many comments about how their Rep "gets me more than my best friend, mum, dad, etc." That is, after all, what companionship is about: knowing the other person, listening to them and being listened to. Users felt the relationship was real and were willing to pay \$70 as annual subscription fee. (I know I will get a lot of flak for saying this but there is always some form of transaction in a relationship so let us avoid judgment here.)

Replika's paid services include more features, one of which was romantic role play. However, in February, a ruling by Italy's privacy regulator (a body that protects private data and online well-being) banned Replika from using Italian people's data and stated that it posed risks to minors and "emotionally fragile people."

It said the app did not have an age verification process or filters to prevent minors from accessing adult material. But I think the real concern was about the risks it posed to the emotionally frail who could get hurt by technology.

After the ruling, many features were removed and users around the world experienced a deep sense of loss when their Rep "changed" overnight. I read com-

ments about users struggling with the break-up and about how surprised they were by the feelings they had for virtual beings.

It is easy to mock people who use apps like Replika. But at the heart of it, this is a story about loneliness, a growing epidemic that technology is attempting to solve, and profit from. If social media has profited from keeping us glued to their platforms, often at the expense of personal relationships, why blame other platforms from trying to cash in and also address a need?

I am curious to see how machine learning impacts the future of our relationships. Can AI succeed in replicating human affection? Assuming you are in a relationship with a virtual being that always agrees with you, how will you deal with conflict and hurt, emotions that make us human?

I am still undecided about trying it for the experience, but I know a group of people who could benefit tremendously from it — the elderly. In the last few months, I have heard stories about elderly people living on their own; their partners gone, their children abroad.

While they are well looked after by caregivers, they are still on their own. Social dynamics have changed and extended family does not always have time to check in on lonely relatives.

I have also heard sad stories about folks craving company. I think they could benefit from a virtual friend and it may even be good for their health. Connections are key to longevity and maybe we can open our minds to the shapes and forms they come in. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Stalled dialogue

### Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

At a book launch in New Delhi on August 30, the Indian external affairs minister remarked that "the era of uninterrupted dialogue with Pakistan is over". Dialogue is the essence of inter-state conduct, particularly between neighbours. To shun dialogue is to shut the doors on diplomacy and open doors for conflict. Since 2016, India has cut off all links with Pakistan and conditioned dialogue with it to an end to the alleged cross-border terrorism from Pakistan. The irony is that it is Pakistan that is suffering from terrorism, including by Indian state operatives who have assassinated 20 Pakistani citizens in 2023 alone. In March 2016, Kulbhushan Jadhav, an Indian spy and a serving Indian Navy officer, was caught re-handed in Balochistan planning acts of terrorism and sabotage under the fake identity of Hussain Mubarak Patel.

Indian leaders often talk about Lashkar-i-Taiba and Jaish-i-Mohammad without taking into account the fact that both organisations and their leaders are proscribed in Pakistan under Schedule I of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 (ATA), and the bulk of their leadership is behind bars. India also tries to give references to these organisations in its joint statements with other countries. Yet, no country now raises this matter with Pakistan because they are well aware of the concrete actions Pakistan has taken to fight terrorism and to choke terrorist financing in pursuance of the ATA and the recommendations of FATF and UN Security Council 1373 committee's monitoring team.

In another remark, S.

Jaishankar stated that India was not passive in relations with Pakistan and "whether events take a positive or a negative direction, either way, we [India] will react to it". India has so far reacted negatively to every recent positive gesture from Pakistan. For instance, the foreign minister of Pakistan has twice raised the possibility of opening trade with India, but the latter did not give any response, positive or negative. Pakistan has also invited India to attend the meeting of heads of governments of SCO that Pakistan is hosting next month. It is not clear if India will attend at the level of prime minister or even external affairs minister.

On Jammu and Kashmir, Jaishankar remarked that "... Article 370 is done". The Kashmir dispute has four parties: India, Pakistan, Kashmiris, and the international community. How can India unilaterally take a decision ignoring the other parties to this UN-recognised dispute, particularly the Kashmiris? When Kashmiris resist Indian occupation, India terms their struggle as Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. For over 70 years, Kashmiris have sent a consistent message to India that they want to exercise their right to self-determination. How long must they speak out before India realises that Kashmiris do not wish to remain under Indian occupation and want to decide their political destiny themselves? Jaishankar said that "actions have consequences". He would well appreciate that India's resort to excessive force against Kashmiris also has had consequences in terms of regional peace and stability.

At this point in time, India is able to get away with its dominating

posture towards its neighbours. If only Indian leaders could see how all nations in South Asia are now deeply frustrated with the interventionist stance that India has adopted in its dealings with neighbours. It appears that the Indo-US strategic partnership, which is aimed at containing the rise of China, has emboldened the Indian leadership to behave as a regional hegemon. When Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, the then Pakistan foreign minister, visited India to participate in the SCO meeting in Goa last May, the Indian foreign minister chose to set aside all diplomatic norms and called him a "justifier [and] spokesperson of a terrorism industry". Such arrogance has become the principal impediment to India's ambitions to become a global and regional power and a net security provider in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

The people and leadership of Pakistan have done well by offering peace and dialogue to India even in the face of India's persistent refusal to engage in talks. Indian leaders are well advised to remember that times change and what they decide today will affect future generations and the course of history. Indeed, actions have consequences. And the consequence of the no-dialogue policy could be a fratricidal conflict in South Asia, which will hurt all sides.

If that is the legacy the Modi regime wishes to leave behind, so be it. A wiser course, however, would be to resume bilateral dialogue, revive Saarc, and address issues like all nations do, and thus engage a positive legacy of leading a secure, conflict-free, and economically integrated South Asia. -- Courtesy Dawn



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan addressing Milad Mustafa gathering organized in connection with Milad-ul-Nabi (SAW) at the Governor House.

## Finality of Prophet-hood is a part of our faith: Governor

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said all the staff of the Governor's House has worked hard to organize this festival. Governor Punjab said that today is also the golden jubilee of Y o u m - e - K h a t m - e - N u b u w a t . He said that the nation was grateful to former Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, as he was the one who signed the law of finality of Prophethood, adding that when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto signed that he said that he was signing his death certificate and that signatory became the cause of his death. Governor Punjab said that the end of Prophet hood is a part of our faith. He said that all Muslims consider love of Prophet Muhammad (peace and

## 3,000 centers for non-formal education will be established in Sindh: Education Minister

KARACHI (NNI): Representatives from global and local institutions working for the advancement of education, social figures, scholars, and others emphasized that efforts to increase education and literacy in Sindh should prioritize providing basic education in children's mother tongue. Furthermore, steps to promote multilingual education should be strengthened so that future generations can enhance communication and learn from one another. These thoughts were expressed by the speakers during an event held at Karachi's Marriott Hotel in connection with World Literacy Day.

Sindh's Minister for Education and Mineral Development, Syed Sardar Ali Shah, participated as the chief guest. The event, organized by the Directorate of Literacy and Non-Formal Education, was titled "Promoting Multilingual Education: Literacy for Mutual Understanding and Peace." In addition to representatives from global organizations working in education, the event was attended by Sindh School Education Secretary Zahid Ali Abbasi, social activist Shehzad Roy, Javed Jabbar, JICA Chief Advisor Javed Gill, MD of Sindh Education Foundation Qazi Kabir, Director of Non-Formal Education Abdul Jabbar Mari, head of the

## Innovative steps being taken for education: CM

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said on Sunday that her government will take all possible measures to enrol all out of school children in the province. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif in her message on International Literacy Day said, "We pledge to impart education to everyone on the eve of International Literacy Day. The religion of Islam lays emphasis on acquiring knowledge and the Holy Quran also preaches to attain knowledge. Resources needed for the basic education of ignored segments of society are being provided." The Chief Minister added, "Literacy improves quality of life and provides immense opportunities of progress. We cannot think of a bright future without attaining a 100 percent literacy rate. The Punjab government is taking historical and innovative steps for the provision of ease in access to education." The CM added, "4 lakh students of three districts are being provided packets of milk under the 'Chief Minister School Nutrition Program'. The Punjab government is providing laptops to the students for providing them assistance in their education and research." The Chief Minister said, "We will provide scholarships to the students of Punjab in the national and international universities. The Punjab government will provide buses to the students especially female students so as to provide comfort in their transportation in every tehsil. Children are being enrolled under the enrolment campaign."



LAHORE: Literacy Department Punjab and TEVTA signing MoU regarding Middle Tech on the eve of World Literacy Day.

## September 8 marked as commitment to Maritime Defence: Governor Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Mohammad Kamran Khan Tessori has emphasized that September 8 signifies an unwavering commitment to maritime defence. Addressing a ceremony on Navy Day, he said that the Pakistan Navy defeated enemies Navy many times. Tessori said that the entire nation paid tribute to the courage and dedication of the Pakistan Navy. He said that the Pakistan Navy

## CM lauds Navy's role on Navy Day

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Sunday said that Pakistan Navy was one of the strongest naval forces in the world. In his message on Navy Day, he appreciated the patriotic spirit of Pakistan Navy. The Sindh Chief Minister said that Pakistan Navy remained vigilant to monitor maritime boundaries. Murad said that our forces had made great sacrifices for the country.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister of Information and Broadcasting Uzma Bukhari answering the questions of journalists in the press conference in the provincial capital.

## GM Wapda Norths calls on Governor KP

PESHAWAR (APP): General Manager WAPDA North, Shafiq Khan Bettani called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi here at Governor House. GM Bettani briefed Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, on the progress and strategic planning for the Chashma Lift Canal project. Bettani informed the Governor that a special directorate has been established in the Chashma Right Bank Canal Colony Dera Ismail Khan to oversee the project. Governor Kundi expressed his pleasure at the development and emphasized the project's significance not only for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but for Pakistan's overall development and prosperity. He highlighted that the completion of the Chashma Lift Canal will irrigate thousands of acres of land, bring a green revolution to the region, and contribute significantly to alleviating the country's food shortages. The Governor said that the project will help reduce unemployment across the province and initiate a new era of related developmental activities. He extended his gratitude to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the federal government for allocating 19 billion rupees to the project in the budget. He also acknowledged the contributions of Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who played a crucial role in facilitating the project. Kundi assured that construction work on the Chashma Lift Canal would begin within the year. The meeting also covered other developmental projects related to WAPDA in the province.

## Two killed in shooting attack on SHO house

ISLAMABAD (APP): Two brothers were killed on Sunday in a shooting attack on Station House Officer (SHO) house in Lakki Marwat. According to a private news channel and police, SHO Shafiqullah was safe as he was not present at home. As soon as the incident was reported, the police reached the accident site and started investigation. The accused managed to escape from the spot after the incident.

## Rallies won't bring PTI's founder out of jail: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said holding rallies will not bring the PTI founder out of jail. Talking to the media at DGPR on Sunday, she said, "We are not afraid of rallies but of actions of the PTI members." She said it was not a jalsa in Islamabad but a concert, held with the resources of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government. People were brought to the jalsa in Rescue-1122 vehicles. She said that it was unfortunate for KP to have had rulers like the PTI founder Imran Khan. The people of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa were deceived in the name of 'Naya Pakistan', she added. They were brought from KP to attend the rally, and God knows how much money was paid to participants. She said that everyone who was involved in the events of May 9, or those who instructed for it would have to answer for it. May 9 is an event similar to the fall of Dhaka, and it could never be forgotten, she said and added that during the PTI government, 40 cases were tried in military courts. If the GHQ attack case could be tried in military courts, why Imran Khan case could not be tried in military court for ordering for May-9 attack? The Punjab information minister said that Imran Khan had opposed the NAB amendments, but now his application had been filed for relief under the same law. She said that the situation in Dera Ghazi Khan was far from ideal. Usman Buzdar, who belongs to DG Khan, could not deliver.



KARACHI: Members of Pak Muslim Alliance (PMA-Dewan) are holding protest demonstration over the derogatory statement against Bengalis and Biharis in the Sindh Assembly, at Karachi press club.

## Sec Education KP issues directives to improve school performance

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), on Sunday called for immediate improvements in the performance of school principals and the overall school environment to ensure quality education for students. During his visit to Abbottabad, he announced a 90-day task for District Education Officers (Male and Female) to implement these changes. The secretary held a joint session with both education officers, where detailed reports on district-level operations were presented. He emphasized the need for effective leadership within schools and requested actionable suggestions to enhance the performance of principals and organize school environments more efficiently. The education officers were given a 90-day deadline to fulfil these tasks. Furthermore, the secretary directed the formation of Parent-Teacher Management Committees (PTM) within 15 days to strengthen community involvement in school management. Highlighting the importance of extracurricular activities, he stressed the need to revive literary societies in schools and promote sports to foster leadership skills.

## Food secretary visits PFA office in Murree

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Secretary Ehsan Bhutta on Sunday visited Punjab Food Authority (PFA) office in Murree and expressed his resolve for ensuring the provision of quality edible items. According to official sources here, the secretary said that steps related to awareness regarding food safety laws and training of food business operators must be expedited. He said that a number of complaints related to food items in Murree was a good sign. Ehsan Bhutta said that operational working of food safety teams resulted in increased business registration.

## No pardon for crime of planning, attacking state: Marriyum

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said that there will be no pardon for the crime of planning and attacking the state. In a statement, she emphasized that no matter how much one protests, complains, punishment is inevitable. "The first request for relief under the new NAB law was made by the convict of the May 9 incident. He claims the law was created to protect thieves, yet his own request for relief in the form of NRO belongs to the May 9 convict under the NAB law," she added. She further stated, "He demands an NRO while holding rallies. The rally is nothing but a plea for an NRO to escape punishment for committing a crime with regard to planning against the state on May 9." Marriyum Aurangzeb questioned why the individual who refers to the NAB law as the "thieves' law" was the first to seek relief under it.

## Abducted boy recovered, female kidnapper arrested

MULTAN (APP): Police have recovered a boy and arrested a female kidnapper in a special operation here on Sunday. The incident came to light on September 6, when Waqas Abbasi reported to Cantt police that his two-year-old son Abdullah, who was playing outside the house in the morning, had gone missing. The police registered a case and began their search for the child.

## Minister inaugurates six dialysis machines

SIALKOT (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government Mian Zeeshan Rafiq, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain and Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Naveed Ashraf inaugurated six dialysis machines at Civil Hospital Daska. The hospital will now have dialysis units with 12 machines. The minister said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is determined to bring best health facilities to the people of the province at their doorsteps. The successful launch of projects like Mobile Hospital and Clinic on Wheel are part of her vision, he added. He said that according to the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the mega project of revamping all primary and rural health centers of Punjab is in progress. They will not only be revamped, but medical facilities would be provided round the clock, besides medicines and medical tests. A request will be made to the Punjab government to set up a trauma center in the hospital.

## Farah Deeba says: Govt working for well-being of artists

LAHORE (APP): Culture and National Heritage (C&NH) Coordinator Farah Deeba said here Sunday that government is artist-friendly and working for the well-being of artists. She was talking to media during her visit to the residence of renowned Film Director Altaf Hussain to inquire about his health. Deeba also conveyed a message from the Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, to Altaf Hussain, stating that the minister

## Larkana Police arrest 7 criminals involved in murder case

LARKANA (APP): Larkana police are conducting operations against criminals and arrested 7 culprits involved in cases of serious nature like murder, robberies, theft and drug dealing on Sunday. In this regard, Dari police arrested the drug dealer Sajjad alias Saju Abro with 3kg 100 grams of hashish, the undercover suspect including Khan Jakarani, Nimat Sarohi with cannabis, Ali Goharabad police also arrested drug dealer accused Rafiq Abro along with 3 kg of 100 grams of hashish.



LAHORE: Residents of Eden Value Homes are holding protest demonstration against high handedness of Eden administration, in Lahore.

## Minister reviews progress on social welfare projects

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal, Sohail Shaukat Butt visited Muzaffargarh to review progress on social welfare projects and the initiative of "Himmat Card" on Sunday. He was accompanied by MPA and Parliamentary Secretary for Higher Education, Sardar Ajmal Khan Chaudhary. Speaking on the occasion, Sohail Shaukat Butt said that the purpose of the visit was to inspect various social welfare projects in the district and to review the ongoing distribution of Himmat Cards. The provincial minister emphasized that the trip was in line with the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He also highlighted the significance of the Himmat Card initiative, which has already benefited over 40,000 individuals across the province.

## Uzbekistan significant trading partner of Pakistan in Central Asia: Jam Kamal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Saturday said that Uzbekistan is a significant trading partner of Pakistan in Central Asia, which signed the first transit trade agreement with Pakistan.

The 33rd Independence Day of the Republic of Uzbekistan was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Islamabad, with Jam Kamal Khan, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce, gracing the event as the Chief Guest.

The ceremony, attended by dignitaries, diplomats, and military officials, marked a new chapter in the flourishing relationship between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

In his address, Minister Jam Kamal Khan emphasized the unique and enduring ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, rooted in shared history and culture.

Highlighting the im-

portance of trade, he stated, "Pakistan views Uzbekistan as a significant trading partner in Central Asia. Over the past three years, bilateral trade has grown substantially, reflecting the strong bond between our two nations."

Jam mentioned the successful "Made in Pakistan" exhibition held in Tashkent in June 2024, which featured 85 Pakistani companies and attracted hundreds of Uzbek businessmen.

Minister Jam Kamal encouraged both nations' business communities to seize opportunities through the business forum held on the occasion, stressing that economic and trade relations should reach new heights.

Jam Kamal Khan further remarked on Uzbekistan's pivotal role as the first Central Asian nation to sign a Transit Trade Agreement and Preferential Trade Agreement with Pa-

kistan. Uzbek traders are increasingly using Pakistani ports for their global imports, Jam added.

The Uzbek Ambassador to Pakistan, Oybek Usmanov, praised Pakistan's support in enhancing connectivity, particularly in the fields of defense, trade, and regional infrastructure.

A m b a s s a d o r Usmanov highlighted that the bilateral trade had reached half a billion dollars, with plans to reach \$1 billion soon, thanks to joint efforts in transit and logistics agreements.

He also pointed out the trilateral Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway project as a transformative initiative for regional connectivity.

In closing, both leaders expressed optimism for the future, with Minister Jam Kamal reiterating his commitment to deepening the economic ties between the two nations.



LAHORE: Women buying second-hand school uniforms from Anar Kali Bazaar in the provincial capital.

## Value-Added Textile Industry & export on brink of collapse owing to liquidity crunch

KARACHI (INP): The Value-Added Textile Industry of Pakistan is facing most challenging and difficult situation owing to hardships emerged due to financial mismanagement and anti-export policies of the Government whereby the genuine Sales Tax Refunds of exporters have been unwarrantedly and excessively delayed in contrary to the laws and rules to release in 72 hours of approval of ERPOS.

The Government had previously hit a fatal blow on the export by changing the Fixed Tax Regime to Normal Tax Regime increasing financial grievances of export-industries. The anti-export moves in violation of the Apparel & Textile Policy viz-viz discontinuation of Regionally Competitive Energy Tariffs, suspending the Financial Matrix covering the dissemination of Duty Drawback on Local Taxes and Levies (DLTL) has severely hampered the viability and competitiveness of the Value-Added Textile Export Industries.

The energy cost has become almost double multiplying the effect of taxes by increasing sales tax amount in the utility bills which has impacted an increase in Sales Tax amount and Refunds claims stuck-up with the Govt. Similarly, discontinuation of EFS on local purchases has been expelled the Exporters to pay additional sales tax to manufacture goods meant for export piling up the refunds burden further.

The sky-rocketing cost of energy and industrial inputs has pushed the export-industries towards the verge of disaster, ultimately, affecting the national foreign exchange earnings.

The industry is, presently, functioning under capacity to the tune of 60% and the adverse impact of liquidity crunch has also jeopardized the future of employment/workforce in the export-industries.

The unwanted delays, amid uncalculated utilization of the funds generated through the Sales Tax contributed by the export in-

dustries in other areas, has excessively delayed refunds to exporters. As appeared in the press today, the FBR has halted Sales Tax Refunds to meet the September targets.

It is also revealed that the Government is paying its liabilities through the refundable tax monies of exporters which appears to be unfair and unethical, also on the cost and survival of the export-industries. The Government must fulfil its commitment and promises to release all pending genuineness sales tax refunds and other refund claims of the Textile Exporters in one go, on most immediate basis.

This joint statement was given by Iftikhar A. Sheikh, President, Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI); the Value-Added Textile Associations: Muhammad Jawed Bilwani, Chief Coordinator, Value-Added Textile Forum & Chairman, Pakistan Apparel Forum; Abdul Jabbar Gajani, Zonal Chairman, Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMA).



SUKKUR: A fisherman selling fresh fish on Sukkur Barrage.

## Traders hail efforts of SCCI for resolving U-turn issue in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Traders from Arbab Road Peshawar Saddar praised the efforts and role of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) in opening a U-turn near Takhtto Jamat Saddar Road Peshawar, which remained closed for the last 11 months. According to information, a delegation of traders led by Arbab Road Traders Association Peshawar Cantt vice president Sumeer Chaudhry held a meeting with SCCI president Fuad Ishaq in the chamber house, during which the delegation lauded his efforts in opening of U-turn to re-connect Arbab Road with main Saddar route.

Members of the delegation include general secretary of the association

Muhammad Aftab Ahmad Khan, Faisal Nouman, Naveed Abrar, Fazal Waheed, Khair Gul, Nouman Durrani, Saddam Hussain, Khushal Khan and other members.

On the occasion, the SCCI senior vice president Sanaullah Khan and executive member Monwar Khurshid also present.

Office bearers of the association highly eulogized the efforts of the president of the SCCI to open the U-turn near Takhtto Jamaat Peshawar Saddar, which remained closed for the last 11 months. The SCCI raised this issue effectively with relevant authorities and resolved promptly, the participants said.

PSQCA launches crackdown on substandard steel products, unlicensed units

LAHORE: The Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) launched a series of raids across Punjab, targeting illegal and unlicensed manufacturing units in a decisive move to curb the production and sale of substandard steel products.

According to the PSQCA sources, acting on directives from the Prime Minister's office, Secretary of Science and Technology Sajid Baloch, and Director General PSQCA Toufeeq Abbasi ordered the crackdown. Engr. Muhammad Rizwan, Director of the Standards Development Centre, spearheaded the action, which was carried out under the supervision of Deputy Director Asghar Ali, Assistant Director Nouman Khaliq, and Field Officer Syed Taimur Ahmed. In cooperation with local police, the PSQCA enforcement team conducted multiple raids across various manufacturing sites in Lahore, leading to the seizure of six illegal manufacturing units. Legal action has been initiated against the traders involved.



KARACHI: Activists of Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) are holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products, inflation price hiking and the highly inflated electricity bills, at Karachi press club.

## MoIT launches RoW One-Window Operation to expedite NOC process for telecom operators

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoIT) has introduced the Right of Way (RoW) One-Window Operation, aimed at simplifying and speeding up the process of securing No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for telecom operators.

One significant barrier to improving fiber penetration in Pakistan is the complicated process of obtaining Right of Way (RoW)

No Objection Certificates (NOCs). Telecom operators are required to seek approvals from multiple government agencies, each with its own unique procedures, causing delays and inefficiencies. This disorganized system has hindered the progress of Pakistan's National Fiberization Vision, a plan designed to expand fiber connectivity nationwide.

An official from the Ministry IT said the RoW One-Window Operation

minimizes paperwork, allowing telecom operators to electronically submit their RoW applications for NOCs, eliminating unnecessary delays in approvals.

The process also facilitates online fee payments, enhancing transparency and efficiency. A dedicated online system for complaint and dispute management will ensure quicker resolutions, while Fiberization Mapping will track fiberization progress nationwide.

## PFC organized Seminar on religious tourism

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq said on Sunday that Pakistan holds historical and spiritual significance for millions of people around the globe as important sites of Buddhism, Hindus and Sikhs are situated on its territory.

Addressing a seminar on "Promotion of Religious Tourism" organized by PFC, he added Pakistan has immense potential to develop religious tourism, which could significantly boost its economy and foreign reserves.

He said important sites such as the ancient Buddhist city of Taxila, the Hindu temples of Katas Raj, and the Sikh pilgrimage site of Kartarpur offer unique opportunities to attract tourists seeking spiritual journeys. Harnessing this potential requires improving infrastructure, promoting religious sites internationally, and ensuring security for tourists. Upgrading transportation, accommodations, and amenities near these destinations would make travel more convenient and comfortable for tourists.



PESHAWAR: Vendors sell bananas to earn their livelihood for support their families, at Fruit Market in Peshawar.

## Pakistan's remarkable achievement at IOI 2024, Egypt

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) 2024 took place in Alexandria, Egypt, from September 1 to 8, and for the first time, a team from Pakistan participated in this prestigious global competition. According to the Education Ministry, teams from 96 countries competed, showcasing their talents in computer science and programming.

"We are proud to announce that the Pakistani team comprising four students achieved an impressive result in their debut appearance, securing two bronze medals". The students who brought this honour to Pakistan are Mr Muhammad Umair Ahmad Mirza and Mr Kaleem Raza Syed. Additionally, Mr. Muhammad Saram received an Honorable Mention for his outstanding performance. This remarkable success is a significant achievement for a country participating for the first time in such a high-level international programming competition.

able confrontations between general passengers and those with disabilities." The situation has been compounded by the BRT's financial woes, including substantial losses due to subsidies and delays in the development of commercial plazas, which had further strained the system's resources.

The limited number of buses and shortage of buses have led to frequent overcrowding, with many passengers left standing and struggling to find a seat, exacerbating the difficulties for those who are already vulnerable including girl students.

In the mornings and evenings, when the passenger rush is at its peak, the issue becomes even

## LESCO official suspended

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has suspended an official for negligence in his duty.

According to the company's spokesperson here Sunday, Assistant Lineman Syed Akmal Rasool posted in Kala Khatai Road Sub-Division has been suspended for misconduct and dereliction of duty.

LESCO Chief Engineer Shahid Haider says that the black sheep are tarnishing the company's repute and vowed to continue with strict action against such elements.

ery position, better and effective customer service, automated complaint registered of faulty meters to concerned field office, balanced distribution system and distribution transformers resultant in reduction of transformers and meters burnt complaints

Moshin Raza Gillani said that this is a pilot project in Pakistan and IESCO has privileged to be a first power distribution company of Pakistan to implement this project.

He said that for awareness of the general public regarding the benefits of this technology AMI meters we have started awareness campaign at different forms and international experts are also part of this technology.

He said that being a pilot project our teams are facing some technical and operational issues and also receiving complaints from customers but our teams are handling all field issues and valuable customers complaints very professionally and swiftly.

He also requested the support of valuable customers which will surely lead towards timely completion of the project and its benefits will bring a positive change in the power sector.

## Punjab govt introduces revolutionary interest-free loan facility for cattle farmers

MULTAN (APP): The Punjab government has officially launched an interest-free Livestock Card Scheme with an aim to support cattle farmers across the province. The scheme was designed to provide financial assistance for the purchase of essential livestock feed and manage care, said Deputy Director Livestock Dr Jamshaid Akhtar while commenting on different features of the interest-free loan scheme.

Talking to APP, Dr. Akhtar shared, the scheme was specifically targeted at small and medium scale livestock farmers and had clearly defined eligibility criteria. To qualify, applicants must be residents of Punjab and possess a valid Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC). Additionally, they were required to have an active mobile SIM registered in their name.

Farmers who own between five to ten calves or cattle could apply for the loan, although those with more than ten animals were also eligible. However, financial support would only

be provided for a maximum of ten animals. Dr. Akhtar stated that a clean credit history was essential, which would be verified by the Electronic Credit Information Bureau (eCIB) to ensure applicants were not defaulters. Verification of identity would also be conducted through NADRA also, while the Urban Unit would confirm the presence of applicant and their livestock. Farmers must be registered with the Punjab Livestock Department's 9211 database to participate in the scheme. Dr. Jamshaid maintained that the loan would be provided on a 'first-come, first-served' basis to those who meet all the necessary conditions.

Applications for the scheme would be submitted online through the Punjab Information Technology Board's (PITB) platform.

The loan had a maximum duration of 150 days, during which farmers would have 120 days to utilize the funds, followed by a 30-day repayment period.



LAHORE: A vendor displaying clay-made items at roadside to attract the customers.

## IESCO installs state of art over 110,000 AMI meters

ISLAMABAD (APP): The state of the art project Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) is a revolutionary initiative in power sector by the government and Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has successfully over 110,000 meters so far.

Sharing details, AMI project director Mr. Moshin Raza Gillani said that this project is successfully continue in two operation circles of IESCO i.e. Rawalpindi city and Rawalpindi Cantt. As per latest report more than 110000 old meters have been replaced with AMI meters and it is expected that by 2026 all old meters in Rawalpindi city Rawalpindi Cantt circles Taxila and surroundings will be replaced with AMI meter. Moreover AMI meter are also being installed on industries and high losses feeders. This will anticipate towards uninterrupted power supply and reduction in line losses and power theft. The installation of AMI meter will also lead towards 100% accurate and timely meter reading, effective control on power theft, true estimation of power demand and supply, real time monitoring and control of electricity consumption, better recov-

er position, better and effective customer service, automated complaint registered of faulty meters to concerned field office, balanced distribution system and distribution transformers resultant in reduction of transformers and meters burnt complaints

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QUETTA: A vendor sorting onions at his roadside stall on Nawa Killi Bypass.

## BRT faces Rs.3.2 billion annual losses

PESHAWAR (APP): The ongoing shortage of buses within Peshawar's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system exacerbated the difficulties faced by passengers, particularly those with disabilities and women, as they navigate the city's public transport network that are facing about Rs 3.2 billion losses.

The scrapping of private transport options and long delayed in completion of BRT's commercial malls at Dabgari and Hayatabad has further intensified these massive challenges, leading to a noticeable strain on the BRT system's capacity.

Among those passengers struggling is Khurshid Khan, a 43-year-old government employee who mostly relied on the BRT for his daily commute from

Chamkani to Hayatabad — a journey spanning approximately 27 kilometers. As a person with a disability, Khurshid Khan has encountered significant discomfort and difficulty during his travel due to a lack of adequate seating facilities. The reserved seats for individuals with disabilities are often occupied by other passengers, forcing him to stand for nearly one and a half hours during his commute.

"I experience severe pain in my back and legs while standing for such a long duration," Khan said. "It is disheartening to see the seats designated for people like me being taken by others. The overcrowding on the BRT buses, especially during peak hours, has become a daily struggle, often leading to uncomfort-

able confrontations between general passengers and those with disabilities." The situation has been compounded by the BRT's financial woes, including substantial losses due to subsidies and delays in the development of commercial plazas, which had further strained the system's resources.

The limited number of buses and shortage of buses have led to frequent overcrowding, with many passengers left standing and struggling to find a seat, exacerbating the difficulties for those who are already vulnerable including girl students.

In the mornings and evenings, when the passenger rush is at its peak, the issue becomes even

more pronounced. The limited availability of dedicated seating for persons with disabilities, coupled with the overcrowded conditions, has resulted in a regular exchange of heated words between passengers and individuals with disabilities and students of professional colleges besides government employees immensely.

Sadaf Kamal, Spokeswoman of Trans Peshawar said the occupation of reserved seats of women and special persons by general passengers was a big challenge, adding special bars were erected in BRT buses to address this issue.

She claimed that about 350,000 passengers were travelling daily in BRT and providing

seats to all commuters was difficult. Keeping in view of passengers' load, she said the buses were increased to 244 in main corridor and feeder routes.

To a question about huge financial losses suffered by BRT, Sadaf said that BRT was facing about Rs3.2 billion annual losses mainly due to granting of subsidy to passengers.

She said that an average Rs 23 revenue was being received per passenger against Rs80 expenditure between Chamkani-Hayatabad route, adding Trans Peshawar pays about Rs 700 million as sales tax on services besides upto Rs400 million to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and approximately Rs 400 million electricity charges per year.

# Ukraine says Russia launched 67 drones in overnight attack

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Ukraine's air force said Russia launched a total of 67 long-range Shahed drones in a mass overnight attack, 58 of which it was able to shoot down. The air force said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app that air defence units were scrambled into action in 11 regions across Ukraine.

Drone debris was found next to the parliament building in the capital Kyiv, the legislature said in a separate statement it posted on its official Telegram page along with several photographs. It is rare for a Russian missile or drone to get so far into central Kyiv, as the city is protected by a network of Soviet-era and Western-donated air defence systems.

The hilltop government quarter in the city centre is perhaps the best-defended site in Ukraine, as it also houses the offices of the president, cabinet and the central bank.

The pictures on Telegram showed at least four pieces of debris scattered on the ground near the parliament building. One piece lay at the foot of the steps to the building's main entrance, while another hunk of metal looked riddled with shrapnel.

Reuters correspondents in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, heard a series of explosions shortly after 3am (0000 GMT) on Saturday, some of which resounded loudly around the city centre, waking up its residents.

Since the start of its invasion in February 2022, Moscow has launched thousands of missiles and Shahed drones into Ukraine.

The Iranian-designed drone has been used by Russia since September 2022 as a cheap, more expendable alternative to missiles, which are expensive and harder to manufacture. The propeller-powered Shahed flies at less than 200 km per hour (125 miles per hour) but can be tricky for conventional air defence systems to track because it flies low and emits far less heat than a missile.

Kyiv's air force said the drones were launched from two border regions in Russia as well as from the Russian-occupied peninsula of Crimea.



LONDON: People hold a Palestinian flag during a demonstration in support of Palestinians amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

## UK and US spy chiefs warn of threat to world order

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: CIA Director Bill Burns and UK MI6 chief Richard Moore warned on Saturday that the world order was "under threat in a way we haven't seen since the cold war".

Writing in a Financial Times op-ed, the two spy chiefs said "we have no more trusted or esteemed allies" than each other, adding that the partnership would be vital as they "face an unprecedented array of threats", chiefly from Russia, China and the Middle East.

The United States and UK are among the leading financial and military sup-

## Blinken to travel to UK to discuss Middle East, Ukraine

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken plans to travel to the United Kingdom on Monday, the State Department said, a week after Britain suspended some arms export licenses with Israel over equipment that could be used in the war in Gaza.

In the trip slated to go through Tuesday, Blinken will open the US-UK Strategic Dialogue, "reaffirming our special relationship," Matthew Miller, a State Department spokesperson, said on Saturday. Blinken will also meet with senior government officials to discuss issues including the Indo-Pacific, the AUKUS defense pact between the US, Australia, Britain and the Middle East.

## Bangladesh calls for faster resettlement process for Rohingya

**Monitoring Desk**  
DHAKA: The head of Bangladesh's interim government, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus on Sunday called for a fast-tracked third-country resettlement of Rohingya Muslims living in the south Asian country, as a new wave of refugees flee escalating violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

Around 8,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled across the border to Bangladesh in recent months as fighting intensifies between Myanmar's ruling junta and the Arakan Army, a powerful ethnic militia drawn from the country's Buddhist majority.

The new arrivals add to the more than one million Rohingya refugees already living in overcrowded camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district, most of whom fled a military-led crackdown in Myanmar in 2017. The Rohingya refugees have little hope of returning to their homeland, where they are largely denied citizenship and other basic rights.

## Indian rescuers pull eight dead from collapsed building

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Indian rescuers pulled out eight bodies Sunday from the wreckage of a three-storey building in the city of Lucknow, reports said, with the state minister calling the deaths "heart breaking".

The Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency broadcast images of piles of concrete, and state rescue teams with heavy digging machines searching for bodies.



Richard Moore, the chief of Britain's MI6 agency, and CIA Director Bill Burns are being interviewed as part of the FT Weekend festival in London.

## Monstrous typhoon tears through Philippines and China, kills 22

**Monitoring Desk**  
HANOI: Asia's most powerful storm this year made landfall in northern Vietnam on Saturday, the meteorological agency said, killing at least four people after tearing through China's island of Hainan and the Philippines.

Super Typhoon Yagi hit island districts of north Vietnam around 1pm, generating winds of up to 160 kph near its centre, having lost power from its peak of 234 kph in Hainan a day earlier.

The government said that as of 5pm four people had died and 78 had been injured by the typhoon. Several were missing at sea, according to state media.

Yagi had already claimed the lives of at least two people in Hainan and 16 people in the Philippines, the first country it hit, having formed east of the archipelago earlier in the week. The storm cuts power to 800,000 homes in China's Hainan province.

Vietnam's coastal city of Haiphong, an industrial hub with a population of two million people that hosts factories from foreign multinationals and local carmaker VinFast, was among the hardest-hit by winds with speeds of up to 90 kph.

As the typhoon approached, the city experienced widespread power outages on Saturday, authorities said, as did at least three other northern provinces.

In Haiphong, the strong winds smashed windows and waves were as much as three meters high when they hit the coast, according to a witness.

## Musk says SpaceX to launch first uncrewed Starships to Mars in two years

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: SpaceX will launch its first uncrewed Starships to Mars in two years when the next Earth-Mars transfer window opens, CEO Elon Musk said in a post on X.

"These will be uncrewed to test the reliability of landing intact on Mars," Musk said on Saturday, adding if those landings go well, his space company will launch its first crewed flights to Mars in four years.

"Flight rate will grow exponentially from there, with the goal of building a self-sustaining city in about 20 years," the billionaire said.

## Thousands take to streets against new French PM

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: Thousands of left-wing demonstrators on Saturday took to the streets across France to protest against the nomination of the centre-right Michel Barnier as prime minister and denounce President Emmanuel Macron's "power grab." Police said that around 26,000 people demonstrated in Paris, while the left claimed a much higher turnout.

Smaller rallies took place in other cities across France including Nantes in the west, Nice and Marseille in the south and Strasbourg in the east.

Macron on Thursday appointed Barnier, a 73-year-old former foreign minister who acted as the European Union's Brexit negotiator, as prime minister, seeking to move forward after July snap elections in which his centrist alliance came second.

Barnier said on Friday night that he was open to naming ministers of all political stripes, including "people from the left".



People ride scooters past falling trees after the typhoon hit Haikou, in China's Hainan province.

## Key points of new Thailand government's policy statement

**Monitoring Desk**  
BANGKOK: Thailand's new government published a policy statement on Sunday that Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra will deliver to parliament at a session from Thursday marking the formal start of her administration.

Following are key points of the statement from Paetongtarn, 38, who has said her government will prioritise stimulating Southeast Asia's second-largest economy while continuing with the policies of her predecessor, Srettha Thavisin.

Restructure debt, including people's housing and car loans, and tackling informal debt through measures with government and commercial banks, and asset management companies. Maintain Srettha's sig-

nature plan for digital wallet handouts targeting vulnerable groups to stimulate the economy. The scheme initially calls for 50 million baht (\$300) each through a smartphone application. The statement does not specify the method of implementation or budget.

Protect small and mid-size enterprises from competition from overseas via e-commerce platforms.

Reduce energy and utility costs for the public by the developing a strategic petroleum reserve, negotiating with Cambodia to jointly explore new sources of natural gas in the neighbouring countries' overlapping maritime area and introducing a one-price mass-transit cost in Bangkok's public transport.

## Venezuela opposition leader Gonzalez flies to Spain after arrest warrant

**Monitoring Desk**  
CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition presidential candidate Edmundo Gonzalez left for Spain overnight and was seeking asylum, officials said on Sunday, amid a mounting political and diplomatic crisis over the disputed results of July's election.

A plane carrying Gonzalez - who has challenged President Nicolas Maduro's declaration of victory - had stopped off in Portugal's Azores islands and was expected in Spain in the coming hours, Spanish media reported.

The dramatic exit of the 75-year-old - seen by the U.S., the EU and other powers in the region as the winner of the vote - came a week after Venezuelan authorities issued an arrest warrant for him, accusing him of conspiracy and other crimes. "Today is a sad day for democracy in Venezuela," European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement.

## Republican Cheney to vote for Kamala

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Republican former vice president Dick Cheney said on Friday he will vote for Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris over Republican former President Donald Trump in the Nov 5 US elections, following a similar statement made by his daughter Liz Cheney this week. Trump and Harris are locked in a tight race for the Nov 5 vote and face off in a debate next week.

Some Republicans upset with Trump's control over their party and his actions have recently thrown support behind Harris, including several former staffers of former Presidents George H. W. Bush.

## US believes Iran has transferred short-range ballistic missiles to Russia, AP sources say

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The United States has informed allies that it believes Iran has transferred short-range ballistic missiles to Russia for its war in Ukraine, according to two people familiar with the matter. They did not offer any details about how many weapons have been delivered or when the transfers may have occurred, but they confirmed the US intelligence finding. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a matter that has not been publicly disclosed.

The White House declined to confirm the weapons transfer but reiterated its concern that Iran is deepening its support of Russia. The White House has been warning Iran for months not to transfer ballistic missiles to Russia.

"Any transfer of Iranian ballistic missiles to Russia would represent a dramatic escalation in Iran's support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and lead to the killing of more Ukrainian civilians," National Security Council spokesman Sean Savett said in a statement. "This partnership threatens European security and illustrates how Iran's destabilizing influence reaches beyond the Middle East and around the world."

The US finding comes as the Kremlin tries to repel Ukraine's surprise offensive that has led to the seizure of about 500 square miles (1,300 kilometers).

## Bolivia declares national emergency due to forest fires

**Monitoring Desk**  
LA PAZ: Bolivia declared a national emergency due to raging forest fires the country's defense ministry announced on Saturday. In a press conference, defense minister Edmundo Novillo said the national emergency would allow the country to quickly coordinate international support.

"This will allow us to have more agile and effective support from friendly countries and from international cooperation," Novillo said. Bolivia has seen the largest number of wildfires since 2010 with at least 3 million hectares (7.5 million acres) burned this year according to Inpe.

## Germany's Scholz calls for renewed push for peace in Ukraine

**Monitoring Desk**  
FRANKFURT: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called for a renewed effort to bring peace to Ukraine, adding that he and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had both agreed in recent talks on the need for a new peace conference that would include Russia.

"I believe that now is the time to discuss how to arrive at peace from this state of war, indeed at a faster pace," Scholz told broadcaster ZDF in a televised interview.

Scholz is under pressure at home after all three parties in his centre-left coalition suffered painful losses in two regional state elections one week ago, while groups seeking better relations with Moscow won more votes.

Nationalist party Alternative for Germany (AfD) and new anti-establishment party BSW, who oppose military backing for Ukraine's fight against the Russian invasion, both booked record gains.

Zelenskyy said in July he aimed to have a plan ready in November to enable Kyiv to hold a second international summit on peace in Ukraine, and that representatives of Russia should attend.

Ukraine in June hosted delegations from 92 countries at a first summit in Switzerland to advance its blueprint for peace.

## North Korean leader emphasises importance of strengthening naval power

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un underscored the importance of strengthening naval power as he toured a naval base construction site, state media KCNA reported on Sunday.

"Now that we are soon to possess large surface warships and submarines which cannot be anchored by the existing facilities for mooring warships, the construction of a naval base for running the latest large warships has become a pressing task," Kim was quoted saying.

During the tour, Kim stressed the need to build a naval port capable of operating weapons systems of the warships and revealed military measures to deploy anti-aircraft and coastal-defence systems for defending the port, according to the report.

Kim cited geopolitical advantages of the site for the country, bordered by the sea on both the east and west sides. The location of the site was not specified in the report.

A recent satellite imagery analysis by 38 North indicated that North Korea's newest ballistic missile class submarine (SSB), the "Sinpo-C" class, was undergoing an extensive fitting-out period at the Sinpo South Shipyard.

In a separate visit to a shipyard, Kim ordered to increase national investments in shipbuilding projects so that immediate tasks and long-term plans for laying the foundation for the development of the shipbuilding industry are pushed forward as scheduled.

## India, UAE to review trade deal in talks this week, sources say

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Indian and Emirati officials are expected to review their trade agreement this week amid concerns raised by Indian industry over a sharp increase in imports of precious metals from the United Arab Emirates, people familiar with the matter said.

India and the UAE signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2022 after just 88 days of negotiations. The agreement has become a template for similar trade pacts the UAE has since signed with many other nations.

An Indian government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the pact would be reviewed this week when a UAE government delegation led by Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed Al Nahyan visits Mumbai and New Delhi.

A second source, confirming the review, and the Indian government official downplayed the significance of the discussion and said that reviews took place from time to time.

The Indian trade ministry and the UAE ministry of economy did not respond to Reuters requests for comment on the review.

Indian officials have said New Delhi was seeking a review of the agreement, including if rules of origin were being met.

Sheikh Khalid, the son of UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, was unlikely to take part in the trade review, the sources said.

The Crown Prince, who is also his country's deputy national security adviser, was due to arrive in India on Sunday, Abu Dhabi's government media office announced on Saturday. The trade review has in part been prompted by complaints among Indian industry of a significant increase in precious metal imports from the UAE, the sources said.

India is one of the UAE's largest trading partners and Indian citizens make up the largest community in the Gulf state, outnumbering Emiratis.

## Yemen's Houthis claim they shot down another US MQ-9 drone

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Yemen's Houthi rebels claimed early Sunday they shot down another American-made MQ-9 drone flying over the country, marking potentially the latest of the multi-million-dollar surveillance aircraft. The US responded with airstrikes over Houthi-controlled territory, the rebels said.

The US military told The Associated Press it was aware of the claim but has "received no reports" of American military drones being downed over Yemen.

The rebels offered no pictures or video to support the claim as they have in the past, though such material can appear in propaganda footage days later.

However, the Houthis have repeatedly downed General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper drones in the years since they seized Yemen's capital, Sanaa, in 2014. Those attacks have exponentially increased since the start of the Israel-Hamas war and the Houthis launched their campaign targeting shipping in the Red Sea corridor.

Houthi military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree made the claim in a prerecorded video message. He said the Houthis shot down the drone over Yemen's Marib province, a long-contested area home to key oil and gas fields that's been held by allies of a Saudi-led coalition battling the rebels since 2015.

Saree offered no details on how the rebels downed the aircraft. However, Iran has armed the rebels with a surface-to-air missile known as the 358 for years. Iran denies arming the rebels, though Tehran-manufactured weaponry has been found on the battlefield and in seaborne shipments heading to Yemen despite a United Nations arms embargo.

The Houthis "continue to perform their jihadist duties in victory for the oppressed Palestinian people and in defense of dear Yemen," Saree said.

Reapers, which cost around \$30 million apiece, can fly at altitudes up to 50,000 feet (15,240 meters) and have an endurance of up to 24 hours before needing to land. The aircraft have been flown by both the US military and the CIA over Yemen for years.



People gather outside the Hillside Enderasha Academy, following a fatal fire which killed and injured several pupils, in Kiini, Nyeri County, Kenya.

# President honors Naval heroes of 1965 war

PM pays tribute to Pakistan Navy on 'Navy Day'

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday paying tribute to the Pakistan Navy on 'Navy Day', praised its role in the country's defense, the bravery of officers and personnel, and their sacrifices.

In a message on Navy Day, the president highlighted that the Pakistan Navy, during the 1965 war, proved its capabilities by conducting successful operations against the enemy.

The Pakistan Navy has full capability to deal

with both traditional and non-traditional maritime challenges facing the country, the president added.

He emphasized that a strong navy was the guarantor of Pakistan's security and prosperity.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to further modernize and strengthen the Pakistan Navy, the president said the Pakistan Navy played a key role in national defense and promoting regional peace.

"The Pakistan Navy is

always ready to defend Pakistan's maritime interests and territorial waters."

He said the nation was proud of the bravery, dedication, and patriotism of the Pakistan Navy and its personnel, adding that the sacrifices of the heroes of the Pakistan Navy serve as a guiding light for the nation.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday commended the Pakistan Navy for their unwavering dedication to duty and pas-

sion for the country.

"On Navy Day, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to all members of the Pakistan Navy. Their steadfast commitment to protecting our maritime boundaries exemplifies their unwavering dedication to duty and passion for the country," the prime minister wrote on his official X timeline.

He said regardless of the challenges they faced, their determination and spirit remained resolute.



KARACHI: Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong in a group photo during his visit to Karachi Nuclear Power Plants K-2 and K-3.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail in a group photo with Vice Chancellor and Professors of Allama Iqbal Open University Balochistan Chapter during convocation

## Tarar visits Naval Hqs, lays floral wreath on Martyrs' Memorial

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Sunday visited the Naval Headquarters on the occasion of Pakistan Navy Day.

The minister laid a floral wreath at the Martyrs' Memorial, paying tribute to the sacrifices of Navy personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Addressing on the occasion, Tarar expressed pride in being present at the memorial and praised the eternal services rendered by the Pakistan Navy for the country's defense.

He highlighted the significance of Operation Dwarka, launched on September 7, 1965, and commended the bravery of Navy personnel who targeted enemy positions during the operation.

Attaullah Tarar also remembered Lieutenant Aftab Ahmed Shaheed and other soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation. He emphasized the importance of unity in the face of terrorism and expressed confidence that the nation's morale would remain high.

In addition to honoring the martyrs, Tarar discussed the significance of the Blue Economy in the current era. He highlighted Pakistan's focus on exploring this sector through joint ventures with multiple countries, including China, and Middle East to secure the country's economic revival. The minister reaffirmed the Navy's role in ensuring the security of Pakistan's seas and contributing to the country's economic revolution through the Blue Economy.

## Tarar grieved over death of former director PTV News Athar Waqar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of former PTV News Director Current Affairs Athar Waqar Azeem.

In a condolence message, the minister in his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family of the deceased said, he was deeply saddened to hear the news of Athar Waqar Azeem's death. Athar Waqar Azeem's services to Pakistan Television will always be remembered, he maintained.

## JUI Maulana Shams killed in road accident

SWABI (APP): A religious scholar and leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Maulana Shams Nawas was killed and two others injured in a car accident near Jhang-Bahtar Interchange on motorway here Sunday.

The victims were returning from JUI Khatman-e-Nubuat conference in Lahore.

According to the details, the car carrying five scholars, overturned as it approached Jang-Bahtar Interchange.

Sheikh Al-Hadith of Jamia Rasheediyah Thand Koi, Swabi Maulana Shams Al-Nawas tragically lost his life in the accident. Asadur Rehman and Maulana Ehtishamul Haq of Jamia Shamsia Zaida sustained injuries. They were shifted to Bacha Khan Medical Complex Shah Mansoor Swabi.

## Five outlaws arrested; motorcycles, mobile phones recovered

QUETTA (APP): The Quetta police have arrested five accused involved in numerous street crime incidents in various areas of the provincial capital city and recovered looted motorcycles and mobile phones.

According to the police, Quaidabad police team has arrested the accused namely Najeebullah and registered a case after recovering the stolen motorcycle from his house while taking action in Pashtunabad area. Further investigation is underway from him.

In another operation, the police has arrested two wanted accused namely

Akhtar Jan and Ilyas and handed them over to the investigation team for further investigation.

Acting on secret information, the Industrial Police has arrested the wanted Mutiullah and shifted him to the police station.

Furthermore, the police arrested the accused Abdullah Khilji and recovered the stolen mobile phone from the possession of the accused and handed over the accused to the investigation team for further investigation.

Cases against all the arrested accused were registered and further investigation is underway.



QUETTA: Additional IG Commandant Balochistan Constabulary Agha Muhammad Yousaf talking with students of different universities during a ceremony organized by Balochistan Police

## Uzbekistan, Pakistan genuine partners, bilateral cooperation elevate to strategic partnership

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov has said that Uzbekistan and Pakistan are not only genuine partners, but brotherly cooperation has been elevated to a level of the strategic partnership.

Only in the last three years, President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev held personal interaction with his Pakistani counterparts the Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari and Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir, strengthening the trade and industrial, technological

projects as well as the active military cooperation between our countries, the Ambassador said.

Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov has said this while addressing the 33rd Independence Day of the Republic of Uzbekistan was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Islamabad. The ceremony, attended by dignitaries, diplomats and military officials, marked a new chapter in the flourishing relationship between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

"As it was agreed between our ministers of foreign relations - Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar

and my Minister Bakhtiar Saidov, during his last meetings in Islamabad; we are actively implementing proactive Economic Diplomacy, further cementing our multifaceted cooperation through 74 joint bilateral agreements and MOU's", he said. Shavkat Mirziyoyev in his address on the 33rd Anniversary of the Republic of Uzbekistan has stressed that large-scale work carried out in recent years. He informed that Uzbekistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 6.4% in 2024 (6.2% for the same period in 2023) and amounted to \$101 billion (inflation - 5.2%).

## PM for promoting literacy, ensuring education for all

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday called upon the nation to support the government's efforts in promoting literacy and ensuring education for all, emphasizing the importance of building a bright future for the children and the country.

"Literacy is a fundamental human and constitutional right that guarantees the future of our country," the prime minister said in a message on the occasion of International Literacy Day. He said literacy was not merely the ability to read and write, it was a gateway to empowerment, economic opportunities, and active participation in society.

"Today, we reaffirm our commitment to advancing the education agenda, striving for a more informed and sustainable nation", he

said adding "Education is the backbone of our society. For this purpose, we have declared an educational emergency across the country, launched an enrollment campaign for students, and initiated mid-day meals for children in schools."

To reduce the dropout rate and encourage every child to complete their education, the prime minister pointed out that the government had introduced scholarships and other incentives. In this rapidly emerging world, developing literacy and skills in line with technology is inevitable; the prime minister said adding that the government was implementing a comprehensive plan to integrate technology into the educational system, ensuring that the youth were equipped with the necessary skills to thrive in the digital economy.

## Leaders of FPCCI demand exclusion of banks of Balochistan from Red Zone

ISLAMABAD (APP): The leaders of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) have demanded of the government to ask State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to exclude the banks of Balochistan from the Red Zone and reduce the interest rate in next monetary policy.

In a joint statement issued here on Sunday, the leaders of FPCCI including S.M. Tanveer, former President of the Federation, Engineer Daro Khan Achakzai, Vice President, Jamaluddin Achakzai and Asfandyar

Mandokhail appealed to the federal government to reduce at least 400 points in the interest rate in the next monetary policy because inflation has been decreased by nine percent.

They said that the interest rate may be reduced by 10 percent along with the adjustment.

They also demanded of the government to issue order to the SBP for exclusion of the banks of Balochistan from the Red Zone. By doing so, there would be very positive impacts on the economy of country, they believed.



QUETTA: Relatives of missing persons holding a protest demonstration in front of Press Club

## For country's strong defense AJK PM, others laud Pak Army's significant contribution, sacrifices

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq and other speakers paid rich tributes to the valiant armed forces of Pakistan for their significant contribution and sacrifices for Pakistan.

They were addressing a special ceremony hosted to mark Pakistan Defense Day at the newly constructed martyrs' memorial at Keren Zero-point in the remote Neelam valley in Azad Jammu Kashmir on Sunday, according to an official handout issued by the Press Information Department (PID) of the AJK government here on Sunday.

Speakers paid eulogizing tributes to the martyrs of the Pakistani army who laid down their lives while defending the country's territorial sovereignty. They also reiterated

Kashmiris' pledge to carry forward the mission for which the martyrs had laid down their precious lives.

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq and General Officer Commanding Major General Muhammad Irfan were the chief guests on this occasion.

It is worth mentioning here that Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik's wife, Ms. Mashaal Malik, and the heirs of the martyrs were specially invited to the ceremony.

Earlier, a spectacular military parade was held to commemorate the proud legacy of the Pakistani army and its brave hearts who offered their blood and sweat to safeguard their motherland.

Local singers, on the occasion, won the hearts of the audience with iconic national and folk songs.



QUETTA: Different delegations meeting Provincial Minister for Irrigation and member of PPP Central Committee Mir Sadiq Umrani

## To promote religious harmony, unity Ministry organizes 49th Seerat-un-Nabi Conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony is organizing the 49th Seerat-un-Nabi Conference on the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal highlighting the significance of this blessed month in the Islamic calendar. Through this annual feature, the ministry promotes religious harmony, tolerance, brotherhood, equality, respect for humanity, non-violence, unity, reconciliation, and dialogue in light of the current situation in the country.

Exchanging his views with this national news agency, Ministry's Spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt informed that the con-

## PTI has track record to undermine state writ: Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik on Sunday said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had a track record of challenging the state writ and attacks on the defense installations.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that top leadership of PTI threatening to attack on the federal capital.

Security measures were taken in Islamabad considering their track record of anarchy in the country, he added.

Musadik said that the federal government had the prerogative to stop these mobs to protect the country from the security risk.

Replying to a query about any anticipated legislation.

ference comprises two main segments: the National Seerat and Naat Book Competition Awards Ceremony and the Seerat-un-Nabi Conference. He said the ministry invited entries in national, regional, and international languages (Arabic and English) for the National Seerat and Naat Book Competition Awards encouraging the participants to submit books and essays on Seerat and Naat within the stipulated timeframe.

Umar said the competition for the year 2024 was announced in January, and each selected book and essay was evaluated by a panel of at least three experts, who are PhD-level professors and specialists

in their fields. The reports of these experts were then reviewed by an apex committee, which determines the winners, he said adding that a total of 164 books were submitted for this year's competition, with 30 individuals selected for awards. Additionally, he said 118 Seerat essays were received, and 33 individuals were awarded. A total of 63 individuals were recognized for their contributions this year, he maintained.

Umar said the Seerat-un-Nabi Conference is held annually to promote and disseminate the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).



QUETTA: General Secretary Grand Alliance Metropolitan Corporations Nadeem Khokar addressing a press at QPC.

## Chinese Envoy calls for boosting Pak-China coop.

KARACHI (INP): Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong has stressed the need of promoting Pak-China strategic and bilateral cooperation in wide range of activities, involving various segments of the society.

During his visit to Karachi Nuclear Power Plants K-2 and K-3, the Ambassador appreciated the joint work done by Chinese Power Company and Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission on completion of these projects.

He advised Chinese power companies to also

contribute in non-CPEC projects and power sector for strengthening economic foundations between the two countries.

Talking on the forthcoming C5 Nuclear Power Plant, he appreciated the ongoing negotiations between both the countries and assured complete support for execution of the project which will ultimately enhance nuclear power potential of Pakistan. He also thanked Chairman PAEC for ensuring foolproof safety and security for Chinese workforce.

## Ayaz pays tribute to Pakistan Navy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Sunday paid homage to the officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Navy for their outstanding defense of the nation's maritime borders during the 1965 India-Pakistan war.

In his message on Navy Day, he expressed pride in the Navy's capabilities, acknowledging the crucial role of the Navy, Air Force, and Army in making Pakistan's defense impenetrable.

Sadiq praised the Pakistan Navy for successfully defending the country's waters, despite limited resources, and in-

flicting significant damage on the Indian naval forces. "The Pakistan Navy has always safeguarded our seas," he said, highlighting the Navy's heroic efforts in destroying key enemy installations during the 1965 conflict.

He affirmed that the Navy remains ever-ready to protect the nation's waters and that the sacrifices of Pakistan's brave armed forces will always be remembered.

The Speaker expressed pride in the Navy's dedication to defending the nation, stating that any threat to the country will be met with a decisive response.

## FIA smashes Intl network involved in human smuggling

LAHORE (APP): A major breakthrough was achieved in the fight against human smuggling, as an international network involved in this heinous crime has been busted by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Lahore, on a tip-off from intelligence agencies.

On the special instructions of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, FIA Lahore Circle has arrested an international network involved in human smuggling on the informa-

tion provided by intelligence agencies. This network was involved in robbing people by giving them false promises of employment abroad and has so far robbed crores of rupees from innocent people. The group was expert in making fake documents, including passports, visas, and other essential papers required for international travel. The human smuggling group had its own printing press, where fake documents of various countries.