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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

Launches special anti-polio campaign

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. Speaking at the ceremony after launching the 7-day polio eradication campaign, the prime minister stressed that a unified approach and collaborative efforts are crucial to successfully tackling the polio challenge and achieving a polio-free Pakistan. At the ceremony, the prime minister extended a warm welcome to the attendees and expressed his appreciation for the outstanding collaboration and tireless efforts of federal and provincial government staff, foot soldiers,

and security officers, who have worked together seamlessly to drive the polio eradication campaign forward. The prime minister voiced his confidence that by working together with provincial chief ministers, chief secretaries, health ministers, and health secretaries, the government will successfully eliminate polio, paving the way for a polio-free future and eradicating this preventable disease in the years to come. The prime minister assured that the polio eradication campaign is in capable hands, being led by expert teams, and expressed optimism that the federal government's joint efforts with the provinces will ultimately lead to the disease's eradication.

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. Dar, who is the Deputy Prime Minister and also the Foreign Minister of the country, made these remarks during an interaction with British lawmakers of Pakistani origin at a dinner hosted by the High Commissioner Dr Mohammad Faisal at the Pakistan

House in London, said a statement issued today. The dinner was attended by the Deputy Speaker House of Commons Nusrat Ghani, Yasmin Qureshi (MP), Lord Qurban Hussain, Baroness Nosheen Mubarak, Lord Zameer Chaudhry, Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, Baroness Shaista Gohir, Mohammad Afzal Khan (MP), Naseem Shah (MP), Imran Hussain (MP), Tahir Ali (MP), Zubair Ahmed (MP), Adnan Hussain (MP), Mohamman Yasin (MP) and Ayoub Khan (MP). Dar informed the audience that during the Pakistan Muslim League-

Nawaz (PML-N) government from 2013 to 2017, terrorism was contained at an immense cost of blood and national exchequer. However, the previous government's policy of appeasing and rehabilitating extremist groups, such as the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), and the release of over 100 hardened terrorists, led to a resurgence of terrorism, he noted. The nation has been reeling under rising violent attacks since the Taliban rulers returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, particularly in the bordering provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan.

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. According to sources, Afghan Taliban opened unprovoked firing with heavy weapons yesterday from inside Afghanistan, targeting Pakistani check posts. The Pakistan security forces responded effectively and killed eight Afghan Taliban, including key commanders Khalil and Jan Muhammad. Sixteen Afghan Taliban were also injured in the firing. The facilitation of terrorist attacks against Pakistan by the Afghan Taliban is no secret. In addition to terrorist attacks, the Afghan Taliban's aggression on the international border is now openly visible. Meanwhile three

people, including two head constable brothers, were killed, and three others injured in two separate terror incidents in Wana and Lakki Marwat. In the first incident, an explosion occurred in Kadikoy Bazaar, a village near Wana in Lower Waziristan district, leaving one person, identified as Shamsuddin, son of Malik Jameel, killed, and three others injured. The explosion targeted a vehicle, which was completely destroyed. The injured individuals were immediately transported to the hospital for medical attention. In a separate attack, terrorists opened fire in Abba Khel, Lucky Marwat, killing Head Constables Safiullah and Naveedullah. Authorities have sealed the affected areas, gathered evidence, and launched investigations into the attacks to arrest the involved individuals.



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. Sources said the government also called for a meeting of all parliamentarians of the allied parties on Monday in the capital. The National Assembly members would be taken into confidence over the legislation process happening in coming days. Meanwhile, it also emerged that JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman also gave green light for his conditional support to the government.

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. In his message on World Literacy Day being observed on Sunday, he said education has been declared a fundamental right in the Constitution of Pakistan under Article 25-A. The President highlighted the government's initiatives to overcome the challenge of illiteracy including the declaration of a National Educational Emergency, to enroll out-of-school children, the Prime Minister's Roshan Pakistan Literacy Drive, Conditional Cash Transfers up to the higher secondary level through Benazir Taleemi Wazif and stipends for students in all districts of Pakistan. The President called for recommitting to the national cause of promoting the universal right to education.

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. Asif suggested that Hameed could reveal details about his ties with Khan and might aim to shift blame onto him. Asif noted that the military installations targeted during the May 9 protests were likely directed by Khan. He also mentioned that both Khan and Hameed were distressed over the loss of power. He said that Hameed hoped to become the army chief and sought support from the PML-N for the matter. Additionally, Asif discussed the role of former Defense Minister Pervez Khattak in initiating amendments in NAB regulations, which received clearance from Hameed.



ISLAMABAD: Activists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party gathered in a ground during public gathering (Jalsa) at Sangjani in the Federal Capital.

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. The rally commenced with PTI leader Hammad Azhar addressing the attendees. He asserted that the obstacles imposed by the current rulers indicated their fear of Imran Khan and his supporters. Azhar also hinted at the initiation of a new movement in Punjab, led by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, urging party workers to "be ready."

highlighting that much of PTI's Punjab leadership is currently imprisoned. Sher Afzal Marwat echoed similar sentiments, announcing that rallies would soon be held in Punjab advocating 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. In a separate development, police recovered a suspicious bag near the venue in Sangjani. 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 Margalla road route. Key thoroughfares, including those from Chongi No 26, GT Road Taxila, Faizabad, Khanna Pull, and Rawat Chowk, were closed. 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.

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. In a special media talk regarding the PTI rally near Sangjani, he said traffic remained normal in Islamabad and the Punjab province. "Millions of people who were supposed to bring a revolution today, nobody knows where they have gone. Have they gone to some other country or another place?", he remarked.



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. He said that the PTI was spreading lies and propaganda on social media by sharing old videos of rallies from Kashmir and even Indian Punjab farmers' foot-ages. He made it clear that the PTI leadership could not escape accountability by such tactics. He said PTI founder chairman will have to face trial for corrupt practices.

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.



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

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. In his statement, he acknowledged he shared an old video that was recorded on some other occasion. 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. Social Media is too big to be bagged or shutdown. Only error corrections can tame this Leviathan."

Ayaz Sadiq 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 inflicting 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.

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.



Daily Voice of Masses Independent

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 59th 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.

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 Kudyas 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 comments 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 re-plicating hum-an 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 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 red-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 In-

dia 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 engender a positive legacy of leading a secure, conflict-free, and economically integrated South Asia. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

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.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) 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 com-

plicated 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.

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 annual 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 uncomfortable 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

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.



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 recovery 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.

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.



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

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."

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.

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 Shafiqatullah 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.

DGPR directs employees to ensure discipline, punctuality

LAHORE (APP): Secretary Information & Culture and Director General Public Relations Punjab, Dr Shahinshah Faisal Azim, has instructed all officers and officials of the department to ensure discipline and punctuality. All officers/officials of DGPR office will mark their attendance through biometric system. All officers of the department should perform their professional duties more efficiently and without negligence. Furthermore, according to the directions of Minister for Information & Culture Punjab, Azma Bukhari, all directors of respective wings have been directed to regularly monitor the performance of their subordinates.

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.

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 extra-curricular activities, he stressed the need to revive literary societies in schools.

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

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan organized a gathering of Milad Mustafa in connection with Milad-ul-Nabi (SAW) at the Governor House Lahore. In the Milad event, well-known Naat Khwans Shahbaz Qamar Faridi, Ahmed Ali Hakim and others recited naats while the speakers shed light on the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his teachings for the welfare and guidance of humanity. Addressing the ceremony, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the holy life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the best example for us. 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

and it was his duty to organize Milad in the Governor's house. Governor Punjab 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 Youm-e-Khatme-Nubuwwat. He said that the nation was grateful to former Prime Minister, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, as he was the one who signed the law of finality of Prophethood, adding that when Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto signed that he said that he was signing his death certificate and that signature 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

blessings of Allah be upon him) as the basis of religion and the end of prophet hood as the way of salvation and faith. He said that following the example of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) is the way of salvation and guidance for us. At the end of Mahfil Milad Mustafa, Umrah tickets were distributed among 13 lucky people by draw. In Mahfil Milad Mustafa (PBUH) people belonging to all walks of life participated in a large number. On this occasion, the Governor House building was decorated with lights. A special prayer was offered for the development and prosperity of the country and to get rid of the problems faced by the Muslim Ummah.

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.



KARACHI: Students are busy in solving their questionnaire during the entry test for vacancies in Foreign Ministry organized by Karachi University Assessment and Testing Services, in Karachi.

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.

International News

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 net-

work 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 chunk of metal looked riddled with shrapnel. Reuters correspondents in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, heard a series of explosions shortly after 3 am (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.



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 in the Middle East. The United States and UK are among the leading financial and military supporters of Ukraine in its resistance to the Russian invasion launched in February 2022. The op-ed by the CIA director and chief of the Secret Intelligence Service was the first-ever jointly authored by heads of their agencies.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

Independent Report

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.

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 conference 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 main-

tained.

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). He said renowned religious scholars from Pakistan and the Islamic world participate in this conference, which serves as a platform for dialogue, mutual understanding, and the reduction of differences among scholars.

Umar mentioned that the theme selected for this year's conference is "The State's Educational System in the Light of Seerat-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him)." Recognizing the significance of the conference, he said the ministry publishes and distributes the proceedings and high-quality papers presented on this topic to institutions and libraries free of charge.

These papers are also uploaded to the ministry's website, he added.

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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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.



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

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 demonstrate 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.

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

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 honouring 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.

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

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, citizens 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.

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

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

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



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.