

# Independent

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Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif welcoming the prime Minister of Malaysia Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim upon his arrival on a 3-day official visit at Islamabad.

## Malaysian PM arrives to a red carpet welcome

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday warmly received Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim who is undertaking a three-day official visit to Pakistan. Upon his arrival at the airport, children clad in traditional attire presented bouquets to the Malaysian Premier. He was also given a static guard of honour by smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Army while 21-guns boomed in the background as gesture of warm welcome. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and members of the federal cabinet were also present to welcome the visiting dignitary. The Malaysian prime minister is accompanied by a high level delegation. Dur-

ing his stay, he will hold meetings with the leadership of Pakistan. Premier Anwar Ibrahim is undertaking the official visit at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The two sides will discuss a wide-ranging agenda to further strengthen Pakistan-Malaysia ties in diverse fields including trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture, halal industry, tourism, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts. They will also discuss regional and global developments. "Pakistan and Malaysia enjoy strong bilateral ties anchored in history, culture and faith. This visit provides an important opportunity to further strengthen Pakistan-Malaysia relations," Foreign Office said in an earlier press release.

## Pakistan calls for de-escalation of hostilities, conflict resolution in ME

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Wednesday expressed deep concern over the escalating hostilities in the Middle East, urging all parties to prioritize peace. "In recent months, Israel has increasingly acted in violation of international law and the UN Charter resulting in grave humanitarian crisis. Israel has endangered regional peace and security with the ongoing genocide in Gaza. The recent invasion of Lebanon has further intensified these tensions, affecting the lives of innocent civilians," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement. The people of Palestine, Lebanon, and the wider region deserved to live free from fear and violence. It was crucial for all sides to step back from the brink and for the international community to take swift action to de-escalate the situation.

## Govt. committed to provide conducive environment for foreign investors in Balochistan, assures Chief Minister

**Independent Report**  
GWADAR: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has stated that formation of modern projects are unavoidable keeping in view the requirements of future. He said that we want to develop Gwadar as developed city of the world standards and as such would provide conducive environment for the foreign investors in the province. The Chief Minister was presiding over the 29th meeting of governing body of the Governing Body of Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) here on Wednesday. The meeting discussed the smart port city, master plan and ships breaking yard. The Chief Minister said that Gwadar is not only the important city of Balochistan and Pakistan but also of the world level. He also directed to ensure consultation of local people in process of development. Besides, the provision of clean drinking water should also be ensured to the citizens of Gwadar. He also stressed the need to clearly determine the responsibilities between Public Health Engineering and GDA. Both the institutions couldn't fulfil their responsibilities due to dependence on each other, he opined.



GWADAR: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over 29th meeting of Governing Body of Gwadar Development Authority

## CJP Qazi Faez Isa rejects PTI's objection to bench hearing Article 63-A review plea

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Wednesday rejected the PTI's objection to the formation of the bench hearing review petition of the Article 63-A case. Earlier, the hearing turned sour when there was a bitter exchange between PTI's Syed Mustafin Kazmi and the chief justice. As PTI's Barrister Ali Zafar came to the rostrum, his fellow counsel Kazmi followed him and objected to two judges - Justice Naeem Afghani and Justice Mazhar Alam - on the re-constituted bench. The chief justice expressed his anger and called police to oust Advocate Kazmi from the courtroom. When the hearing resumed, Barrister Ali also objected to the formation of the CJP-led bench. The bench took into account his objection during the proceedings and "unanimously" rejected the objection. Barrister Ali submitted that he filed the review application late due to which it was not fixed for hearing. Chief Justice Isa asked him when the application was filed; you must have filed it in the morning? Barrister Ali replied that he filed the application but the office of the Supreme Court did not approve it. He said he needed time to present arguments. He has to consult PTI founder Imran Khan on the case. He submitted that you [the CJP] said it is a constitutional matter. "Imran Khan is a former prime minister and is also a petitioner, he understands the constitution and he knows what to say. Consult him on the matter." The chief justice asked him to start arguments, and Barrister Ali said that means "you are rejecting my request to meet Imran Khan." Justice Naeem Afghani said you could have met him yesterday, to which Ali said the PTI founder is in jail. The chief justice said that if he had to consult the PTI founder, he would have told him yesterday and the court would have issued an order. In the past, the court had called the PTI founder on video link, and had arranged a meeting with the lawyers. Barrister Ali again raised question on the bench and said that first it should be decided whether the bench is legal or not. "After that, I can give arguments." The court rejected his objection regarding the formation of the bench.

## Nawaz asks Imran to learn humility, refrain from making tall claim

"As you sow, so shall you reap", PML-N president tells incarcerated PTI founder  
LAHORE (INP): Amid ongoing protests by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in different areas of Punjab, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif asked incarcerated party founder Imran Khan to learn humility and refrain from making tall claims. "You reap what you sow," the three-time prime minister said to jailed PTI founder while addressing a ceremony related to "Apna Ghar Apni Chat" Scheme. His statement came as PTI continues its anti-government campaign, with party workers and supporters staging protests in different areas of Punjab. Without naming the PTI, the ruling party president said the ruling party of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was not interested in the development of the province. "They come Punjab with tear gas shells," the PML-N chief said hinting at PTI protesters.

## Six top BLA terrorists killed in major Harnai operation

QUETTA (INP): Security forces personnel have killed six top terrorists belonging to banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) during a major intelligence-based operation in Harnai area of Balochistan. According to sources, security forces successfully conducted the intelligence-based joint operation against BLA hideouts on September 12, 2024 in Harnai region of Balochistan. According to reliable sources in BLA, as a result of the operation, six important terrorists of BLA were gunned down in the operation. The slain terrorists were identified as Shafu Samalani alias Tadin, Sarmad Khan alias Dasteen, Muhammad Gul Murri alias Wahid Baloch, Ghulam Qadir Murri alias Anjeer Baloch, Ubaid Baloch alias Fida and Taj Muhammad alias Babul, the sources added. Meanwhile, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid rich tribute to the security forces for the successful intelligence-based operation against the banned BLA in Harnai. In his message, the Interior Minister said that the security forces once again carried out a successful operation and killed six terrorists.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar welcomes the Foreign Minister of Malaysia Dato Seri Utama Haji Mohamad Bin Haji Hasan, on his arrival at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Bilawal warns of confrontation if constitutional amendment not passed before Oct 25

"Matter will be resolved peacefully, if the amendment passed before October 25," says PPP chief  
ISLAMABAD (INP): As the coalition government determined to pass a judiciary-centric constitutional package, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari warned of potential confrontation if the proposed amendments did not pass before October 25 - the retirement date of the incumbent chief justice. Last month, the coalition government made a futile attempt to pass a 'closely-guarded' constitutional package amid speculation about a potential extension in the tenure of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa. However, the government failed to even table the amendments in parliament after JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman refused to support the government's judicial package, leaving the contentious amendments hanging in the balance. Ostensibly, the government was short of 13 votes in the National Assembly and nine in the Senate as the said legislation requires a two-thirds majority in both houses.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Irrigation Mir Sadiq Umrani meeting with Provincial Minister for PHE Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran

## Govt committed to enhancing healthcare access, especially for women: Dr Mukhtar

QUETTA (APP): Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, has said the government was fully committed to enhancing healthcare access, especially for women in marginalized and underserved regions. "We are working towards a system where every woman can receive the healthcare she needs, when she needs it, free from stigma or fear," he added. He made these remarks while addressing the launch of the report titled 'Safeguarding Women's Health: Trends, Inequities, and Opportunities in Pakistan's Abortion and Post-Abortion Care Services,' said a press release issued on Wednesday.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting regarding preparation of SCO Summit.

## Pakistan's railway system most inexpensive and safest source of transportation: Governor

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the railway system is still the most inexpensive and safest source of transportation in the country. He said that it is matter of pleasure and contentment that Pakistan Railways has announced to resume the Jaffar Khan Jamali between Quetta and Peshawar. It may be mentioned here that the resumption of Jaffar Khan Jamali is being made because of the personal interest and whole-hearted efforts of the Government of Pakistan. Needless to mention here is that Governor had played pivotal role in launching the direct flights from Quetta to Jeddah. The resumption of train would not only provide travelling facilities to thousands of passengers besides saving their precious time. This would also relink two provinces and promote trade and economic activities between them. This initiative would also highlight the prospects of joint efforts for enhancing the trade and coordination and relationship among the people in country.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh signed the MoU on behalf of Government of Pakistan with Danish Government. Finance Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal and Federal Minister for Industries Rana Tanveer were present on the occasion.

## Irfan Siddiqui calls on Fazi, conveys Nawaz's message

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui visited the residence of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Wednesday. Irfan Siddiqui conveyed the special message of the PML-N's President Nawaz Sharif to the JUI-F chief. During the meeting, ongoing political situation of the country and consultation was held on constitutional amendments.

## Two inmates die in armed attack on district jail in DMJ

DERA MURAD JAMALI (INP): An armed attack on the district jail in Dera Murad Jamali resulted in the deaths of two inmates and left three others injured on Wednesday. The assailants opened fire on the jail, creating chaos within the facility. During the confrontation, one of the attackers was wounded and subsequently arrested by the jail authorities. Following the attack, a large contingent of police forces arrived at the scene to secure the area and prevent further violence.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf exchanging views with Italian Ambassador Marilina Armellini at Naval Headquarter.

## Quetta Administration to outsource Fatima Jinnah Girls School, BHUs

QUETTA (APP): Commissioner Quetta Division and Administrator Metropolitan Corporation (MC) Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat in a meeting on Wednesday reviewed the measures regarding the outsourcing of Fatima Jinnah Girls School, Gurdatt Singh Road and Basic Health Units (BHUs) run under the auspices of MC Quetta. The meeting held under the chairmanship of Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat has reviewed the measure regarding the outsourcing of school and BHUs run by Metropolitan Corporation to improve the education delivery and ensure best medical facilities to the people in the BHUs. The Quetta administration has decided to outsource the Girls School Gurdatt Singh Road and BHUs in order to improve the public service delivery besides minimizing the financial expenses bearing by MC Quetta. In the meeting, Chairman Education Foundation Dr. Zafar Qadir, CEO Education Foundation Asim Mushtaq, Assistant Commissioner Political Quetta Division Syed Kaleemullah, Chief Metropolitan Corporation Attaullah Baloch, State Officer MCQ Zulfiqar Ali, Law Officer Abdullah Khan and DDF Abdul Khaliq were also present.



Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Constitutional courts

The decision-makers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad should have taken the hint. Instead, their determination to have the controversial 'constitutional package' bulldozed through parliament with another attempt is now uniting the legal community in anger and indignation.

Over the weekend, some 300 lawyers from across the country — including some of the most notable names in the profession — signed on to an open letter addressed to the judges of the superior judiciary, urging them to refuse to take any part in a 'constitutional court' that is set up under this government's secretive legislative agenda.

Saying that they recognise the Supreme Court and the high courts as the only 'constitutional courts' of the country, the lawyers warned the judiciary against repeating past mistakes, regretting, in particular, that "Our higher judiciary has, for many decades now, lent legitimacy to a sustained assault on our Constitution and on our democracy".

Underlining their opposition to the proposal to set up a new 'constitutional court', these representatives of the legal community have made it clear that, in their eyes, such a court would be considered a PCO court, "and those who take the oath to serve on it will be PCO judges".

This is unusually strong phrasing by the lawyers' community. While they doubtless would have debated the merits and demerits of a constitutional court more congenially in a different context, right now, the brightest minds in the profession are seeing it as an existential challenge: a move that represents a continuation of the series of assaults launched by military dictators on Pakistan's constitutional order in the past.

There is no question that the timing of the move has tainted its intent — perhaps irrevocably. After all, the government has made it clear that it has little regard for the judiciary and its prerogatives. Perhaps the proposal would have been seen more charitably had the government demonstrated that it is as subservient to the law like everyone else. Instead, it chose to disregard, even sabotage, express orders of the Supreme Court on multiple occasions, with the latest being in the reserved seats case.

Given that it has established that it will not obey legal authority except when it is bent in its favour, how can it expect any court established by it to be seen as fair and impartial? It is even more troubling that the government wants to handpick the judge who will sit atop this proposed constitutional court. This will not only compromise the new court further but also potentially sully the reputation of whichever judge agrees to lead it. The lawyers have agreed that they will not engage with this idea because they do not see it as rooted in good faith. The judiciary, too, must soon make its position known.

Unseen horrors

Mahir Ali

When yet another Sudanese civil war erupted in April 2023, the then-year-old Russian invasion of Ukraine continued to hog the attention of the so-called international community. Now, as Israel supplements its bombardment of Beirut with ground incursions into Lebanon almost a year after launching an open-ended genocidal assault on Gaza, the intensifying catastrophe in Sudan is still struggling to attract anything more than cursory concern and the usual platitudes.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has a possible explanation. "I think race is in the play here. ... We see the pattern now," he told the BBC last month, after describing the "destruction, displacement, diseases everywhere, and now famine" that he witnessed during a visit to Sudan.

The violent tussle for power between rival military forces has claimed at least 20,000 lives, mostly among civilians; up to 12 million people have been displaced from their homes; there is mass starvation bordering on famine as the cultivation of food crops has dwindled and the conflict interferes with aid delivery. On top of everything, there are appalling indications of the 2003 genocide in Darfur being resumed by the same perpetrators: the Janjaweed militia, which evolved into the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) now competing for power with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

The RSF and the SAF jointly carried out the 2021 coup that crushed tentative hopes of a transition to some kind of democracy after a popular uprising in 2019 led to the end of Omar al-Bashir's 30-year dictatorship. The duumvirate formed by Mohamed

Hamdan Dagalo, the RSF chief better known as Hemedti, and the SAF's General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan crumbled when the latter insisted on a relatively rapid integration of the RSF into the regular armed forces. Sudanese civilians have paid the price, as evidenced last week when the SAF embarked on a fresh effort to retake Khartoum.

Both sides have justifiably been accused of atrocities, although the RSF and its associates appear to be well ahead of the SAF in perpetrating sexual violence. Systematic rape as a weapon of war was a prominent part of the Janjaweed modus operandi, and it remains a favourite form of torture for the RSF, alongside arbitrary executions of young males, especially in its vicious campaign against non-Arab ethnic groups.

At the UN General Assembly last month, Burhan, invited as Sudan's de facto head of government despite the limits of his authority, appealed for international initiatives to stop the flow of weapons to the RSF in order to end the war (and, although he didn't say it out loud, consolidate his power). His remarks were widely interpreted as a salvo aimed primarily at the UAE, which, notwithstanding denials from Abu Dhabi, has been touted as the RSF's biggest arms supplier, its largesse ranging from hi-tech Chinese drones to Serbian munitions.

A New York Times investigative report co-authored by Declan Walsh revealed last month how an Emirates Red Crescent hospital in Chad, near the Sudanese border, set up ostensibly to aid refugees from Sudan, mainly treats injured RSF combatants, and is situated next to drone hangars and a munitions storage facility.

The drones help to stave off threats to arms delivery convoys. Back in July, a Guardian report revealed that Emirati passports had been found in a part of Omdurman, across the Nile from Khartoum, after it was retaken by the SAF from the RSF, indicating that the UAE may be "covertly putting boots on the ground". The discovery was described by analysts as "a smoking gun" that called into question Abu Dhabi's denials about its alleged favouritism in the Sudanese conflict.

The UAE president stuck with his narrative during his meeting with Joe Biden last week, as the US president hailed his country as a "major defence partner" — an accolade hitherto reserved for India — and refused to call out the controversial role of a key Gulf ally that is a reliable customer for the US military industrial complex. The UAE leadership, seen as indebted to the RSF for its nation's misadventure in Yemen, may also be guided by Israel's penchant for disregarding the occasional verbal diatribes from Washington, as long as the military and intelligence supply chains it relies on remain intact. And they do.

Sudan is coveted for its vast gold reserves and extended Red Sea coastline, and the UAE is not the only pebble on the beach.

The Wagner Group was once allied with the RSF, but Russia now backs Burhan, reports suggest, alongside the likes of Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and even Ukraine — not to mention Iran. Russia and China, alongside the US and its European allies, are all part of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century scramble for Africa. But the UAE might possibly have trumped them all. -- Courtesy Dawn

New generation

Sohail Habib

At a recent parent-teacher meeting at an elite school, a parent complained of her son's poor performance in Urdu. The teacher told her not to worry, as all his classmates were facing problems in Urdu. This is the dilemma of our new generation, the Gen Z-ers, born between the mid-1990s and the late 2010s. In fact, Gen Z-ers are the first true digital natives, with technology seamlessly integrated into their lives, unlike previous generations, who are digital immigrants.

American sociologist George Ritzer explains the dilemma of the new generation in The McDonaldisation of Society. 'McDonaldisation' refers to the pervasive expansion of the principles of the fast-food chain: speed, convenience and standardisation for diverse societies and geographies. The ensuing cultural globalisation has the advantage of being democratic in nature, but the associated homogenisation threatens diversity.

Previous generations learnt through auditory delivery and manual practices; Gen Z-ers learn digitally and visually. Not surprisingly, many skills are becoming redundant such as calligraphy, classical music and the learning of oriental languages. Parenting styles are also changing. Previously, we saw helicopter parenting, with excessive parental involvement and control in children's lives. Today, Gen Z students are experiencing a 'CIA' style of parenting, where progress and grades are monitored through technology.

Cultural globalisation also features speed and efficiency, manifested in automated banking services, online shopping and self-checkout counters. However, the downside of excessive automation is dehumanisation which leads to poor tolerance in times of stress. Dubbed the 'loneliest generation', Gen Z-ers face anxiety owing to disruptive technologies, economic uncertainty and loss linked to the Covid pandemic. Moreover, previous generations would spend their free time socialising in person, which releases mood-elevating chemicals in the body. But this is missing in the emoji- and text-driven interactions of our youth on social media platforms today. They frequently suffer from FOMO, 'the fear of missing out', and so cannot stay away from their phones for too long.

Gen Z-ers are relatively more pragmatic than their predecessors. They focus more on skills than on theory and prefer certification over degrees. Although they exhibit more entrepreneurial qualities compared to previous generations, they are more conservative and prudent when it comes to finances. This shift is mainly shaped by the perma-crisis of the 2008 Great Recession, Covid-19 and 9/11 hyper-terrorisation.

The new generation prefers personalised experiences, self-enrichment and an adventurous lifestyle. This has spurred local tourism from Kalash to Kumrat and Insta-selfies from Deosai to Phander. However, this hyper-mobility has two associated trends. Firstly, there is a hyper-exodus of youngsters from Pakistan. According to the UN World Population 2024 report, 1.6m Pakistanis left the country in 2023. This exodus is more

than the numbers from the two most populous countries: India (980,000) and China (570,000). This may be considered 'brain drain' but also proves to be a primary source of remittances in the long term.

The second trend is the declining attachment to ancestral lands. An example is the third generation of Kashmiris who have settled in the UK. Older generations of the Kashmiri diaspora wo-uld invest back in Kashmir and bring the bodies of relatives for burial there. However, the new generation of Kashmiris expats has diminished emotional and financial interest in their ancestral land. A similar trend can be observed in rural-urban migration.

The grooming and blooming of Gen Z-ers in the virtual world has made it a generation of 'scroll & troll'. Like the gig economy's short TikTok reels, McJobs, micro-celebrities and freelancing, our youth display a short attention span and an appetite for instant gratification. This makes it harder to focus on deep learning or long-term projects. Casual relationships — 'situationships' — are developed online and terminated by ghosting.

The age of marriage is moving to the late 20s.

During Juma prayers, worshippers arrive late and leave quickly after the prayers. The reliance of Gen Z-ers on social media has made them more vulnerable to fake news and synthetic content. According to the Global Risks Report 2024, the top five risks that Pakistan faces today include fake news and misinformation.

In short, technology has transformed the 'global village' into the 'global street', but Gen Z-ers' excessive usage of gadgetry may lead to a 'tech neck'. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

'Pakistan Economy Dashboard' provides easy access to Socio Economic data: Ali Perviaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, Ali Perviaz Malik said that "Pakistan Economy Dashboard" is huge initiative in the direction of making the socio-economic data easily accessible to everyone.

The launch of the Pakistan Economy Dashboard represents a major leap forward in our mission to modernize the dissemination of economic information, he said while addressing the launching ceremony of 'Pakistan Economy Dashboard' here Wednesday.

"I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Economic Adviser at the Finance Division, and his team, whose relentless

efforts have successfully brought this initiative to fruition," he said.

He appreciated the appreciation to the EU-funded PFM-II Programme for providing technical assistance to the Finance Division in these crucial areas.

In today's rapidly evolving global economy, access to accurate and timely economic data is more critical than ever, he said. Ali Perviaz Malik said this portal has been designed to be a user-friendly resource, providing all stakeholders—whether policymakers, researchers, investors, or citizens—with the data they need to make informed decisions.

"We stand on the cusp of a new era in economic management, the in-

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where five ships, Maersk Kinloss, Phoenician-M, Clipper Trent, Ice Fighter and Acadia Park scheduled to load/offload Container, Rices, Fuel oil and Chemicals, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminals, FOTCO oil Terminal and Engro Vopak Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Centurion Signifer and Al-Areesh carrying Coal and LNG are also arrived at outer anchorage port during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, MSC Positano, Maersk Kinloss and Ice Fighter are expected to sail on today. Cargo volume of 95,743 tonnes, comprising 41,664 tonnes imports cargo and 54,079 tonnes export cargo carried in 3,919 Containers.



KARACHI: Pakistani stockbroker monitors the share prices during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi.

Exports increase by 14.11% to \$7.875 bln during Jul-Sep 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country increased by 14.11 percent during the first three months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

Exports during July-September (2024-25) were recorded at \$7.875 billion against \$6.901 billion during July-September (2023-24), according to PBS data. On the other hand, imports into the country also went up by 9.86 percent by



MOSCOW: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization & Communications Abdul Aleem Khan meeting with President Moscow Chamber of Commerce Platonov Vladimir.



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Digital retail payments rise to 84% in FY24, Governor SBP

KARACHI (APP): Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Jameel Ahmad, Wednesday, stated that the share of digital payments in total retail payments by volume has risen from 76% in FY23 to 84% in FY24 while the overall number of digital retail transactions has increased by 30%.

The number of transactions processed using mobile and internet banking is growing at an annual rate of 70% and 30%, respectively, he said and added, "This is not surprising as the majority of our population is young and adept at using mobile apps." The governor, while addressing the 13th Bank of the Future Forum, also underscored the SBP's

commitment to fostering innovation and digitalization within the banking sector and paving the way for a dynamic financial sector in Pakistan. He noted that rapid technological change has not only enabled banks to offer innovative financial services to customers but also empowered regulators to ensure compliance effectively and efficiently through advanced data collection and processing capabilities.

To facilitate the entry of IT-enabled, non-banking entities into the financial services industry, the governor said that the central bank issued the framework for establishing Digital Banks in Pakistan in 2022 and later in-principle approvals were

issued to five applicants who will shortly start pilot operations in the country. The Governor shared that as a result of SBP's efforts, today in Pakistan, we have around 59 million branchless banking wallets, 19 million mobile banking apps, another 3.7 million e-money wallets, and 12 million internet banking users.

Reflecting on SBP's journey of digital transformation starting in 2002 with the Temenos and ERP systems and a data warehouse, Jameel Ahmad said that the Real-Time Gross Settlement System, PRISM, was implemented in 2008 while SBP has recently established state-of-the-art, Tier-3 data center.

Malaysian PM's visit to Pakistan boosts bilateral trade: Iftikhar Ali Malik

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik has said that Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's three-day visit to Pakistan marks a significant step in strengthening the existing bilateral trade relations between the two nations. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, popular octogenarian trade leader of South Asia said that current visit holds substantial potential for enhancing economic cooperation, particularly in key sectors

of trade, investment, energy, agriculture and technology and activity would serve as an opportunity to deepen these relations further. He said visit would lead to the signing of new agreements and memorandum of understandings (MoUs) aimed at diversifying trade portfolios and increasing market access for two countries. He said his visit would underscore the importance of regional partnerships in overcoming economic challenges posed by the global market.

FCCI welcomes Pak-Russia barter trade deals

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) President Rehan Naseem Bharara has welcomed barter trade deals between Pakistan and Russia in the field of agriculture and urged the government to sign similar agreements with other neighboring countries including China. In a statement here on Wednesday, he said that under this barter trade agreement, Pakistan would import chickpea and lentil and in return it would export rice, mandarins and potatoes to Russia.

Govt committed to transform Pakistan into cashless economy: Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on Wednesday that the present government was committed to transform Pakistan into cashless economy. During a meeting with Ambassador of Ethiopia Jemal Beker Abdula, she said steps were being taken to promote digital payments in the country as it had an important role in driving economic growth and efficiency.

Matters of mutual interest, digitalization and e-governance were also discussed in the meeting, said a news release.

Shaza Fatima said that boost in relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia in IT and telecom sector was vital. She said the IT and telecommunication sector of Pakistan was rapidly progressing. Shaza Fatima said under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, steps were underway for digital transformation in the country. The society, economy and governance were being digitalised, she added.

The minister said that Ethiopia could benefit from Pakistan's experiences in the field of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).



PESHAWAR: Carpenters making part of a traditional bed (charpai) at his workplace in Dabgari area.

LCCI president discusses economic situation with JJ delegation

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Mian Abuzar Shad held a meeting with Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) delegation, led by its Lahore Ameer Ziauddin Ansari here on Wednesday and discussed the economic situation of the country. LCCI Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry also spoke, while Malik Shahid Aslam, Rashid Daud, Shahid Naveed and Engineer Ikhlaq were members of the delegation.

Key initiatives to promote entrepreneurship, create job opportunities and enhance collaboration aimed at fostering economic development in the region came under discussion. LCCI

President Mian Abuzar Shad underlined the importance of a strong partnership between the business community and political entities to address the challenges being faced by the economy. They discussed various initiatives that could enhance trade, promote entrepreneurship and create job opportunities for the youth.

He highlighted the crucial role of the private sector in driving economic development and expressed the LCCI's commitment to working with political leaders to create a conducive environment for business growth. He said that a stable economic framework is essential for attracting investments and improving the overall business climate.



## MoU signed to synergize efforts towards developing micro, SMEs, home based workers

PESHAWAR (APP): In order to continue its journey of evolution, Krafters signs an MoU with Handicrafts Association of Pakistan to synergize efforts towards development of Micro, Small & Medium enterprises and home based workers. Under the MoU both the organizations will endeavor to undertake projects and activities together with particular focus on digital financial inclusion, enterprise development and youth empowerment.

SMEs under Pakistan Innovation Fund (PIF) initiative, Krafters also arranged a session on "Digital Financial Inclusion" at TMA Haripur for women led enterprises of District Haripur. The session, organized in collaboration with JazzCash, focused on the importance of digital financial inclusion, onboarding and its effects towards fostering economic growth, reducing poverty, and empowering individuals. JazzCash team from Islamabad undertook a session on need of digital onboarding to the participants followed by registration of women led enterprises for jazz cash accounts enabling them to access financial services. "Digital financial inclusion plays a significant

role in empowering women-led businesses, particularly in developing regions, where traditional financial systems often marginalize women entrepreneurs," observed Syed Zahid Ali Shah, CEO Krafters while speaking at the training session. Krafters in partnership with JazzCash & Government Technical Teachers Training College (GTTC) Peshawar also held a session about "Digital Financial Inclusion" for women led enterprises on GTTC, Hayatabad Peshawar. The event besides creating awareness on digital financial inclusion also involved on-boarding of women entrepreneurs on hashtag #kraftersapp and hashtag #Jazzcash app to lead these women towards economic empowerment.



LAHORE: Disabled blind persons are holding protest demonstration for demanding employment, outside CM House in Lahore.

## PA body discuss measures to solve problems of labors

PESHAWAR (APP): The introductory meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Standing Committee on Labor was held here Wednesday wherein members were briefed by the Secretary of Labor about the performance of the department. The meeting was chaired by the chairman of the committee, Muhammad Rishad Khan, and attended by Labor Minister, Fazal Shakoor Khan, Gul Ibrahim, Ubaidur-Rehman, Muhammad Khurshid, Zar Alam and concerned officials.

Secretary labor and officials briefed the committee about the performance of the labor department and plans. Later, briefing the media about the meeting of the Standing Committee, Rishad Khan said matters including child labor, performance, and recruitment were discussed in the meeting. He said that efforts would be made to improve the performance of the department and added that a probe would be initiated to identify recruitments that were made on a political basis.

## PTI's education emergency slogan proves false

PESHAWAR (APP): In Dera Ismail Khan, the hometown of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 31 schools lack roofs, while Peshawar has 22, and Upper Dir has 22 such schools, according to media sources. Thousands of students in government schools across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are forced to study under the open sky. Overall, 516 primary, middle, and high schools in the province lack roofs. In settled districts, 344 government schools do not provide shelter to students. According to the Department of Education documents, 172 schools in the merged tribal districts are without roofs. In settled districts, 489 schools operate in rented buildings. In the merged districts, 138 boys' and 34 girls' schools lack roofs.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with PPP MNA Ali Jan Mazari and MPA Haji Abdul Rauf Khoso during meeting, held at CM House in Karachi.

## Amir Maqam visits home of martyr child 'Iqtidar' in Swabi for condolences

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Maqam on Wednesday visited the home of martyr child 'Iqtidar' in Swabi for condolences. Prominent PML-N politician and former member of the provincial assembly, Babar Saleem, warmly welcomed the federal minister. Both leaders met the family of martyr child Iqtidar, who lost his life in

the recent Swabi blast, and offered condolences. Amir Maqam comforted the grieving family, stating, "In this moment of sorrow, we stand with you. I will speak to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif regarding your financial assistance." Following this, Amir Maqam, along with Babar Saleem, visited Swabi Hospital to meet those injured in the blast and prayed for their swift recovery. The Medical Superintendent and other officials were also present during the visit.

## Constable killed on resistance in dacoity

FAISALABAD (APP): A police constable was killed on resistance in dacoity in Gulberg police limits on Wednesday. According to police, constable Nadeem s/o Sardar was returning home when unidentified armed bandits stopped him near his home situated in Gobindpura. The accused opened fire on Nadeem when he offered resistance. He was taken to hospital where he expired. The body was shifted to the mortuary for autopsy. RPO Dr Muhammad Abid has taken notice and sought a report from CPO Kamran ADil.

## Court seeks reply from NAB on Muhammad Khan Bhatti's application

LAHORE (APP): An accountability court on Wednesday sought a reply from the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) regarding an acquittal application filed by Muhammad Khan Bhatti, the former principal secretary to the former chief minister of Punjab, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi, in the Gujrat development projects reference. Accountability Court Judge Zubair Shahzad Kiyani conducted the proceedings, during which Chaudhry Parvez Elahi ap-

peared on a wheelchair, while Muhammad Khan Bhatti and other accused were also produced after being brought from jail. The counsel for the accused requested the court to decide the issue of jurisdiction before indicting their clients in the case. At this stage, Bhatti's counsel submitted an acquittal application, stating that his client had not taken any monetary benefit, and therefore, the court could not proceed against him.

## ANF foils drug smuggling bids; recovers 3.5 kg heroin, 7.2kg Ice

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in an operation conducted in Karachi foiled an attempt to smuggle 3.5 kg heroin and 7.2 kg Ice drug abroad through International consignments, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that ANF recovered heroin and Ice drug tactfully concealed in sweets packaging and the international consignments were being sent to four countries.

## Transport fares slashed in Punjab after fuel prices reduction: Azma Bokhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has said that public transport fares have further been slashed in Punjab for passing on relief to the common citizens, after a reduction in petroleum prices by the federal government for the fifth time in a row. The biggest fare cut, Rs190, has been applied to the Lahore-Karachi route, she said and added that Punjab is the only province where public fares are reduced whenever petrol and diesel prices dip down. Passengers have started receiving relief after the price reductions. She mentioned that other major reductions

include a Rs 50 cut for the Lahore-Peshawar route and a Rs 20 reduction for Lahore-Rawalpindi. Azma stated that the district administration and Transport department officials are present in the field to ensure the implementation of the fare reductions. New fare boards have been displayed at all bus terminals. "We are also grateful to the transporters in Punjab who cooperate with the provincial government," she added. She further noted that since Maryam Nawaz's government took office, fares in Punjab have been decreasing with the reduction in petrol prices.



KARACHI: Police officials carry out the combing search operation against criminals as security has been tightened in city due to security reasons, at Dalmia area in Karachi.

## Education worst affected merged districts: Tarakai

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Faisal Khan Tarakai on Wednesday said that education was the worst affected sector due to militancy in the all merged tribal districts. The terrorists had particularly targeted the girls' schools, which were now being made functional, he said while chairing a meeting to review the progress on education sector projects in the Khyber District. Besides, KP Minister for Religious Affairs Adnan Qadri, Member of the National Assembly Iqbal

Afridi and Member of the Provincial Assembly Abdul Ghani Afridi, officers of the District Education Department and students from the Khyber District attended the meeting. The meeting discussed in detail the situation of the education sector, completed and ongoing schemes and other projects. Minister Tarakai assured the elected public representatives that the second shift in area schools would be started within a week, so that all boys and girls of the district get the opportunity of getting education in their respective localities.

# International News

## UN Security Council calls emergency meeting amid aggravation in Middle East

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: A day after Iran struck back against Israel after launching a slew of missile attacks in Tel Aviv following killing of top leadership of Hezbollah by the Zionist state, the United Nations Security Council called an emergency meeting on Wednesday to discuss ways to avoid escalation in the Middle East. Recent episodes of bloody confrontation between warring parties of the Middle East brought the matters on edge, culminating into a full-blown conflict in the powder keg region of West Asia. United Nations Secretary General António Guterres once again called for an immediate ceasefire while British Prime Minister Kier Starmer condemned Iran's attack on Israel by reaffirming Britain's unwavering support for Israel's defence. The Brit-

ish PM urged Iranian leadership to abandon support for proxies aiming to target the Zionist state. Earlier, United States of America President Joe Biden also vowed to stand by Israel come what may. Iran fired a salvo of ballistic missiles at Israel in retaliation to the latter's campaign against Tehran's Hezbollah allies in Lebanon and the killing of its chief and that of Hamas. Alarms sounded across Israel and explosions could be heard in Jerusalem and the Jordan River valley after Israelis piled into bomb shelters. Reporters on state television lay flat on the ground during live broadcasts. Reuters journalists saw missiles intercepted in the airspace of neighbouring Jordan. Israeli media reports said as many as 100 missiles had been launched.

After about an hour, the military announced there was no longer a threat and "it was decided that it is now permitted to leave protected spaces in all areas across the country", with a "large number" of Iranian missiles intercepted. Reports said between 150 and 200 missiles had been fired in the attack. It was Iran's second on Israel after a missile and drone attack in April in response to a deadly Israeli air strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus. Israel vowed to retaliate with an army spokesman saying it would respond at the time and place of its choosing. "This attack will have consequences. We have plans, and we will operate at the place and time we decide," said Israeli military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari.



Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani meets with Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, in Doha, Qatar.

## Palestinian officials say 51 killed in Israeli strikes on southern Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
DEIR AL-BALAH: Israeli strikes killed at least 51 people in southern Gaza overnight, including women and children, as the military launched ground operations in the hard-hit city of Khan Younis, Palestinian medical officials said Wednesday. Israel has continued to strike what it says are militant targets across Gaza nearly a year after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack ignited the war there, and even as attention has shifted to Lebanon and

Iran. Israel has launched ground operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Tehran fired ballistic missiles on Israel late Tuesday. Separately, Hezbollah said its fighters clashed with Israeli troops in the Lebanese border town of Oadaiisheh, forcing them to retreat. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military or independent confirmation of the fighting, which would mark the first ground combat since Israeli troops crossed the border this week.

## Russia rules out nuclear talks with US given its stance on NATO expansion

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russia has dismissed the possibility of nuclear talks with the United States citing Washington's stance on NATO expansion, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Wednesday. "We see no point in dialogue with Washington without respect for Russia's fundamental interests."

## Unexploded US bomb causes minor blast at Japan airport

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYUSHU: An unexploded US bomb caused a minor blast at a regional Japanese airport, officials said on Wednesday, with reports saying that the device likely dated from World War II. Footage on Japanese media showed a cloud of dust rising from a blast on a taxiway at Miyazaki Airport on the island of Kyushu. The airport in southern Japan originated in 1943 as an Imperial Japanese Navy base, sending dozens of "kamikaze" air-

craft on suicide missions. There were no reports of injuries but dozens of flights were cancelled. The airport confirmed part of a taxiway had caved in. "After investigation with the Self-Defense Forces, we concluded that it is an explosion of a US unexploded bomb," a transport ministry official told AFP. The official added that it was not known whether the bomb was dropped during World War II, though local media reported it likely was.

## Bangladesh factories reopen amid garment sector unrest

**Monitoring Desk**  
DHAKA: Most garment factories in Bangladesh reopened on Tuesday, a day after violent protests over a pay hike left one worker dead and several others injured, officials said. Bangladesh, one of the world's largest garment producers and a supplier to western brands such as H&M, Zara and Carrefour, has been facing widespread protests in recent weeks, leading to the closure of dozens of factories. The protests have worsened an already significant production backlog.

## Iran's president visits Qatar, aims to rally opposition to Israeli crimes

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian arrived in Qatar on Wednesday for bilateral talks and a summit at which he said he hopes to enlist Asian countries' help in preventing what he called "Israeli crimes" in the Middle East. Starting his first trip to Qatar as president, Pezeshkian criticised Israel over the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. Iran blames Israel for Haniyeh's assassination on July 31. Israel has neither claimed nor denied responsibility for his death. Since then, Israel has assassinated the leader of the Iran-backed Hezbollah group in Lebanon, Hassan Nasrallah, and sent troops

into southern Lebanon on what it called a limited operation. Iran responded by firing a barrage of missiles at Israel on Tuesday. "We also want security and peace. It was Israel that assassinated Haniyeh in Tehran," Pezeshkian was quoted saying on his arrival in Qatar by Iran's Student News Network. "Europeans and the US said if we do not act, there will be a peace in Gaza in one week. We waited for them to have peace but they increased their killing". Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose country faces conflicts against both Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

## Myanmar civil war fuels surge in cross-border drug trade, Thailand official says

**Monitoring Desk**  
BANGKOK: Thailand has seen a surge in illegal drugs trafficked from neighbouring Myanmar and a sharp increase in methamphetamine and heroin seizures, as a civil war adds fuel to the regional drug trade, a senior Thai counter-narcotics official said. Apikit Ch.Rojprasert, deputy secretary-general of Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), said the northern region remains the main trafficking route into Thailand, with dealers going through the mountains or on the Mekong river to bring in methamphetamine tablets and crystal meth, also known as ice. Thai authorities say organised crime networks have allied with militias and rebel groups to set up "super labs" in Myanmar's Shan and Kachin States. A junta spokesperson declined to comment for this story but Myanmar's ruling junta has previously said it is committed to working with neighbouring coun-

tries to tackle narcotics. "Because of the armed conflict, the drug trade is one of the factors used to fund weapon purchases or drive the fighting forces," Apikit told Reuters in an interview. "We have to be vigilant about crimes that are linked to drug trafficking and work with neighbouring countries." Myanmar is locked in a civil war, with the military fighting on multiple fronts and losing territory to an armed resistance movement loosely allied with several ethnic minority rebel groups. The military took over the Myanmar government in 2021. Seizure of meth tablets in the first eight and a half months of this year in Thailand's northern provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son increased by 172% from the amount seized in all of 2023 to 346 million pills, ONCB data showed. Seizure of crystal meth in those provinces increased by 39% over the same period to 6.48 tons, the data showed.

## Iran's Khamenei warned Nasrallah of Israeli plot to kill him, sources say

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned Hezbollah leader Syed Hassan Nasrallah to flee Lebanon days before he was killed in an Israeli strike and is now deeply worried about Israeli infiltration of senior government ranks in Tehran, three Iranian sources said. In the immediate aftermath of the attack on Hezbollah's booby-trapped pagers on Sept 17, Khamenei sent a message with an envoy to beseech the Hezbollah secretary general to leave for Iran, citing intelligence reports that suggested Israel had operatives within Hezbollah and was planning to kill him, one of the sources, a senior Iranian official, told Reuters. The messenger, the

official said, was a senior Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander, Brigadier General Abbas Nilforoushan, who was with Nasrallah in his bunker when it was hit by Israeli bombs and was also killed. Khamenei, who has remained in a secure location inside Iran since Saturday, personally ordered a barrage of around 200 missiles to be fired at Israel on Tuesday, a senior Iranian official said. The attack was retaliation for the deaths of Nasrallah and Nilforoushan, the Revolutionary Guards said in a statement. The statement also cited the July killing of Hamas Leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, and Israel's attacks on Lebanon. Israel has not claimed responsibility for Haniyeh's death.

## Almost 1.3 million US customers still without power from Hurricane Helene

**Monitoring Desk**  
FLORIDA: Almost 1.3 million homes and businesses were still without power in the US Southeast and Midwest on Wednesday after Helene slammed into the Florida Panhandle as a major hurricane on Sept 26, according to data from PowerOutage.us. Those outages were down from around 1.7 million on Tuesday as utilities continued to restore power. In total, the storm knocked out service to around 5.5 million customers, predominantly in the Southeast. Helene's winds, rain and storm surge killed more than 160 people. The utility with the most outages was US energy company Duke Energy in the Carolinas with about 323,000 customers still out in South Carolina and 299,000 still out in North Carolina, according to PowerOutage.us.



## PM lauds Dr Zakir for global Islamic outreach efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday lauded eminent scholar Dr Zakir Naik's exceptional efforts in spreading the true essence of Holy Quran and Hadith, besides promoting Islamic values worldwide.

The prime minister warmly welcomed Dr Zakir, expressing his admiration for his scholarly work.

He said the entire Ummah was proud of him for projecting the real image of Islam across the world. It was heartening to note that a vast majority of youth listened to his lectures. PM Shehbaz said that he had personally benefited from Dr Zakir's lectures, enriching himself from the valuable teachings of Islam.

He said that the people of Pakistan fully admired the great personality of Dr Naik and were happy over his presence in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Renowned Islamic Scholar Dr. Zakir Naik calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## GoB determined to resolve problems being faced by public: Khetran

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering (PHE), Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran has stated that the provincial government is determined to resolve the problems being faced by general public in the province.

In this regard, practical steps are being taken, stated the Minister for PHE, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran while speaking to different delegations who called on him here on Wednesday.

Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran said that welfare and development of the people is priority of the provincial government. For this purpose, we



GWADAR: Director General Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) Shafqat Shahwani presenting souvenir to Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti

## Govt to privatize PIA by end of year: FM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has reaffirmed the government's commitment to privatizing Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and three power distribution companies (Discos) before the end of 2024.

In a media interview he said that the incumbent government will complete the privatisation of the national carrier along with three power distribution companies (Discos) before 2024 culminates.

The privatization of PIA, initially set to conclude by October 1, has

been postponed to October 31 due to low bidder interest, ongoing court cases, aging fleet issues, and civil aviation concerns.

He further said that government is working on privatization of sick units, and power sector reforms and for this, all necessary steps have been taken to achieve the objectives.

The outsourcing of Islamabad and Karachi airport would be made in phases, he added. Right sizing and restructuring of some ministries and departments would also be made before the next fiscal year, he stated.

## Step afoot to activate MERC 1122 for medical aid to people, says DG

QUETTA (APP): Director General (DG) of Medical Emergency Response Centers (MERC) 1122 Dr Mir Noorullah Musakhail on Wednesday said that measures were being afoot to activate MERC 1122 and expand it to other National Highways for the provision of first medical aid to people in case of accidents.

Talking to APP, he said that about 22 centers of MERC 1122 are fully operational on national highways across the province.

He said that the MERC 1122 would be further activated and expanded to other highways under the leadership of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti. Dr. Mir Noorullah Musakhail said that in October 2019, Medical Emergency Response Centers

(MERC) 1122 were established.

From that day till today, the fully trained staff of MERC 1122 provided a first response in case of accidents or emergencies on national highways N25, N50, N85, N65 and N70 of Balochistan, he said.

From October 2019 to September 2024, Merck has collected data of accidents on the national highways of the province so that these data are being tested, he said.

He said that 53457 accidents have occurred in Balochistan during the last 5 years, in which 73084 people were injured and 1327 people lost their lives.

He said that 24206 OPDs have been conducted in 1122 MERC centers so far and first aid has been



ISLAMABAD: Ahead of the mid-October Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit, a high-level review meeting on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects was convened under the chairmanship of Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal.

## CPEC projects' review meeting held ahead of SCO Summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahead of the mid-October Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit, a high-level review meeting on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects was convened under the chairmanship of Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal here Wednesday.

The meeting brought together Secretaries and Additional Secretaries from all relevant ministries, reflecting a unified and collaborative approach towards enhancing the bilateral relationship with China, according to press release issued by planning ministry. During the session, an extensive briefing was given on the progress of ongoing CPEC projects. In anticipation of the forthcoming visit of the Chinese Premier, the discussions centered on amplifying cross-sectoral cooperation and preparing a comprehensive action

plan aimed at advancing bilateral economic and developmental goals.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the essential role of all ministries in the successful implementation of CPEC, emphasizing that collaboration across government sectors is crucial to unlock the full potential of this flagship initiative.

He stressed the importance of leveraging the upcoming high-level engagement with China to advance business-to-business (B2B) investments, secure concrete deliverables, and showcase Pakistan as an investment destination.

In this context, all ministries were urged to finalize their preparations and proposals to ensure impactful outcomes from the visit.

Minister Iqbal further underscored the urgency of achieving substantive advancements in priority sectors such as infrastructure development, road connect-

## Govt. decides against taking loan from commercial bank at 11% interest rate

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has 'decided' against taking loans from commercial bank at higher interest rate, sources said Wednesday.

As per sources, the finance ministry has decided not to proceed with borrowing from a commercial bank at an 11% interest rate. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reportedly directed the finance minister to avoid taking expensive loans.

Although an agreement had been made with commercial banks for a loan at 11% interest, the government has now decided not to take the funds. In case of a financing gap, loans will be sought from other sources at lower interest rates, the sources aware about the development said.



GWADAR: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti distributing cheques among flood affected of tehsil Ormara. MNA Malik Shah Gorgage, MPA Maulana Hidayatur Rehman and other officials are also present

## Attacker and child killed in firing on Tank police

PESHAWAR (APP): A passerby child was killed when a man started firing at a police van in Wazirabad area of Tank district on Wednesday.

Police said the incident occurred in Wazirabad area where area SHO and his team were on routine patrolling. A man whose identity could not be immediately ascertained, started firing at the police van.

As a result of indiscriminate firing, a pedestrian child was killed while in retaliatory fire, police also killed the attacker.

Police said the SHO and police team remained unhurt in the incident.

## Adopting innovative technologies pivotal for enhancing trade: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Wednesday said that Pakistan can achieve higher business standards by adopting new technologies and upgrading modern equipment.

He emphasized that embracing innovative technologies would create opportunities for growth in trade and business.

## On directive of CM Sick girl operated successful at Children Hospital Quetta

QUETTA (APP): On special directive of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti and Health Minister, a little girl belonging to Musakhail was successfully operated by Prof. Surgeon Ghulam Nabi Nasir, Head of Peds Surgery at Children's Hospital Quetta on Wednesday.

Balochistan Chief Minister and Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar had taken notice of the sick girl after viral video of the sick small girl on social media. According to press release, the sick girl was admitted to the Children's Hospital and treatment was started.

Today, Surgeon Ghulam Nabi Nasir, Head of Peds Surgery at

Children's Hospital Quetta, performed a two and a half hour Sacrococcygeal teratoma (SCT) surgery on the girl. The tumor to be removed through the operation was 5 kg.

He said that Sacrococcygeal teratoma is a rare tumor that develops under the spine near the tailbone (coccyx). SCTs are congenital, meaning they are present at birth and are usually benign.

SCT occurs in about one in every 35,000 babies, making it the most common tumor found in newborns, he mentioned. The girl's parents also went to Punjab for treatment, but due to lack of money for the operation, they were unable to treat the girl.



CHITRA: Ameer Jamaat Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman addressing a public gathering

## Special Sec. Health announces: Joint Task Force of Health and Livestock Depts to be formed for prevention of Congo virus

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The Special Secretary Health, Muejibur Rehman Qambrani has announced that Joint Task Force of the Health and Livestock departments would be formed for prevention of the congo virus in the province.

The Special Secretary Health said that the Joint Task Force would hold programmes for awareness of the general public against the Congo virus in different areas of the province. He was chairing a meeting on prevention of the Congo virus here on Wednesday.

The Director General of Health, Dr. Amin Khan Mandokhail, Provincial Head of Malaria Control Programme / Vector Borne Diseases, Balochistan, Dr.

## Arshad Bugti transferred; Muzaffar posted as Secretary WDD

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The senior bureaucrat of Grade-20, Arshad Hussain Bugti, serving as the Secretary Women Development Department has been transferred and directed to report in the Services and General Administration Department on Wednesday.

According to the official notification issued here by S&GAD, the Commissioner BESSI, Muzaffar Zeeshan Lehari has been transferred and posted as the Secretary Women Development Department.

Similarly, Saeed Ahmed Umrani, who was awaiting posting orders, has been posted as the Commissioner BESSI with immediate effect.

## PTA indicates end of internet slowdown by end of October

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has indicated that the ongoing internet disruptions in the country are expected to be resolved by the end of October. PTA Chairman Major General (ret'd) Hafeezur Rahman addressed journalists, reaffirming that the authority does not intend to slow down internet services further.

Rahman noted that there has been a 93% compliance rate with social media platforms, with the exception of X (formerly Twitter), which is currently only complying with 27% of regulations. He clarified that decisions regarding the closure of X are made by the federal government.

## Bakht Muhammad Kakar says GoB making every possible effort to improve health sector

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Health, Bakht Muhammad Kakar has stated that the provincial government is making every possible effort to bring improvement in health sector of the province, as per the vision of Chief Minister, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti.

He said that our aim is to provide quality and easy healthcare facilities to the people. In this regard, improvement of the basic infrastructure and provision of modern medical equipment is being ensured.

This was stated by the Provincial Minister for Health during his visit to Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Institute of Cardiology on Tuesday night.

The management of Institute of Cardiology



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffer Khan Mandokhail in a group photo with a delegation of PML (N) Youth Wing led by Sajjad Raisani

## Perimetric Security System comes in action at Gwadar Port, 675 cameras installed

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a major development, the Perimetric Security System (PSS), with the installation of 675 high-tech security cameras, has been put into full operation in the jurisdiction of the Gwadar Port area. With this significant move, the Perimetric Security System, costing Rs 252.350 million, has instilled a sense of heightened security coverage for Gwadar Port, allied infrastructures, buildings of Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), Gwadar Free Zone South, and Gwadar Free Zone North.

According to a Gwadar Pro's report, the PSS is a built-in multipurpose system that detects threats, performs surveillance, and analyzes attack patterns, installed with the objective of ensuring a safe and secure environment in Gwadar Port and the adjoining Free Zone.

Chairman GPA



QUETTA: PB-43 candidate & Parliamentary Secretary GAD Mir Kiliqat Lehari along with Deputy Commissioner Saad bin Asad listening problems of people during Khuli Kachehri.

## Deputy Chairman Senate urges political unity for national progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate, Syedaal Khan, on Thursday called on all political parties to play an active role in steering the nation out of its current crises.

Speaking during a meeting with a delegation that included Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, Senator Bushra Anjum Butt; former Member of the National Assembly, Agha Syed Mahmood Shah; Balochistan Provincial Assembly Member, Fazal Qadir Sherani; former District Nazim, Mir Nizamuddin Lehari; along with tribal elders, social workers, journalists, and students, he stressed that the country cannot afford political instability and un-



KILLA SAIFULLAH: Provincial Ombudsman Nazar Muhammad Baloch talking with students during his visit to Government Girls High School