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PPP won't yield to any pressure on contentious judicial package: Bilawal

Independent Report

QUETTA: As the coalition government has yet to gain enough parliamentary strength for its contentious constitutional amendments, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari reiterated his party's firm stance to bring judicial reforms without accepting pressure from any side.

"This is not possible that we do not accomplish a necessary task by succumbing to someone's pressure," said Bilawal while addressing an event of the Peoples Lawyers Forum in Quetta on Monday.

He claimed that the PPP was told to withdraw the recently proposed constitutional amendments

or in another case, it should take back the 18th Amendment. The PPP chief claimed that his party had achieved successes via 18th constitutional amendment, including by renaming Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province among others.

He said that the existing mechanism of judicial appointments was not in favour for the nation but only for judges. He stressed the necessity of reforms citing the existing procedure of appointments in the judiciary.

He further emphasised forming a parliamentary committee comprising the treasury and the opposition lawmakers to decide on judges' appointment. Bilawal suggested that a

judge would not be appointed if the recommended name fails to win a majority in the committee.

He went on to say that the country's judicial system could not serve justice to the victims of terrorism and also highlighted the huge pendency of cases in the different courts.

The PPP chairman advocated the formation of a constitutional court in the country with equal representation of all provinces. He added that the time has come to rectify the judicial shortcomings.

He was of the view that not only in Islamabad, constitutional courts should also be established in provinces which is a necessary step to dispatch timely justice on a provincial level.



QUETTA: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti distributing cheques among flood affected during a ceremony.

SC dismisses LHC's verdict regarding election tribunals

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday turned down the verdict of Lahore High Court (LHC) regarding election tribunals of Punjab while accepting the appeal of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

A five-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa announced the unanimous verdict.

The court, in its 11-page judgment authored by the chief justice, said, "We have also received 'Report' dated 18 July 2024 from the Registrar which confirms that the matter was amicably resolved between the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court and the ECP. And, we are informed that sufficient number of election tribunals will be appointed/constituted immediately. Since the matter has been amicably resolved there is no need to decide these cases. "We want to record our

appreciation that the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, who holds an important constitutional office, and the ECP, which is a constitutional body, have amicably settled the matter. Undoubtedly, they realized their respective constitutional and legal responsibilities and rose to the occasion to do the needful.

"Therefore, since the matter has been amicably resolved to the satisfaction of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court and the ECP adjudication was not called for, resultantly, the impugned judgment is set aside and also the notification dated 12 June 2024 issued pursuant thereto. Moreover, though we do not expect, however, since such a dispute may one day have to be adjudicated upon we hold that anything stated in the impugned judgment should not be referred to before any court."

President visits Dar's residence to condole on death of his elder brother

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari visited the residence of Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad today to offer condolence on the death of his elder brother.

The President offered feteiha and prayed for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also accompanied the President.

Malaysian PM due in Islamabad tomorrow for 3-day visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim is scheduled to arrive here on Wednesday for a three-day official visit to Pakistan from October 2-4, on the invitation of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

He will be accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials, according to a curtain-raiser issued by the Foreign Office.

During the visit, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will meet Prime Minister Shehbaz wherein 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.

Toshakhana-II case: PTI founder, Bushra Bibi's bail plea rejected

RAWALPINDI (INP): A special judge central on Monday rejected the post-arrest bail pleas of former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi in Toshakhana-II case.

The pleas were heard by Special Judge Central Shahrukh Arjumand at Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi.

Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi were both present at the special court established inside Adiala Jail.

On July 13, Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi were arrested in a fresh National Accountability Bureau (NAB) reference related to Toshakhana, hours after their acquittal in the Iddat case.

The NAB team headed by Deputy Director Mohsin Haroon arrested Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi from the Adiala Jail.

The development came after the Islamabad district and sessions court accepted the appeals filed by former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi against their conviction in the Iddat case.

1.37mn viewers watch live address PM leaves behind major world leaders in speech viewership on UN's YouTube

ISLAMABAD (APP): A total of 1.37 million viewers glued to the UN official YouTube channel to watch Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's recent address at the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 79) which ranked top among the world leaders' speeches streamed live across the globe.

According to the data shared by Center for Public Opinion Research, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's address was among the most watched events at the global stage and the number of viewers even surpassed those who watched the speeches of different world leaders.

The prime minister became the most prominent world leader attracting a large number of viewers. The world leaders' addresses were streamed live on the UN official YouTube channel whereas on Al Jazeera's Tiktok account, the prime minister's address was watched live by a total of 1.6 million viewers.

President Asif Ali Zardari offering Feteiha over the sad demise of the brother of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, in Islamabad.

OMAN: Federal Minister for Religious affairs and inter-faith Harmony Chaudhary Salik Hussain meeting with Oman's Minister of Auqaf and Religious affairs Mohammad bin Said bin Khalfan Al-Mamari during his three day visit to Oman.



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Pakistan, Oman to strengthen interfaith harmony through MoUs, bilateral cooperation

CHAUDHRY SALIK HUSSAIN SAYS

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Monday emphasized the need for Pakistan and Oman to work together in promoting peace, education, religious harmony, and the eradication of Islamophobia.

He expressed these remarks during a meeting with Special Assistant to the Grand Mufti of Oman, Sheikh Dr. Kahlan Al-Kharousi.

Salik highlighted that fostering interfaith harmony was a key characteristic of Pakistani society and a top priority for the government. He reiterated that promoting interfaith harmony was not only a hallmark of Pakistan but also central to the government's agenda.

Salik said Pakistan and Oman shared deep cultural, historical, and religious ties, making their collaboration in religious education and the exchange of scholars and important texts. He stressed the importance of highlighting shared human values across different religions and working together to advance religious tolerance.

Chaudhry Salik Hussain says Pakistan, Oman to strengthen interfaith harmony through MoUs, bilateral cooperation

Pakistan Embassy in Beijing observes Defence & Martyrs Day

BEIJING (APP): The Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing on Monday hosted a ceremony to commemorate Defence and Martyrs Day to pay rich tributes to the valor, resolve and ultimate sacrifices made by members of the Pakistan armed forces to defend their homeland.

The event was attended by a large number of dignitaries including senior Chinese civil and military officials, members of the diplomatic corps, defense attaches, media, members of Pakistani community and officers of the embassy. Air Marshal Jia Zhigang, Deputy Commander Peoples Liberation Army (Air Force) of China was the chief guest.

The ceremony commenced with playing of the national anthem, followed by a moment of silence to pay homage to the martyrs who laid down their lives in the defense of Pakistan.

Addressing the ceremony, Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalil Hashmi underscored the strong bond between Pakistan and China, emphasizing the deep-rooted partnership and cooperation in the field of defence between the two countries.

BEIJING: Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Khalil Hashmi with Air Marshal Jia Zhigang, Deputy Commander Peoples Liberation Army (Air Force) of China cutting the cake at a solemn ceremony commemorating Defence & Martyrs Day honoring the bravery and sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

Renowned scholar Dr. Zakir Naik arrives in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Eminent religious scholar and preacher Dr. Zakir Naik was warmly received by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-



faith Harmony Dr. Syed Attair Rehman on his arrival at Islamabad International Airport on Monday.

According to the ministry spokesperson, Parliamentary Secretary for Religious Affairs Shamsir Ali Mazari and Prime Minister Youth Program Chairman Rana Mashhood were also present at the airport to welcome Dr. Naik. His visit, Dr. Zakir Naik is scheduled to address public gatherings in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore and will also lead Friday prayers and address gatherings during his stay in Pakistan.

In addition to public events, Naik is expected to meet senior government officials and participate in various public engagements as his visit is scheduled to continue till October 28, 2024.



President Asif Ali Zardari offering Feteiha over the sad demise of the brother of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, in Islamabad.

Justice Munib refuses to show up for Article 63-A hearing

ISLAMABAD (INP): A dramatic scene unfolded in the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday as Justice Munib Akhtar did not show up for hearing of appeals in the Article 63-A case.

A five-member bench led by Justice Qazi Faez Isa took up the appeals on Monday. The bench also included Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Mandokhail and Justice Mazhar Alam.

Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa announced that Justice Munib had written to inform him that he would not be able to attend proceedings. The proceedings were then adjourned.

CJP Isa added that the bench would try to convince Justice Munib to attend the proceedings on Tuesday. The Supreme Court

had previously scheduled the review appeals on the interpretation of Article 63-A for September 23rd.

The court's May 17, 2022, decision on a presidential reference regarding Article 63-A stated that a vote cast by a defected member of parliament against party policy would not be counted, and that the duration of disqualification would be determined by parliament.

This 3-2 decision, led by then-Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, saw Justices Mazhar Alam Miankhal and Jamal Khan Mandokhail dissenting.

The majority opinion, written by Justice Munib Akhtar, was challenged through various review petitions that have remained pending until now.

DPM Dar chairs meetings to review JMC, exploration, production sector issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Monday chaired an inter-ministerial to review preparations for the forthcoming 12th Session of Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) with the United Arab Emirates. The JMC will be held in Abu Dhabi in October, a press release said.

Separately, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister also chaired the 4th meeting of the committee established by the prime minister on addressing key exploration and production sector issues, including circular debt resolution and re-gasified liquefied natural gas price rationalization.

Govt reduces prices of petrol, diesel

Petrol price slashed by Rs2.07; igh-speed diesel price slashed by Rs3.40 per litre

ISLAMABAD (APP): Government has reduced the prices of petrol by 2.07 rupees per liter and high speed diesel by 3.40 rupees per liter for next fortnight.

According to a notification issued by the Finance Division, the new price of petrol is 247.03 per liter and diesel Rs246.29 per liter. The price of Kerosene oil has also been reduced to 3.57 rupees per liter and light diesel by 1.03 per liter.

The new prices will be applicable from midnight tonight.

On the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, government has reduced the price of petrol by 28.57 rupees and diesel by 37.51 rupees during last two months. The fruits of the reduction of petroleum products are being transferred to the masses. The Prime Minister has been consistently focusing on providing relief to the people since the incumbent government came into power.



BEIJING: Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Khalil Hashmi with Air Marshal Jia Zhigang, Deputy Commander Peoples Liberation Army (Air Force) of China cutting the cake at a solemn ceremony commemorating Defence & Martyrs Day honoring the bravery and sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

Imran announces nationwide demos to show solidarity with judiciary

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan has announced demos nationwide to show solidarity with the judiciary.

The protests will be held in Mianwali, Faisalabad and Bahawalpur on October 2, the former prime minister said in a

message on Monday. He said the protest will be held in Lahore at Minar-e-Pakistan on October 5 and in D Chokw on Friday.

Taking a swipe at the government, the ex-PM said they (coalition government) want him 'crushed under the London plan.' He added: "I have been in jail

for a long time. My wife has been kept in prison for many months. They want me shattered. We have always protested peacefully. Our women workers are in jails."

He went on: "Ali Amin Gandapur marched towards Islamabad and awakened the people.

No need of military operation in Balochistan: CM

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti says educated Baloch youth being entrapped and made fuel of terrorism; welcomes Adeela Baloch on joining national mainstream giving up move of suicide bombing; asserts we would not let Baloch youth use against state; says we send girls to Oxford while terrorists entrap & send them for attacks. Killing of labourers in Panjur condemnnable

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has categorically stated that there is no need of military operation in the province, however, we would eliminate the terrorist elements through smart intelligence base operations (IBOs).

He said that there always happen to be consequences of the military operations, which include mass migration of dwellers from the areas causing problems to them. So, we have no plan to conduct military operations in the province.

The Chief Minister said that the educated Baloch youth are being entrapped and made fuel of



war of terrorism while on the other hand, we are educating them by providing opportunities of higher education on the other hand.

He said that we would not let Baloch youth use against the state. He also said that we send the girls to Oxford while terrorists entrap them and send for attacks.

Condemning the incident of brutal killing of seven labourers in Panjur, the Chief Minister said that it is very sorrowful in which they (labourers) were made soft target.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti was addressing press conference along with the Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms. Ghazala Gola

at the Chief Minister's secretariat on Monday morning.

Also present in the press conference were Adeela Baloch, who had given up suicide bombing, and his father.

The Chief Minister on the occasion welcomed Adeela Baloch on joining national mainstream and thanked her on giving up suicide bombing.

It may be mentioned here that Adeela Baloch had been recovered by the security agencies in Turbat last week, who otherwise was trapped by the miscreants to become a suicide bomber.

The Chief Minister maintained that he deemed it necessary to invite Adeela Baloch in CM House and

said that everyone should know that how terrorists got done suicide bombing engaging Baloch youngsters by entrapping them.

He said that credit of saving lives from suicide bombing goes to father of Adeela Baloch, who contacted the government when found his daughter missing for sometimes.

He pointed out that many Baloch youngsters including girls and boys are present in the camps of terrorists.

He said that the parents of young people should keep strict vigil on activities of their children and inform the government and its institutions if they (children) are found missing having no connection with them.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Legal games

The ECP continues to dither. Despite the strong rebuke issued to it about two weeks earlier, it is still confused about how or whether the Supreme Court's verdict in the reserved seats case should be implemented.

Having delayed implementing the ruling straight away when it was issued, it has now found a new excuse — a law to deny the PTI its rightful share of reserved seats, bulldozed through parliament in the month of August — behind which to take cover. 'If the Supreme Court's verdict is implemented, it would be a violation of the Elections (Second) Amendment Act of 2024; perhaps the apex court should clarify the effect of this new law in the interests of justice first,' the ECP is now arguing.

At the same time, it wants the Supreme Court to stay the operation of its clarification order, issued on Sept 14, till all 'confusion' is cleared up. Further, it has cited a letter from National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, which states that since the Supreme Court's ruling is based on 'an old law', it no longer needs to be implemented.

While the ECP has made a big show of its righteousness and respect for court rulings in its new petition, it has not explained why it reasoned that the detailed ruling issued by the Supreme Court goes against existing law. It is also strange for it to be relying so heavily on a letter issued by the Speaker to interpret what the new law states.

Is the National Assembly Speaker judge and jury or a court of law that his word will now prevail over legal judgments? The question of 39 lawmakers already notified by the ECP after the initial ruling as members of PTI's parliamentary party also remains. What is their status now? Has the ECP accepted the Speaker's letter as the word of the law and de-notified them?

Those who have been observing the ECP's conduct in these past few months believe that this fresh application for clarification has little to do with its respect for rules and procedures or concerns for democratic principles. They fear it is nothing more than a new ploy to buy both itself and parliament more time. They point to its refusal to implement the ruling in full when it was first released, which is what gave the government enough time to come up with new legislation aimed at rendering the verdict ineffective. Now, a 'constitutional package' aimed at debilitating the judiciary is about to be reintroduced, after which the possibility of such 'inconveniences' being raised by the courts will be forever put to bed. The ECP should stop playing games and take a clear position. It should not expect sympathy from the courts at this point.

Ungoverned areas

Mohammad Ali Babakhel

The war against terrorism has put ungoverned and weakly governed spaces into the limelight, and governance in such areas is being debated. Globally, various options, including kinetic, administrative, and constitutional steps, have been introduced. However, the consequences of kinetic approaches include the displacement of tribes and de-tribalisation.

In a changed situation, the question is whether merely rebranding the old apparatus will serve the purpose. The real challenge for any state is to convince the locals that the new arrangements are better than the previous ones. While dealing with such situations, states are under intense pressure as they have to establish the rule of law and ensure socioeconomic development. Furthermore, in an era of disinformation, governments also have to counter the propaganda of miscreants.

Establishing state authority in ungoverned or weakly governed spaces is a challenge for modern nascent states that require a balance between establishing order and authority. A policy focused on a give-and-take relationship with a tribe, with more giving than taking, has proven to be the best approach. The state must consider its capacity to expand its authority — the lower the capacity, the longer it will take.

Ungoverned areas can be defined as geographic regions that are either beyond the access of central authority or have weak administrative control. Besides other reasons, the lack of state authority over its territory is a reason for the concentration of militants in ungoverned areas. The existence of 'un-

governed spaces' within a state's borders challenges the state's authority, particularly its legitimate right to violence. Therefore, conflicts between tribes often seem uncontrollable, negatively impacting other parts of the state.

The last four decades have also witnessed the migration of transnational terrorist networks into areas lacking central authority. Therefore, in a few such states, there is a debate on how to supersede tribal customs with the rule of law.

Establishing state authority in tribal regions remains challenging, as tribes accustomed to governing their own affairs often resist external control. The state's success depends on convincing these groups that national laws serve their interests better than traditional customs, while also managing conflicts that arise when tribes are forced to relinquish autonomy.

Pakhtun tribes can be classified as nomadic, sedentary hill tribes, or sedentary plains tribes. Nomadic tribes, as they remain in transit, never fully comply with state laws, while sedentary hill tribes adhere passionately to Pashtunwali and prefer to avoid state authority.

Due to their mobility and tightly knit social bonds, isolated tribes have historically resisted state authority. Even the Pakhtuns in plain areas resisted the use of force by outsiders, as independence has been their historical norm.

To manage the Pakhtun tribes, British colonial authorities introduced policies like the Close Border and Frontier Crimes Regulation, aiming to control hill tribes indirectly. These efforts, however, were met with resistance, as Pakhtuns rejected external authority and pre-

ferred tribal customs.

To strengthen the buffer between India and Afghanistan, a new Forward Policy was implemented, focusing on Balochistan and aiming to co-opt the tribes within designated settlement areas. The effectiveness of the policy could not be repeated in the NWFP, but it did result in establishing order among the tribes.

By delegating certain functions, political agents administered tribes through maliks who were paid allowances and incentives. The British underestimated the Pakhtuns' passion for independence, as the hill tribes viewed indirect rule as a way to provide administrative space to the British. The malik system helped them maintain an acceptable level of order but failed to establish authority and deterred them from directly engaging with the tribes, which contributed to its lack of success.

To address weakly governed areas in the NAP, the third point states that militants will not be allowed to operate; point 12 recommends Fata reforms, point 16 mentions operations in Karachi, and point 17 emphasises reconciliation in Balochistan. In the revised NAP, the first point stresses intolerance for militancy, point 10 focuses on reconciliation in Balochistan, and point 11 highlights reforms in the merged areas.

By drafting NAP, the state has fulfilled its legal obligation. Achieving such a goal is the joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments. The post-18th Amendment scenario warrants magnanimity on the part of all stakeholders. National security and national interest are not to be interpreted narrowly; ideally, they are to be a collective resolve. - Courtesy Dawn

Taking back space

Huma Yusuf

An anti-MAGA America First family. That's how an American friend recently described his family's politics: vehemently anti-Trump and opposed to his 'Make America Great Again' exclusionist rhetoric, but still pro-US and committed to defending its leading place in the world. This friend's family represents a growing trend among the Western world — the uptick in nationalism among left-leaning liberals ready to reclaim their governments and countries from the far-right political movements that continue to threaten Western democracy.

Recent electoral results in countries such as the UK, France, Poland and Spain reflect this trend at the macro level. But it's apparent in the details too. For example, the New Yorker recently published gushing coverage of the Sammys, an annual awards ceremony organised by the Partnership for Public Service, to recognise exceptional federal government employees. Taking a cue from the ceremony, the article lavished praise on US government workers, celebrated their ordinary heroism, and highlighted the many visible and invisible ways in which they contribute to American society. The un-ironic tone of the article was notable, a sign that American nationalism is becoming palatable beyond the confines of Trump rallies and white supremacist gatherings.

Pakistan is not immune to this global trend. We have seen our own amazing efforts to reclaim space from far-right — religious-nationalist or violent extremist — movements. The most recent was the civil society gathering in Umerkot to protest

against extremism and the police complicity in the murder of a doctor accused of blasphemy.

All Pakistan's recent grassroots movements have been engaged in acts of reclamation. The PTM pushed back against the conflation of the Pakhtun identity with the threat from extremist and militant groups such as the TTP. It demanded that young Pakhtuns be granted their basic rights in a democratic system — freedom of movement, due process, dignity, safety.

The BYC is similarly reclaiming space from the militant violence of groups such as the BLA, and demanding fair treatment for the Baloch, including justice for the innumerable extrajudicial killings and an end to future disappearances and torture. They are also demanding that development be inclusive, and that the state deploy a less extractive mentality to CPEC and natural resources in the province, with more local involvement and wider sharing of economic benefits.

Here the trend of reclaiming space diverges in Pakistan as compared to the West where reclamation is a process of reclaiming the democratic process, government workings, the flag, and state — nothing less than national identity. In Pakistan, however, the effort to reclaim democratic norms is posited as anti-state — the best summary of Pakistan's predicament.

This is no fault of the grassroots movements themselves; elites that dominate our state and its institutions have framed these movements as threats to elite privileges rather than celebrate them as a chance to reclaim Pakistan from the violence rooted in sectarian or ethnic divisiveness.

How does a country

recover from this? The state should change its narrative, support these groups and engage with their demands. But social and political structures in Pakistan are too compromised: in Umerkot, the law enforcers were the lawbreakers, and public trust in the state is so weak that if the PTM or BYC worked alongside the government or military the movements would be derailed with concerns about infiltration and co-option.

The media could help shift the narrative by highlighting the positive aspects of state functioning, to remind us that reclamation is still possible. But again, the media has been so long censored and co-opted, that if a journalist praised a civil servant or public official, cries of 'lifafa' would resound.

So what's the answer? In the short term, collective action at the grassroots level may be the only way forward — small gatherings of locals, including representation from local groups (social movements, religious groups, marginalised communities, etc), district- or provincial-level state and judicial representatives, and the media, to identify common goals, rebuild trust, consider resource-sharing agreements, and agree on 'red lines' — for example, around what religious rhetoric is permitted in mosques.

But in the long term, Pakistan will have to accept that the national fabric is in tatters, and the only way to sew the pieces back together will be through a formal, sustained truth and reconciliation process.

Sadly, there is a long wait for a leadership with the courage to initiate such a process — unless we decide to give more political space to the organic grassroots movements that are seeking to reclaim a Pakistan we can all believe in. — Courtesy Dawn

International News

Lebanon says over 100 killed in new Israeli strikes

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli strikes killed more than 100 people, after Israel's military said it had kept up its bombardment of Hezbollah targets there and also struck Yemen. The health ministry in a revised toll issued late Sunday put the total killed at 105 and 359 wounded.

The attacks come after an air strike on Beirut's densely populated southern suburbs on Friday killed Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Lebanon's Hezbollah group which has engaged in cross-border fire with Israel for almost a year.

Hezbollah says it is acting in support of Hamas militants in Gaza, who attacked Israel on October 7, triggering the war in the Palestinian territory.

After Israel turned its focus north from Gaza to Lebanon and cross-border fire escalated, Israeli attacks have killed hundreds since last Monday, the deadliest day since Lebanon's 1975-

1990 civil war. Lebanon's health ministry said there had been deadly air raids near the main southern city of Sidon Sunday, while dozens more had died in the east, in the south and in and around Beirut.

France's foreign ministry said Sunday a second French national had been killed in Lebanon, after a woman died following a south Lebanon blast on Monday. The announcement came as French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot arrived in Lebanon, the first high-level foreign diplomat to visit since the Israeli air strikes intensified.

Barrot spoke earlier with Prime Minister Najib Mikati and said Paris sought "an immediate halt" to Israeli strikes.

France also appealed for Hezbollah and its backer Iran to abstain from any action that could lead to "regional conflagration".

Pope Francis, asked about Israeli air strikes on civilians, said a country

"goes beyond morality" when defence is not proportional to the attack.

Israeli military operations in Lebanon seek to downgrade Hezbollah's capacity to attack Israel, eliminate the group's military leadership and "clean" the border areas from fighters, an Israeli security official said Friday. Israeli leaders say they want their citizens displaced from the north to be able to safely return. Israel's military said dozens of its warplanes had attacked targets of Iran-backed Huthi rebels in war-ravaged Yemen Sunday, including around Hodeida port, a key entry point for fuel and humanitarian aid.

Huthi media reports said the strikes had killed four people and wounded 33. The Yemen raids came a day after the Huthis said they targeted Israel's Ben Gurion Airport with a missile, trying to hit it as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned from New York.

Cash-strapped Sri Lanka records first deflation in 39 years

Monitoring Desk

COLOMBO: Cash-strapped Sri Lanka's economy recorded falling consumer prices for the first time in 39 years, official data showed on Monday, with the September inflation figure dipping to negative 0.5 per cent. Census and Statistics Department data showed price drops in both food and non-food goods contributing to deflation in September, compared to inflation of 0.5pc in August.

Sri Lanka last recorded deflation in October 1985 with a figure of negative 2.1pc. Inflation peaked at 69.8pc two years ago at the height of an unprecedented economic crisis in the island nation. Acute shortages of food, fuel and medicines led to months of protests that eventually forced then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

"The situation in Lebanon is very bad. The war is increasing dramatically and lots of bombings happen in Beirut. We are hearing the (military) flights all night...in the sky," said Aref Arhad, 33, a Beirut resident who arrived in Istanbul on Monday on a Middle East Airlines flight.

He said he hoped to be able to go back to Beirut in a few days if the situation improves.

Lina Diab, a Lebanese journalist, said the area where she lives was still safe but she decided to leave as a precaution.

"We don't want to live (with) the stress, so I prefer to come to Istanbul, stay for a while, watch what will happen," she said waiting for luggage.

"Hopefully we go back soon to Lebanon."



People pass by buildings damaged in an Israeli strike, amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, in Kola, central Beirut, Lebanon.

Israel's Netanyahu strengthens his hold on office by adding a rival to his Cabinet

Monitoring Desk

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appointed a former rival, Gideon Saar, as a member of his Cabinet on Sunday, expanding his coalition and strengthening his hold on office. Under their agreement, Netanyahu said Saar would serve as a minister without portfolio and serve in the Security Cabinet, the body that oversees the management of the ongoing war against Israel's enemies across the Middle East.

Saar, 57, had hoped to

replace Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, another rival of Netanyahu's. But a deal to become defense minister fell through several weeks ago after fighting intensified with Hezbollah along Israel's northern border, leaving the popular Gallant in office for the time being.

Saar has had a strained relationship with the prime minister. He was once a rising star in Netanyahu's Likud party, but angrily left it four years ago after accusing the prime minister of

Japan's next PM aims for snap election, stocks sink

Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: Japan's incoming prime minister Shigeru Ishiba said on Monday he aimed to call snap elections for October 27, as equities plunged on a strong yen and fears that tax hikes are on the cards.

Ishiba, who was set to be formally appointed as premier on Tuesday after winning the leadership of the ruling party, supports the Bank of Japan's drive to hike interest rates and has said "there is room" to raise corporate levies. The leadership contest for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which

has governed almost uninterrupted for decades, went down to the wire on Friday, with right-winger Sanae Takaichi tipped to win when markets closed.

With Takaichi a fan of former prime minister Shinzo Abe's unorthodox "Abenomics" economic policies of ultra-low interest rates and tax cuts, the prospect of her winning sent stocks higher and the yen lower. Takaichi, an arch-nationalist, would also have been the first woman prime minister in a country where men still dominate politics.

Eight killed in Colombia military helicopter crash

Monitoring Desk

BOGOTA: Eight Colombian soldiers died when the helicopter transporting them on a humanitarian mission crashed near the border with Venezuela early on Sunday, authorities said.

The eight were on a mission in the eastern department of Vichada. President Gustavo Petro rose on X.

The Air Force said the helicopter was found after a search in a rural area in the municipality of Cumaribo.

Fire breaks out at Chinese battery giant's plant

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: A fire broke out on Sunday at a factory belonging to Chinese battery giant CATL, which supplies electric vehicle makers including Tesla, but only a "relatively small" impact on operations is expected, the company said.

A CATL spokesperson said no injuries or casualties had occurred at the plant in the coastal city of Ningde, and that "the reasons behind this accident are still under investigation". Emergency services were sent to the plant to fight the fire and to organise the evacuation of any people who were inside the 15,000 square metre

Russia targets 11 Ukrainian regions as it steps up its drone attacks

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Russia fired missiles and drones at 11 regions of Ukraine, the Ukrainian air force said Monday, in a 33rd consecutive night of aerial attacks behind the front line and set a new monthly record of drone barrages.

In Kyiv, multiple explosions and machine gun fire could be heard throughout the night as the Ukrainian capital's air defenses fought off a drone attack for five hours.

No casualties were reported in Kyiv or elsewhere, though a "critical infrastructure object" caught fire in the southern Mykolaiv region, Gov. Vitalii Kim said, without

elaborating. Russia has increasingly deployed Shahed drones, rather than more expensive missiles, in its aerial bombardment of Ukrainian cities since its full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022.

It launched more than 1,300 Shahed drones at Ukraine in September alone — the highest number of drone attacks in a single month since the war began.

Ukraine, too, has developed a new generation of drones for the battlefield and for long-range strikes deep inside Russia. More than 100 Ukrainian drones were shot down over Russia on Sunday, Russian officials said.

France's Le Pen denies wrongdoing as she and her party go on trial accused of embezzling EU funds

Monitoring Desk

PARIS: French far-right leader Marine Le Pen denied violating any rules as she and her National Rally party and two dozen others went on trial on Monday, accused of embezzling European Parliament funds, in a case that has the potential to derail her political ambitions.

Arriving at the court in Paris, Le Pen said she remained confident as "we have not violated any political and regulatory rules of the European Parliament" and vowed to present the judges with "extremely serious and extremely solid arguments."

Le Pen and other National Rally members casually greeted each other before sitting down in the first three rows of the packed courtroom.

The nine-week trial will be closely watched by Le Pen's political rivals as she is a strong contender in the race to succeed Emmanuel Macron when the next presidential election takes place in 2027.

It comes as a new government dominated by cen-

trists and conservatives just came into office in the wake of June-July legislative elections. Some observers expect the trial could prevent National Rally lawmakers, including Le Pen herself, from fully playing their opposition role in Parliament as they would be busy focusing on the party's defense.

Since stepping down as party leader three years ago, Le Pen has sought to position herself as a mainstream candidate capable of appealing to a broader electorate. Her efforts have paid off, with the party making significant gains in recent elections at both the European and national levels. But a guilty verdict could seriously undermine her bid to take the Elysee.

The National Rally and 27 of its top officials are accused of having used money destined for EU parliamentary aides to pay staff who instead did political work for the party between 2004 and 2016, in violation of the 27-nation bloc's regulations. The National Rally was called National Front at the time.

Commerce Minister assures, SCCI of trade-friendly policies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Monday assured support to the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and pledged trade-friendly policies.

In a virtual meeting with the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, reaffirmed the government's commitment to implementing trade-friendly policies aimed at boosting industrial growth and enhancing trade volumes, said a press release issued here. Jam Kamal Khan assured the business community of full support

in addressing the challenges they face, with a focus on ensuring the growth of local industries and improving trade with Afghanistan and other neighboring countries. During the meeting, SCCI President Fuad Ishaq raised pressing concerns about the escalating power and gas issues, which he said are gradually leading to the closure of industries.

He also highlighted the challenge of high tariffs, which are further burdening the industrial sector.

Fuad pointed to the decline in trade volume with Afghanistan. "In 2013-14, our trade with Afghanistan was valued at \$3 billion, but it has now plum-

meted to \$800 million," he said, underlining the significant drop. He urged the government to address the issues surrounding transit trade and bilateral trade with Afghanistan, which are negatively impacting the local business community.

The SCCI president further advocated for the establishment of a new industrial estate to support the business community and encourage industrial expansion, which he believes is critical for revitalizing the region's economy.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan expressed the government's strong commitment to protecting and supporting the business

community. He acknowledged the challenges faced by industries due to the economic situation and pledged to take necessary steps to resolve the issues related to power, gas, and tariffs.

Regarding the declining trade with Afghanistan, the minister emphasized the need to address the issue in order to improve access to Central Asian markets. The virtual meeting ended with a shared understanding of the urgency to resolve the business community's challenges and to work towards sustainable solutions that would bolster industrial growth and increase Pakistan's trade footprint regionally and globally.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail addresses to gathering during ceremony on his visit to Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI) in Quetta.



MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani addressing during the oath-taking ceremony of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association.

US, UAE and UK top 3 destinations of Pakistani exports during July-August 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the first two months of the current financial year 2024-25, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and United Kingdom (UK).

Total exports to the US during July-August 2024-25 were recorded at US \$949.855 million against the exports of US \$934.666 million during July-August 2023-24, showing an increase of 1.62 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This was followed by the UAE, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$400.977 million against the exports of US \$295.563 million last year, showing an increase of 35.66 percent.

UK was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$366.370 million during the month under review against the exports of US \$351.186 million, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to China stood at US \$323.435 million against US \$350.297 million last year, showing a decrease of 7.66 percent while the exports to Germany were recorded at US \$287.169 million against US \$253.155 million last year, data said.

During July-August 2024-25, the exports to Holland were recorded at \$247.343 million against \$226.624 million whereas the exports to Italy stood at \$186.984 million against \$195.539 million.

Pakistan's exports to Spain were recorded at

\$231.945 million against the exports of US \$242.201 million while the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at \$146.655 million against \$88.393 million last year.

The exports to Bangladesh stood at US \$122.004 million against US \$98.589 million. Similarly, the exports to France during the months under review were recorded at US \$82.680 million against US \$91.043 million while the exports to Belgium stood at US \$100.402 million against US \$96.515 million.

Pakistan's exports to Saudi Arabia were recorded at US \$114.189 million during the current year compared to US \$95.174 million last year whereas the exports to Türkiye stood at US \$64.812 million against US \$61.354 million.

NAC revises GDP growth rate to 3.7% in Q4; 2.52% for FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accounts Committee (NAC) on Monday approved revised quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates for the fiscal year 2023-24, reflecting a significant improvement in the country's economic performance. "The updated provisional and revised growth rates for FY 2023-24 and FY 2022-23 are 2.52% and -0.22% compared to 2.38% and -0.21% approved in the previous NAC meeting," according to a news release.

The updated figures were ratified during a committee meeting at the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), chaired by Awais Manzoor Sumra, Secretary of the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

According to the re-

vised estimates, the GDP growth rates for Q1, Q2, and Q3 have been adjusted to 2.69%, 1.97%, and 2.36%, respectively, from previously reported figures of 2.71%, 1.79%, and 2.09%. The Q4 growth rate is recorded at 3.07%.

The revised growth rates in the agriculture sector during Q1 (8.64% vs. 8.59%) and Q2 (6.12% vs. 5.83%) have improved, while growth in Q3 has slightly declined from 3.94% to 3.92%.

Industrial activities have shown downward revisions in all three quarters: Q1 from -2.44% to -2.66%, Q2 from 0.09% to -1.15%, and Q3 from 3.84% to 2.83%, mainly due to downward revisions in annual benchmarks for the electricity, gas, water supply, and construction industries.

CM taking priority steps for prosperity of farmers: Kirmani

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani has said that Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif is taking priority steps for the prosperity of farmers and agricultural development.

During a meeting with the delegation of Pakistan Kisan Ittehad, here on Monday, the minister said that the deterioration in Agriculture sector was due to the failed policies of the previous governments. The government has allocated a huge amount of 64 billion rupees for the development budget of agriculture, which is 250 percent more than the previous financial year, he said.

The minister said that the unprecedented measures and mega projects that the present government has initiated for the development of agriculture in the short period of the last six months cannot be exemplified in the past. The Chief Minister Punjab has launched

the mega projects of Kissan Card, Green Tractor Scheme, Solarization of Tube wells to get rid of the high cost of electricity and diesel and provide interest-free agricultural loans under the Transforming Punjab Agriculture Programme, he added.

Kirmani said that according to the vision of the Chief Minister Punjab, practical measures are being taken for the provision of quality seeds, agricultural marketing and reducing the production cost of the farmers for development in agriculture sector.

On this occasion, President of Pakistan Kissan Ittehad Khalid Khokhar informed the minister about the problems faced by the farmers. He said that due to climate change, the agriculture sector is facing a crisis and this year the farmers have faced losses in cotton, rice, mango and sesame crops due to which they are suffering from economic crisis.



QUETTA: Newly elected President of Small Chamber of Small Industry, Haji Rauf Gul Barech is being seated by Senator Bilal Mandokhail, Adviser to Chief Minister Naseem Rehman Malakhal and other during ceremony held in Quetta.

CCP initiates Phase-II merger review hearings for PTCL-Telenor acquisition

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has held its first hearing for the Phase II Merger Review concerning PTCL's acquisition of 100% shareholding in Telenor Pakistan (Private) Limited (TP) and Orion Towers Private Limited (OT).

The hearing was presided over by CCP Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, along with members Salman Amin and Abdul Rashid Sheikh, said a press release issued on Monday.

Senior Counsel Ms. Rahat Kaunain Hassan represented PTCL, emphasizing the potential economic benefits and growth opportunities the transaction could bring to Pakistan. Hatem Bamatraf, President

and Group CEO of PTCL, Robert Middlehurst, and PTCL's senior management also shared key insights into the merger.

The Commission then offered opportunity to M/s Wateen Telecom Limited, represented by Mian Sami-ud-Din. He concluded his preliminary submissions.

Other key attendees included Khurram Ashfaq, CEO of Telenor Pakistan, Andreas Hogberg, CEO of Orion Towers, Fawad Ahmad Khan, Group Director of Regulatory Strategy & Compliance (PTML), Amer Shahzad, DG Wireless Licensing (PTA), and representatives from Jazz, Wateen, Transworld Associates, Cm Pak LDI Ltd, and the Frequency Allocation Board.

Gilani for revival of cotton to strengthen economy

MULTAN (APP): Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani stressed the urgent need to focus on enhancing cotton production in the country.

He said this on the oath-taking ceremony of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) here on Monday. Gilani stated that the country's economic future relied heavily on agricultural productivity, with cotton playing a pivotal role. "Our primary focus must be on increasing cotton yields, as the weakening of the cotton sector is already causing- related industries.

"The cotton revival losses," he observed. Gilani recalled that during his tenure middlemen's role was abolished and the support price for cotton was increased which provided relief to farmers. He assured the ginners that he would push for cotton to be a top priority for the government in order to revive the sector.

Talking about the issue of high markup rates raised by PCGA members, Gilani promised efforts to bring the interest rate down to single digit and hoped that it would facilitate remarkable growth for cotton-related industries.

"The cotton revival issue will be given precedence in the Senate, and we will work towards resolving challenges, including high financing costs, to boost production and support the ginners," he added. Congratulating the newly elected members of the PCGA, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani reiterated that cotton was the backbone of the country's agriculture-driven economy, and any decline in its production would have far-reaching consequences. He urged all stakeholders to come together and ensure that the cotton sector is given the attention it deserves at both provincial and national levels.

PSX loses 177 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Monday, losing 177.93 points, a negative change of 0.22 percent, closing at 81,114.20 points against 81,292.13 points on the last working day. A total of 297,994,181 shares were traded during the day as compared to 339,323,128 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 14.103 billion against Rs 12.893 billion on the last trading day.

LCCI new office-bearers take oath at AGM

LAHORE (APP): The newly elected Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Mian Abu Zar Shad, Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry took oath during the LCCI Annual General Meeting and pledged to work for the cause of business community and the economy here on Monday.

Former Presidents and senior group leaders of LCCI Mian Anjum Nisar, Muhammad Ali Mian, outgoing Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry,

outgoing Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, Faheem Rehman Sehgal, Ali Hassam Asghar and Khawaja Shahzaib Akram addressed the gathering. In his address, LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad reflected on his 28-year-long journey and lauded the historical victory of securing 32 seats in the chamber's election. He acknowledged the leadership of former Presidents Mian Anjum Nisar and Muhammad Ali Mian whose guidance has always been instrumental in advancing business interests.



Federal Minister for Privatisation, Board of Investment & Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan presided over meeting of Privatisation Commission Board in Islamabad.

New wheat varieties imperative to increase productivity amid climate change: Dr Sajid

FAISALABAD (APP): New wheat varieties are imperative to increase productivity amid climate change and harsh weather conditions, said Dr Sajidur-Rehman, Director General Agriculture Research Punjab. Addressing the Annual Wheat Research Program 2024-2025 at Ayub Agricultural Research Institute (ARI) here on Monday, he said that AARI scientists have so far introduced more than 705 varieties of different crops and new seed varieties are contributing Rs.180 billion per annum to the national kitty.

He said that wheat is the major crop of Pakistan which was cultivated over more than 17.4 million acres of land in Punjab last year. He stressed innovation in the agriculture sector which was the baseline of national development.

He urged agri scientists to accelerate their research efforts and introduce new wheat varieties which have more resistance against climatic changes and give maximum production

even during harsh weather conditions.

Chief Scientist Wheat Department AARI Dr Javed Ahmad said that AARI scientists conducted 79 research experiments this year and introduced two new wheat varieties.

These varieties helped obtain 24 million tons wheat production this year by enhancing per acre yield up to 41 maunds in Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Sahiwal divisions which is record in the history of Punjab, he added.

Textile millers demand restoration of RCET, EFS

LAHORE (APP): Newly-elected Chairman All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) Kamran Arshad has urged policymakers to reduce electricity tariff and restore Regionally Competitive Energy Tariff (RCET) besides reversing the government policy of curtailing gas supply to captive consumers from January 1, 2025, and include local yarn supply in the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS) scheme.

These measures will revitalize the textile sector, boost economic growth, and create employment opportunities, he added.

Arshad also sought a cut in the interest rate for the industrial growth.

He was addressing the Annual General Meeting of the Association here at the APTMA office on Monday. Earlier Mohammad Raza Baqir, Secretary General North Zone APTMA, opened the house while Umar Nazir Shah announced election results of the Association, declaring Kamran Arshad as central Chairman, followed by Muhammad Jameel Qasim as Senior Vice Chairman, Siddique Javed Bhatti as Vice Chairman and Shahzad Ahmed Shaikh as Vice Chairman (Value-added sector) for 2024-26. In the Northern zone, he said, Asad Shafi has been elected as Chairman, Anees M. Khawaja as Senior Vice Chairman, Ahmad Shafi as Vice Chairman, and Mohammad Qasim as Treasurer for the Northern Zone for 2024-26.

Yousaf takes over as new OICCI president

ISLAMABAD (APP): President and CEO of Faysal Bank Ltd, Yousaf Hussain has been elected as the new president of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI).

In addition to the president, Managing Director and CEO of Nestle Pakistan Ltd, Jason Avancena was elected senior vice president, while Managing Director and CEO of Pakistan Tobacco Company (Pvt) Ltd, Syed Ali Akbar will serve as vice president, said a news release.

The newly elected Managing Committee also included key business leaders from sectors such as banking, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing, further solidifying OICCI's position as a major player in Pakistan's economic landscape. The new Managing Committee for the 2024-2026 term included Yousaf Hussain, Faysal Bank Ltd, Jason Avancena, Nestle Pakistan Ltd, Syed Ali Akbar, Pakistan Tobacco Company (Pvt) Ltd, Amir Hafeez Ibrahim, Pakistan Mobile Communications Ltd. (Jazz), Ahmed Khan Bozai, Citibank NA, Pakistan, Asif Ahmad, IBM

Italia SPA, Farheen Salman Amir, Lipton Pakistan Ltd, Fahd K Chinoy, Pakistan Cables Ltd, Hafsa Shamsie, Roche Pakistan Ltd, Javed Ghulam Mohammad, Martin Dow Marker Ltd, M Adil Khattak, Attock Refinery and Muhammad Jawaid Iqbal, United Bank Ltd. leadership team would focus on shaping policies and fostering a more investment-friendly climate in Pakistan.

During his address to members, the president acknowledged the complex economic environment Pakistan faces, pointing to both challenges and opportunities. "Pakistan today stands at a critical crossroads. While inflation is easing and we're seeing a slight recovery in GDP growth, the country still faces structural challenges. However, these challenges also represent opportunities for pushing necessary reforms, driving innovation, and fostering a business environment that promotes sustainable development," he said. Outgoing president Rehman Shaikh, who will continue to serve as an ex-officio member of the Managing Committee, highlighted the Chamber's role in engaging with government bodies and offering strategic solutions.

Consultative session on IT hardware production held

LAHORE (APP): A consultative session focusing on IT hardware production was successfully held here at Planning and Development Board (P&D) Complex on Monday.

The session brought together key stakeholders from the public and private sectors, academia, and industry to discuss strategies for enhancing the IT hardware manufacturing landscape in Punjab.

The session aimed to identify challenges and opportunities in the IT hardware sector, promote local manufacturing, and foster innovation.

Participants engaged in productive discussions on policy recommendations, technological advancements, and potential partnerships to strengthen the IT hardware ecosystem.

The local manufacturer of IT hardware shared insights on the latest trends in IT hardware, emphasizing the importance of research and development. They expressed their commitment to support the Government of Punjab in promoting local hardware manufacturing.



KARACHI: Executive Director of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) Mohammed Aamir Jan chairing a meeting with TVET Institute under PM's Youth Skill Development Programme at FPCCI here on Monday. NAVTTTC Sindh Director General (DG) Aziz Chandio is also seen in the picture.

President calls for making Pakistan more inclusive, age friendly for senior citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the world community observes the International Day of Older Persons on Tuesday, President Asif Ali Zardari has urged the country to strive for making Pakistan more inclusive and age-friendly to honour and respect its senior citizens.

The president, in his message to the nation on the Day, annually observed on October 1, called upon the federal and provincial governments, as well as civil society, to prioritize better healthcare; strengthen social security; protect the rights of the elderly; and provide them a friendly and healthy environment.

Reaffirming the country's commitment to improving care and support systems for older per-

sons, he said the Day was aimed at honouring the contributions of senior citizens for transferring their experience and wisdom to younger generations as well as their role in the progress and prosperity of the country.

President Zardari said that the senior citizens were not only the foundation of the society but were also a source of wisdom, knowledge, and experience.

"Our religion calls upon us to look after our parents and elderly people with love, compassion and utmost care."

Our parents and the elderly make tremendous sacrifices by investing time, love, energy and resources in bringing up children. It is our moral and religious obligation to treat them with

respect and dignity, and take care of them in old age," he remarked.

The president said that the Constitution of Pakistan also placed a responsibility upon the state to provide necessities of life for all citizens who were permanently or temporarily unable to earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment.

Pakistan, he said, had taken a number of steps for the welfare of senior citizens.

"As populations age, they become dependent and their need for specialized care increases, and therefore, it is imperative to provide affordable and accessible medical facilities to our elderly," the president added.



ISLAMABAD: Flags of Pakistan and Malaysia adorn Zero Point Interchange, welcoming Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for his first official visit to Pakistan in the first week of October.

Ambassador P.Khorev says Ukrainians attack attempts to undermine stable political situation in Russia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan Albert P.Khorev on Monday said the Ukrainians attacked the Russian Kursk region in an attempt to undermine the stable domestic political situation in Russia.

Realizing that the strategic initiative "on the ground" is in Russia's hands along the entire line of contact, the Kiev regime unleashed large-scale military activities against the civilian population of our regions, and on August 6 this year the Ukrainian fighters invaded the peaceful, border region of Kursk, the Ambassador said.

Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan Albert said this while addressing to press conference on the situation in and around Ukraine war.

"I would like to reiterate that Russia is in favor of a political and diplomatic settlement of the conflict. The conditions for such a settlement, if you like, the "Putin formula", were set out in detail in a speech by the President of Russia on June 14 of this year at the Russian Foreign Ministry." He said the with-

drawal of Ukrainian armed forces from the territories of the Donetsk People's Republic, Luhansk People's Republic, Kherson and Zaporozhya regions of Russia, Kiev's refusal to join NATO, the abolition of all illegal sanctions against Russia adopted without the approval of the UN Security Council, and respect for the rights of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine.

Russian envoy said that an early negotiated end to the conflict will benefit Russia and Ukraine, as well as countries in the Global South, including Pakistan.

He said that Russia is a reliable trade and investment partner that offers opportunities for equitable, mutually beneficial cooperation with Pakistan.

He said the lifting of illegal Western sanctions on the transportation of Russian products would significantly contribute to Pakistan's energy and food security, as Russia is the largest exporter of nitrogen, phosphate and potassium fertilizers and has vast oil and gas reserves.

CDA, Chinese officials to explore collaboration on data centers

ISLAMABAD (APP): A virtual meeting was held between the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Chinese officials, to explore opportunities for collaboration in the field of big data and the establishment of Tier-Four Data Centers in Pakistan. The high-level meeting included the participation of executives from leading Chinese companies, and acting Chairman CDA Talat Mahmood Gondal, along with Member Technology and Digitalization Nauman Khalid and other senior officials.

Talat Mahmood Gondal underscored Pakistan's strong commitment to advancing its digital infrastructure and welcomed Chinese investment in the country's rapidly expanding digital economy, said a news release.

He highlighted the immense potential for growth in big data and digitalization, noting that this partnership would play a key role in positioning Pakistan as a hub for big data innovation.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing a seminar titled "Resilient and adaptation population in disaster."

Building resilience, adaptive capacity of people, infrastructure vital for resilient-society: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam said that empowering disaster-vulnerable communities with resources and skills to sustain the impacts of recurring and intensifying natural disasters in the country is crucial for reducing their vulnerability over time.

"Providing necessary training and resources help communities better prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters and this is inevitable for enhancing their climate-resilience. Because, equipping individuals with skills and resources can lead to sustainable livelihoods, helping communities bounce back

economically, socially and psychologically after a disaster." She stressed.

Addressing as chief guest at a high-level dialogue "The Resilient Reflections" here on Monday, the Romina highlighted, "Communities, infrastructure and ecosystems are interconnected. Building resilience in one area positively impacts the others, creating a more sustainable and adaptive environment overall."

Highlighting the significance of community empowerment with resources, knowledge and skills for disaster resilience, Romina Khurshid remarked that when empowered with necessary resources and skills, the resilient commu-

nities are better equipped to withstand and recover from natural disasters.

However, "by fostering local leadership and providing education on disaster preparedness, resources and skills to recover, we can enhance the safety and well-being of our climate-vulnerable communities", she said. The event was organized jointly by Islamic Relief, National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) and Asian Development Bank in support with Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Ministry and attended by senior officials of federal and provincial organizations, national and international non-governmental organizations.

Islamabad Police directed to maintain smooth flow of traffic on roads

Independent Report SSP Traffic Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, directed officials to depute special squads at Islamabad Expressway, Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed road, Sri Nagar Highway and other important boulevards of the city to ensure smooth traffic flow.

Islamabad Traffic police officers were also instructed to ensure traffic discipline in the city and take action against violators without any discrimination.

Efforts are underway to ensure smooth traffic flow in the city and cooperation of road users is crucial to overcome the traffic related problems, he maintained.



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam on Islamabad Expressway.

Evidence-based policy key to solving Pakistan's education crisis: Sohail Akhter

ISLAMABAD (APP): Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) Sohail Akhter emphasized the Ministry's critical role in addressing Pakistan's urgent education challenges during his speech at the two-day workshop on "Facilitating and Communicating Research for Policy Planning and Decision-Making" held here on Monday.

The event was organized by the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) and Oxford Policy Manage-

ment (OPM) under the Dare-RC project.

Akhter highlighted the importance of evidence-based policymaking in tackling systemic issues, including out-of-school children (OOSC), gender disparity in enrollment, and the rural-urban education divide.

He noted, "Our policies must be informed by thorough analysis, focusing on districts where female enrollment remains low and addressing foundational learning deficits worsened by the pandemic."

Int'l Translation Day: AIOU emphasizes importance of language

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) prioritizes the promotion of intellectual foundations, actively engaged in opening the closed doors of culture and civilization through translation.

These remarks were made by Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice-Chancellor AIOU, during a seminar held in celebration of International Translation Day.

He highlighted that the university is giving special attention to the promotion of languages and has established centres for Russian, Chinese, and

Turkish languages, with a Japanese Language Center to be inaugurated soon.

The Vice-Chancellor also extended his congratulations to the Center for Languages and Translation Studies for organizing the successful event on International Translation Day.

Other notable speakers included Professor Dr. Alia Sohail, former Vice-Chancellor of Rawalpindi Women University; Brigadier Waseem Ahmed, former Director of ISPR; Dr. Asghar Nadeem Syed, Dean of Languages at University of Lahore; Dr. Qibla Ayaz, former Vice-Chancellor of University of Peshawar.

IHC serves notice to CDA against development charges in E-12

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday served notices to the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in a case against cancellation of plots in the Sector E-12 and notices of more development charges to the allottees. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, who heard the case filed by allottees of E-12 Muhammad Tazeem and others, also served notices to the respondents in the plea seeking a stay order against the CDA's decision. The petition stated that the civic body had added more development charges on the already charged ones while it could not complete the development work in over 20 years in the said sector.

Ayaz extends greetings to leadership, people of China on National Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq conveyed heartfelt congratulations to the President of China, Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Zhao Leji, on the eve of the 75th Foundation Day of the Republic of China, which is celebrated annually across China on October, 1.

In his felicitation message, Speaker Sadiq lauded the exemplary leadership and wise vision of the late Chairman Mao Zedong, whose unparalleled contributions have propelled China to socio-economic excellence and established it as a leading economic power on the global stage. "Sino-Pak friendship is testament to shared socio-economic vision of regional stability", he stated.

The Speaker highlighted the transformative joint economic and infrastructure ventures between the two nations, particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is a flagship project of One-Belt and One-Road

initiative. "CPEC along with revolutionizing International trade will also elevate Pakistan's economy, harnessing its strategic location for greater global connectivity," he emphasized.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq further noted the deep-rooted and cordial diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, based on mutual respect and brotherhood. Over the years, this relationship has evolved into an All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, leading to the formation of a significant regional organization, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the shared unanimity of views on Climate-Change and other issues on multi-lateral forums. This alliance between Pakistan & China has played a pivotal role in fostering socio-economic and political stability in the region.

The Speaker stated that, the Sino-Pak friendship has created far-reaching positive externalities, benefiting not only the two countries but the entire region, creating opportunities that were previously unimaginable.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Brazil to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Olyntho Vieira, called on by Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services.

Governor Kundi stresses women empowerment, police recruitment in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Monday said that women empowerment was top priority, and all possible measures would be taken to support this initiative.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation from the social organization SSDO and USIP. It included SSDO Executive Director Syed Kausar Abbas, Director Shahid Jatoi, Program Director Maryam Jawad, USIP Program Manager Hamza Ijaz, Program Officer Bilal Khattak, and Moiz.

The meeting focused on promoting the recruitment of women in the police force in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

SSDO and USIP will run awareness campaigns to in-

crease female representation in the police and will assist government institutions in policy-making.

Governor Kundi welcomed the inclusion of women in the police force, assuring his full support for initiatives aimed at increasing their participation.

He said that involvement of women in the police would not only protect women's rights but also enhance social balance and improve the justice system.

He expressed pride in the capabilities demonstrated by women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa across various sectors, saying that their participation in the police force is a testament to the province's progress towards a more equitable society.



ISLAMABAD: CDA gardeners preparing the land for planting on the green belt at Kashmir Chowk in the Federal Capital.

To empower future environmental leaders US, TRC launch Pakistan's first climate change curriculum

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) on Monday partnered with the Teachers' Resource Center (TRC) to launch Pakistan's first climate change curriculum for schools.

This programme will educate students from grades 1-10 on the science behind climate change and provide them with tools to protect the environment for future generations.

The curriculum, created by TRC under the Climate Change Awareness and Action for Nature, Diversity, Livelihoods, and Ecosystems (CANDLE) initiative, includes an interactive toolkit for teachers. It also features easy-to-use lesson plans covering essential topics such as climate science, the impact of climate change, and practical solutions for adapting to a rapidly

changing environment. Minister Counselor for Public Diplomacy at the US Embassy, Lisa Swenarski said, "By introducing climate education in schools, we're empowering young minds to take meaningful action."

"These students will grow up with a deep understanding of their role in protecting the environment, and that's where real change begins."

Senior federal and provincial education leaders, as well as representatives from both public and private sector attended the launch and emphasized the vital role education plays in addressing the climate crisis.

The new curriculum reflects the shared commitment of both the US and Pakistan to fostering a sustainable and resilient future.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used to install a pedestrian bridge on Islamabad Expressway.