

# Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

Vol. XIV No. 248 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Friday October 25, 2024, Rabi-us-Sani 21, 1446 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

## 'Will not sit idle until Pakistan purged of poliovirus,' says PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paying tribute to the efforts and sacrifices of the polio workers, and support by the international partners, reiterated his government's resolve to make Pakistan a polio-free country to save the future of millions of children.

The prime minister, addressing an event held on World Polio Day dedicated to recognise the sacrifices of the polio workers, said that the resurfacing of the polio cases in the country required reuniting the efforts to fight the menace.

He reaffirmed that the government would face the challenge with an unwavering commitment to purge the country of this crippling disease.

The prime minister, who earlier launched a nationwide polio vaccination drive by administering polio drops to the children, appreciated the support from international partners

including the World Health Organisation, UNICEF, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, who had contributed to Pakistan's efforts to fight out the polio. "With this commitment, we will meet success and polio will be pushed out of the country and will never be allowed to resurface," he resolved, and also appreciated the Saudi government's support.

Calling them the "real heroes" the prime minister paid tribute to the sacrifices of the polio workers in the the polio eradication efforts and also distributed shields among the family members of the martyred polio workers and also to those who sustained injuries during the polio vaccination drives.

"Around 40 cases have been reported across four provinces. Today, we make a pledge to handle these cases effectively. We will not sit idle until the virus is eliminated from the coun-

try. This is a challenge which we have accepted," he remarked.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said the existence of polio only in Pakistan and Afghanistan was a matter of concern and a challenge that needed to be handled through concerted efforts.

In his address, Coordinator to PM on National Health Services Dr Mukhtar Bharath said the constant oversight of the polio eradication efforts at the prime ministerial level was unprecedented which also gave hope for Pakistan to get rid of the virus.

He assured the government's all-out support to the polio workers and said the event was also held to acknowledge their dedicated efforts and sacrifices. He said the surge in polio cases, caused by an immunity gap, was a matter of concern and resolved that the polio vaccination teams would reach every household to vaccinate every child to ensure no one was left behind.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing a ceremony organized to mark World Polio Day & the Inauguration of the National Polio Campaign.

## COAS visits PAF to review Indus Shield-2024 exercises

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Thursday visited an operational air base of Pakistan Air Force to witness the ongoing multinational exercise Indus Shield-2024.

The COAS was received by Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaher Ahmed Baber Sidhu. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf was also in presence at the occasion, an Inter Services Public Relations news release said.

Exercise Indus Shield-2024 is the biggest multinational exercise of the region that is witnessing participation from 24 esteemed Air Forces con-

verging to foster interoperability and training through state-of-the-art facilities embodying the exercise motto; "Stronger When Together."

COAS expressed his satisfaction over the combat readiness of Pakistan Air Force and the progress made through various modernization and up-gradation programs. Later, he witnessed exercise operations, static display of various niche and disruptive technologies where he was briefed on the modernization efforts of Pakistan Air Force to stay abreast with contemporary security challenges which was later followed by an enthralling aerial display by PAF fighter jets.

## Pakistan values its enduring relationship with Sri Lanka: CJCSC



RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), General Sahr Shamsah Mirza on Thursday said that Pakistan valued its enduring relationship with Sri Lanka, and highlighted the shared commitment to fortifying bilateral ties, particularly in defense and security.

He made these remarks during a call on paid by Commander Sri Lanka Air Force, Air Marshal RAUP Rajapaksa, who is on an official visit to Pakistan, to the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee here at Joint Staff Headquarters, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. During the meeting, both sides reiterated their commitment to enhancing bilateral security and defense collaboration.

## Policeman martyred as terrorists attacked SWU's account office in Tank

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A policeman was martyred and another got injured as terrorists attacked District Accounts Office South Waziristan Upper (SWU) situated in Tank on Thursday.

According to police spokesman, the terrorists, riding on two motorcycles, entered into District Account Office of South Waziristan Upper situated in Branch Street of Tank and opened fire at on-

duty constable named Zia ur Rehman, who was martyred on the spot. Another constable retaliated and one of the attackers also got injured. However, the terrorists take away their accomplice and managed to escape from the scene on motorcycles.

After receiving information about the attack, DSB, Army, CTD and local police reached the site and cleared the District Accounts Office.

## Bushra Bibi arrives in Peshawar after release from Adiala Jail

PESHAWAR (INP): PTI founder Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi arrived in Peshawar after being released from Adiala Jail in the Toshakhana-II case on Thursday.

Immediately after her release from Adiala Jail, Bushra Bibi went to Bani Gala, where she stayed for a while before heading to Peshawar, where arrangements had already been made for her arrival at the Chief Minister's House in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja announced on the social media platform X that Bushra Bibi will stay in Peshawar instead of Zaman Park in Lahore.

## IHC directs to form medical board for PTI founder's check-up

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday directed the formation of a medical board to conduct a health examination of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder, including his personal physician, Dr. Faisal Sultan.

Hearing the case, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb directed the executive director of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) to form a medical board for the health assessment of the PTI founder. He also directed that the board should include Dr. Faisal Sultan, the PTI founder's personal physician, and submit a report to the court's registrar.

The decision came after the PTI founder requested a medical examination by his personal doctors. While the court acknowledged the importance of involving a personal physician, and ordered the formation of an independent medical board by PIMS to ensure thorough and unbiased evaluation.

The written court order noted the PTI founder's age—72 years—and his status as a former prime minister and under-trial prisoner.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir witness the ongoing Multinational Exercise Indus Shield-2024, at an operational Air Base of Pakistan Air Force (PAF).

## CENTCOM magazine hails COAS's leadership, military diplomacy

RAWALPINDI (PR): US central command's magazine Unipath has paid tribute to Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir for his military diplomacy and his commitments for economic improvement in the country.

According to magazine, General Asim Munir has taken decisive action against Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) within Pakistan, known as Fitna al-Khawarij. Under his leadership, through July 2024, 22,409 intelligence-based operations have been conducted against terrorists and their facilitators. They eliminated 398 terrorists, including 31 high-value targets. US magazine writes that General Asim Munir's tenure as the Chief of the Army Staff has been characterized by determined action against extremism, proactive measures to address security challenges and a commitment to fostering socioeconomic stability.

General Asim Munir's approach to military di-

plomacy has not only strengthened Pakistan's relations with key global partners but has also underscored the nation's role in promoting regional peace and stability. As Pakistan navigates through intricate geopolitical dynamics and internal challenges, Gen. Asim Munir works to guide the Army and nation toward a future marked with professionalism, resilience, prosperity and unity.

Pakistan is also confronted with a formidable challenge in the form of fifth-generation warfare, a complex blend of conventional and unconventional tactics aimed at the implosion of societal structures. Gen. Asim Munir has expressed his resolve that the Pakistan Armed Forces, with the support of the nation, are fully prepared to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the motherland against the full spectrum of threats.

Pakistan's sovereignty was challenged on January 16, 2024, when Iran carried out a series of missile and

drone strikes within Pakistan's Balochistan province resulting in the deaths of two innocent children. To express its resolve and redeem its stature, on January 18, Pakistan conducted a meticulously planned and precisely targeted series of military strikes based on credible intelligence against terrorist hideouts in the Sistan-o-Baluchistan province of Iran. This operation, codenamed Marg Bar Sarmachar, resulted in the elimination of several terrorists.

US central command's magazine further stated that General Asim Munir recognizes that an important way to curb extremist proclivities among youth is through employment and business opportunities. With this backdrop, the Army is assisting the government in the functioning of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI) to attract foreign investment and ensure food security.

General Asim Munir's proactive efforts in forging

economic partnerships, including with the Arabian Gulf states and the United States, are fostering confidence within the business community and encouraging their active participation in national progress. Gen. Asim Munir strongly supports greater tolerance and religious harmony. Condemning the Jaranwala incident, where a mob vandalized and torched several churches and scores of houses after two men living there were accused of desecrating the Holy Quran, he declared: "There is no space for such incidents of intolerance and extreme behavior by any segment of the society against anyone, particularly against minorities."

Military diplomacy is an important facet of the COAS's vision. In December 2023, Gen. Asim Munir visited the U.S., marking a pivotal moment in Pakistan's expanding military and diplomatic relations with the U.S. In the midst of swiftly changing global dynamics, this visit was both symbolic and practical, with high-profile

engagements that highlighted the multifaceted nature of Pakistan-US relations.

Also in 2023, Pakistan conducted joint military exercises with Malaysian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian and Emirati Armed Forces. Similarly, at the closing ceremony of 7th Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) training exercise in which 15 teams, including those from the US, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia participated, he reiterated the significance of PATS in promoting team spirit and enhancing readiness in the face of evolving threats, particularly in the fight against terrorism.

He lauded the bond the Pakistan Army developed with other armies as a clear example of military diplomacy. Under his leadership, the Pakistan Army serves not only as the guardian of the nation's borders but also extends its support during calamities such as floods and earthquakes. Additionally, the Army's role in facilitating nationwide elections stands as a notable contribution to the nation.

## Pakistan ready to collaborate with UN states: President

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has stated that Pakistan stands ready to collaborate with all United Nations member states to achieve a peaceful and prosperous world for all.

In his message on the occasion of the United Nations Day today, he said Pakistan has consistently championed the principles of the UN Charter.

Asif Ali Zardari said Pakistan has also made invaluable contributions to international peace and security, including by serving as a leading military and police contributor to UN peacekeeping operations.

The President said the UN Charter's vision of universal peace is currently under threat by the blatant violations of its principles in Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

## Rear Admiral Faisal Amin takes over as Commander Coast

KARACHI (APP): Rear Admiral Faisal Amin took over the duties of Commander Coast during Change of Command ceremony held at Karachi, where Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz handed over the command to the Rear Admiral.

Rear Admiral Faisal Amin got commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy



in 1992, a Pakistan Navy news release on Thursday said.

He is a graduate of Royal College of Defence Studies (UK), Army Command & Staff College (Quetta) and National Defence University (Islamabad). The Admiral has an illustrious naval career comprising vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments.



Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization & Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan inaugurating the Hub River Bridge (N-25).

## Aleem Khan says Govt to ensure maximum dev. of Balochistan even by collecting revenue from other provinces

Aleem, Jam inaugurate newly constructed bridge over Hub river

HUB (APP): Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday inaugurated the newly constructed bridge over the Hub River.

The newly constructed bridge over the Hub River on National Highway N-25,

reconnecting the provinces of Balochistan and Sindh.

The project has been completed in two years at a cost of Rs 1.18 billion, aims to enhance connectivity and facilitate trade between the regions, said a press release issued here. Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Abdul Aleem Khan emphasized the importance of business activities for regional

development. "We have to ensure maximum development of Balochistan, even by collecting revenue from other provinces," he stated.

Aleem Khan noted that while Balochistan boasts the largest network of the National Highway Authority (NHA) in the country, covering 4,500 km, the province generates relatively lower toll revenue.

## SC sends case related to "shufa" to constitutional bench

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has sent case related to "shufa" (right of preemption) to constitutional bench.

Newly appointed Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi has said policy has been given to registrar office with reference to constitutional cases. Office has been directed a separate category be formed of the cases wherein any law has been challenged. We will continue to transfer the cases where interpretation of law is needed.

He gave these remarks on Thursday.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by newly appointed CJP Yahya Afridi took up the case for hearing.

## Security forces kill nine terrorists, including two suicide bombers in Bajaur

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Security Forces on Thursday killed nine Khwarij, including two suicide bombers and a High Value Target Kharij ring-leader Said Muhammad alias Qureshi Ustad during an intelligence-based operation IBO conducted in Bajaur District on the night of October 23/24.

During conduct of operation, the Army troops effectively engaged the Khwarij location and after intense fire exchange, nine Khwarij were eliminated, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

A large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives was also recovered from killed

Meanwhile President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday appreciated the security forces for carrying out a successful intelligence-based anti-terror operation in Bajaur.

The president and prime minister, in separately issued statements, appreciated the gallantry of the personnel and officers of the security forces in eliminating nine terrorists including suicide bombers and a mastermind of terrorists.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Curtain call**

The controversy surrounding the full-court verdict, where a majority of eight Supreme Court judges favoured restoring PTI as a parliamentary party and granting it reserved seats, continues to simmer.

Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, part of the minority in the case, has raised concerns about the legality of the majority's decision to issue clarifications on queries from the ECP. In his dissenting note, the CJP makes a valid point: once the full court had issued its verdict, the eight judges had no authority to act independently and issue clarifications to queries put forth to the court. He rightly contends that the responses should have been routed through official channels in line with protocol.

And yet, while his critique of the judges' overreach is valid, his leadership has faced criticism for failing to enforce the full court's decision. As chief justice, he had a responsibility to ensure that the ruling was implemented, even if he disagreed with it. His inability to push for its implementation gives one the impression he may have been quietly aligned with the view that the ruling should not be enforced. This failure to act raises concerns about his leadership during a critical period for the judiciary.

The CJP's note marks the end of a tumultuous tenure marred by decisions that some saw as unnecessarily divisive. His handling of cases like the ones pertaining to PTI's bat symbol and Article 63-A are examples where his rulings appeared more focused on technicalities and less on justice. In the bat case, he was clear in upholding the ECP's stance against the PTI, refusing the party its election symbol due to legal technicalities. Yet, this decision appeared to be more of a punitive gesture towards the PTI. Similarly, the timing of the Article 63-A ruling — which dealt with toying party lines — stirred significant debate. The forces that hunger for influence over the political and judicial landscape were firmly against the man at the start but appear sated now.

On the other hand, the chief justice, who was once viewed as a crusader for judicial integrity has left many of his initial supporters disillusioned. Once lauded as one of the finest jurists, he will now leave a complex legacy, with his dissent symbolising the divisions within the apex court.

Adding to this quagmire is the appointment of Justice Yahya Afridi as the new CJP, passing over Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, who was a strong contender being the next most senior judge.

There is, however, hope that under Justice Afridi, the court can move beyond the discord and heal the fractures that developed under CJP Isa's watch. The nation needs a judiciary that upholds justice without descending into internecine strife — a hope that rests on Justice Afridi's shoulders as he dons the robe.

**Milk the public**

F.S.Aijazuddin

Perhaps the inspiration came from milking the buffalo his father-in-law gave him. Or the hardships he endured during his training for the Olympics 2024, in which he won the gold medal for his record-breaking javelin throw. It is said that recently, when invited to be a motivational speaker at a school in Lahore, someone on his behalf demanded a fee of Rs50 lakhs.

Instant celebrities have just cause. In the 1960s, the British model Mandy-Rice Davies charged an exorbitant fee from a Sunday rag for her revelations about the Profumo scandal. Her justification? She needed to pro-vice for her "predictably insecure future".

Was that the rationale for the startling increase approved last year in the perquisites for Senate chairmen, past, present and future? Their benefits extend over nine pages and into the lifetime of the beneficiaries. Clearly, John F. Kennedy's advice is lost on our legislators: "Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country."

Milking our country is now a given. A former president is supposed to have told an incoming State Bank governor: "I am the president; therefore, understand that the State Bank is my bank."

A shameful example of this "your hand in the public pocket" attitude has been the Diamer-Bhasha dam project, located on the River Indus between Kohistan and the Diamer district in Gilgit-Baltistan.

In 1998, prime minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the Diamer-Bhasha project, designed to generate 4,500 megawatts of electricity. It should have been completed in nine years. Ten years later, in 2018, unfinished, its cost has ballooned from an

original Rs479 billion to Rs1,400bn.

Wapda (hitherto responsible for the construction of dams) warned that at least \$12bn would be required to build Diamer-Bhasha dam — \$7bn for power generation and another \$5bn for infrastructure. The hilly terrain precludes any arterial irrigation canals.

In July 2018, the then chief justice ordered a national fund to be established to finance its construction. Two days later, the then prime minister added his PMO's name to the CJ's project. Commercial banks and cellular companies became the conduits to receive contributions from a gullible public.

Within six months, the dam fund rapidly accumulated \$66.7 million. After July 2019, deposits dwindled to a trickle. The public was assured that the fund's status would be "regularly updated" before the Supreme Court of Pakistan. As if the backlog of 43,800 cases was not burden enough, the Supreme Court constituted an implementation bench of five apex court judges. It did not examine the progress reports. All five judges of the bench have since retired and never been replaced.

Meanwhile, Wapda disbursed Rs115.9bn for land acquisition, and Pakistan signed a Rs442bn contract with China Power and FWO to execute the project.

The billions spent on direct and indirect advertising has never been disclosed.

In October 2024, 26 years after its inauguration, the Supreme Court finally examined the fund's status. It was told that the fund had received Rs23.7bn, of which the amount collected was Rs11.5bn. The mark-up earned on it paid to the apex court by the federal government was Rs.12.2bn. The court noted that the fund's ac-

count constituted only 3.2 per cent of the money required to complete the dam.

Today, Wapda predicts the dam will involve a financial outlay of Rs1,406.5bn. It anticipates a completion date of February 2029. The Supreme Court has ordered the fund's assets to be transferred to the public exchequer and buried the moribund fund.

Are the court and the Prime Minister's Office liable for misrepresentation, because the public's contributions have not been applied towards their original purpose? The fund provided no mechanism for refunds to subscribers. Their money has disappeared in the federal government's bottomless well.

That the Chinese are now co-partners in the project's implementation is reassuring. They know something about dams. After the gigantic Three Gorges Dam, China is planning a 'mother of all dams' — a 60,000 MW Motuo mega dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet. This river (known in India as the Brahmaputra) supplies water to an estimated 1.8bn people within China and in India, Bhutan, and Bangladesh.

Understandably, India has retaliated with a plan to build a 11,000 MW hydropower and reservoir project on the Siang River in Arunachal's Upper Siang district. India fears that China's mega dam will allow China, being in the upper riparian, to "curtail the river's flow during the lean season and trigger artificial floods during the rainy season".

Could China's mega dam be our insurance against India's arbitrary abrogation of the Indus Waters Treaty? -- Courtesy Dawn

**Divisive canals**

Naseer Memon

Amid rapidly depleting water resources, Punjab has embarked upon an exercise to build new canals and develop new command areas. The Green Pakistan Initiative is pursuing its agenda of ploughing millions of acres of hitherto barren land, especially in Cholistan.

With an appetite for large-scale corporate agriculture, it is pressing the government to complete six strategic canals on a fast-track basis. These include the Chubara Canal as the second phase of the Greater Thal Canal, the Rainea Canal, the Thar Canal, the Chashma Right Bank Canal and the Cholistan Flood Feeder Canal. The total command area of these canals is 3.58 million acres.

Sindh, the lowest riparian, is upset at the recent decision of the Central Development Working Party that disregarded its objections and approved the Cholistan Flood Feeder Canal. This canal is part of the Smaller Cholistan irrigation project proposed on the Sutlej River. The canal will further feed four canal systems to irrigate 0.6m acres in the Cholistan desert of Bahawalpur and Bahawal Nagar districts. Water availability for this project was certified by the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) in January 2024. Sindh has concerns that the Sutlej receives water when India releases surplus flows. Hence the entire canal system will be vulnerable to uncertain flows. Climate change has rendered flood flows unreliable.

Once water rights are established, Punjab will resort to diverting water from the Indus zone through link canals during dry spells to sustain the cropped area. Sindh's concerns are pending with the Council of Com-

mon Interests. The federal government should have deferred the project until the CCT's decision on Sindh's reservations. The approval of this canal will pave the way for other components of the Smaller Cholistan project that will eventually irrigate 2m acres of land.

The Chubara Canal is a branch canal of the Greater Thal Canal which Sindh has objected to since the start. Irsa approved the project on May 7, 2002, whereas Sindh and Irsa's federal members opposed it. Subsequently, the Sindh Assembly adopted two consensus resolutions in 2003 dismissing the project. Later, the assembly also adopted a resolution spurning the Chubara Canal in November 2021. The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council advised the Planning Commission to hold meetings with the representatives of Sindh and Punjab. Sindh maintained its dissent yet Enec approved this project on March 16, 2022. Sindh has referred the matter to the CCT, where it awaits a final decision.

The Kachhi Canal is designed to irrigate 0.7m acres of land in the Dera Bugti, Nasirabad, Jhal Magsi and Bolan areas of Balochistan. The canal with a capacity of 6,000 cusecs starts from the Taunsa Barrage. Almost 75 per cent of the work on the canal has been completed. The canal is exposed to gushing hill torrents descending from the Dera Bugti hills. A drain has been proposed to divert the flows to protect the canal structure. Wapda, however, has ignored the critical aspect of the ultimate disposal of water from this drain. It suggested that the flows be offloaded in Sindh's Hamal Lake through the Right Bank Outfall Drain. What Wapda did not realise was that the estimated

flood could be of 100,000 cusecs, which is beyond the capacity of the RBOD and Hamal Lake.

Currently, four hill torrents drain into the lake with a flow of 44,000 cusecs. Excessive inflows can burst the banks resulting in devastation in Qambar Shahdakot and Dadu districts. These factors should have been thought of at the design stage but in its eagerness to comply with the orders of the then ruler Gen Musharraf, Wapda hastily executed the project.

Wapda constructed the Rainea Canal, handing it over to the Sindh government in January 2022. The canal, with a capacity of over 5,000 cusecs, was designed to irrigate 0.4m acres land in Ghotki district. No water has been allocated for the canal in the 1991 Water Accord. Hence, it depends on surplus flows during floods. Sindh opposed the next phase of the canal for not having been sanctioned water. The Thar Canal is proposed as an escape channel for the Rainea Canal, to be operated during high floods. Developing large-scale cropped areas on flood channels is imprudent due to erratic Indus flows.

Sindh has reservations about the new irrigation projects mainly because of insufficient water availability in the Indus basin. The average annual flow below Kotri Barrage between 1976 and 1998 was 40.69 MAF. The flow decreased drastically to 14 MAF from 1999 to 2022. The Indus delta is in the throes of an ecological disaster. Climate change is aggravating the water scenario. In these conditions, constructing new canals will stoke new conflict between Sindh and Punjab. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**Seminars, meetings of foreign delegates held on 2<sup>nd</sup> day of TEXPO-2024**

KARACHI (APP): The foreign delegates, exporters and the business community representatives visited the 5<sup>th</sup> Textile & Leather Exhibition "TEXPO-2024" on the second day of the three day event on Thursday.

As part of the TEXPO Talks and sideline event, two seminars, focusing on sustainability and innovation in Pakistan's textile and leather sectors, were held.

The first seminar, "Green Threads: Weaving Sustainability into Pakistan's Textile and Leather Sectors," featured speakers Omar Hameed (Economic Minister, Brussels) and Bianca Seidel

(MD, Bianca Seidel Consultancy), with a panel discussion including Ivo Spauwen (Better Work Programme), Muhammad Fauz ul Azeem (Interloop), Imran Zaidi (Primark), and Dr. Hafsa Jamshed (NTU).

The interactive Q&A session drew strong participation from industry stakeholders, government representatives, international buyers, and international agencies.

The second seminar, "From Waste to Worth: Circular Innovations in Pakistan," included presentations by Boudewijn Mol (Director, M/S Bedding House) and Usman Khan (Investment, Trade & Cli-

mate Finance Advisor, REMIT).

The panel, moderated by Khan, featured Shafiq Haider Virk (Trade & Investment Counsellor, The Hague), Salman Ahmad Chaudhary (Pakistan Single Window), Dr. Zeeshan Khatri (Mehran University), and Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal (Pakistan Textile Council).

Both sessions concluded successfully with engaging discussions and valuable insights from participants.

The distinguished foreign guests and local exhibitors appreciated the arrangements and the opportunity for cultural exchange.



KARACHI: Investment Trade and Climate Finance Advisor REMIT, Usman Khan addressing during the Seminar from Waste to Worth Circular Innovations in Pakistan second day of the 5th International Textile and Leather Exhibition TEXPO 2024. Mr Boudewijn Mol Director M/S Bedding House, Mr Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal CEO Pakistan Textile Council and others also seen on the stage.

**China, Pakistan sign MoU to leverage space technology for global sustainable goals**

BEIJING (APP): A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between International Research Center of Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals (CBAS), China and Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), Pakistan

recently to collaborate on utilizing space and big data technologies for natural resource management and the assessment of regional sustainable development goals (SDGs).

It is learned that the collaboration is set to advance China-Pakistan joint research initiatives

and leverage data from the Sustainable Development Science Satellite 1 (SDGSAT-1), which supports the attainment of the SDGs and fosters a data-driven approach to sustainable development. According to sources, this partnership aims to enhance data sharing.

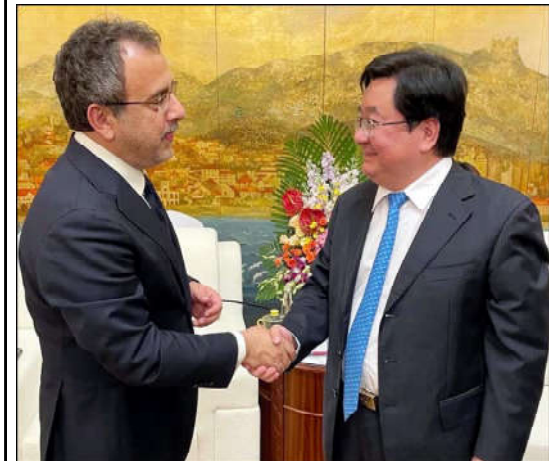
**PM calls for using technology to improve tax, revenue collection**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to utilise modern technology to improve the collection mechanism of taxes and revenues.

The prime minister, chairing a review meeting on the FBR reforms, instructed the measures for capacity building of the FBR officers and its effective use, according to

a PM Office press release. He directed the formulation of a strategy for restructuring Pakistan Revenue Automation Limited (PRAL) and called for enhancing the effectiveness of the systems to curb smuggling.

The prime minister directed the FBR to provide a friendly atmosphere to the taxpayers and asked the officers to accomplish the reform process.



QINGDAO: Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari, meets Mr. Yao Huan, Vice-President of Power China on the sidelines of the Third Belt & Road Energy Ministerial Conference in Qingdao, China.

**ADB country director calls on Shaza Fatima**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Country Director Asian Development Bank (ADB) Ms. Emma Fan called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

According to news release during the meeting issues relating to further strengthening collaboration between Pakistan and ADB, Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program, and IT and Telecommunication sector were discussed in detail.

Secretary IT Zarrar Hasham Khan and Special

Secretary IT & Telecom Division Azfar Manzoor were also present in the meeting. Shaza Fatima said under the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan present government is taking steps for the development of IT and Telecommunication sector of the country.

The government is fully supporting the private sector, adding that Ministry of IT is taking alongside the IT industry for increasing IT exports. Pakistan's IT exports are increasing, she maintained.

Shaza Fatima said Pakistan is embarking on the process of digital transformation.

**FPCCI & FBR exclusive meeting Genuine taxpayers should be protected at all costs: Atif**

**Independent Report** KARACHI: Mr. Atif Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial, Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), has agreed, in an

legitimate and transparent manner. To which the high-profile FPCCI delegation agreed to assist FBR, if the tax collection machinery is run and policymaking is undertaken in a consultative style. Mr. Atif Iqbal Sheikh



exclusive, candid and detailed meeting, with FPCCI's demand of an end to harassment of genuine and regular taxpayers — and, only the tax evaders or defaulters should be served with notices.

However, FBR Chairman demanded that FPCCI should support the efforts of FBR to persuade all traders and industrialists to file their returns in a fair,

acknowledged that the demand of signing an affidavit by chief financial officers (CFOs) of companies has been withdrawn by FBR after special request by FPCCI. It was intrinsically unnecessary and redundant as sales tax act 1990 already offers enough provision for responsible filing of the sales tax returns, he added.

**Pak total liquid foreign reserves recorded as \$16.01 billion**

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 16,017.1 million as of October 18, 2024 while the forex reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan increased to \$ 11,040.7 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that total liquid foreign reserves held by the central bank increased by \$18 million to \$11,040.7 million during the week ended on October 18, 2024.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were recorded as \$ 4,976.4 million during the week under review, it added. Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on October 11, 2024, were \$16,111.3 million. Among them foreign reserves held by the central bank were recorded as \$11,022 million while \$5,088.6 million were held by commercial banks.



## Cabinet approves transfer of land for construction of Custom House in DI Khan

PESHAWAR (APP): The meeting of provincial cabinet chaired by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur here Thursday approved transfer of 40 kanal of land from Board of Revenue to Pakistan Custom for construction of Custom House & Warehouses in Dera Ismail Khan. The cabinet meeting was also participated by Provincial Ministers, Advisors, Special Assistants, Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary, Senior Member Board of Revenue and administrative secretaries.

The meeting also demanded formation of a committee comprising representatives of government and political parties to look into proposals and demands of Pashtun Peace Jirga relating to federal government. The provincial cabinet also authorized Relief Department to take up a case of establishing a desk at Bacha Khan Airport Peshawar for providing the facility of transporting the dead bodies brought from abroad. Cabinet also approved Rs.36 million grant for purchase of three ambulances also allowing Rs.0.7 million per month budget to Rescue 1122 for the purpose. It was also decided that such transportation facility would be provided on

demand from the Islamabad International Airport. The cabinet approved federal government to legislation on the subject of "Explosive" for implementation of National Explosive Policy. Cabinet also decided to approve amendments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Civil Servants (Appointments, Promotion and Transfer) Rules, 1989 for reservation of quota for transgender, revising the fourth condition of its decision taken in the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Provincial Cabinet allowing partial relaxation of ban for creation of positions of project employees with domicile from other than Ex-FATA.



LAHORE: Ambassador of Belgium to Pakistan, Idesblad van der Gracht, called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan here today at Governor House.

## Punjab govt to support pediatric transplantation, says health minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique announced the provincial government's commitment to providing all possible support for pediatric transplantation. He made this statement during the opening session of the three-day 3<sup>rd</sup> International Pediatric Urology Congress, organized by the Pakistan Society of Pediatric Urology at the University of Child Health

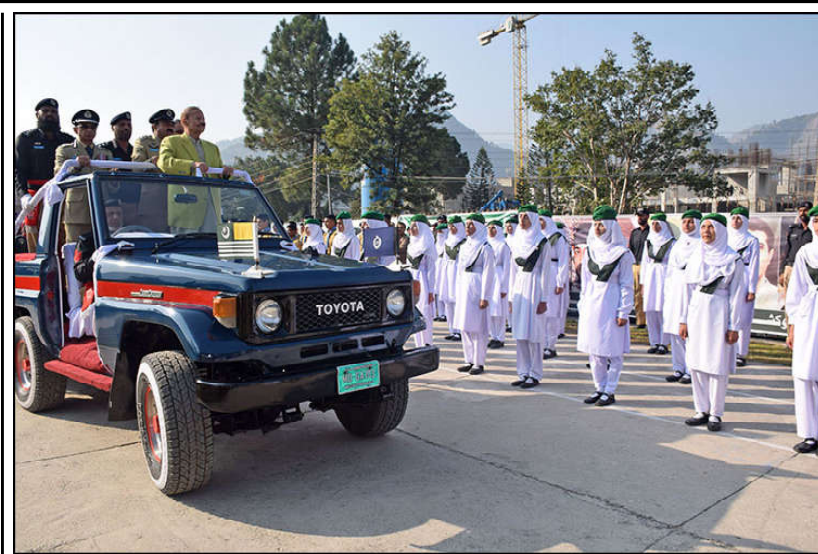
Sciences on Thursday. Addressing the attendees as the chief guest, the minister highlighted that Lahore's Children's Hospital is the second largest children's hospital globally and the largest in South Asia. He emphasized that, following the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the government is dedicated to enhancing healthcare services for the public.

## 16 killed, 1638 injured in 1467 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least sixteen persons were killed and 1638 injured in 1467 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 739 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 899 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals.

## ANF recovers 232 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an operation managed to recover over 232 kg drugs, said an ANF headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that acting on a tip-off, ANF team conducted a raid near the Motorway Interchange, Balkasar and foiled a drug smuggling attempt from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab.



MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry inspecting the parade on the occasion of the 77th foundation day of Azad Kashmir.

## Punjab Governor says: Exchange of trade, various delegations from Belgium will bolster bilateral ties

Independent Report LAHORE: Ambassador of Belgium to Pakistan, Idesblad van der Gracht, called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan here today at Governor House Lahore. In the meeting, cooperation in the fields of trade, education and sports were discussed. Speaking

on this occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that promotion of trade and business activities is very important for boosting the economy of the country. Governor Punjab appreciated the proposal of the Ambassador of Belgium to promote sports diplomacy between the

two countries for the promotion of sports, especially hockey. He said that hockey is the national sport of Pakistan and there was a time when Pakistan was champion in hockey at international level. He said that the exchange of trade and various delegations from Belgium will bolster bilateral relations.

## Progress on Chashma Lift Canal Project continues: Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that the Chashma Lift Canal project is moving closer to completion, with the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) issuing tenders for its first two phases. In a statement issued here, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi announced that the project will be inaugurated this year, fulfilling a long-standing demand of the residents of Dera Ismail Khan.

The tenders for the first phase will be opened on November 22, followed by the second phase on November 25. WAPDA plans to complete the canal in six sections. Similarly, Ahmad Karim Kundi, the parliamentary leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, emphasized that the party believes in taking practical steps rather than making empty promises. He expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and the Federal Minister and Chairman of WAPDA for their support.

WAPDA's North Project Manager has requested pre-qualification tenders for the initial two phases of the canal.



HYDERABAD: Members of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Lawyers Wing are holding protest demonstration for release of PTI Founder Imran Khan, outside Civil Court in Hyderabad.

## Punjab Law Minister engages bar associations to resolve legal community's issues

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has embarked on a journey to address the issues of lawyers and bar associations across the province. In this context, Provincial Law Minister Malik Sohaib Ahmed Bharth invited the presidents and general secretaries of six bar associations in the first phase to meet with him at the Lahore Civil Secretariat's Darbar Hall on Thursday morning. Imran Khakwani, President of the Multan Bar, Muhammad Ibrahim,

President of the Narawal Bar; Mariam Rana, President of the Mandi Bahauddin Bar; Mian Anwarul Haq, President of the Faisalabad Bar; Aamir Munir, President of the Gujranwala Bar; and Mohsin Shah, President of the Sargodha Bar, were welcomed by the Minister for Law Punjab and the Parliamentary Secretary for Law, Khalid Ranjnah. The meeting was also attended by the general secretaries of the bar associations and the Punjab Secretary for Law, Bilal Ahmed Lodhi.

## PG Punjab declares minor domestic worker murder case high-profile

LAHORE (APP): Prosecutor General Punjab Syed Farhad Ali Shah on Thursday declared the minor domestic worker murder case as high-profile. Earlier, after taking notice of the incident in which a minor domestic worker girl was tortured and killed within the jurisdiction of Lahore's Defense-C Police Station, the Prosecutor General Punjab summoned the investigating officer and the investigation in-charge, along with the case record. The investigating officer briefed the

Prosecutor General that the accused had tortured the minor domestic worker girl, buried her body, and filed a false theft FIR against her. In response to a question from the Prosecutor General that why the Anti-Rape Act 2021 was not applied and why the investigation was not conducted by the SSIU Unit, the investigating officer failed to provide a satisfactory explanation. Expressing anger over the negligence and poor investigation, the Prosecutor General reprimanded the officers.

## US delegation meets Punjab minorities minister

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora met a US delegation at his camp office on Thursday to discuss issues regarding protection of human rights, particularly for religious minorities in Punjab. The delegation, which included Deputy Assistant Secretary Jacobsen, Consul General Hawkins, Laskowski, Nelson, Lakhanpal and political specialist Daim. In the meeting they discussed the measures taken by the Punjab government to support minority communities.

# International News

## Israeli strike on Gaza shelter kills 17 as Blinken says cease-fire talks will resume

Monitoring Desk DEIR AL-BALAH: An Israeli strike on a school where displaced people were sheltering in the central Gaza Strip killed at least 17 people on Thursday, nearly all women and children, Palestinian medical officials said.

several strikes on schools-turned-shelters in recent months, saying it precisely targets militants hiding out among civilians. The strikes often kill women and children.

Blinken, speaking to reporters in Qatar, which has served as a key mediator between Israel and Hamas, said negotiators would reconvene "in the coming days."

The strike came as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Israel had accomplished its objective of "effectively dismantling" Hamas, and that negotiations over a cease-fire and the release of dozens of Israeli hostages would resume in the coming days. Another 42 people were wounded in the strike in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp, according to the Awda Hospital, which received the casualties. Among the dead were 13 children under the age of 18 and three women, according to the hospital's records. The Israeli military said it targeted Hamas militants inside the school, without providing evidence. Israel has carried out

## Lebanon media says 17 Israeli strikes hit Beirut suburbs, 6 buildings levelled

Monitoring Desk BEIRUT: Lebanon state media reported 17 Israeli raids on Beirut's southern suburbs, with six buildings levelled and the vacated offices of a pro-Iran broadcaster hit as the Iran-Hezbollah war reached its one-month mark. AFP TV footage showed a massive explosion followed by smaller blasts in the embattled southern suburbs after the Israeli army issued an evacuation warning for the area, where Hezbollah holds sway. The official National News Agency (NNA) reported at least 17 Israeli raids, marking one of the most violent nights in the area since the Israel-Hezbollah war erupted on Sep 23. Six buildings were destroyed around the suburb of Laylaki, NNA said, calling the raids "the most violent in the area since the beginning of the war". The strikes came shortly after the Israeli military's Arabic-language spokesman, Avichay Adraee, issued evacuation warnings on social media platform X. There was no warning, however, for a strike that hit the Jnah neighbourhood in southern Beirut.



Men walk on the rubble at a site damaged in the aftermath of Israeli strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs, amid the ongoing hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, Lebanon.

## Russia's proposed grain exchange for BRICS countries may take years to launch

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russia's proposal for a new international grain exchange could take years to get off the ground even though the plan was welcomed by members of the BRICS group of countries at a summit this week in Kazan in Russia. Russia has been pushing to establish the exchange as part of a broader plan to create new financial instruments, detach its trade from the US dollar and

help Moscow combat Western sanctions. President Vladimir Putin said at the summit that BRICS countries, which are among the world's largest producers of grains, legumes, and oilseeds, could establish such an exchange, potentially expanding it to trade other major commodities. The plan to create the exchange has been approved by leaders of the BRICS countries, whose members include Brazil, Russia.

## UN chief calls for peace in Gaza, Lebanon, Ukraine and Sudan

Monitoring Desk KAZAN: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told BRICS leaders including Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday that the world needed peace in Gaza, Lebanon, Ukraine and Sudan. "Across the board, we need peace," Guterres said at the BRICS summit in the Russian city of Kazan. "We need peace in Ukraine. A just peace in line with the UN Charter, international law and UN General Assembly resolutions."

## Indonesia says its coast guard drove away Chinese ship that interrupted survey in disputed sea

Monitoring Desk JAKARTA: Indonesian patrol ships drove a Chinese coast guard vessel away from a survey vessel in a disputed area of the South China Sea for the second time in three days, Indonesian authorities said Thursday. Indonesia's Maritime Security Agency said a Chinese ship approached the MV Geo Coral on Monday and Wednesday, interrupting a seismic data survey being conducted by the state energy company PT Pertamina in a part of the South China Sea claimed by

both countries. Asked about the Indonesian statement, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said the Coast Guard vessel had carried out routine patrols in waters under Chinese jurisdiction. "China is ready to enhance communication and consultation with Indonesia through diplomatic channels and properly handle maritime differences between the two countries," he added. China's "nine-dash line," which it uses to roughly demarcate its claim to most of the South China Sea.

## Bomb attack in Kabul market kills child, injures 11 others

Monitoring Desk KABUL: An attacker carrying a bomb in a bag killed a child and wounded 11 others in a market in Afghanistan's capital, police said on Thursday. The attack took place in a central area of Kabul on Wednesday afternoon, although Taliban officials did not confirm the incident until Thursday. "Yesterday, there was an explosion in the Pami Cinema area of Kabul from explosives a person was carrying in a bag," Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadrani said in a statement. "Due to this explosion, a child was killed and some civilians were lightly wounded," he said, telling

AFP later that 11 people had been hurt in the blast. A suspect, who was also wounded, has been arrested, he added in the statement. Italian organisation Emergency NGO, which operates a hospital in Kabul, said on Wednesday it treated 11 wounded, including two young children, a 16-year-old and two women. "The explosion took place at a second-hand clothes market when it opened and people crowded to get in," said deputy country director Stefano Gennaro Smirnov. "This is the Pami Cinema neighbourhood, one of the most densely populated in Kabul."

## Thai PM apologises for crackdown that killed 85 Muslims as hopes for justice fade

Monitoring Desk BANGKOK: Thailand's prime minister on Thursday apologised for the deaths two decades ago of dozens of Muslim protesters who were piled up in army trucks, hours from the expiry of the statute of limitations on an incident over which no state official has been convicted. The security crackdown in the southern town of Tak Bai in 2004 caused the deaths of 85 people and was one of the most high-profile events of a separatist insurgency that re-ignited that same year and has since killed more than 7,600 people. "I am deeply saddened for what happened and apologise on behalf of the government," Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said, vowing to ensure no repeat of such events.

while bound and piled on top of each other in army trucks. Seven others were shot dead. The crackdown was widely known as the Tak Bai massacre and took place under the administration of Paetongtarn's father, Thaksin Shinawatra, a key figure behind her ruling Pheu Thai Party. Attempts to prosecute security personnel have failed, including two in the past two months. In August, a court accepted a criminal lawsuit by victims' families against seven senior officials, among them a retired general and ruling party lawmaker, but all of those failed to show up at a hearing. A separate case against eight other personnel filed by the attorney-general last month has made no progress. Paetongtarn said the incident should not be politicised, adding the statute of limitations could not be extended because it would be a breach of the constitution.

## Bangladesh bans student wing of ousted Sheikh Hasina's party

Monitoring Desk DHAKA: Bangladesh's interim government has officially banned the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party, declaring it a "terrorist organisation". This move comes in response to escalating demands from the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, which outlined five key demands, including the abolishment of the current constitution, the removal of President Mohammed Shahabuddin, and the dissolution of the BCL. The Ministry of Home Affairs cited the BCL's history of serious misconduct over the past 15 years, including violence,

harassment, and exploitation of public resources. The ban under the Anti-Terrorism Act takes effect immediately, it said in a gazette notification issued late on Wednesday. The country has been rising tensions and protests in recent months, after violent protests forced Hasina to flee to India on Aug 5 and an interim government led by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus took charge. The protests, which began as a student-led movement against public sector job quotas in July, escalated into some of the deadliest unrest since the country's independence in 1971, resulting in over 700 deaths and numerous injuries.

## 'The whole city shook' after Israel pounded ancient Tyre

Monitoring Desk TYRE: Israeli strikes on Wednesday pounded Lebanon's Tyre, an ancient coastal city which boasts a UNESCO World Heritage site, leaving swaths of its centre in ruins. The raids, among the worst since the start of the Israel-Hezbollah war last month, hit the "heart of Tyre", said Rana, a resident who asked to only use her first name over security concerns. "The whole city shook," said Rana, after fleeing to the seafloor following an Israeli military warning for people to evacuate much of Tyre's centre in the morning. Thick black plumes of smoke were seen rising from several neighbourhoods, with parts of the evacuation area just 500 metres (yards) from the city's ancient ruins.



## PM Shahbaz meets newly appointed community & labour welfare attaches

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the newly appointed community and labour welfare attaches at Pakistani missions abroad to work diligently to find employment opportunities for skilled workers from Pakistan.

"I am confident that your appointment has taken place through a highly transparent process," the prime minister said while talking to the group of the attaches here at the PM House.

He directed that the welfare of the overseas Pakistani community should be their top priority.

"Overseas Pakistanis who are bringing valuable foreign exchange worth billions of dollars to Pakistan are

our assets," he said.

The prime minister instructed to always keep Pakistan's interests in their mind besides making vigorous efforts to promote Pakistan's image abroad.

The prime minister directed the newly appointed attaches to also seek opportunities to bring business and investment to Pakistan.

The officials briefed the prime minister about their action plans related to their respective stations.

The prime minister expressed his best wishes for the officials.

The meeting was attended by the Prime Minister's Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi, the Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, and other senior government officials.



ISLAMABAD: Newly selected Community and Labor Welfare Attachés call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Humanitarian situation caused by Israel's Gaza siege blot on human conscience: FO spokesperson

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday strongly condemning the Israeli forces' attack on UN peacekeepers in Lebanon, said that the humanitarian situation caused by Israel's siege of Gaza was a blot on human conscience.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, unequivocally condemned the brutal and indiscriminate Israeli airstrikes on Beit Lahia, which resulted in the tragic loss of over 80 Palestinian lives, including women and children.

She said that targeting the densely populated residential areas without warning and collective punishment of civilians by depriving them of food,

water and essential medicines constitute war crimes. The spokesperson told the media that the UN peacekeepers had become the latest victim of Israeli aggression in Lebanon "Pakistan strongly condemns the deliberate and unlawful attacks by Israeli forces on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeepers. The Peacekeepers must be able to fulfill their mission without fear of attack or obstruction."

She called upon the international community to press Israel to cease all aggressive actions against UNIFIL immediately and forthwith cease.

its attacks against the people of Palestine and Lebanon. Israel should also be held accountable for its

war crimes and crimes against humanity and the people of Palestine should be protected from the Israeli aggression, she added.

The spokesperson highlighted that October 27, 2024, would be marked as 'Black Day' in Pakistan and around the world, on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of the Indian troops' landing in Srinagar.

"The Kashmiri people have never accepted Indian occupation of their land and persistent denial of their right to self-determination. Their aspirations for their rights and liberty remain alive despite decades of occupation and suppression," the spokesperson remarked and reiterated Pakistan's continuous political, diplomatic and moral support to

Kashmiri people for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.

She apprised the media of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar's current visit to Samoa to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) where he participated in the Commonwealth Intergenerational Youth Dialogue, delivered a keynote address at the Commonwealth Business Forum; and also attended the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting ahead of the Heads of Government Meeting scheduled for Friday.

## NA Speaker calls for polio vaccination for all children under five

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday urged everyone to make sure all children under five get polio vaccine drops to help eliminate polio in Pakistan and create a healthier future for kids.

In his World Polio Day message, speaker said polio is a debilitating disease that leads to disability in children, and it is our shared duty to safeguard them from it. Sadly, Pakistan remains one of the few countries where the poliovirus is still present. The speaker appealed to the nation to ensure all children under five years receive polio vaccine drops, stressing the importance of collective efforts to protect them from this debilitating

disease.

Ayaz Sadiq stated that the surge in polio cases is alarming, emphasizing that protecting children from the poliovirus is a collective responsibility as they are the future of the nation.

He highlighted the necessity of unified action to shield children from the poliovirus. He urged all sectors of society to collaborate in the fight against polio. Sadiq also commended frontline health workers for their relentless dedication in providing door-to-door polio vaccinations, recognizing their vital contribution to combating the disease.

The speaker appealed to the nation to ensure all children under five years receive polio vaccine drops.

## Law minister holds meeting with bar councils' representatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): The representatives of different bar councils on Thursday met Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarrar.

The representatives of bar associations from Jhelum, Khushab, Sohawa, Chuniyan and Nurpur Thal held meeting with the law minister.

They discussed the discussion on various issues related to bar councils.

The law minister said that Bank of Punjab branches and counters will be opened in court premises after discussing with the Punjab government and the Punjab Bar Council on the issues of court fees and stamps.

The contact has been established between the Vice Chairman Punjab Bar Council Chaudhry Babar Waheed and the management of Bank of Punjab.

He assured that full cooperation while discussing the problems of lawyers and said that government prioritizes welfare schemes for lawyers.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed addresses at the opening ceremony of the 'Pakistan Sustainability Summit' held at a local hotel.

## Rubina emphasizes importance of skill development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Thursday emphasized the importance of skill development in transforming liabilities into valuable assets.

During her visit to the Riphah Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts (RIHCA), she highlighted that empowering beneficiaries with skills could help them break the cycle of poverty while also creating opportunities for others in need of social protection.

Senator Rubina Khalid stressed the significance of international standard certifications in addressing Pakistan's challenges.

She called for high-quality training programs to unlock potential, particu-

larly in the nursing sector, and urged organizations to provide world-class training and certifications.

Chancellor Hassan Muhammad Khan briefed Senator Khalid on the initiatives of RIHCA, focusing on vocational training and the medical-technical fields.

"RIHCA operates in various cities and serves nearly 30,000 students," he noted.

Both leaders agreed on the importance of integrating work ethics and hygiene into skill development programs to cultivate professionally competent and ethical leaders for the future.

Chairperson BISP also interacted with female trainees at RIHCA and cut a cake baked by them in celebration of 'World Chef Day'.

## Irfan praises Uzbekistan's initiative to commence flights operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, met with Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtayev, on Thursday and discussed areas of mutual interest, with a particular focus on enhancing bilateral trade.

During the meeting, Senator Siddiqui warmly welcomed the newly appointed ambassador and extended his best wishes for

a successful tenure.

He acknowledged the invitation to observe the elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, scheduled for October 27, 2024, expressing his enthusiasm for witnessing this important democratic event.

He also thanked the Central Election Commission of Uzbekistan for inviting a delegation of Pakistani senators to observe

the elections. Ambassador Tukhtayev announced the launch of direct flights between Lahore and Tashkent, which will later be extended to other major cities in Pakistan.

Irfan Siddiqui praised Uzbekistan's initiative to commence flights starting next month, stating that this development will significantly boost trade, tourism, and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarrar held a meeting with Lawyers from various Bar Associations.

## IHC directs jail admin to present PTI founder

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday directed the Adiala Jail administration to present the PTI founder before court on coming Thursday for his meeting with lawyers.

The court said that the jail administration has to tell the certain security threat if the PTI founder is not brought here.

Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan remarked that the interior ministry should also present the report and explain that what security threats are there. The court remarked that even the lawyers were not allowed to meet their clients in jail, adding that it was a contempt of court.

## Peace not just aspiration but necessity for future of humanity: Gilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday said that peace is not just an aspiration but a necessity for the future of humanity, calling on all nations to prioritize conflict prevention.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony in Islamabad in connection with UN Day, marking the 79th anniversary of the United Nations.

Reflecting on Pakistan's 77 years as a dedicated member of the UN, Gilani reaffirmed the country's commitment to the UN Charter's principles, including sovereignty, equality, and respect for human rights.

He said that Pakistan remains devoted to upholding these ideals as a cornerstone of its foreign policy.

The Chairman Senate praised the contributions of UN agencies in Pakistan, highlighting their vital role in sectors such as education, health, and humanitarian relief.

He acknowledged their timely interventions, particularly in collaborative efforts like flood relief, which have positively impacted Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Housing & Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Ambassador of Hungary in Islamabad, Béla Fazekas and others cutting a cake on the occasion of the National Day of Hungary.

## Lok Virsa calls vendors, artisans to book stalls for Lok Mela in November

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) has called all vendors and artisans from across the country to book stalls for becoming part of the much-awaited annual cultural event of "Lok Mela", scheduled to be held from November 08-17 in Islamabad. The event is being arranged by Lok Virsa which is an autonomous cultural organization working under National Heritage.

## Toshakhana case PTI founder appeal plea against his conviction fixed for hearing

ISLAMABAD (Online): Appeal pleas of PTI founder against his conviction in Toshakhana case has been fixed for hearing.

The hearing of appeals will take place on October 29.

The petition seeking early fixation of appeals against conviction of Imran Khan came up for hearing in IHC Thursday.

A division bench of

IHC comprising Chief Justice (CJ) Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case.

The court accepted the petition for fixing the appeal pleas for early hearing. The court directed to fix the appeal pleas for hearing on October 29.

PTI founder had filed appeal plea in IHC against decision of district court in Toshakhana case.

## Bike lifter gang held; seven bikes recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Thursday apprehended two wanted members of a notorious bike lifter gang involved in numerous bike thefts and recovered seven stolen motorbikes from their possessions.

According to a police spokesperson, under the special directions of Inspector General (IG) Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the ICT Police have intensified their crackdown on criminal elements to eliminate crime from the city.

In this regard, the Shahzad Town police team used technical and human resources, successfully apprehending two wanted members of the bike lifter gang.

## US congressmen urge Biden to secure PTI founder's release

WASHINGTON (INP): More than 60 members of the US House of Representatives have written a letter to President Joe Biden urging him to pressure Islamabad to release PTI founder Imran Khan.

The congressmen stressed the president that efforts should be made to also secure release of other political prisoners in Pakistan.

The former prime minister has been incarcerated since August last year after his conviction in several criminal case ahead of the February 8 elections.

In their letter, the lawmakers belonging to the Democratic party urged President Biden to prioritize human rights in the US policy towards Pakistan. "We write today to urge you to use the United States' substantial leverage with Pakistan's government to secure the release of political prisoners including

former Prime Minister Khan and curtail widespread human rights abuses," they wrote. They also asked the US embassy officials to visit Imran in Adiala Jail. The letter marked the first such collective call from congressmen for the release of Imran, "who otherwise has had tenuous relations with Washington as a long standing critic of US foreign policy."

According to US Representative Greg Casar, who is one of the congressmen who wrote the letter.

Casar noted that following Imran's ouster from the prime minister's office through a no-confidence vote in 2022, multiple cases were filed against him and he has been in prison since August 2023. The letter also stressed on the US administration to seek assurance from the government of Pakistan about Imran's safety and well-being in custody.

## Ahsan Iqbal reviews 'Foreign-Funded Development Projects'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, chaired a meeting of the Prime Minister's Committee for planning and execution of foreign-funded development projects here on Thursday. Attendees included Secretary Planning Awaish Manzoor Sumra, Secretary Economic Affairs Division (EAD), Member Infrastructure, Waqas Anwar and senior officials from the Ministry of Planning.

Federal Minister for EAD Ahsan Iqbal participated via video link, said a press release.

The committee discussed in detail the planning and execution of foreign-funded projects and the need to refine policy guidelines in line with the Economic Coordination Committee's (ECC) decisions. During the briefing, it was highlighted that the challenges posed by scarce resources and huge demand for development projects needs to be addressed during the financial year. The ministries demanded PKR 2,900 billion whereas approved development budget was PKR 1,100 billion. The PSDP currently stands at PKR 1,100 billion, with an allocation of PKR 220 billion in foreign funding as rupee cover.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam signs Statement of Understanding (SoU) with private sector members to mitigate nitric acid mitigation pact for enhanced national climate action held at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination

## US envoy lauds restoration of Karachi's historic Frere Hall at completion ceremony

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome on Thursday praised the successful completion of the restoration of the historic Frere Hall, a project funded by the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP).

Addressing a ceremony held at Frere Hall, Karachi, Ambassador Blome expressed his admiration for the initiative, stating that the restoration symbolizes the shared values and collaborative spirit between the US and Pakistan.

He said, "On behalf of the US government and the American people, it is an honor to join you today as we celebrate the completion of this remarkable project. Thanks to the AFCP, Frere Hall will continue to serve as a space for Karachi's vibrant artistic community and as a testament to the city's rich cultural heritage."

Ambassador Blome highlighted the cultural and educational significance of Frere Hall, noting that the restoration project reinforces its role as a center for civic engagement and learning in the heart of Karachi. He commended the Sindh Exploration and Adventure Society (SEAS) for their leadership in the restoration effort, led by Dr. Asma Ibrahim and Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari. The project, which spanned three years, involved local students in learning the skills of historic preservation, reflecting a commitment not only to cultural heritage but also to skill development and economic growth.

"Restoring Frere Hall and making it structurally safer and more accessible for public gatherings like today—and for the future—is a powerful symbol of the bond between the US and Pakistan," he remarked.



ISLAMABAD: Provincial Ombudsman on Protection of Women Against Harassment at Workplace, KP, Rukhsanda Naz, Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development, GB, Dilshad Bano, Executive Director PODA, Sameena Nazir presenting a certificate to a participant at Closing ceremony of 17th Annual Rural Women Leadership Training Conference held under the auspices of PODA - Pakistan at Lok Virsa in the Federal Capital.