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

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 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.

He, however, clarified that consensus on the mechanism for provincial constitutional courts is yet to be developed.



KARACHI: Governor of Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing media persons during his visit to Liaquatabad Furniture Market.

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

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.

Deputy Mayor Karachi chairs KMC Council meeting

KARACHI (APP): Deputy Mayor Karachi, Salman Abdullah Murad on Monday chaired the general meeting of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation-KMC Council at KMC Council. During the meeting, a total of 11 resolutions were approved, six of which were passed unanimously and five by majority vote.

Additionally, the discussion and voting on five other proposed resolutions were postponed until the next meeting. Among the resolutions passed unanimously, three identical resolutions expressed sorrow over the martyrdom of

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrullah and his daughter in the Israeli attacks in Lebanon, the martyrdom of former Palestinian President Ismail Haniyeh, and the martyrdom of former Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi in an air accident.

The resolutions condemned the mass killings of oppressed Muslims in Gaza by Israel in the strongest terms. During the discussion, parliamentary leaders Najmi Alam from the Pakistan People's Party and Saifuddin Advocate from Jamaat-e-Islami expressed that the Israeli state, posed severe threat to global peace.

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 feteha 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.

Govt reduces prices of petrol, diesel

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.



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

Governor visits Furniture Market

KARACHI (APP): Governor of Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori visited the Liaquatabad Furniture Market, where he was warmly welcomed by the President of the Furniture Market, Muhammad Owais Farooqui, and local citizens, who showered him with flower petals.

The shopkeepers of the market informed Governor Sindh about their challenges, particularly related to parking and electricity load-shedding.

Governor Tessori assured the shopkeepers that their issues would be resolved, immediately instructing DC Central to address the parking problems.

During a media interaction after the visit, he highlighted the promising growth of Pakistan's furniture industry in recent years. He noted that the Liaquatabad Furniture Market plays an essential role in the economy, with Pakistan exporting approximately \$39 million worth

of furniture in the fiscal year 2021.

The United States is the largest market for Pakistani furniture, accounting for around 39% of total exports, while countries in the Middle East, such as Qatar and the UAE, also have high demand for Pakistani furniture.

Tessori emphasized the significance of supporting businesses and addressing issues like parking and power shortages, stating, "Traders face a dilemma of whether to run their businesses or struggle with these problems."

He reiterated his commitment to improving the nation's economy and providing employment opportunities, stating, "We have everything we need—resources. Our military keeps our borders safe, but foreign adversaries don't want to see us prosper. Our youth, like Shehbaz Rind, have defeated terrorists in Balochistan through their skills."



OMAN: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain meeting with Assistant Grand Mufti of Oman Sheikh Kahlan Al Kharousi during his three day visit to Oman.

Nisar Khukhro call for double track railways line Larkana to Quetta under CPEC

LARKANA (APP): Chairman of Public Accounts Committee Sindh, President of People's Party Sindh MPA Nisar Khukhro has said that it was important to lay a double track railway line from Larkana to Quetta under the CPEC project. He expressed these views on Monday while talking to the media at the reception ceremony of the newly elected officials of the Larkana Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He said that China had planned mega projects in the country under the CPEC project. He said that China will invest in the land

and Pakistan will benefit from the development process. "We also need a friend who will invest in the development of Pakistan. "Not surprisingly, there were some governments in the past that downplayed the importance of CPEC projects." He said that "if there was a double railway line from Larkana to Quetta under the CPEC, we would not have complained today." In the road sector, the motorway was built from Multan to Sukkur, but the motorway from Sukkur to Karachi was not connected to the CPEC.

1.37mn viewers watch PM Shehbaz's live address at UNGA

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 AI Jazeera's Tiktok account, the prime minister's address was watched live by a total of 1.6 million viewers.

Kumail Hyder calls on President Asif Ali Zardari

SUKKUR (APP): Chairman District Council Sukkur, Syed Kumail Hyder Shah, called on to President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and briefed him about the performance of District Council Sukkur as well as various development projects in Sukkur.

According to handout, issued here on Monday, Syed Kumail Hyder Shah briefed the President Asif Ali Zardari on the district council's achievements and initiatives undertaken to improve public services in Sukkur.

President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari praised the efforts of Chairman District Council Syed Kumail Hyder Shah and assured his full support for their future endeavors.

During the meeting, the Chairman Syed Kumail Hyder Shah also extended an invitation to the President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari to visit Sukkur, which he accepted.

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.

Ten women among 11 injured in Jamshoro road mishap

JAMSHORO (INP): At least 11 people mostly women were injured in a road mishap here on Monday, rescue sources said.

According to details, a loader rickshaw turned turtle due to reckless driver at Sehwan Sharif Bypass road.

The accident resulted in injuries to 11 people including Zeenat, Puppi, Wakeelan, Lahl Khatoon, Bakhtawar, Samina, Islam, Maira, Samal, Zaibal and Naeem Pararo.

The injured were shifted to Syed Abdullah Shah Medical Institute for treatment.

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 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/substituted 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.



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

NA Speaker denounces growing Israeli adventurism in ME

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has strongly condemned Israel's increasing adventurism in the Middle East, while stating, "Such actions jeopardize regional peace & threaten global security."

The Speaker expressed profound grief over the ongoing loss of innocent civilian lives, including women and children, due to Israeli military operations in Gaza and Lebanon.

"This growing Israeli adventurism is a blatant

breach of human rights and a direct threat to the stability and peace of the Middle East," said the Speaker in a statement here on Monday.

He lamented that nations which claim to uphold democracy, justice, and human rights are silent which is dismaying.

Speaker Sadiq urged the international community, including the United Nations, human rights organizations, and world powers, to take immediate notice of the situation and intervene to stop Israel's continued brutality.

PTI raises objections to bench formation in SC's article 63A review case

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has raised formal objections regarding the constitution of the Supreme Court bench hearing the review case on the interpretation of Article 63-A.

A petition was filed by PTI's lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar challenging the bench's formation.

In the petition, Zafar argued that the bench was not constituted in accordance with Section 2 of the Act under the Presidential Ordinance, which requires the Judges' Committee to consist of three members.

According to the law, a minimum of three judges is necessary to decide on the composition of the bench.

The petition further stated that the bench can only be constituted through the collective wisdom of three judges.

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 Interfaith Harmony Dr. Syed Attaur Rehman on his arrival at Islamabad International Airport on Monday.



According to the ministry spokesperson, Parliamentary Secretary for Religious Affairs Shamshir Ali Mazari and Prime Minister Youth Program Chairman Rana Mashhood were also present at the airport to welcome Dr. Naik.

During 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.



KARACHI: Session of Balidia Uzma Karachi is being held in the municipal office under the chairmanship of Deputy Mayor Salman Murat.

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 requires 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 dented 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 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 Sammies, 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.



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 tumbling.

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. Vitaliy 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 defence.

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 plummeted 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.

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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 Turkey stood at US \$64.812 million against US \$61.354 million.

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 Nestlé 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, Nestlé 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.

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.

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 Yousaf Raza Gillani 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. Gillani 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 significant economic

losses," he observed.

Gillani 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, Gillani 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 Yousaf Raza Gillani 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.

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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 presiding 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 Javid 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.

Rabi Kisan Mela to begin at UAF on Oct 1

FAISALABAD (APP): A Rabi Kisan Mela 2024 will begin from October 1 at University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan will inaugurate the 9-day festival during a Mehfil-e-Milad at the Iqbal Auditorium. According to university sources here Monday, the opening day programs are a book fair at the main library and exhibition at the expo center, while Art & Literary Festival (Musical Expressions) at Iqbal Auditorium, fancy bird show in front of library, tent pegging competitions at Equestrian Stadium will be held on October 2.

The 3rd October functions are inauguration of food & nutrition mela at NIFSAT, art & literary festival (Monologue, standup comedy, cultural dance).

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.

Relief & rehabilitation of flood victims remain one of top priorities: Bilawal reaffirms commitment to welfare & development of people of Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has emphasized that the relief and rehabilitation of flood victims remain one of his top priorities. He urged the federal and provincial governments to take immediate and concrete steps to address the issues faced by these citizens, who are severely affected by climate change.

The Chairman PPP was addressing the inauguration of the process of distribution of relief cheques to flood victims at the Chief Minister's House in Quetta on Monday. During his address, he reaffirmed his commitment to the welfare and development of the people of Balochistan.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari highlighted his efforts in 2022 as Foreign Minister to secure international funding for the rehabilitation of flood victims. He stated, "Standing with the Prime Minister, I signed agreements as Foreign Minister before the world. We secured funding for a housing project, which was my initiative that we presented to the World Bank. The aim of this project is to rebuild homes for flood victims in a way that they can withstand the challenges of climate change."

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari stressed that before seeking help from the World Bank, the federal and provincial governments should step in to assist the flood victims. "If both governments contribute, we can help more people," he said. He also warned that the federal government's approach to flood funds could have negative consequences in the future, cautioning, "If the next Prime Minister or Foreign Minister asks for funds from international organizations during a natural disaster, they will look at our past record, which is not favorable."

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari reiterated the need to build new homes for flood victims, noting that the construction of homes for victims is already underway in Sindh.

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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.

SHC directs to place names of accused of Dr Shahnawaz's murder case on ECL

MIRPURKHAS (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday directed to place the names of all accused involved in murder of blasphemy accused Dr. Shahnawaz Kumbhar during a fake police encounter in Umerkot on Exit Control List (ECL).

According to details, the Mir Pur Khas bench of Sindh High Court announced the verdict which was reserved earlier on the civil society's plea.

It should be mentioned here that a case was registered after an inquiry report confirmed that the blasphemy accused, Dr. Shahnawaz Kumbhar was killed in a suspected fake police encounter.

As many as 45 individuals including the high-ranking police officials, including DIG Javed Jaskani, SSP Asad Chaudhry, SSP Asif Raza Baloch, SHO Sindhari and CIA team officials.

World heart Day observed in Sukkur

SUKKUR (APP): Mahar Medical College, Sukkur has organized an awareness walk in connection with 'World Heart Day' on Monday with aim to awareness about prevention and control of cardiovascular disease.

The walk was organized by the Inter Global Human Development Society (IGHDS) with the collaboration of the health department Sukkur started from College and was culminated at the OPD of the district headquarters hospital. This year's theme of the Day was 'Use Heart for Action'. Speakers said that Cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, is the world's leading cause of death, they claimed over 17.5 million lives each year across the globe. Dr Zahoor Ahmed Soomro, Dr Farhan Baloch, CEO of the IGHDS, Advocate Dr Jameel Shakeel, Keenjhar Nazeer, Bakhtawar Soomro, Maqsood Imam, Awais Qureshi and others spoke the occasion.



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.

Pakistan launches cell to assist nationals in Lebanon amid Israel attacks

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has activated its Crisis Management Unit (CMU) to aid Pakistani nationals and their families impacted by Israeli attacks in Lebanon. Following recent Israeli airstrikes, many Pakistani families found themselves stranded due to suspended flight operations.

"The ministry in Islamabad and the Pakistani embassy in Beirut are continuing their efforts to assist Pakistani nationals impacted by the situation in Lebanon," Foreign Office spokeswoman Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in a statement. "For the last several days, Israeli forces have engaged in unacceptable violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon, relentlessly targeting civilian population centers, and undermining its stability and security," the FO spokesperson said.

"We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of Israeli aggression and the people of Lebanon."

She encouraged Pakistani nationals impacted by the situation to reach out to the CMU at Islamabad's landline 051-9207887 or via email at cmu1@mofa.gov.pk. They reported that the land route for exiting Lebanon is closed due to safety concerns in Syria.

Pakistan had issued a warning for its citizens to exit the country on September 26.

The Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement urging citizens to avoid traveling to Lebanon due to the current security situation.

Imran announces nationwide demos to show solidarity with judiciary

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan has announced nationwide demos 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. Ali Amin Gandapur rightly said that the revolution will come now." "My message was also conveyed to the public. Our people don't fear jail. We will defend the judiciary, and fight for our freedom," he added.

Ghost students, quality training issues discussed in NAVTTC meeting

KARACHI (APP): A consultative meeting of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) and TVET Institute under PM's Youth Skill Development Programme, on Monday discussed the issues of ghost students, stipend to students for improving attendance, quality training and measures to motivate them in pursuance of their education and training.

The meeting under the chairmanship of NAVTTC Executive Director Mohammed Aamir Jan was held at the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI).

Amir Jan said that the prime minister had directed him for the international certification specially in the fields of information technology, hospitality and trade. The federal government wanted to equip the workforce with modern skills. While stressing the need for ending taboos of vocational training, he said that the efforts were being made to this effect, he added.

Later, talking to media persons, the ED said that 56000 students had been trained this year since January 2024. Replying to a question, he said that NAVTTC was working in 117 sectors including IT, agriculture, livestock, mining, banking, health, manufacturing, textile, etc.

Answering to another question on ghost students, he said that there was no ghost institute although ghost students were being monitored by the third party.



LARKANA: Residents of Nazar Mohalla, Mirani community are holding protest demonstration against the killing of Hubdar Ali Mirani and demanding for arrest of his killers held at Larkana press club.

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.

Karsaz accident accused Natasha granted bail in drug use case

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday granted bail to Natasha Danish, the driver booked in deadly Karsaz accident case last month, in drug use case.

The court directed Natasha to submit Rs1 million surety bonds. During the proceedings on Monday, Natasha's lawyer Farooq H Naek Advocate informed the court that his client had already been granted bail in the main Karsaz accident case after both the sides reached a settlement. The state prosecutor told the court that Natasha was 'high' when she was driving her car.

Farooq Naek intervened saying there was an ambiguity in the medical report which said there was no methamphetamine in the blood. When the court asked the state's lawyer how much quantity of methamphetamine was gauged in the blood, he said there was no mention of it in the medical report.

Eight held after clash between two groups

KARACHI (INP): The police arrested eight people after two rival groups exchange fire near Suleman Tower here on Monday.

According to SSP Malir, members of two groups which had come to Malir Court to follow a murder case traded fire soon after they came out of the court.

The enraged culprits also set several motorcycles on fire after which police took eight members of the two into custody.

The police registered a case against the detainees and started investigations.

Sindh University extends online registration deadline for admissions

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh University Jamshoro has announced an extension of the online registration deadline for Bachelor's and third-year (fifth semester) admissions for the academic year 2025. The new deadline is now set for October 2, 2024.

According to a statement of the Director Admissions, Professor Dr. Ayaz Keeryo, candidates who missed the initial registration deadline can now apply online until October 2. They must fill out the online form and submit a fee of 3,000 rupees at any Habib Bank branch. Candidates were advised to complete their registration and pay the admission processing fee as soon as possible and not to wait until the deadline. The announcement emphasized that no further extensions will be granted after October 2.

Gilani urges UN to take action to end Israeli aggression

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Monday strongly condemned Israeli attacks on Palestine, Yemen, and Lebanon, urging the United Nations to take immediate notice of the atrocities committed against civilians and take action to end its aggression.

Gilani also called on the Islamic nations to break their silence and speak out against Israeli aggression.

The Senate chairman, in a statement, expressed deep sorrow over the brutal violence and the loss of innocent lives.

He also conveyed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, expressing his grief over the massacre of innocent people in Palestine and Lebanon. "The hearts of the people of Pakistan beat with those of the Palestinian and Lebanese people," he added.

The Senate chairman reaffirmed that during the difficult times, the Parliament and the people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with the people of Palestine and Lebanon.

Gilani described Israel's ongoing airstrikes as a manifestation of war-mongering that "threatens not only the region but also global peace".

"Israel's aggressive actions are pushing the region towards a broader conflict, which could escalate into a global war," he warned.

Gilani said that Israel's refusal to agree to a ceasefire was an attempt to plunge the region into further chaos, putting regional peace at risk.

Israel's bloodstained hands, responsible for the deaths of innocent children and elders in Palestine and Lebanon, had further endangered global peace by expanding attacks to Yemen and Lebanon after Palestine, he added.

He stressed, "The Muslim world must unite and raise its voice against Israel's hostile actions," he added. He also appealed to the international community to take collective action to curb Israel's expansionist ambitions. "If Israel's malicious objectives are not stopped, the entire region could be engulfed in conflict."

Sindh Ombudsman holds awareness meeting in Mirpurkhas

MIRPURKHAS (APP): Provincial Ombudsman of Sindh Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput on Monday chaired an awareness meeting to inform social workers about the office's services.

During the meeting, the Regional Director Zulfikar Ali Junejo addressed the attendees and highlighted the role of the Ombudsman's regional office.

He stated that the people can submit applications for the redressal of their grievances without any fee and the office will forward the application to the concerned institution for immediate resolution.

The Deputy Registrar Chief Ombudsman, Sajjad Soomro also spoke at the event.

He explained that the Ombudsman's office is a government institution that has been working under the supervision of the Sindh government since 1992 to address the complaints and grievances of the people.

Soomro further informed the audience that during the year 2023-24, the Mirpur Special Office of the Ombudsman received more than 10,000 complaint requests of which 5,000 were approved for investigation.

The remaining requests were sent to the relevant institutions for resolution at the grassroots level.

The awareness session was attended by social leaders including Junaid Mirza, Radha Bheelndar Dr. Tahira Bilal, the Focal Person from the High Regional Office, Kamran Soomro as well as representatives from various social organizations.

SBBU organized breast cancer awareness seminar

HYDERABAD (APP): Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Shaheed Benazirabad organized an awareness seminar and rally in the university campus regarding breast cancer and other women's diseases in collaboration with Noran Cancer Hospital Nawabshah. It was presided over by Vice Chancellor Engineer Professor Dr Mudd Ali Shah.

Speaking on this occasion, Dr. Mark Laghari, a cancer specialist, said that as a human being came into this world alone, he has to take care of himself. There is no need to panic about breast cancer, but if women do regular self-examination and timely mammograms, this disease can be defeated.

About 50% of women in this country are dependent on their men because they do not know that their lives are connected with their mental, psychological and physical health.

He further said that since the number of poor people in our poor country is very high, the government should release more health funds so that the poor women can get expensive tests for free. The main reason for the rapid spread of breast cancer among women in developing countries is the adoption of a western lifestyle. In response to the questions of the students, he said that women should avoid excessive use of makeup, never use shampoos that contain sulphur. Adopt a simple lifestyle. Make a habit of eating fresh and simple food instead of fast food. Make light exercise a part of your life and avoid unnecessary stress and anger. On this occasion, Vice-Chancellor Engineer Prof. Dr. Mudd Ali Shah, Dr. Sadiq Hussain Nahrio, Marina Sherbaz Marri, Dr. Sadra Amin said that such awareness seminars are needed in relation.

SHC orders chief secy to get vacated German school's land in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court on Monday ordered provincial chief secretary to get vacated the land belonged to German school in Karachi's Orangi Town and build a college or university on it.

The court directed the chief secretary to construct a college or university on the land of German School after getting its possession.

The court further ordered to hold consultations with educational experts and representatives of school committee in this regard.

The court directed that relevant committee must take measures to provide alternative land on lease. The Sindh High Court directed the committee to complete the assigned task within three months and submit a comprehensive report to the court.

Petitioner's counsel Saeed uz Zaman in his petition stated that the land is occupied by the organized mafia who was also getting covert assistance and support from government officials.

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 Shahrulh 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.

IGHDS stresses to give rights to older people

SUKKUR (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Inter Global Human Development Society (IGHDS), Advocate Jameel Ahmed Shakeel said that Ageing is not recognized explicitly in existing human rights standards, which makes it possible for ignoring people's rights as they grow older.

Speaking in an event, organized by IGHDS here on Friday, he said that Age is just a number adding that eliminating all forms of age discrimination and providing an environment in which older people are protected from violence and abuse will help them exercise their choices and contribute to society.

He further said that the Sindh Province has taken some very positive steps in the form of legislation for the protection of the rights of older people. However, there is still a significant implementation gap between policy and practice.

CEO Advocate Jameel Ahmed Shakeel further said that the senior citizens are considered the most revered members of our society but their treatment is quite the contrary. Old age is an inevitable part of human life but people fear old age and the youth should aim to create a place where they do not fear old age or consider it a difficulty but look forward to it as a time of ease, he added. Ms Nosheen said that this aim cannot be achieved instantly through administrative means it requires the utmost importance.