

Independent

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

Vol. XIV No. 241 Reg. mails-B/ID-445 Thursday October 17, 2024, Rabi-us-Sani 13, 1446 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Pushes for regional security, stability: PM urges SCO member states to work together for well connected, prosperous region

Shehbaz Sharif raises Israel's genocide against Palestinians; calls for ceasefire at SCO CHG; Taliban rulers must ensure Afghan soil isn't misused for terrorism; Hopeful of "wonderful outcomes" of the meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday calling a stronger SCO essential to achieve sustainable development, emphasised advancing the shared vision of an economically integrated region and investment in the connectivity projects without looking at them through political prism.



shared vision of an economically integrated region. Let us work together for a well-integrated and prosperous region that benefits all Member states," the prime minister said in his National Statement at the 23rd meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the member states of the Shanghai

Cooperation Organization (SCO) here.

The prime minister, who earlier received the participating leaders at the venue before a group photo, said that the SCO collaboration, spanned academic and tourism linkages, poverty alleviation, and the empowerment of women and youth across the SCO region—a reflection, of our determination, to promote prosperity through unity.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that Pakistan endorsed the ongoing SCO reforms, aimed at modernizing the organization, enhancing the resources and capabilities, of the SCO Secretariat and, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure.

"Pakistan firmly believes, that a stronger, more effective SCO is essential, to achieving sustainable development in our region... Let us not look at such projects, through the narrow, political prism and invest in our collective connectivity capacities, which are crucial to advancing the



Russian Prime Minister H.E. Mikhail Mishustin along with a delegation meets Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.

India acknowledges Pakistan for successfully hosting SCO summit

Indian External Affairs Minister thanks PM, DPM, GoP for hospitality

ISLAMABAD (INP): India has recognised Pakistan for successfully hosting the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar congratulated Pakistan during his address at the SCO meeting. He stated that India provided its full support to make the presidency a success.



He noted that the summit comes at a time when global conditions are complex, with ongoing major wars impacting the world significantly.

Jaishankar emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic devastated developing countries, while climate change has adversely affected economies.

He pointed out that the burden of debt posed a serious challenge to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, Jaishankar referred to the SCO Charter's Article 1 that stressed on strengthening mutual trust, promoting friendship, and acting as good neighbors.

He stressed the need for an honest dialogue by

saying "If there is a lack of trust and cooperation, it is essential to address those issues."

APP adds: Indian Minister for External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on Wednesday expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and the Government of Pakistan for the hospitality extended to him during his participation in CHG-SCO meeting in Islamabad.

The Indian minister, on his X handle, prior to his departure posted "Departing from Islamabad. Thank PM

(@CMShehbaz), DPM & FM (@MishaqDar50) and the Government of Pakistan for the hospitality and courtesies." Jaishankar was among the dozen leaders of the member states of Council of Heads of Government of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (CHG-SCO) who had participated in the two-day, 23rd CHG-SCO summit, on October 15-16, in Islamabad.

It was the high-level visit by any Indian minister to Pakistan in nearly nine years. Last visit was undertaken by Shushma Swaraj as the Indian external minister who during 2015, had participated in a conference on Afghanistan, in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: A group photograph of Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Heads of delegations of the 23rd SCO Heads of Government Meeting.

SCO member states pledge to strengthen cooperation for peaceful, prosperous world

Leaders emphasise exploiting region's trade, connectivity potential; Meeting adopts decisions to guide future of organization with enhanced role in regional connectivity, investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The member countries of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to peacefully resolving disputes through dialogue and consultations besides emphasizing the importance of strengthening cooperation across various sectors, including politics, security, trade, finance, and cultural ties, to build a prosperous, peaceful, safe, and ecologically sustainable planet.

In a joint declaration issued at the conclusion of the two-day SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting held here,

the heads of delegations called for sustainable and inclusive economic growth of member states by optimizing the region's potential in areas such as green development, digital economy, trade, e-commerce, finance and banking, investment, high technology, start-ups and innovation, poverty alleviation, health care, including traditional and folk medicine, agriculture, industry, transport, logistics connectivity, energy, including renewable energy, communications, science and technology, environment and climate change.

The heads of delegations, reaffirming their desire to ensure stable economic and social development in the SCO region, noted the importance of implementing the SCO Economic Development Strategy for the period up to 2030 and the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO member states.

They stressed the need for coordinated efforts through the mechanisms of SCO member states. Cabinet relevant cooperation in order to implement the respective action plans.

The event was chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and was attended by the leaders from the SCO member states including China's Premier of the State Council Li Qiang, Prime Minister of Belarus Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Olzhas Bektenov, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Tajik Prime Minister Kohir Rasulzoda, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, Kyrgyzstan's Chairman of Ministers' Cabinet Zhaparov Akylibek, Trade Minister of Iran Seyyed Mohammad Atebak, and Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

Pakistan, Russia agree to boost cooperation in different sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Prime Minister of Russian Federation Mikhail Mishustin on Wednesday agreed to pursue robust dialogue and cooperation in the areas of trade, industry, energy, connectivity, science, technology and education.

During a cordial and substantive meeting at the Prime Minister's House on the margins of the 23rd SCO-CHG meeting, both prime ministers discussed the entire spectrum of bilateral cooperation and noted the positive momentum in Pakistan-Russia relations over the

last two decades, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif fondly recalled his first foreign visit to Moscow, expressing a desire to transform these warm memories into a lasting friendship with Russia.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening political, economic, and defense ties with the Russian Federation.

Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation at multilateral forums, including the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receiving the Chinese Premier H.E. Li Qiang at the venue of the 23rd SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting.

Tarar warns of strict action against those inciting violence, threatening lawmakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday warned that the state would respond firmly to those responsible for inciting violence and threatening the lawmakers.

Speaking to the media here, the minister expressed concern over the threats hurled by the leadership of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to the lawmakers for supporting constitutional amendments.

"No one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands. The writ of the state will be established, and those issuing threats will be dealt with iron hands," the minister said.

action would be taken against anyone attempting to harm others' lives or property, condemning PTI's habitual use of threats against the opponents.

He said that if anyone tried to harm another person, the state will set an example by holding the perpetrators accountable.

He also accused the PTI of writing letters to the International Monetary Fund to push Pakistan towards default, orchestrating the May 9 attacks, vandalizing memorials of martyrs, and calling for protests during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit.

"This is a non-serious threat," he remarked, pointing to the internal conflicts and divisions within PTI.



PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, PML-N President Nawaz Sharif, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif attend a meeting in Lahore.

Breakthrough claimed in constitutional amendment talks between PML-N, PPP, JUI-F

LAHORE: A significant breakthrough has reportedly been achieved in discussions over Pakistan's 26th constitutional amendment, with claims that the required number of votes for its approval have been secured.

The announcement follows high-level political meetings hosted by PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif at his Jati Umra residence in Lahore on Wednesday.

According to sources, a crucial meeting took place between key political leaders, including Nawaz Sharif, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari, and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. Maulana Fazlur Rehman, accompanied by the PPP leadership—Zardari and Bilawal—arrived at Jati Umra, where they were greeted by

Nawaz and Shehbaz Sharif.

Discussions began with Nawaz and Shehbaz Sharif holding talks with senior PML-N leaders, followed by a more than hour-long consultation between the PML-N and Maulana Fazlur Rehman. The talks then extended to a joint meeting between the senior leadership of PML-N and JUI-F. Sources indicate that a complete consensus was reached on the proposed 26th constitutional amendment. "Maulana Fazlur Rehman expressed his reservations and displeasure to Nawaz and Shehbaz Sharif, who assured him that his concerns would be addressed," one insider revealed.

The meeting also reviewed the PPP's proposed draft of the amendment, with expectations that agreement could be reached. Fazlur Rehman's

concerns were thoroughly discussed, and detailed briefings were provided on the vote count in both houses of Parliament.

In addition, the gathering reviewed consultations with coalition partners, including the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), and mapped out a strategy to ensure the amendment's approval. Responsibilities were assigned to leaders of allied parties to ensure maximum attendance during the parliamentary sessions.

It is believed that a consensus draft among the three major parties has been finalised and could be presented in the National Assembly on October 18. Sources confirmed that the dinner was attended by key political figures, including Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar, and Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan.



ISLAMABAD: Belarus's Prime Minister Roman Alexandrovich Golovchenko departs after attending 23rd SCO summit. Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communication, Abdul Aleem Khan bid farewell to Belarus's Prime Minister at Islamabad International airport.

Premier Li Qiang Pakistan visit reinforces all-weather bilateral partnership: China

BEIJING (APP): Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning stated on Wednesday that during his ongoing visit, Chinese Premier Li Qiang has engaged in extensive and in-depth discussions with Pakistan's government, parliament, and military leaders, which will certainly lead to positive outcomes.

This visit by China's Premier of the State Council is the latest after 11 years, she said during her regular briefing in response to a question about Premier Li Qiang's visit to Pakistan and its major outcomes.

Mao Ning said that the visit marks the exchanges at the government level between the two countries within a year.

Sharing details, she said that Premier Li Qiang held in-depth discussions with leaders of Pakistan's government, parliament, and military. The ongoing visit has achieved three key positive results.

First, consolidating the all-weather friendship between China and Pakistan.

Both sides emphasized that their time-tested friendship has gained renewed vigor. Under the strategic guidance of the two countries' leaders, bilateral relations continue to enjoy robust momentum. China reaffirmed its commitment to prioritizing its relationship with Pakistan in its foreign policy, while Pakistan underscored that its ties with China are the cornerstone of its foreign policy, with this friendship being a widely recognized and overwhelming consensus across all sectors of Pakistani society.

President summons NA, Senate sessions today

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned the sessions of the National Assembly and Senate to be held separately on October 17.

The president has summoned the session of National Assembly on October 17 (Thursday) at 4:00 pm, while that of Senate on October 17 (Thursday) at 3:00 pm, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Wednesday.

President Zardari has summoned the sessions of both Houses of Parliament under Article 54 (1) of the Constitution of Pakistan.

He warned that strict

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Two steps back

Pakistan is making leaps. Just not of the desired kind. The country has mindbogglingly gone from eight polio cases at end of June to 33 by mid-October. Whereas much has been written on the subject this year, this sustained rise in cases points to a deeper issue: systemic healthcare failures. While it is true that the government is confronted with challenges such as disinformation, parental refusal, and attacks on polio workers, it is time we realise that our children are falling victim not only to the virus, but also to the lack of healthcare infrastructure and poor governance. In Balochistan, for instance, where immunisation coverage is as low as 37pc, children are vulnerable not just to polio but also a range of preventable diseases. Many RHCs remain non-functional or under-resourced, leaving large populations without basic healthcare. This makes vaccination campaigns, however well-intentioned, only acute fixes when the real issue is chronic neglect of public health services.

Compounding this are reports of number-fudging and fake vaccination data. While the government claims high coverage, environmental samples continue to test positive for the virus, especially in high-risk areas like Quetta. This disconnect between official figures and ground realities has eroded trust.

The polio crisis cannot be solved in isolation. Pakistan must rethink its approach to healthcare delivery. Instead of treating polio as a stand-alone emergency, it should be incorporated into a broader public health strategy. Polio workers, for example, could be trained to promote other health measures, such as sanitation, nutrition, and maternal health. This would not only help in the fight against polio but also strengthen the overall healthcare system.

The government's role cannot be understated. It must prioritise improving basic healthcare infrastructure, especially in rural areas. Functioning health centres, routine immunisation, and trained staff are essential to protect children from diseases like polio and restore the faith of the citizenry in immunisation efforts.

Transparency in reporting is equally vital. Local officials should be held accountable for alleged falsification of data, and regular audits must be conducted to ensure every child is vaccinated. The government must acknowledge that health workers need better protection from obscurantist forces that want to ensure anti-polio campaigns fail.

At the same time, communities must take responsibility. Public health is a shared duty, and without collective cooperation, no vaccination drive will succeed. Parents will have to realise that regular polio vaccines are the only way to save their children from a life-altering condition. Since it is such a prevailing issue, the government may consider incentivising parents for getting their children inoculated.

Pakistan's polio crisis is more than the failure to vaccinate. It is the failure to deliver on basic public health promises.

Clearing the air

Zofeen T. Ebrahim

Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's historic visit — historic because the last official visit to Pakistan by an Indian foreign minister was undertaken by his predecessor, Sushma Swaraj, in 2015 to attend a conference — comes at a time when the air in the federal capital is at its crispest. There is just the right amount of nippiness in the evening air for a hot cup of the popular pink Kashmiri chai to produce the perfect warmth — and thus thwart the toxic air between India and Pakistan.

The high-level, 11-country SCO summit, which Mr Jaishankar and his delegation are attending, also comes at the start of the smog season. That is why climate experts in both India and Pakistan agree that, given the stalled formal bilateral talks between the two nuclear neighbours, the two can at least take baby steps and discuss shared issues which are likely to generate less mistrust, scepticism and suspicion because of scientific evidence.

The conversation can begin with air pollution, since we share and breathe the same air. According to the World Bank, an estimated total of 1.5 billion people in the two countries are exposed to this form of pollution. Yesterday's air quality data by IQAIR showed Delhi and Lahore ranking as the second and fourth cities with the worst air quality.

Environment lawyer Ahmad Rafay Alam believes clean air should be an obvious agenda item for discussion at the summit. In fact, it would have made sense, he says, to hold the meeting in Lahore so that the attendees could view acclaimed British artist Dryden Goodwin's artwork titled Breathe, which highlights air pollution in

Lahore through posters, digital billboards and projections on multiple sites across the city. This piece of art is part of the ongoing Lahore Biennale 03. According to Alam, Goodwin's work takes the discussion on air pollution out of the dryness of policy language and speaks directly to the heart. Abid Omar, a clean air campaigner, also the artist's model, said there was time still and the digital artwork can be projected on the facade of important buildings in Islamabad, as well as Karachi, even after the summit is over, as it will inform and educate the masses.

To understand how deadly air pollution can be, one must understand the real culprit: inhalable particulate matter, which has a diameter of 2.5 micrometres and is finer than the finest human hair (which has a diameter of about 70µm) and is visible only under an electron microscope. When inhaled, it affects your heart and lungs. Research has found a connection between air pollution and the health of newborn babies — low birthweight, miscarriages and stillbirths. And, among young children, these particles can cause asthma, a reduction in brain volume, behavioral dysfunction, and impaired lung growth. It's a scary thought, but imagine South Asia burdened by a generation of unhealthy children, many of whom may not live to become adults.

But this particulate matter does not stay put or respect borders. It travels long distances. It chokes the air above us and across the region. Therefore, cleaning up the air in your own city or country is an exercise in futility, since there are six air sheds over the South Asian region in which the polluted air remains trapped and that can lead to an

estimated two million premature deaths in the region.

Thus, a shared problem requires a shared strategy to eliminate it. It is time to move from bickering over which country spews the most poison and work together to overcome the challenge.

At a meeting organised last week in Nairobi by the UK-based Conciliation Resources between Indian and Pakistani representatives, air pollution experts, diplomats, journalists and parliamentarians, air pollution experts, dismissing the silo-ed approach, and recommended greater cross-border engagement between the two countries in the form of knowledge-sharing and by treating the issue as a year-round problem rather than a seasonal event that gets underway with the onset of winter and as smog engulfs the two Punjab.

There were discussions on developing a long-term strategy for diversification of cropping patterns, capacity building of judges, lawyers, members of parliament and doctors, and sharing best practices so as not to reinvent the wheel.

For example, India's 2017 Odisha Millet Mission — a transition to a more equitable food system that has brought millet back on the farmer's radar and people's menu — can be tweaked and replicated in Pakistan. Millet is a hardy, climate-smart grain and an ideal choice for areas prone to drought and heat stresses.

Similarly, tested practices that failed or were not the best ones for the region, can also be shared so as not to repeat mistakes and erroneous technologies. — Courtesy Dawn

Disunited nations

Mahir Ali

The inability of the UN to facilitate the primary goal set out in its hopeful charter nearly eight decades ago, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", stands out in stark relief every time failure greets its efforts to halt ongoing hostilities. That depressing pattern was established not long after the UN was set up in 1945.

It has, since then, vastly expanded in terms of both membership and subsidiary or affiliated organisations, many of which can be credited with worthy achievements in tricky environments — alongside grave inadequacies that reflect structural problems or funding deficiencies. Nor can anyone ignore the abuse of the UN as a platform for aggression, as in the case of the first major post-World War II conflagration, the Korean War, an ideologically motivated US-led intervention that was technically a UN operation.

Half a century later, a similar effort to obtain the UN Security Council's imprimatur for unwarranted aggression against Iraq fell short of US expectations. There can be little doubt, though, that the way the UNSC is constituted militates against the UN's purported mission "to maintain international peace and security". Talk of reform often focuses on expanding and/or restructuring the UNSC's permanent membership, which excludes the Global South.

India is one of the main contenders, alongside the likes of Brazil and Nigeria. The UK boasted a vast empire in 1945, but is barely able to govern itself 80 years later; besides, its foreign policy inclinations are barely distinguishable from those of the US. France is marginally more independent, but not neces-

sarily an adequate representative of Europe.

Apart from a membership reshuffle, it is vital to restrict or, better still, abolish the veto power of permanent members. Permitting its exercise becomes particularly absurd when one or more of these members are themselves engaged in unjustified hostilities or other violations of the UN Charter, or closely allied with an offensive belligerent. For instance, what are the chances of a binding resolution aimed at halting Russia's aggression against Ukraine, or castigating China for violating the rights of its Uighur and Tibetan minorities? And the US, naturally, has protected Israel against even mild reprimands.

But even worthwhile resolutions that are passed don't resolve anything if they are ignored by the relevant parties. They are dug out every now and then for rhetorical purposes, then returned to the archival graveyard that is destined to be their final resting place. The goals proffered in efforts led by other UN bodies on sustainable development, climate change or the environment often meet a similar fate. Their implementation remains an aspiration.

Empowering resolutions passed by, say, a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly — weighted according to population — might be a possible alternative to tussles in the UNSC. It was alarming, though, to see some of the loudest voices in the assembly's 79th session last month representing a council of war rather than recipes for peace. If Benjamin Netanyahu was, predictably, the worst offender, Russia's Sergey Lavrov wasn't far behind, and both Pakistan's prime minister and India's foreign minister contributed

to the antagonistic atmosphere. Some of the wisest speeches were made by South American leaders. Chile's Gabriel Boric, for instance, declared: "I refuse to choose between the terror of Hamas or the genocide carried out by Netanyahu's Israel; we have no reason to choose between barbarities — I choose humanity."

That, ultimately, is what the UN is supposed to be all about. It has frequently faltered, but its shortcomings and demonstrable impotence at crucial junctures testify not to its irrelevance but to its structural deficiencies. In his role as secretary-general, former Portuguese PM António Guterres has generally tended to be wise. He probably did not expect to be declared persona non grata by a member state, let alone that only 104 nations would leap to his defence in an initiative laudably led by Chile. But then, Israel has never been a fan of advocates for human rights or peace, as demonstrated by its crusade against UN peacekeepers in Lebanon and the UN Relief and Works Agency that has helped to sustain Palestinian refugees since 1948.

Perhaps the best way of halting Israel's genocidal ambitions would be the kind of international boycott, divestment and sanctions that persuaded an earlier apartheid state to opt for a non-racial democracy. Alternatively, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris could stop providing Israel with the means to perpetrate the evil that has expanded from Gaza to the West Bank and Lebanon, with Iran in the crosshairs. In all too many ways, the UN's relevance depends on which way the US goes, regardless of who wins next month's presidential election. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Smallholder Farmers FFC Ltd and ZTBL sign Industry-First MOU to enhance financial access

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited and Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL) have entered into a groundbreaking partnership to promote financial inclusion and support for smallholder farmers in Pakistan. This collaboration aims to integrate farmers into the formal financial system while providing them with essential agricultural resources and innovative solutions to enhance

Yaqoob Bhatti, President & CEO of ZTBL. The ceremony, attended by senior officials from both organizations, marked a significant step toward empowering farmers and addressing Pakistan's agricultural challenges.

Mr. Asad Murad, Chief Operating Officer of Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited, emphasized the importance of the partnership, stating, "This MOU strengthens our mission to provide smallholder farmers with



productivity and livelihoods. This is the first-of-its-kind agreement in the industry, pioneering a new way forward for agricultural financing and farmer empowerment. The MOU was formally signed by Mr. Asad Murad, Chief Operating Officer of Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited, and Mr. Tahir

the tools they need to improve productivity and contribute to Pakistan's food security. By combining our innovative solutions with ZTBL's financial services, we are not only empowering farmers but also pioneering our way ahead in sustainable agricultural practices across the country."

PSX stays bullish, gains 365 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 365.32 more points, a positive change of 0.43 percent, closing at 86,205.66 points against 85,840.34 points on the last trading day. A total of 474,333,405 shares were traded during the day as compared to 422,107,359 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 26.942 billion against Rs. 24.467 billion on the last trading day. As many as 445

companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 227 of them recorded gains and 150 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 68 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were The Searle Company with 26,011,365 shares at Rs 63.32 per share, Hub Power Company with 24,345,667 shares at Rs 101.73 per share and Hum Network with 22,574,161 shares at Rs 14.24 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 156.55 per share price.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan meeting with Iran's Minister for Industry, Mining, and Trade, Mohammad Atabak, during the SCO 2024 summit. The discussion focused on enhancing bilateral trade, industrial cooperation, and regional economic ties.

Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan vow to boost bilateral trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to boost economic cooperation, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan here on Wednesday recognized significant potential for increasing trade between the two countries, which currently is valued at just US\$ 8.63 million.

The discussion for improving bilateral trade was made during a meeting between Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema and Minister of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic, Daniyar

Amangeldiev and his delegation on the sidelines of SCO Summit.

Pakistan's exports to Kyrgyzstan stand at US\$ 3.33 million, while imports from the Central Asian nation reached US\$ 5.3 million in the fiscal year 2022-23.

On the occasion, Cheema vowed to enhance trade between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan and highlighted the need to enhance these figures and address the existing trade imbalance.

He expressed

appreciation for the Kyrgyz delegation's participation in the 23rd Council of Heads of Government meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Islamabad, according to press release issued by Economic Affairs Division (EAD).

The Minister acknowledged the productive outcomes of the 4th Session of the Pak-Kyrgyz Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) held in November

2023 and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to following up on these agreements.

Moreover, various sectors for mutual cooperation were discussed, including trade, agriculture, energy, mining, digital development, tourism, health, banking, and education.

He also emphasized on the importance of convening Joint Working Groups (JWGs) to foster collaboration in key sectors such as agriculture and trade.

Rupee sheds 10 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 10 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.84 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.74. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs277.90 and Rs279.40 respectively. The price of Euro decreased by 71 paise to close at Rs302.33 against the last day's closing of Rs303.04, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

80 Pakistani Companies Participate in GITEX Global 2024 in Dubai

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Sajjad Mustafa Syed, Chairman of Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), has said that Pakistan — as the Tech Destination — made a remarkable impact at GITEX Global 2024 in Dubai with the grand inauguration of Pakistan Pavilion and the much-anticipated Pakistan Night; hosted by P@SHA and the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) in coordination. Mr. Syed added that

these events showcased Pakistan's dynamic IT sector and magnified its status as the official Tech Destination of the Year by GITEX Global. He apprised that the inauguration ceremony notably featured H. E. Mr. Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, ambassador of Pakistan UAE; high-ranking officials from Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC); Muhammad Umair Nizam, Senior Vice Chairman P@SHA; Raheel Iqbal, Vice Chairman P@SHA and CEOs of some of the top IT companies of Pakistan.

Gold prices up by Rs.2,200 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs. 2,200 and sold at Rs. 277,200 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs. 275,000 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 1,886 to Rs. 237,654 from Rs. 235,768 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs. 217,850 from Rs. 216,121, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs. 3,050 and Rs. 2,614.88, respectively.

CGPA hosts Public-Private dialogue to empower women entrepreneurs in Charsadda

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: The Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA), in partnership with the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) Charsadda, held a Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) on Tuesday, aimed at improving the business environment for women entrepreneurs in Charsadda. The event facilitated collaboration between local Elected and District administration officials and women business leaders.

Participants including the President of WCCI Charsadda, local women entrepreneurs, the Additional Deputy

Commissioner & Assistant Commissioner of Charsadda Participated. The dialogue focused on addressing challenges faced by women-led businesses and identifying strategies for enhancing access to resources and support.

CGPA highlighted the need for stronger business infrastructure to promote women's entrepreneurship and foster public-private cooperation.

The event concluded with an interactive questions and answers session, allowing attendees to share experiences and propose solutions to strengthen the local business ecosystem.

Participants including the President of WCCI Charsadda, local women entrepreneurs, the Additional Deputy



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Cheema in meeting with Kyrgyz Finance Minister Daniyar Amangeldiev.

KP Minister directs completion of saffron seeds purchase

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Minister for Agriculture Major (Rtd) Sajjad Barakwal has directed that the process of purchasing saffron seeds should be completed within a week and suitable land should be selected for its successful cultivation and substantial increase in production.

He issued these directives while presiding over the meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee of the Agriculture Department here on Wednesday.

Besides, Secretary Agriculture, Atta-ur-Rehman, Director Generals of all wings of the department and other relevant officials also attended the meeting. He said that a joint coordination committee should be formed in all the districts of the province in which the district directors of all wings of the agriculture department will be members. Committee will help in co-operation between all the wings of the Agriculture Department at the district level and adopt a common plan of action.

Kuki Khel tribe ends 75 days long sit in Torkham Road

PESHAWAR (APP): A Jirga of elders from the Kuki Khel tribe of District Khyber called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, on Wednesday at the Chief Minister's House and held extensive consultations on the issue of repatriation of temporary displaced people of Kuki Khel tribe to their native areas.

MNA Iqbal Afridi, MPAs Sohail Afridi and Abdul Ghani Afridi, Commissioner Peshawar, Secretary Relief, Deputy Commissioner Khyber and others were also present on the occasion.

It was agreed in the meeting to immediately initiate the registration process for the return of residents to areas which

have been cleared whereas for the remaining displaced families, it was decided to hold a meeting with the relevant institutions next week to develop a timeline and action plan for their repatriation.

Following the Chief Minister's assurance, the Jirga announced the cancellation of a proposed march towards Tirah and ended their sit-in on the Torkham Road, which had been staged for the last 75 days.

The Jirga expressed full confidence in the Chief Minister's commitment for the repatriation of the displaced persons and lauded his leading role in resolving the issue of October 11, peacefully.

"The Chief Minister's wisdom and able leadership prevented bloodshed and

resolved the issue in peaceful manner" they remarked and expressed profound appreciation for his crucial role in this regard and said "As the Chief Minister had successfully resolved the October 11 and Bannu issues, we trust that he will also address our concerns", they remarked.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur appreciated the Kuki Khel elders for reposing trust to resolve the issue and assured them that he would make every possible efforts to live up to their expectations. He stated that a meeting with relevant stakeholders would be held next week to finalize a plan for the repatriation and rehabilitation of the displaced people.



LAHORE: Punjab Finance Minister Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman presides over the 48th meeting of Punjab Pension Fund Management Committee.

Maryam says students misled to run a 'malicious' campaign

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said on Wednesday that a mountain was made out of a molehill to malign the image of Pakistan.

Addressing the media here in connection with an alleged rape of a college student, she said an issue was made about something that did not exist.

She said students were misled to run an "ugly" campaign. "A girl was named as a victim. The girl had been admitted to the hospital since October 2 and was in the ICU."

She said that the police received information that the incident of rape had taken place. After which the

police took immediate action.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said this campaign was based on lies. "That girl is not a victim of rape, she is a victim of dirty politics."

A conspiracy was hatched after failing to spread anarchy, she said and added that those who hatched the conspiracy would be taken to task.

She criticised the Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and said that it was this very dangerous plan after failing [to fulfil their agenda]. "SCO meeting is being held in Pakistan after a long time. Inflation is decreasing. The stock market is soaring. The

Dialogue on Judicial reforms at Governor House held

PESHAWAR (APP): The Human Rights Cell of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) organized the fourth seminar titled "Dialogue on Judicial Reforms" at the Governor House here on Wednesday.

The event focused on discussing necessary reforms within the country's judicial system.

Key speakers included Farhatullah Babar President of the PPP Human Rights Cell, Ahmad Karim Kundi Member of the Provincial Assembly and General Secretary Malaika Raza, alongside various legal experts. Attendees comprised legal and political professionals as well as representatives from civil society.

The speakers emphasized the importance of constitutional amendments to ensure judicial representation across all provinces.

They said that constitutional courts remain an incomplete aspect of the Charter of Democracy and reaffirmed the PPP's commitment to fundamental rights and the rule of law.

It was highlighted that over 50 democratic countries have established constitutional courts, positioning every Pakistani citizen as a vital stakeholder in these proposed amendments.

DGPR conducts surprise visit of Information Directorates

Independent Report
KARACHI: Director General Public Relations, Information Government of Sindh Muhammad Saleem Khan has stressed upon officers and officials of the department to ensure their availability during official timings and discharge their duties with utmost devotion and dedication. This he said

dismay over the non availability of few officers and officials in their respective offices. "If the officers are absent or come late, their subordinates would also remain unavailable and due to which official work would be suffered and compromised", he observed. He said that action would be taken against absent officers and officials accord-



ing to relevant rules. "Chief Minister Sindh and Chief Secretary Sindh have time and again reiterated to observe punctuality in government offices and as such all employees must adhere to their instructions", he added.

Director General Public Relations expressed his

4 dead as vehicle overturns in Vehari

VEHARI (APP): Four members of a family were killed on the spot after a speedy vehicle overturned in Vehari district of Punjab on Wednesday. As per details, rescue sources said that the incident occurred near the Ladan area of Vehari where the vehicle overturned when the driver slept while driving, private news channels reported. The rescue officials stated that the incident reportedly claimed the lives of four family members who were on their way back from Lahore.

11 dead, 1,484 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 11 people were killed and 1,484 others injured in 1,395 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 641 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 843 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

Minister chairs Standing Committee on Interfaith Harmony meeting

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora chaired a meeting of the Punjab Regional Standing Committee on Interfaith Harmony during his visit to Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) office, here on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by FPCCI Vice President and Regional Chairman Zaki Aijaz, Convener Saleem Shakir, Director Rabia Dar, and other executive committee members.

The agenda included detailed discussions on minority affairs, human rights, and economic development. Various proposals were presented, including providing scholarships for business people, appointing a focal person from the Department of Minority Affairs to liaise with the chamber, introducing a Minority Card similar to the Himmat Card, and establishing a Minority Development Fund under the Evacuee Trust Property Board.

Zaki Aijaz highlighted FPCCI's Vision 2030, emphasizing the goal of increasing exports to US \$ 100 billion. He also stressed the importance of interfaith harmony for global peace.

73rd death anniversary of Liaquat Ali Khan observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 73rd death anniversary of Pakistan's first Prime Minister Shaheed-e-Millat, Khan Liaquat Ali Khan, was observed on Wednesday. Born in Kamal' East Punjab, Liaquat Ali Khan got education from Aligarh Muslim University, India and Oxford University, United Kingdom. He joined All India Muslim League and participated along with Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah in the struggle for a separate homeland for Muslims of the sub-continent.

After Pakistan came into being, he became first prime minister of the country. Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated on October 1951 during a public meeting at Company Bagh.

Commissioner reviews progress on Lahore development plan

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Commissioner Zaid bin Maqsood chaired a divisional meeting focused on the Lahore development plan and district development schemes, here on Wednesday.

The meeting presented the Lahore development plan, alongside various district-level schemes for approval. A total of 94 schemes from the Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) and 114 schemes from the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) were submitted for approval. Each scheme was thoroughly reviewed by the working committee chaired by the Commissioner.

During the meeting, Assistant Commissioners from relevant areas briefed the committee on the details of each development scheme under the Lahore Development Plan.

Commissioner Zaid bin Maqsood emphasized that the Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, is focusing on the development of neglected and underprivileged areas within the city.

International News

Israeli strikes kill 21 in Lebanon, including in a town with a dark history of civilian deaths

Monitoring Desk
QANA: Israeli airstrikes pounded areas across Lebanon, killing at least 21 people, officials said Wednesday, including more than a dozen in a southern town where Israeli bombardments in previous conflicts are seared into local memory.

Elsewhere in the south, a city's mayor was among the dead in a strike that Lebanese officials said targeted a meeting coordinating relief efforts.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on the strikes late Tuesday on the southern town of Qana, where 15 people were killed. Associated Press photos and video of the scene showed several flattened buildings and others with their top floors collapsed. Rescue workers carried away the remains of dead people and used a bulldozer to remove rubble, as they searched for more vic-

tims. In 1996, Israeli artillery shelling on a United Nations compound housing hundreds of displaced people in Qana killed at least 100 civilians and wounded scores more people, including four U.N. peacekeepers. During the 2006 war, an Israeli strike on a residential building killed nearly three dozen people, a third of them children. Israel said at the time that it struck a Hezbollah rocket launcher behind the building.

"Qana always gets its share," Mayor Mohammed Krashit told the AP, referring to the town's grim history.

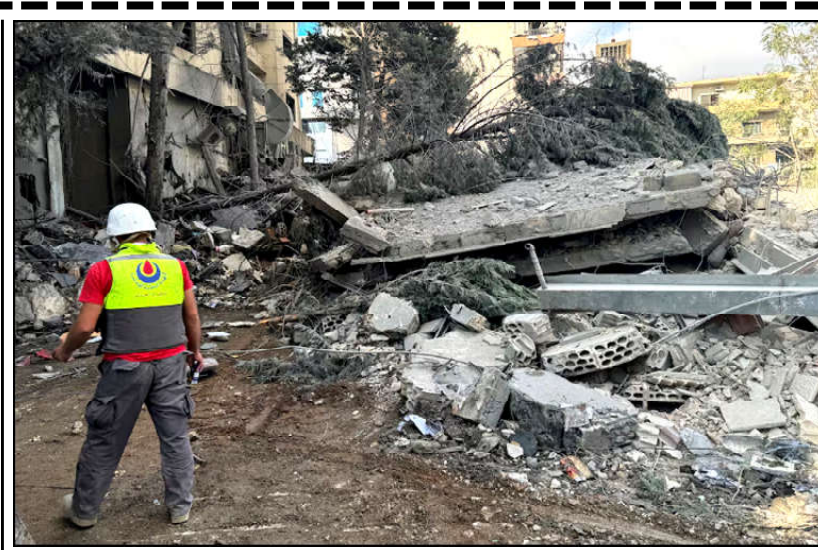
"What solution can be hoped for in light of this reality?" he asked in a statement. The Israeli military said it targeted Hezbollah command centers and weapons facilities that had been embedded in civilian areas of Nabatiyeh on Wednesday's strikes, with-

out providing evidence. Israel also resumed its barrage on Beirut's southern suburbs after a six-day pause, hitting what it said was an arms warehouse under an apartment building, without providing evidence. The military warned residents to evacuate before the strike, and there were no reports of casualties.

The strikes on southern Beirut came after Mikati said the United States had given him assurances that Israel would curb its strikes on the capital.

Hezbollah has a strong presence in southern Beirut, known as the Dahiyeh, which is also a residential and commercial area home to large numbers of civilians and people unaffiliated with the militant group.

The Israeli military posted an evacuation warning on the social media platform X ahead of the strike in Beirut.



A civil defence member of the Islamic Health Authority walks at a site damaged in an Israeli strike in Nabatieh, amid the ongoing hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, southern Lebanon.

Arab American group rejects both Kamala, Trump over Israel support

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The Arab American Political Action Committee has said it will not endorse Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris or Republican former president Donald Trump citing what it called their "blind support" for Israel in wars in Gaza and Lebanon.

The Nov 5 US elections will mark the first time AAPAC has chosen not to endorse a candidate since the group's 1998 inception. It usually endorses Democrats.

Polls show the race between Harris and Trump as tight. Arab and Muslim Americans overwhelmingly backed President Joe Biden in 2020 but have been vocal opponents of US support for Israel, which has eroded their backing of Democrats.

Trump has historically had low approval from that community due to past statements and his policy of a travel ban targeting Muslim-majority nations when he was in office.

China urges caution in Israel-Iran tensions, calls for ceasefire

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called on all parties involved in tensions between Israel and Iran to exercise caution and avoid escalating the situation.

In a phone conversation with Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz, Wang also urged Israel to ensure the safety of personnel of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a foreign ministry statement said.

EU sanctions Iran over ballistic missiles transferred to Russia

Monitoring Desk
LUXEMBOURG: At a meeting in Luxembourg, EU foreign ministers on Monday imposed sanctions on prominent Iranian officials and entities, including airlines, accused of taking part in the transfer of missiles and drones for Russia to use against Ukraine.

They also called on Israel to stop attacking UN peacekeepers at the Israel-Lebanon border.

European Union foreign ministers approved the sanctions on seven entities, including Iran Air, and

seven individuals, including deputy defence minister Seyed Hamzeh Ghalandari and senior officials of the Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force, the bloc said.

Leading European powers Britain, France and Germany adopted similar sanctions last month over Iranian missile transfers to Russia, as did the United States.

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen welcomed the adoption of the sanctions by the entire bloc, while adding: "More is needed."

Fuel tanker explodes in Nigeria, killing at least 140 people

Monitoring Desk
JIGAWA: A fuel tanker explosion in northern Nigeria has killed more than 140 people, a spokesman for the national emergency agency told AFP on Wednesday. Victims were burnt to death trying to collect fuel that had spilled from the crashed vehicle in the town of Majia in Jigawa state.

Nura Abdullahi, a spokesman for the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), said "more than 140" people have been buried in a mass grave and warned the toll was likely to rise further.

The incident occurred in Majia town in the Taura local government area, about 530 kilometres north of the capital Abuja, spokesperson for Jigawa State Police Command Lawan Shisu Adam told Reuters by telephone.

The wounded were taken to local hospitals in Ringim and Hadejia towns where they were being treated, Adam said. A mass burial for the dead will be held later in the day, he said.

Many roads in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, are poorly maintained and riven with potholes, causing accidents that claim dozens of lives every year. Last month, at least 48 people were killed in north-central Nigeria when a fuel tanker exploded after colliding with another truck carrying travellers and cattle.

UK gov't 'looking at' sanctioning far-right Israeli finance, security ministers

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Wednesday that the government was weighing up sanctions against far-right Israeli ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich.

Asked in parliament if the government would sanction the pair, Starmer said: "We are looking at that because there are obviously abhorrent comments along with other really concerning activity in the West Bank."

National Security Minister Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, the finance minister, are vocal supporters of settlements in the West Bank, which are considered illegal under international law.

Smotrich has also triggered an international uproar by suggesting it would be justified to starve two million Gazans to free Israeli hostages in the Palestinian territory.

Earlier this week, former foreign secretary David Cameron revealed that the previous Conservative government had been "working on" sanctions against the "extreme" politicians.

Starmer's Labour government announced separate sanctions against seven Israeli settler outposts and organisations on Tuesday.

Israeli settler violence and military raids have intensified in the occupied territory following Hamas's October 7 attack last year.

Pointing to the "dire" humanitarian situation in Gaza, Starmer also called for Israel to "take all possible steps to avoid civilian casualties, to allow aid into Gaza in much greater volume".

Foreign Secretary David Lammy meanwhile announced that the UK, France and Algeria had called an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council following UN reports that "barely any food has entered" North Gaza in the last two weeks.

Ukraine calls for sanctions over alleged North Korean involvement in war

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine called on its allies on Wednesday to impose new sanctions on Pyongyang after it said North Korea had become a de facto participant in the war in Ukraine on Russia's side.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told parliament in a speech to outline his victory plan that his spy services had confirmed North Korea's supply of both weapons and people to Russia, echoing similar comments in recent days.

"These are workers for Russian factories to replace Russians killed in the war. And personnel for the Russian army. This is the participation of a second state in the war against Ukraine on the side of Russia," Zelenskyy said.

The Kremlin has denied the allegation of North Korea sending people as "fake news". Moscow and Pyongyang have denied arms transfers but have said they will boost military ties, possibly including joint drills.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said Kyiv's allies should respond firmly, including by imposing new sanctions and further isolating Pyongyang, whose relations with Russia have grown closer since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

"This is a huge threat of further escalation. We are approaching a new phase, new realities of war," he said at a news conference in the Black Sea city of Odesa.

Qatar to hold referendum on measure to abandon legislative elections

Monitoring Desk
DOHA: Qatar will hold a rare referendum for citizens to vote on a set of constitutional amendments, including a proposal that would abandon an effort to introduce elections, the Gulf Arab state's emir said on Tuesday.

Qatar held its first-ever elections in 2021 to choose two-thirds of the members of the advisory Shura Council. The elections sparked rare tribal tensions in Qatar after some members of a main Bedouin tribe found themselves ineligible to vote in the poll. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on Tuesday called the elections "an experiment" that was reviewed and led the government to propose the constitutional amendments.



ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers/Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Bilal Kayani says: 'SCO provides unique opportunity for peaceful dialogue among nations'

ISLAMABAD (APP): PML-N leader & Convener of the National Parliamentary Task-force on Sustainable Development Goals Bilal Azhar Kayani Wednesday emphasized the vital role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in promoting inter-nation dialogue to shape regional policies.

Talking to a Private news channel, he said the SCO indeed provides a unique platform for countries to engage in dialogue and cooperation, shaping regional policies and addressing common challenges.

By engaging in dialogue and cooperation, the SCO aims to create a more stable and prosperous region, with its member states working together to address shared challenges and inter-

ests, he mentioned. Kayani noted, the SCO provides a valuable opportunity for nations including India and Pakistan to come together and find peaceful solutions to regional issues.

He said regional countries, including China, Russia, and Iran are set to convene and explore ways to tackle challenges and bolster cooperation across various sectors including climate change and economy.

He said this collaborative effort aims to foster economic growth, security and cultural exchange among participating nations.

Pakistan's involvement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) presents a significant opportunity for the

country to strengthen its relationships with participating nations, he mentioned.

This includes fostering closer ties with Russia, China, and Iran, among others. By collaborating on regional security, economic development and cultural exchange initiatives, Pakistan can enhance its diplomatic and economic standing within the region, he further explained.

Responding to a query, he said Pakistan's friendly gesture towards India presents a prime opportunity for dialogue and cooperation on pressing issues such as climate change and the longstanding Kashmir conflict. By engaging in peaceful discussions, both nations can work towards mutually beneficial solutions, he stressed.

Ayaz lauds Pakistan's pivotal role in fostering regional cooperation via SCO platform

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended heartfelt congratulations to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and all other stakeholders for the successful organization of the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit.

The prestigious event, attended by heads of governments and senior officials from member states, showcases Pakistan's growing stature on the in-

ternational stage. In a statement, Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the significance of the SCO in strengthening cooperation and collective action across key areas, including sustainable development, regional connectivity, economic integration, climate action, and poverty alleviation.

"The outcomes of this summit will undoubtedly contribute to a safer, more prosperous future for the region and the world," he noted.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's army helicopter patrols around red zone area during Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit 2024, in the Federal Capital.

Khurram Dastgir says: SCO vital for Pakistan's regional peace efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz prominent leader Khurram Dastgir Khan Wednesday highlighted the vital role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in offering Pakistan a prominent stage to demonstrate its dedication to peaceful resolution and open communication.

"By leveraging the SCO platform, Pakistan can effectively showcase its commitment to regional stability and cooperation, bolstering its international reputation," he said while talking to a private news channel.

"Pakistan's involvement in the SCO enables the country to demonstrate its peaceful intentions and resolve challenges through

diplomatic means," he added. Dastgir Khan said, "SCO provides a vital platform for Pakistan to engage in peaceful dialogue and resolve conflicts through diplomatic means.

"The organization offers a unique opportunity for countries to come together and address their differences peacefully, fostering regional stability and cooperation," Khan underscored. "The SCO has emerged as a robust and influential platform, capturing the attention of Western nations," Khan noted.

"As a key player in regional politics, Pakistan's participation in the SCO reinforces its commitment to peaceful conflict resolution, economic cooperation and regional stability.

Constitutional amendment, judicial reforms need of hour: Barrister Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to Prime Minister on Legal Affairs Barrister Aqeel Malik on Wednesday said that constitutional amendment and judicial reforms are vital to provide speedy justice to people.

There is also need to implement charter of democracy (CoD), in the country, he said while talking to a private television channel.

sensus of political parties including JUI-F.

To a question about constitutional courts, he said Maulana Fazal ur Rehman has different views on this matter and added that JUI-F, leader is talking about constitutional benches. He further said, we will have more discussion on this matter and hope to develop consensus in next few days. He also stressed the need for removing backlog of thousands of cases pending in the lower and upper courts.

President for boosting economic cooperation with Turkmenistan

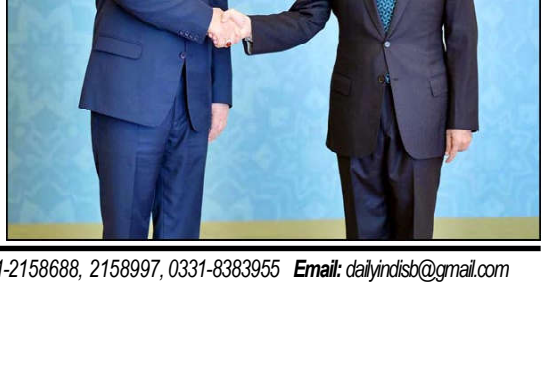
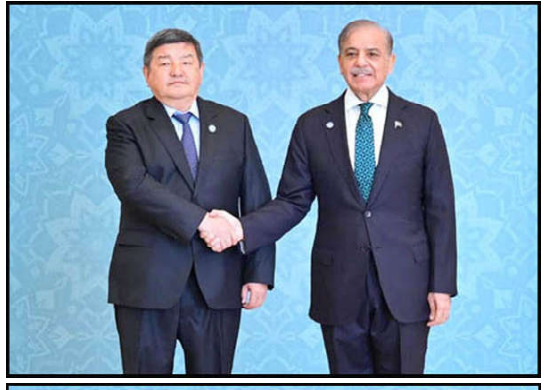
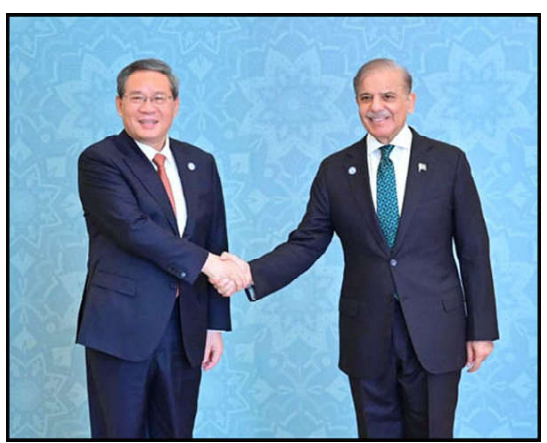
ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday underlined the importance of increasing economic cooperation and business-to-business relations between Pakistan and Turkmenistan for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

He also called for greater linkages between the stock exchanges of the two brotherly countries to improve economic cooperation. The president expressed these views while talking to Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers/Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, who along with Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan Atadjan Movlamov, called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press

Wing said in a press release. Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan attached great importance to its ties with Turkmenistan, which were based on common values, religion and culture. He called for working together for the shared prosperity and stability in the region and the betterment of the people of Pakistan and Turkmenistan. The president also affirmed Pakistan's commitment to the early completion of the TAPI Gas pipeline project, adding that the project would greatly help in the economic development of the two countries. Rashid Meredov thanked the president for participation in the International Forum on the 300th birth anniversary cel-

ebrations of Magtymguli Faragi in Ashgabat, saying that it was a great gesture of respect for the Turkmen people. He also conveyed the special greetings of President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, and National Leader of the Turkmen People and Chairman of the People's Council of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, to President Asif Ali Zardari. The President thanked the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers/Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov for his participation in the 23rd meeting of the Council of Heads of Governments of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization being held in Islamabad.

PM Shahbaz receiving dignitaries upon arrival at venue of 23rd SCO Summit



Foreign media delegates laud arrangements at SCO Media Facilitation Center

ISLAMABAD (APP): The foreign media correspondents arrived here to cover 23rd meeting of the Council of the Head of Governments (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on Wednesday lauded the arrangements made for international journalists at the SCO Media Facilitation Center.

The media correspondents while requesting anonymity said the thematic setting, digital library, high speed internet facility, computers and printing facilities with multiple TV screens providing live news coverage of different news channels from the member states of the SCO were all well planned to ensure all out coverage arrangements at Pak China Friendship Center.

The SMDs and digital media screens projecting banners of member states with their national monuments extended a warm gesture of solidarity by the host country, said a foreign media scribe.

She added that the clock wall with time zones of different member states was also another attraction to give on spot time zone information to foreign journalists.



ISLAMABAD: Tajikistan's Prime Minister, Kokhir Rasulzoda, has wrapped up his visit to Pakistan after attending the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference, and is heading back home. Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, bid him farewell at Islamabad International Airport.

Kazakh envoy admires SCO Council meeting in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin on Wednesday called the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government meeting in Pakistan significant for the economic and trade ties between the member countries in the near future.

Talking to APP, he said Kazakhstan and Pakistan are important members of the SCO forum, and both countries have a key role in SCO and in future the two nations will play their major role in the economic and political sphere of SCO forum.

The ambassador said the relations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan will be further improved through

SCO. He said that economic and trade activities between the two countries are at their peak recently and they will play their role for economic integration between SCO member states. He said Prime Minister of Republic of Kazakhstan Olzhas Bektenov has participated in the SCO Council of Heads of the Government and a meeting was also held on the sideline of SCO between the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Prime Minister of Kazakhstan.

Ambassador Kistafin said that during the meeting both sides emphasized the need to enhance trade and investment, and also focused on regional connectivity and security.

Pak introduces new grading system for SSC, HSSC exams

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Inter Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC) has introduced a new grading system for Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) examinations, aiming to promote fairness, transparency, and accuracy in student evaluation.

Sharing the details of key features of the new grading system, IBCC said that it will be a 10-point grading system (A++, A+, A, B++, B+, B, C, D, E, U) replaces the 7-point system (A-1, A, B, C, D, E, F).

However, passing marks increased to 40% from 33%, while grades and grade points reported instead of absolute scores. IBCC further said that grade points calculate Grade Point Average (GPA) and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

As per objectives of the grading system it will control grading inflation, minimize competition for maximum marks, and ensure accurate reflection of student learning and achievement.

Combing operation conducted in Bhara Kahu

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police conducted a grand combing operation on Wednesday at the Bhara Kahu and Industrial Area police stations jurisdiction.

A public relation officer told APP under the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IG) police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the combing operations are being conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens.

Following these orders, under the supervision of SPS of Rural and Industrial Area a grand search and combing operation was conducted in different areas of Bhara Kahu and Industrial Area police station jurisdiction by Islamabad Police teams.

Gilani calls for raising awareness for reducing food waste

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, on Wednesday, called for raising awareness about reducing food waste and advocated for policies that encourage innovation in food production and distribution.

In his message on World Food Day, Gilani highlighted the critical importance of food security and the need for sustainable practices to ensure every individual has access to sufficient and nutritious food. He said that the day serves as a reminder of the shared responsibility to combat hunger and malnutrition within communities.

The Chairman also acknowledged Pakistan's rich agricultural heritage and stressed the need to support farmers while promoting sustainable agricultural methods that protect the environment.

AIOU extends admission deadline

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has extended the admission deadline for the second phase of the Autumn 2024 semester until November 5.

According to Director Admissions, Syed Zia-ud-Hasnain Naqvi, new students can apply for admission with late fee charges until November 5. The previous deadline was October 15.

Existing students can enroll until October 22. This phase includes Associate Degree programs, BS, BBA, B.Ed, and Post-Graduate Diploma programs. Prospectuses and admission forms are available on the university's website.

5 outlaws arrested; drugs, weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police apprehended five criminals involved in different criminal activities, including drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons recovered from their possession.

A public relation officer told APP under the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IG) police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the search and combing operations are being conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Police warden open 7th Avenue as removing cement block with the help of car lifter, in the Federal Capital, Administration was closed roads due to Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit 2024.