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Pakistan to host SCO meet from Oct 15-16 in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan will host the twenty-third meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government (CHG) of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) from 15 to 16 October in Islamabad.

"In his capacity as the current Chair of the CHG, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will preside over the upcoming CHG meeting," Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

SCO member States will be represented by the Prime Ministers of China, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as well as the First Vice

President of Iran and External Affairs Minister of India.

Prime Minister of Mongolia (Observer State) and Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Turkmenistan (Special Guest) will also participate in the meeting.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will also hold important bilateral meetings with visiting heads of delegation on the sidelines of the meeting.

The CHG meeting will discuss ongoing cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, environment, socio-cultural linkages and review the performance of the Organization.

PM visits Jinnah Convention Center to review preparations for upcoming SCO Summit



ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday visited Jinnah Convention Center to review arrangements for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of Government in Islamabad scheduled for October 15-16.

On the occasion, the prime minister was briefed by the Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and other relevant authorities also accompanied the prime minister.

The prime minister expressed his satisfaction over the preparations made for the SCO meeting.

Financial assistance of Rs. 1 million provided by CM to injured labourers

Independent Report
QUETTA: The immediate financial assistance of Rs. 1 million was provided to five injured labourers by the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti here on Saturday.

The labourers who were injured in the terrorists attack in Duki were provided Rs. 0.2 million each as announced by the Chief Minister.

It may be mentioned here that the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti announced to provide financial assistance to the victims of terrorism personally during his visit to the Trauma Center the same day.

In its backdrop, the

injured labourers were provided Rs. 1 million i.e., 0.2 million each for all the five labourers admitted in the trauma center.

Needless to mention here is that the financial assistance was provided to the injured labourers within one hour of the announcement made by Chief Minister.

The financial assistance provided by the Chief Minister is in addition to the government's financial compensation to be provided to the injured labourers.

On this, the injured labourers and their families thanked the Chief Minister on this gesture of kindness.

Pakistan, US Navy conducted bilateral exercise in Arabian Sea



KARACHI (PR): US Navy Ship USS O' Kane visited Karachi and participated in a bilateral exercise at North Arabian sea with Pakistan Navy Ship BABUR.

The exercise was aimed to enhance interoperability and demonstrate PN-USN resolve towards regional maritime peace. During the visit, Commanding Officer of USS O' Kane met Commander Pakistan Fleet Rear Admiral Abdul Munib to discuss matters pertaining to interoperability of both Navies and tactical proficiency in Maritime Operations.

The visit and bilateral exercise reflect Pakistan Navy's commitment towards regional peace, stability and maritime order in collaboration with seasoned global partners. These collaborations have proved befitting in countering menace of terrorism, piracy, narcotics and human trafficking in the region and beyond.

Visit of US Navy Ship to Pakistan is a manifestation of deep rooted bilateral ties between both navies in general and nations in particular.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti talking with mediapersons after visiting Trauma Center. Provincial Ministers are also present

Will pull out terrorism from its roots

We are committed to tackling terrorism head-on with full support of security forces: CM

If my resignation would lead to a reduction in terrorism, I would not hesitate to step down, Mir Sarfraz Bugti

Independent Report

QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has expressed his unwavering commitment to rooting out terrorism in the province, stating that if his resignation would end terrorist activities, he would not hesitate to step down.

Addressing the media during his visit to the trauma center at Civil Hospital Quetta to inquire about the injured, Bugti reiterated the government's determination to eliminate terrorism. "We will pull out terrorism from its roots," he declared, emphasizing that the province faces significant challenges. A task force and think tank have been established to devise effective counter-terrorism strategies.

The CM revealed that six terrorists were killed in retaliation for the martyrdom of Deputy Commissioner Panjgur, Zakir Baloch, and acknowledged the federal government's full cooperation with the provincial administration.

Flanked by provincial ministers Mir Zahoor Buledi,

Mir Sadiq Umrani, Mir Saleem Khosa, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Haji Ali Madad Jatak, and Inspector General of Police, Moazzam Jah Ansari, Bugti condemned the recent attack in Duki, where innocent laborers were brutally killed. He noted that Balochistan, with over 30,000 workers employed across 400 mines, is vast and requires increased vigilance.

An apex committee meeting has been scheduled for October 15 to assess shortcomings and formulate key decisions against terrorism. Bugti criticized past leniency towards terrorists, stressing the need to correct mistakes to ensure public safety.

Discussing healthcare issues, Bugti acknowledged the sector's challenges and announced strict orders to ensure the availability of medicines in all hospitals.

On the topic of modern technology, Bugti raised concerns about terrorists using 4G internet services while questioning whether the intelligence agencies have adequate access to such technologies.

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MQM-P presented demands before PM to support constitutional amendments

ISLAMABAD (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) presented its demands before Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif to support the constitutional amendments.

In a meeting with the prime minister, the MQM-P's high-level delegation sought empowered local bodies across the country in favour of supporting the government's constitutional amendments, the sources added.

"The MQM-P asked the government to also amend Article 140-A of the Constitution that pertains to local bodies," the sources added.

The MQM-P presented a draft proposal to the prime minister and demanded that the same should also be made part of the government's constitutional amendments.

Bilawal Bhutto says Fed. constitutional court dream of Quaid-e-Azam

ISLAMABAD (Online): PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said establishment of federal constitutional court was dream of Quaid-e-Azam.

"Quaid-e-Azam presented the proposal of federal constitutional court first of all. He presented the details of federal constitutional court on October 27, 1931 in Round Table Conference. The proposal of Quaid-e-Azam resembles with the proposal presented by PPP, he said this in a statement issued here Saturday.

He stated Quaid-e-Azam gave proposals for establishment of federal constitutional court for the protection of rights of fundamental rights of the citizens, Supreme Court for filing appeal against decisions of high courts and one court to hear appeal in criminal cases.

Quaid-e-Azam said any question which relates to federal constitution or it arises from constitution should go to the federal court, he added.



A view of Special Parliamentary Committee meeting held in Islamabad

Deadlock persists as constitutional amendment drafts reviewed in committee

JUI-F refuses to back government on constitutional amendments, opts to draft with PPP; PTI seeks founder's input

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Government's efforts to gain opposition's support for the 26th Constitutional Amendment remained stalled as another meeting of political parties in parliament ended without a consensus on Saturday.

The special parliamentary committee, chaired by Syed Khurshid Shah of PPP, reviewed various draft

proposals from the government, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM).

During the meeting, the government presented its proposed constitutional amendment draft, while JUI-F submitted a 24-point document. MQM also shared its recommendations. The proposed constitutional draft comprises

28 pages and suggests 56 amendments.

A sub-committee has been formed to review the constitutional drafts submitted by both the government and opposition parties. This sub-committee will evaluate the documents and provide its recommendations to the main parliamentary committee.

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7th Pakistan-KSA bilateral Defence Industrial Forum held at Riyadh

RAWALPINDI (APP): The 7th meeting of Pakistan-KSA Bilateral Defence Industrial Forum was held at Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) on October 10th 24, where Pakistan tri services delegation was led by Chief of General Staff (CGS), Lieutenant General Muhammad Avasi Dastgir, whereas, Assistant Defence Minister, Engr Talal Bin Abdullah Al Otaibi led the Saudi Arabian side.



During the meeting, the CGS affirmed Pakistan's continuing support towards capacity building of Royal Saudi Defence Forces, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The dignity from the KSA acknowledged Pakistan's achievements and sacrifices in war against terrorism and its valuable contributions towards regional peace and stability.

The forum discussed challenges to global and regional security and their implications on Defence Forces.

Judiciary is facilitator of Imran Khan: Full force of state will be used to foil PTI agenda of chaos: Defence Minister

SIALKOT (Online): Defence minister Khawaja Asif has said judiciary is facilitator of PTI founder Imran Khan and it should take notice of PTI October 15 protest call.

"Judiciary has provided all facilities to PTI founder but judiciary is silent over the role of PTI founder against integrity of the country. The judiciary should take notice of PTI October 15 protest call. Conflict is running between PTI founder and state of Pakistan. We stand with Pakistan in this critical time, he said this while addressing a press conference here Saturday.

He held PTI never condemned terrorism.

PTI founder provided material for the destruction of Pakistan. PTI is following enemy agenda. PTI is not desisting from creating chaos. They want release of PTI founder by blackmail-

ing state. It is their mindset if PTI founder is not then there is nothing else.

Suo motu notice is taken on breathing, he said adding as to why the court did not take suo motu notice on recent protest of PTI.

APP adds: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif said that the PTI founder had always prioritized his interests over national interests and the party wanted to block the path of Pakistan's development.

Addressing a press conference at his residence in Sialkot Cantt, he said when the heads of 16, 17 countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are coming to Pakistan, the PTI founder has given a call for protest, however, he warned that the country's interests will be protected at any cost.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti enquiring about health of an injured labourer at Trauma Center. Provincial Ministers are also present

CM inquires about health of injured labourers of Duki terrorism

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti visited the Trauma Center, Civil Sandeman Provincial Headquarter Hospital here on Saturday evening.

During the visit, Chief Minister inquired about the health of labourers injured in the incident of terrorism in Duki on Thursday night.

He prayed for the early recovery of the injured labourers and expressed best wishes for them.

The Provincial Minister for Health, Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Managing Director Trauma Center, Dr Arbab Kamran Kasi briefed the Chief Minister about the situation and medical services being provided to the injured.

The Chief Minister expressed satisfaction over treatment of the injured

labourers.

He assured that financial compensation would be given to the victims besides providing them the necessary treatment to the injured at the government level.

Also present on the occasion were the provincial ministers Mir Sadiq Umrani, Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Mir Saleem Khosa, Ali Madad Jatak, Inspector General of police, Secretary and Director General Health besides other concerned officials.

It may be mentioned here that some 21 labourers were killed and seven injured in the terrorists attack at the coal mines in Duki.

The incident of terrorism was widely condemned by the provincial ministers and all other segments of the society including the political, social and religious leaders and parties.

Nawab Ayaz Jozezai condemns brutal killing of labourers, says Duki incident not first of its kind



Independent Report

QUETTA: The senior leader of Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) and the Convenor of Pashtoon Qaumi Jirgah, Nawab Ayaz Khan Jozezai has strongly condemned the brutal killing of coal mine labourers in terrorists attack in Duki.

Nawab Ayaz Jozezai was addressing press conference along with other party leaders here at the Quetta Press Club on Saturday.

He said that 21 labourers were martyred and seven others injured in the tragic incident of Duki.

He said that the Duki incident is not the first and not the last, while such incidents are increasing with every passing day.

He regretfully pointed

out that there is rise in such attacks in different areas and happening of the same is a matter of great concern.

He said that Pakistan is an atomic power and has strong military.

He said that we borrow loans and then celebrate it.

Nawab Ayaz Jozezai charged that small nationalities are being exploited in the country for 76 years.

He said that the loans are taken for the whole country but the same are utilized only in one province.

As a result, our people are forced to lead miserable life and our children are not safe even, he added.

The eminent tribal personality on the occasion said that it has become hard for us to lead life in the country.

Third meeting of Civil Service Reforms held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The third meeting of Committee constituted by the Prime Minister on "civil service reforms" was held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal here Saturday.

The meeting was attended by the provincial Chief secretaries or their representatives, Rector National School of Public Policy, Director General of Civil Service Academy, Secretaries of the Cabinet, Establishment, and Planning Divisions, Special Secretary, EAD, Secretary, FPSC, Additional Secretary, Finance Division and senior officers of Establishment and Planning Divisions, according to press release issued by planning division.

During the 2nd meeting of the Committee, 5 sub-committees on refining Recruitment process, Appropriate training, institutional restructuring, improving compensation, and performance management) were constituted.

During the first two meetings, held under the

leadership of Planning minister, the proposal prepared by the Ministry Planning in consultation with stakeholders during 2013-18 were deliberated during these meetings.

Two reports i.e. refining Recruitment process, Appropriate training were deliberated during the meeting. The Establishment Division made a detailed presentation prepared in consultation with FPSC on refining recruitment process highlighted existing CSS exam / recruitment issues and challenges, deliberating on findings from screening test results analyzed over the last few years since it was introduced and also discussed the current problems in CSS curriculum.

It was observed that the current CSS curriculum and examination process does not encourage critical thinking. It was also discussed that predictable style of examination has led to a surge in commercial academies which only candidates belonging to affluent class can afford.

To discourage this practice, minister advised FPSC to revise the curriculum and reconsider subjects.

Emphasizing on the need for effective marketing for recruitment, minister advised FPSC to conduct rigorous campaigns to attract maximum candidates to participate in CSS exam as being followed global companies who hire their HR by targeting universities across the country.

"A candidate studying in BUTEMS Quetta is as good as a candidate studying in any other university," the minister remarked.

With the right mentoring and access to preparatory material, they can pass the exam, he said.

Minister also said that the proactive recruitment program will enable candidates in backward areas to prepare for CSS.

"There are 8000 to 10,000 women studying in Quetta University and the new CSS exam structure should be easy for them," stated the Minister.

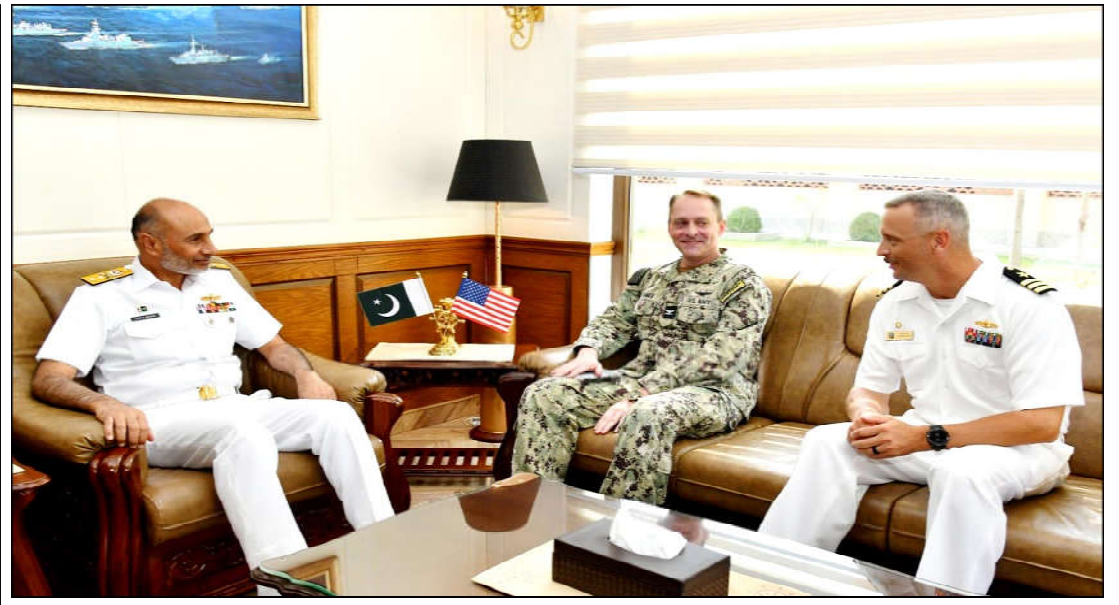
Regarding psychological assessment, the minister instructed the committee to use psychometric analysis to analyze the attitudes of candidates especially signs of extremist tendencies.

Giving example of

Punjab Police, he said that there was no system in place for psychological evaluation in any Police academy of the country.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal also suggested to add the best practices from corporate sector giants into the reform proposals. "We need to borrow from the best practices of companies like Engro, McKinsey, etc. to create the best standard of civil service trainings," he added.

Director General Civil Service Academy made a detailed presentation of existing training regime and briefed the minister about structure and themes of Common Training Programme.



Commanding Officer of US Navy Ship USS O'KANE called on Commander Pakistan Fleet Rear Admiral Abdul Munib

Law Minister says October 24 deadline for issuing notification for new CJP appointment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Saturday said that the government will notify on October 24, that at which place the Chief Justice is to be sworn in.

Talking to the media, the minister said that the deadline for issuing the notification for the appointment of the new Chief Justice of Pakistan is October 24.

He said that the notification of the new Chief Justice is always issued a day or two before the appointment.

The appointment notification of Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa was issued a little earlier in view of the arrival of the caretaker government, he said.

Activists demand legal safeguards to protect innocent lives

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Human rights activists have expressed deep concern over the ongoing misuse of blasphemy laws and have called for urgent legal reforms and enforcement of strong administrative measures to hold accountable those responsible for inciting hatred and violence, including extrajudicial killings, and mob attacks carried out under the pretext of blasphemy accusations.

In a meeting, activists lamented over the wrongful prosecution of two sisters, Saima and Sonia, from Village 304, Tehsil Gojra, Toba Tek Singh District. The sisters were allegedly accused of discarding a sack of waste paper allegedly containing sacred inscriptions onto an empty plot. However, the court granted them bail after determining that they had been falsely accused of blasphemy under Section 295-B of the Pakistan Penal Code.

Chaudhry Hanef Hameed Mithu Advocate emphasized that

the accusations made on 6 August 2024 against Saima and Sonia were fabricated with malicious intent and lacked any credible witnesses. He noted that Saima, a volunteer health worker, and Sonia, who runs a local school, had vehemently denied the blasphemy allegations, reaffirming their deep respect for all sacred texts. The accusations, they said, were baseless and driven by personal vendettas. Mithu further highlighted that Saima, a widow, is the sole provider for her children after the loss of her husband and parents. However, both sisters continue to face threats and live in constant fear of vigilante justice.

Joseph Jansen, Chairperson of Voice for Justice, expressed his profound concern over the growing misuse of blasphemy laws in Pakistan, as demonstrated in the case of Saima and Sonia. He also cited other recent instances of blasphemy-related mob violence, including the extrajudicial killings of

Nazir/Lazar Masih in Sargodha, Muhammad Sulaiman in Swat, Syed Khan in Quetta, and Dr. Shahnawaz Kanbar in Umerkot. He emphasized the urgency of reforming blasphemy laws, stating that the abuse of these laws, driven by false accusations, must be addressed before more innocent lives are tragically lost.

A human rights activist, Anosh Waseem said that Blasphemy accusations often lead to mob violence and extrajudicial killings, which are avoidable if appropriate legal safeguards are in place. The state's failure to protect its citizens and uphold the rule of law has created a climate of fear and impunity for perpetrators.

A human rights defender, Aneel Edger called for the prosecution of individuals who incite violence through false blasphemy accusations, stressing the importance of ensuring accountability to safeguard citizens' lives and maintain the rule of law.



DUSHANBE: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan interacting with the Pakistani diaspora at, Tajikistan.

Naqvi calls for action against Islamabad's criminal mafias

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a formal oath-taking ceremony held at the Ministry of Interior on Saturday, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi administered the oath to the newly elected officials of the Islamabad Crime and Interior Reporters Association.

The event brought together prominent figures from both journalism and the government, underscoring the vital role of crime reporting in safeguarding public interests.

The association's key leaders included were Chairman Shakeel Qarar, Vice Chairman Na'eem Janjua, President Qamar Al-Manawar, and Secretary General Zulqarnain Haider stood at the forefront, pledging their commitment to upholding the values of journalism and integrity.

Other notable office-bearers who took the oath included Senior Vice President Adil Tanoli, Vice Presidents Na'eem Asghar and Bilal Afridi, Information Secretary Nasir Butt, and

Finance Secretary Saqib Syed.

During his address, Minister Naqvi congratulated the new office bearers and praised the association for its critical role in bridging the gap between the media and the Ministry of Interior.

"The Crime and Interior Reporters Association and the Ministry of Interior share a deep-rooted connection. We rely on your work to bring transparency and accountability to the public," Naqvi remarked.

However, the minister's message was not just one of praise but also a call to action.

He urged the newly appointed reporters to take a proactive role in identifying and exposing criminal mafias operating within Islamabad. "You are the eyes and ears of the city," Naqvi emphasized. "Your investigative work is essential in combating the growing menace of organized crime."

Climate Change awareness good initiative of federal govt: Samina Zehri

KARACHI (APP): Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri on Saturday said that the federal government had taken a great initiative to make aware the people of climate change impacts on our daily life.

She said that the new generation could face problems due to the severe impacts of climate change if precautionary measures were not taken.

While talking to media persons, on the occasion, she said that the COP Simulation Program aimed at enhancing the understanding of students regarding international climate negotiations and decision-making processes in addressing the global environmental challenges based on the regional competition, organized by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination at Habib Uni-

versity, Senator Samina Zehri said that COP Simulation Program was the initiative taken by the Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam.

She said, 'The new generation is our hope,' and we had to take steps for their better future.

Zehri said that the impacts of climate change also risked the food security. She said that the children were aware of climate change and its impacts and they were giving suggestions on it. She further said that they must come forward along with them to correct mistakes done in the past.

Samina Zehri said, 'We have to get use of plastic banned, which was also becoming cause of pollution.'

SC fixes petitions against proposed constitutional amendments for hearing

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has fixed for hearing petitions against proposed constitutional amendments.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa will hear the petitions.

The committee under Supreme Court practice and procedure fixed the petitions for hearing.

The two judges in the bench are Justice Afghan Naeem and Justice Shahid Bilal.

3-member bench of SC will hear the petitions on October 3.

Hike in petrol, diesel prices proposed

ISLAMABAD (INP): There is a proposal to increase the prices of petroleum products (POL) in the country following a hike in the crude oil prices in the international market which have soared by \$6.90 per barrel (9.50 per cent) in the last two weeks to reach \$578.88 per barrel from \$71.98 per barrel.

It reported in media that there was a proposal to increase each liter of petrol's price by Rs4.

If approved, they informed, petrol's price would increase from the present Rs247.03 per liter to Rs250.98 per liter.

Similarly, sources said, there was a proposal for a hike in high-speed diesel's price by Rs10.25 per liter. If approved, its cost would jump from Rs246.29 per liter to Rs256.54 per liter, they added.

Likewise, Rs7.85 per liter increase in the price of kerosene oil had been proposed, sources elaborated. Similarly, they said, there was a suggestion to increase the price of one liter of light-speed diesel by Rs8.33 per liter. In case the government greenlights new prices, they will take effect from October 16.

KP govt provides tents, water to Jirga participants

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Saturday provided essential items including tents, drinking water and other necessary items to the participants of Pashtun Qaumi Jirga here.

Special Assistant to the Chief Minister KP on Relief, Naik Muhammad Khan informed that following directives of the Chief Minister, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority was asked to provide necessary

items to the Jirga participants. He said the items were handed over to the local Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Suhail Afridi adding that tents, water tank, blankets and other necessary items included the provided items. He further said that the provincial government will provide every possible assistance and co-operation to the Jirga and ensure a peaceful atmosphere during its proceedings.

We are committed to tackling...

Continued from page 1

He called for national unity in the fight against terrorism, emphasizing the misuse of social media against the state and the importance of public cooperation.

The CM highlighted the ongoing search operations following the Dukki incident, noting that terrorists involved in the August 26 attacks were neutralized in a Mastung operation, while security forces thwarted a major terrorist plot in Turbat by recovering 280 kilograms of explosives. "Security agencies prevent nine incidents for every one that comes to light," Bugti remarked.

The CM confirmed that all decisions made during the apex committee meeting chaired by Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif are being implemented. "There are no issues for the state—operations will continue across the province wherever needed," he affirmed.

Bugti also announced that a task force think tank has been established to expedite efforts against terrorism. Furthermore, he revealed plans to increase compensation for victims of terrorism, with the government announcing a payment of PKR 1.5 million for each martyr of the Dukki incident.

The Chief Minister concluded by calling on the public to support the government's anti-terrorism efforts and pledged that the province would soon launch "smart operations" to deal with terrorist threats effectively.

Deadlock persists as constitutional...

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cludes members from various political parties, such as Naveed Qamar from the Pakistan Peoples Party, Azam Nazeer Tarar from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Barrister Gohar from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Farooq Sattar from MQM, and Kamran Murtaza from JUI-F.

The ruling coalition has reached consensus on proposed constitutional amendments, but JUI-F has declined to support the government on the creation of a constitutional court, opting instead to form a joint draft with the PPP. Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to consult with its founder Imran Khan on the proposed amendments.

During the session, JUI-F presented its draft proposal, rejecting the government's plan for a constitutional court and instead suggesting the formation of a constitutional bench.

Senator Kamran Murtaza of JUI-F stated, "The only difference between the PPP and JUI-F drafts is the concept of a constitutional court versus a bench. We propose a

bench instead of establishing a separate court." He added that aside from this, there were no major objections to the PPP's draft and expressed hope for a joint proposal soon.

In response to the government's 56-point proposal, Murtaza presented 24 counterpoints, arguing, "There is no need for a large setup for fewer than 200 constitutional cases."

PPP leader Raja Pervaz Ashraf echoed Murtaza's optimism, noting that JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman suggested drafting a joint proposal with the PPP, which would be shared soon. "Things are moving in the right direction. Stay positive," Ashraf remarked, adding that the October 25 deadline was unrelated to the constitutional amendment discussions.

Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar emphasized that such matters move forward through dialogue. "Is there anything that cannot be resolved within constitutional limits? Solutions won't come through criticism alone; present your suggestions too. The country is at a standstill, and decisions are being criticised," he said.



NASEERABAD: Regional Secretary Transport Noor Ahmed Domki checking documents of vehicles



USTA MUHAMMAD: Commissioner Moeenur Rehman Khan being briefed by DHO Dr. Abdul Manan during his visit to Latki

ISSI hosts round table on "Pakistan-Russia Relations Amid Changing Global World Order"

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ISSI hosted a round table discussion on "Pakistan-Russia Relations Amid Changing Global World Order," with Pakistan's former Ambassador to Russia Qazi Khalilullah.

The event, moderated by Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), was attended by representatives from the Russian Embassy, academics, think-tank experts, and practitioners, a news release said.

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood warmly welcomed the distinguished participants, expressing his profound gratitude to Ambassador Qazi Khalilullah as the keynote speaker.

He highlighted Ambassador Qazi's extensive diplomatic career, which included key postings in Cuba, Myanmar, and the Russian Federation.

With decades of experience in the region, Ambassador Qazi has significantly contributed to the growth of Pakistan-Russia relations, particularly during his tenure as Ambassador in Moscow.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood noted that Pakistan-Russia relations have passed through many phases—from the earliest day of the cold war to the present times - evolving into a relationship now marked by friendship, mutual understanding, and trust.

He stressed that this is a growing partnership encompassing diverse domains, including trade, energy, security, culture, and people-to-people exchanges, with vast opportunities for future collaboration, particularly in the fields of agriculture, aviation, and regional connectivity.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood also remarked on the significance of the efforts of Pakistan and Russia for the stabilization of Afghanistan and for enhanced regional connectivity.

He appreciated Russia's support for Pakistan's full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and its supportive stance toward Pakistan's quest for membership of BRICS. Both countries share a commitment to multilateralism, with the UN playing a central role.

He emphasized that Pakistan and Russia are united in their desire to avoid another Cold War, given the contemporary world's challenges in the wake of accentuation of traditional and non-traditional security threats.

During his discourse, Ambassador Qazi Khalilullah provided a detailed account of the current state of Pakistan-Russia relations, highlighting how the relationship has evolved from the Cold War

years of the 1980s to the present phase of mutual friendship. He explained that the Russian economy began transforming with the introduction of Perestroika and Glasnost in the 1990s, transitioning towards a market-based system.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, a fresh start was made in Pakistan-Russia relations, laying the groundwork for qualitatively enhanced cooperation and progress.

A significant breakthrough occurred in 2014 with the signing of the Defence Cooperation Agreement, followed by a gas pipeline agreement in 2015.

Ambassador Qazi noted that regular dialogues on various issues of bilateral interest have since taken place, including arms control, counterterrorism, and defence cooperation.

He emphasized that Pakistan currently enjoys a peaceful, cooperative, and trustworthy relationship with Russia, free from any demands on either side.

In September 2024, the first-ever Pakistan-Russia Trade Forum was held, resulting in the signing of a Barter Trade Agreement between the two countries.

This development, along with Russia's important role in Pakistan's foreign policy considerations, underscores the deepening ties.

Irfan urges unity on 'Constitutional Amendments' for national interest

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Irfan Siddiqui from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Saturday announced that two key parties have submitted draft proposals for the constitutional amendments, paving the way for a potential consensus with Maulana Fazlur Rehman's Jamaat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) and other parties.

Talking to a private news channel, he emphasized the importance of unity in passing constitutional amendments for the national interest.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui has reaffirmed that the proposed constitutional amendments are not tailored to benefit any specific individual. Instead, they aim to bring about meaningful reforms to Pakistan's constitution.

To achieve this, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), is actively engaging in discussions with other political parties to support the amendments, he added.

The PML-N is seeking broad consensus on the constitutional reforms, recognizing that unity among parties is crucial for the nation's interest, he high-

lighted.

By building alliances and fostering cooperation, Siddiqui hopes to create an environment conducive to passing the amendments.

This collaborative approach demonstrates the PML-N's commitment to prioritizing the country's well-being over individual interests, he mentioned.

Replying to a query, he said two key parties had submitted their proposal drafts for constitutional amendments to the committee overseeing the process, adding, Mulana and PTI will jointly present other.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui has clarified that there is no rush to amend the constitution and the date for the amendment can be adjusted as needed.

However, he expressed optimism that the amendment proposals will mature following the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference.

This development suggests that the government is prioritizing careful consideration and international cooperation over hasty decision-making, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, presides over a high-level meeting to discuss security arrangements for "Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit".

PTI's protest at D-Chowk during SCO conference conspiracy: Governor Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said that the announcement of a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest at D-Chowk during the conduct of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference is part of a conspiracy.

He criticized PTI for consistently pursuing an agenda against the country and collaborating with enemies of the state.

Kundi emphasized that they will not allow any plots to destabilize Pakistan to succeed and urged PTI to retract their call for protest on October 15.

Talking to media here, Kundi pointed out the significance of the upcoming international conference, saying that Pakistan aims to present a positive image to the world.

He expressed concern that PTI's protest coinciding with the conference is detrimental.

Kundi reiterated that if PTI's demands will align with the constitution, they will be addressed, recalling that the establishment of a constitutional court was announced by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Kundi said that all political parties are united in support of the SCO conference and emphasized that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always advocated for peace.

He lamented the deteriorating security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, accusing PTI of attempting to incite unrest by inviting the Indian minister to address their rally.

Stressing that national interests come first, Kundi highlighted the sacrifices made by the PPP for the country, asserting that they have never rallied against Pakistan but instead promoted the slogan "Pakistan Khappay" (Long Live Pakistan).

He underscored that the best forum for politicians is parliament, criticizing PTI members for promoting violence and suggesting they join in peaceful protests instead.

Kundi praised JUI Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman as a political figure who has fought for democracy and suggested that Maulana's support would ultimately benefit their cause. He concluded by addressing the impact of terrorism on tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Foolproof security measures in place ahead of SCO summit

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, presided over a high-level meeting to discuss security arrangements for the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit" in Islamabad.

The meeting was attended by DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, DIG Headquarters Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, DIG Security Jawad Tariq, and other senior police officials. IG Islamabad received a briefing on security arrangements and directed officers to implement effective security measures.

On the occasion, the IG Islamabad emphasized that security of the delegation must be strengthened, by effectively utilizing the modern systems of the Safe City Islamabad. Well-prepared police teams will be deployed at all entry and exit points of the high-security zone.

Search and combing operations will continue in the residential areas surrounding the Red Zone. During the delegation's movement, all major roads will be completely closed, and alternative routes will be provided at various inter-sections, keeping in mind the convenience of the public.

In this regard, Islamabad Traffic Police has issued a special traffic plan.

IG Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi further assured that the Islamabad Police will use all available resources to provide foolproof security to all delegations and will make every possible effort to uphold the dignity and honor of the country.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in dismantling a building at Sitara Market in the Federal Capital.

Muqam strongly rejected PTI's agenda of protest during SCO meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam strongly rejected the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) anti-state agenda as PTI announced for protest on the occasion of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) upcoming meeting.

He said, "It is a proof of anti-nationalism. There is no doubt that PTI's agenda seemed to be anti-Pakistan because PTI has declared the protest on this important occasion".

PTI once again showed its real face as the meeting of SCO was very important for Pakistan, he said. Muqam asked What type of image of Pakistan they wanted to highlight before the World?

"First they postponed the visit of the President of China, now they want to sabotage the SCO meeting.

In any case, protest cannot be allowed on this occasion and the declaration of protest is condemnable and very sad.

Protests and processions can be held at any other time," he said.

CDA chairman, MCI & ICT officials served notices in TJ restaurant case

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has served the notices to the senior officials of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration for violating the court orders in Tandoori Junction (TJ) restaurant case.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, taking up the instant petition, served the notices to CDA Chairman, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa, MCI's Directorate of Management and Administration Director, Sania Hameed and ICT Administration's Assistant Commissioners City, Farhan Ahmed and Ghulam Murtaza Chandio and Magistrate Ali Javed and sought a formal reply within two weeks, according to a certified copy of the order sheet, issued on Saturday. Javed Asif, TJ restaurant's owner in F-7 Markaz, filed a contempt petition under Article 204 of the Constitution and relevant sections of the Contempt of Court Ordinance, 2003 against the above mentioned respondents in connection with an alleged breach of the court's previous order on September 27, 2024, which directed the de-sealing of TJ restaurant.

The petitioner's counsel, Qaiser Imam, inter-alia, contended that despite the court's suspension of a notice dated September 20,



ISLAMABAD: CDA staff busy in the maintenance work of an overhead bridge.

It's honor to join UNICEF: Saba

ISLAMABAD (APP): UNICEF has appointed renowned actor Saba Qamar as its first National Ambassador for child rights in Pakistan. The announcement was made on International Day of the Girl Child, a day that recognizes girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.

"It's an honor to join UNICEF. I will echo our shared mission of achieving every right for every child wherever I am," said Ms. Saba Qamar. "In my recent travels, I have seen both the challenges children and women face in this country and the difference UNICEF's dedicated efforts are making. I promise to play my part for the children and young people of Pakistan so that they can dream and have the chance to fulfill their dreams," added Qamar.

In her role as UNICEF Pakistan's National Ambassador, the star of Kamli and Hindi Medium will use her international platform to help raise awareness of children's rights and issues affecting young people, such as child marriage, mental health, lack of education, gender equality, climate change and the impact of violence, exploitation and child poverty. Child marriage is one of the biggest impediments to girls realizing their rights in Pakistan. The country is home to 19 million child brides, the sixth highest globally. More than half of adolescent girls are pregnant before their 18th birthday which can be life-threatening for the mother and the child.



ISLAMABAD: Passengers leaving for their homes from Bus Stands after the government announced holidays on Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in the Federal Capital.

OPF set up PGFRC to assist returned Overseas Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development has set up a Pakistani-German Facilitation & Reintegration Centre (PGFRC) in Lahore with an advisory desk at Overseas Pakistani Foundation (OPF) here at the head office.

An official source told APP that the objective was to facilitate the return of overseas Pakistanis in terms of their skill development in Pakistan's social and economic fabric for gainful employment.

It is being implemented in collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and Overseas Pakistani Foundation, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development on technical assistance to the facilitation & reintegration centre for Pakistani workers has been signed.

ITP conduct full dress rehearsals for SCO Summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Saturday conducted full dress rehearsals to finalize the arrangements for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, scheduled from 14th October to 16th.

According to the Chief Traffic Officer, (CTO) Muhammad Sarifaz Virk the ITP have issued a comprehensive traffic plan aimed at ensuring smooth traffic flow during this important international event.

Muhammad Sarifaz Virk said specific routes will be designated according to the traffic plan, and citizens are encouraged to cooperate with police directives to facilitate the smooth conduct of the summit.

Jamal Shah nominated for lifetime achievement award

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jamal Shah legend Actor and Artist has been nominated for Lifetime Achievement Award Baku, Azerbaijan International Achievers Award 2024. West World Events, a registered company in the UAE and a subsidiary of West World Group Ltd UK, was honored and being invited Jamal Shah to prestigious International Achievers Awards 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan, said a press release. "We are excited to nominate you for the Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of your remarkable contributions and achievements to the Television, Film,

FIA academy hosts inter-ministerial workshop on anti-human trafficking action plan 2024-2025

ISLAMABAD (APP): The FIA Academy in Islamabad recently hosted an inter-ministerial consultative workshop focused on the Anti-Human Trafficking Action Plan 2024-2025.

The event, organized by the Ministry of Interior and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), brought together representatives from various government departments and international organizations to make strategy and enhance efforts against human trafficking and smuggling in Pakistan.

The workshop was opened by Special Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, Waqas Mehmood, alongside Muhammad Jafar, Additional Director General of the FIA's Law Wing. Both officials emphasized the importance of strengthening Pakistan's response to human trafficking.

Muhammad Hamza, Assistant Director (USA) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discussed the country's Tier Ranking in the U.S. Department of State's Human Trafficking Report and its significance.

The workshop also featured presentations aimed at addressing concerns raised in the U.S. Department of State's 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report.

Deputy Director FIA, Rai Nasrullah, and Ms. Saip Jan, Section Officer from the Ministry of Interior, provided detailed briefings during the event, highlighting the current state of anti-trafficking efforts and plans for future improvements.

Ms. Shahida Gilani from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) addressed the role of international organizations in combating human trafficking, adding an important global perspective to the discussions.

Under the guidance of FIA's Director of the Anti-Human Smuggling Wing, Saqib Sultan Mehmood, the progress of the TIP Committees was reviewed, and targets for 2024-2025 were outlined.

The workshop concluded with closing remarks from Shahida Gilani, reiterating the need for collaborative efforts to successfully combat human trafficking and achieve the objectives of the Action Plan.



ISLAMABAD: Security of the Federal Capital beefed up for upcoming SCO Summit.

Religious Targeting in India: Shamim Shawl calls for collective stance against Islamophobia

ISLAMABAD (APP): A veteran leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference & Kashmir delegate Shamim Shawl Saturday sounded the alarm on the escalating threat of Islamophobia in India, where Muslims, Christians, Sikhs are facing intensifying violence and persecution.

She said it is crucial for global leaders to acknowledge the gravity of the situation and take concrete steps to address the growing threat of Islamophobia in India.

The Indian government must also be held accountable for its role in perpetuating this ideology and ensuring the safety and dignity of all its citizens, regardless of their faith, she demanded.

The international community must recognize the alarming rise of Islamophobia in India and its devastating consequences, she mentioned.

It is essential to promote peace and understanding in the region by supporting organizations that work towards interfaith dialogue and conflict resolution, she said.

Nothing perfect, constitutional amendment will also not be perfect: Senator Sherry

ISLAMABAD (Online): PPP central leader Senator Sherry Rehman has said no thing is perfect and constitutional amendment will also not be perfect.

She said this while talking to media men after special committee meeting here Saturday.

"we are trying to forge consensus. Committee meeting is also taking place in-camera.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah also considered constitutional court his priority. This constitutional amendment is not assault on the court at all. There are different methods for appointment of judges in different countries. There is no such thing any where that judges are appointed on seniority basis. Dam funds have been crafted due to appointment of judges on seniority basis. She held PPP is only party which has filed constitutional amendment draft. PPP forges consensus on national security policy. Evolving consensus is quality of PPP. Talks go on in politics on the basis of mutual interests. Nothing is perfect. Constitutional amendment will also not be perfect.

We are trying to bring transparency in constitutional amendment.

SPL hosts breast cancer awareness session

ISLAMABAD (APP): Security Papers Limited (SPL) hosted a breast cancer awareness session in collaboration with Indus Hospital & Health Network.

The event aimed to educate and empower female employees about the importance of breast health and early detection, said in a Press Release issued here on Thursday.

The session, led by Dr. Nazia Lodhi Breast & General Surgeon from Indus Hospital & Health Network, provided valuable insights on breast cancer prevention, detection, and treatment.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers repairing a bus stop at Islamabad Expressway in the Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Sunday October 13, 2024

Ghastly attack

In the second major terrorist attack in the country over the last few days, at least 20 miners were brutally murdered in the early hours of Friday in Balochistan's Duki area.

The reported details are ghastly, for the unfortunate souls had no chance of survival as terrorists lobbed rockets and grenades into the mine. The Duki outrage follows the deadly terrorist attack targeting a convoy of Chinese nationals in Karachi last Sunday. While no group has yet claimed responsibility for the latest attack, it must be said that no ideological motive whatsoever can justify such cold-blooded murder, and the targeting of poor, defenceless workers was an act of terrorism. Duki is a mostly Pakhtun area, and reportedly most of the victims of the attack hailed from the same ethnic community, including some Afghan nationals.

Both Baloch separatist militants and religiously inspired fighters have been involved in acts of terrorism in Balochistan. In fact, the troubled province has been rocked by frequent spasms of violence over the past few months, mostly carried out by separatists. This is not the first time that workers have been targeted, albeit in earlier terrorist attacks, the victims of the separatist insurgents have mostly been migrant labourers from Punjab. Unless solid evidence emerges to identify the perpetrators of the Duki outrage, we can only speculate about the motives. One possible goal could be to ignite ethnic strife in the country, and pit communities against each other. Moreover, the terrorist attack comes at a time when Pakistan's foreign friends are looking to make major investments in the country, particularly in Balochistan, while the SCO moot — bringing together dignitaries from the region to Islamabad — kicks off next week. It is possible that hostile external actors may have facilitated the attack, as well as earlier incidents, to present an image of rampant insecurity in Pakistan, and prevent foreign funds and visitors from coming to this country.

Whatever the motive and whoever the perpetrators, firm steps are needed to crack down on the elements behind the violence. While those responsible for the miners' killings must be brought to justice, national institutions need to up their game when it comes to addressing the gaping loopholes that allow terrorists to strike. The administration, along with the civil and military security agencies, must implement a fool-proof counterterrorism plan which can address the many threats that confront Pakistan.

Not too long ago, the state launched the Azm-i-Istehkam campaign; the people need to be informed what steps are being taken under this scheme to root out terrorist groups. Without security and protection for people's lives and property, no economic turnaround will be possible, while foreign investors will be discouraged from bringing their money here. Urgent action is required.

Sakib Sherani

How a country is organised as a polity casts a long shadow on its economic development. Egypt and Indonesia offer two contrasting examples from recent history.

Both these countries have a broadly similar past in terms of the omnipresent involvement of the military, and both were at a crossroads in their recent history similar to where Pakistan finds itself today. Each, however, took a different path, with vastly different outcomes.

Egypt is a flourishing autocracy with a floundering economy. Indonesia is a functioning democracy while also being economically vibrant. There are important lessons for Pakistan, as it stands at a consequential, and possibly existential, moment in its history.

The Arab Republic of Egypt is a strategically important country in the Middle East, with a population of around 116 million. Though nominally democratic, it has had only a brief and tragic tryst with participatory democracy since its independence in 1922, with

long periods of its history marked by army-led one-party, and one-man, rule. Rampant human rights abuses, the denial of the right to vote in free and fair elections or the exercise of free speech and freedom of association, have been the unfortunate hallmarks of this history.

While Egypt is a republic with a de jure semi-presidential form of government, de facto it has been a one-man autocracy for much of its post-independence existence. The military exerts a strong influence in virtually all spheres of Egyptian life, and has a large footprint in the economy. The economy itself is characterised by crony capitalism and the accumulation of rents by connected insiders.

With a nominal per capita income of around \$3,500, Egypt is a lower-middle-income country. Wealth inequality is high, and poverty is widespread. Not unlike Pakistan, Egypt has required multiple bailouts from the IMF, with 12 programmes under its belt. In terms of absolute amount drawn, it currently ranks as the second largest borrower from the Fund.

On top of the protracted use of IMF resources, Egypt has also been the periodic recipient of huge lifelines from its wealthy Gulf backers, notably Saudi Arabia. However, its ruling elite has squandered the loans and external assistance on wasteful expenditures and by siphoning public resources to enrich themselves.

Not surprisingly, Egypt's governance indicators are poor, similar to Pakistan. Its percentile rank for 'control of corruption' is 26th (Pakistan: 22nd), while for 'voice and accountability', its percentile rank is ninth (Pakistan: 25th), according to the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators.

Over the past two years, Pakistan appears to have been heavily inspired by Egypt's political structure, with the latter's autocratic one-man system, sham elections, its constitutional court acting as a kangaroo court and as an instrument of state power, an ubiquitous and expanded role for the army, its own version of the Special Investment Facilitation Council or SIFC (called Supreme Council for Investment, first set

up in 2016), the stifling of political dissent and widespread human rights abuses.

In addition, political commentators have expressed concern that Pakistan could be taking another leaf from Egypt's book, and may be moving towards "politicise" of its largest and most popular political party, much like the fate meted out to President Mohamed Morsi and his Freedom and Justice Party, commonly known as the Muslim Brotherhood.

Unlike in Egypt and Pakistan, the military in Indonesia seized the day in 1998 as the Suharto regime collapsed in the face of popular unrest, and took a historic, selfless as well as bold step that has sealed the fate for the better for that country. Instead of consolidating its hold on power, the army leadership at the time decided it was time to head to the barracks.

In the words of Tristan Dreisbach's case study for Princeton University's Innovations for Successful Societies, titled Back to the Barracks: Getting the Indonesian Military Out of Politics, 1998-2000: "In May 1998, Indonesia's armed forces, which had marched

in lockstep with the Suharto regime for more than three decades, were poised to begin a stunning about-face. Suharto, a former major general, had resigned when anti-government protests rapidly escalated, and his departure opened the door for a small group of military leaders to implement reforms they had discussed quietly for years.

Agus Widjojo, one of the officers, drafted a plan that would change the relationship between civilian government and the armed forces. His New Paradigm reform agenda called for eliminating the military from many aspects of politics and governance in which it had long played a dominant role. From 1998 to 2000, the military severed its ties with the ruling party, agreed to reduce its representation in the parliament, ordered active-duty officers to leave many posts in civilian government, and separated the police from the armed forces. The changes represented a major break with the past and set the stage for civilian-led reforms to enhance elected government's control over military institutions and defence policy."

Since this momentous decision, Indonesia's

economy has taken off and not looked back, with nominal US dollar GDP increasing over 14 times, and per capita income recording a rise of 11 times, between 1998 and 2023. Today, Indonesia attracts over \$25 billion in gross FDI inflows (2022), and is the largest economy in Southeast Asia.

For comparison, Egypt's nominal per capita income in US dollars has increased by a multiple of 2.8, and Pakistan's 3.3 times over this period.

The military in Egypt has expanded its footprint in all spheres over the past few decades, while the army in Indonesia chose to return to the barracks at a critical moment in the country's history. The roll-back of democratic institutions, impulses as well as aspirations of the citizens, and the entrenchment of autocracy in Egypt has been accompanied by a mostly downward trajectory for the country. The vision of Indonesia's army leadership, on the other hand, to unilaterally accede to the democratic aspirations of the people, has propelled the country into an economic powerhouse. -- Courtesy Dawn

The IPP negotiations**Waqas Bin Najib**

The short-sightedness in dishonouring sovereign contracts will haunt us. The government is guaranteeing high power generation costs for years to come.

The private sector began participating in capital-intensive power generation projects in many developing countries in the 1990s, as governments had limited fiscal space to invest in them. So, independent power producers were set up. In a few years, IPP payments became a burden in these states, where increasing generation capacity was the sole policy aim. The power sector became untenable without simultaneous demand management and lack of reforms in transmission and distribution. The expanding generation capacity rarely coincided with industrial and economic growth.

Most of these countries had poor credit ratings, high investment risk, and issues with the electricity sector. To attract private investment, the policies needed generous terms and high returns. Governments provided

sovereign guarantees to secure the contracts. The agreements were made under international law, with dispute resolution through international arbitration fora. Pakistan set up IPPs under similar policies. The four power policies of 1994, 2002, 2006 and 2015 promoted negotiated tariffs on a cost-plus basis and a guaranteed return on the equity invested. Nepra assessed projects' capital and operational costs and awarded tariffs based on that.

The power tariffs are two-part. The first part is capacity tariff, including debt repayment, fixed O&M and insurance costs, and return on invested equity. The second is the variable tariff, including fuel and variable O&M costs. The latter fluctuates based on fuel prices and plant utilisation. Banks typically financed 80 per cent of project costs with 10-year loan tenors, so the tariff is high in the first 10 years and lower for the remainder of the project's life.

The cost-plus tariff used in the policies was ineffective in discovering market prices. There is information asymmetry between market players and

regulators. Cost-plus tariffs should have been limited to the first few projects in 1994. Once the private sector's confidence was won, procuring generation capacity should have been done through competitive bidding. However, when the power policies were announced, the government was in a hurry to build new power projects and continued with the inefficient tariffs. In 2015, private investors and IFIs showed little interest. Regardless of cost implications, the government wanted power plants before the 2018 polls and invited Chinese companies who insisted on an upfront tariff for setting up the projects.

This tariff is even worse than the negotiated one in determining market prices. It is also calculated on a cost-plus basis, but the regulator assumes the costs with a built-in return on investment. The upfront tariff was used for renewable energy projects. At the government's insistence, Nepra assumed high costs to determine the upfront tariffs for coal power projects and the transmission project under CPEC. The tariffs were overly attractive as the ac-

tual costs are likely two-thirds of the assumed costs. It was a policy and regulatory failure dictated by political expediency, unnecessary urgency, poor planning, and inadequate investor interest.

Three events since 1994 have hurt international investor confidence. The first was the government's coercion of IPPs and the unilateral change in Hubco's tariff in 1998. Then there was judicial intervention in rental power projects under the ill-conceived policy for rental power generation. The agreements with IPPs were renegotiated in 2020, and the IPPs agreed to change the terms of the contracts voluntarily, although not legally obliged to do so.

This week, the cabinet approved the termination of IPP contracts, and the PM announced that more IPP contracts would be revised. We've already paid the price of a poor investment climate through CPEC projects and have no case to argue except to request debt rescheduling. The Hubco episode and judicial intervention in sovereign contracts had already eroded investor con-

fidence, and forced renegotiations will end any chance of rebuilding it.

The 2020 report on the power sector, authored by the incumbent SAPM on power, precipitated the power contract negotiations. The report was flawed. It conflated issues, entertained conjecture, drew wrong conclusions, and missed the policy perspective. The IPPs were set up under government-promulgated policies overseen by the regulator. We must endure the cost of our mistakes and avoid making more. Blaming private investors for government policy blunders and regulatory weaknesses is ridiculous. This is not to say that corporations involved in power generation have done no wrong. Over-invoicing, tax evasion, regulatory gaming, and misreporting are common in corporate sectors globally. Some IPPs have likely committed corporate crimes. Regulators should probe and rectify regulatory errors, if any, and prosecute the perpetrators if evidence is available.

Briefly, we need private investment in the power sector and low-cost

electricity. We need to move from cost-plus tariff to competitive bidding. To have low-cost power projects through competition, we need high investor interest, confidence in policy stability, trust in contracts, and low investment risk. In 2022, Nepra approved the generation capacity expansion plan. It aims to add 20,000 MW of new solar, wind, and coal capacity through private investment by 2030. The policy objective should be to procure the required capacity at the least cost through international competitive bidding.

Governments should take a strategic view, follow a vision, make policies for growth, and aim to reduce the cost of essential services. What the government is doing today will, instead, ensure that we continue with poor tariff regimes, pay hefty premiums, offer higher returns, and provide stringent guarantees by international institutions to attract private capital in future power generation or other public-private partnership projects. The savings from renegeing on sovereign commitments are minimal, while the losses will be incalculable.

US or China?**Touqir Hussain**

The challenges that China poses to America exceed those witnessed during the Cold War, according to US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell. US policies reflecting this perception have been a source of much upheaval in US-China ties. But the latest developments raise hopes that relations may finally be stabilising.

The visit to China by Jake Sullivan, the US national security adviser, that had capped months of his unpublished talks with Wang Yi, the Chinese foreign minister, and the exchange of cabinet-level officials, besides two meetings between presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping, reportedly resulted in clarity on some fundamental issues. The US-China competition is intense, structural, and expansive, covering the economic, security and technology fields, but the two countries seem to have reached a consensus that they must manage it responsibly.

Will the US still tell countries to choose between Beijing and Washington? US diplomacy "is not about forcing countries to choose", Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in 2022, "It's about giving them a choice." The position has been confirmed by the US ambassador to China Nicholas Burns. Speaking to the Foreign Policy magazine after Sullivan's visit to China in late August, he said the US is not asking countries to choose. "The world does not work like this anymore," he added. Obviously, the US has learnt its lesson after the failure of its debt-trap rhetoric and being told by country after country that forcing a choice on them would not work.

While the US was busy in this futile campaign and in building mili-

tary alliances against a hypothetical military threat from China, Beijing was hard at work expanding its economic footprint globally. By the time the US woke up, it was no longer possible to force a choice on anyone. Most countries, especially in Asia, where the US-China competition would have been fierce, had made their choice: they would have strong economic ties with China but look to the US as a security provider, given their own issues with Beijing. China has an edge in geo-economics, America in geopolitics and military power.

Each year, the Yusuf Ishak Institute of the National University of Singapore polls opinion leaders from Asian countries. In this year's poll, the majority of respondents, for the first time, picked China over the US when asked who ASEAN should align with if forced to choose. The US is seen as a distant and unreliable power.

In courting the Global South, the US has obviously fallen behind the curve. It has belatedly set up the Asia Pacific Economic Forum, which has so far shown little progress. Its Build Back Better World initiative to fund infrastructure projects would be largely led by the private sector and may not be competitive against China. Yet this initiative and the APEF give countries another option.

The globalised, integrated and interdependent post-Cold War world offers great possibilities for prosperity, allowing countries to rise economically and militarily following the devolution of global power once monopolised by two superpowers. The US-China rivalry now gives them space to de-risk overdependence on either of them. Their ambitions

find common purpose with both China and America. It is an ideal situation, especially for the middle powers, to hedge against any possible threat from China yet concert with Beijing through BRICS and the SCO against US hegemony. The alliance system has become polygamous as countries multi-align and multi-network.

Pakistan's fear of being pressured to choose between China and the US is overblown. US interests — both direct and indirect — in Pakistan would be limited but sustainable. The US is interested in Pakistan's stability as an un-stable Pakistan would foster militancy, en-danger its nuclear assets, and raise the prospect of an India-Pakistan conflict. China's economic ties with Pakistan may be helpful in so far as they contribute to Pakistan's stability. Washington is also interested in Pakistan due to Afghanistan and counterterrorism.

Regarding indirect interests, America does not want Pakistan to completely fall in the Chinese orbit as this might lead to such cooperation with China, like militarisation of Gwadar, that would undermine the Indo-Pacific strategy. For the same reason, the US would not want Pakistan to upset the strategic balance with India.

As for Pakistan's interests, its strategic ties with China remain vital to them but if Pakistan also had good relations with the US, both Washington and Beijing would have an incentive to keep the ties strong.

But for that Pakistan needs to gain internal strength and stability to enhance its appeal to them. A weak Pakistan will have no freedom of choice. -- Courtesy Dawn

Living statues**Rida Tahir**

The streets of Karachi are witnessing a new form of child exploitation: children performing as living statues. Children as young as six are covered in silver or gold paint from head to toe and they wear matching suits, hoping to earn some money from their performance. They can be seen across Karachi in public spaces, including at traffic signals, on footpaths and at the beach.

Street performances are a global tradition. A living statue showcases an artist's skill in remaining perfectly still and then suddenly coming to life, surprising the onlooker. However, children must be safeguarded against economic exploitation and situations that disrupt their education, or that harm their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development. But their protection cannot be achieved through removing them forcibly.

Unfortunately, Pakistan's laws and policies are unable to specifically address the issue of children in such street situations. A child-rights approach ensures respect for a child's dignity, life, survival, well-being, health, development, and participation; it recognises the child as somebody who has rights.

In Sindh, the Children Act, 1955, is applicable. Section 4 (i) defines 'begging' as "soliciting or receiving, alms in a public place ... such as singing, dancing, fortune-telling, performing tricks or selling articles".

Section 40 of the Act gives police officers the power to bring "a child found begging" before a juvenile court or a magistrate. Under Section 44, the court may "send the child to a remand home for further inquiries".

Additionally, the Sindh Child Protection Authority (Amendment) Act, 2021, gives the child protection officer the powers to take into custody a child requiring such measure against abuse. It defines 'abuse' in Section 2 (a-i) as including economic exploitation. The rules under the amended law have not been formulated yet, leaving a gap in the implementation of this law through a child-rights approach.

Practices such as eviction and forcible removal of children from street situations through 'anti-child beggary drives' need to be removed from Pakistan's legal framework. Interventions that fail to recognise children as active participants in their transition from street life to alternative care are often ineffective, leading to many children returning to the streets.

A child-rights approach must be applied to uphold the best interests of the youngsters. Pakistan ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. In accordance with Article 27 (3), states have a responsibility to provide children a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual and moral development, to prevent them ending up in street situations and to fulfil the rights of children already in such situations.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child provided authoritative guidance to states on developing national strategies on such situations involving children through the general comment No. 21 (2017). The committee stated that states should "abolish any provisions allowing or supporting the round-up or arbitrary removal of children and their families from the streets or public spaces; abolish where ap-

propriate offences that criminalise and disproportionately affect children in street situations, including begging".

Interventions for children transitioning from street life into alternative care need to respect and acknowledge their agency. When children are actively involved in the decision-making process, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and commitment to positive changes. Additionally, children in street situations face multiple forms of discrimination. This includes indirect discrimination through policies that exclude them from essential services such as health and education by requiring identity documents.

Recently, the Sindh Human Rights Commission collaborated with the province's local government department to waive the birth registration fees of children across Sindh to tackle discrimination against children in street situations.

The SHRC also provided training to the police force and judicial magistrates on applying a child-rights approach in rescuing children in street situations. However, such training must extend to child protection officers, parliamentarians and healthcare professionals, too. Sindh's child protection policy must be formulated to include the rights of children in street situations.

In the wake of the 18th Amendment, the subject of children has been devolved to the provinces to take measures to address their exploitation. Each province and Islamabad Capital Territory must adopt laws and policies based on a child-rights approach to protect children in street situations. -- Courtesy Dawn

CM inaugurates new emergency block at Indus Hospital

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif inaugurated a new emergency block at Indus Hospital in Jubilee Town here on Saturday.

During her visit, the CM toured various departments, including resuscitation areas, CT scan facilities, nursing stations, information desks, and family medicine centers.

Addressing a woman's complaint about police inaction, she promptly summoned the DIG of Investigation,

directing an immediate resolution. Maryam Nawaz also visited children in the emergency ward, offering prayers for their swift recovery.

The chief minister reviewed the hospital's treatment protocols and paperless dashboard system, engaging with patients and their families to assess the quality of healthcare services.

The CM called for a collaborative plan to enhance government hospitals with support from the Indus Trust and

agreed on joint efforts for pediatric heart surgeries. Emphasizing her commitment to improving healthcare across Punjab, she noted that the province would benefit from the best practices of Indus Hospital. Maryam Nawaz highlighted the success of the air ambulance service in saving lives daily. Punjab Information and Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, MPA Saania Ashiq, Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Secretary Health, and other officials were present.



LAHORE: The participants of the training course organized for National Javelin Judges of Pakistan Horse and Mounted Archery Federation in a group photo with Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

PTI proved to be nonpolitical entity: Talal Chaudhary

FAISALABAD (APP): PMLN Central Leader Senator Talal Chaudhary said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had proved itself a nonpolitical entity by taking nonpolitical decisions repeatedly during the last decade. During a press conference here on Saturday, he commented on the protest call of the PTI for October 15 and said that it has exposed the PTI as anti-Pakistan. "Earlier, this party observed sit-ins during the scheduled visit of the Chinese President and sabotaged the economic benefits of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)," he added.

He further said that it was also revealed that the PTI was getting foreign funding for its ulterior motives from many countries including India. He said that a hype was created by unnecessarily projecting a cipher and then a dramatic situation was created during the appointment of General Asim Munir. During the same period, a terrible situation was created on May 09 and just one week ago this party attacked Islamabad for its ulterior motives, he added.

Talal Chaudhary said that the PTI intended to blackmail the state at this crucial time when the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference was scheduled to be held in Pakistan and more than 200 foreign delegations would participate in it. Actually, the PTI is perturbed as anti-Israel countries are joining this conference in Pakistan, he added.

Health Minister says: Punjab expands capacity for CM Children's Heart Surgery Program

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique announced that the capacity of children's hospitals in the province is being increased under the Chief Minister's Children's Heart Surgery Program.

He made this statement while presiding over a meeting at the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education on Saturday, where he reviewed the progress of the initiative. During the meeting, the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) provided a detailed briefing on the program. The Health Minister highlighted the success of the initiative, noting that more than 320 children have already undergone successful heart surgeries since its launch. "Alhamdulillah, we have expanded the scope of the Chief Minister's Children's Heart Surgery Program, significantly reducing the waiting list for surgeries," he said.

Prior to the launch of this program, many parents faced long waiting periods for their children's heart surgeries. "This initiative has not only expedited treatment but has also brought immense relief to families by eliminating long waiting lists," Khawaja Salman Rafique added.

The minister emphasized the transparency of the program, stating that it is continuously monitored through a dashboard to ensure efficiency and accountability. "The Punjab government has made the entire system of the children's heart surgery program very transparent," he said.

Parliamentary Secretary Rushda Lodhi and Health Advisor Major General (Retired) Azhar Kayani were also in attendance. Other participants included Secretary Health Punjab Azmat Mehmood Khan, Special Secretary Development Syed Wajid Ali Shah.

9 dead, 1659 injured in 1535 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Nine persons were killed and 1659 injured in 1535 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 703 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 956 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals.

Furthermore, the analysis showed those 864 drivers, 60 underage drivers, 193 pedestrians, and 611 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 313 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 329 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Faisalabad 107 in with 120 victims and at third Multan with 102 RTCs and 110 victims.

According to the data 1405 motorbikes, 84 autorickshaws, 144 motorcars, 32 vans, 12 passenger buses, 24 truck and 111 other types of auto vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in these road traffic accidents.

KP govt provides tents, water to Jirga participants

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Saturday provided essential items including tents, drinking water and other necessary items to the participants of Pashtun Qaum Jirga here.

Special Assistant to the Chief Minister KP on Relief, Naik Muhammad Khan informed that following directives of the Chief Minister, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority was asked to provide necessary items to the Jirga participants.

He said the items were handed over to the local Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Suhail Afridi adding that tents, water tank, blankets and other necessary items included the provided items.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif offering Dua after inaugurating new emergency block of Indus Hospital Jubilee Town.

Governor KP holds meeting with Russian Ambassador; emphasizes on religious tourism, bilateral coop.

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Saturday met with Russian Ambassador H.E. Mr. Albert P. Khorev to discuss enhancing bilateral relations across various sectors, particularly focusing on the promotion of religious tourism.

Governor Faisal Kundi highlighted that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is home to over 2,000 religious sites that could attract international tourists.

He emphasized the need to strengthen Pakistan-Russia relations in trade, economy, education, culture, and tourism.

Kundi expressed a

desire to increase collaboration with Russia in youth and women's initiatives, proposing an event in Peshawar to foster connections between the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Russia.

The discussion also included the establishment of sister city relations between Peshawar and Russian cities.

Additionally, the Governor talked about reviving the Russian Language Center established at University of Peshawar in 2018.

He suggested inviting scholars from Central Asia and Russia in the future to highlight shared cultural, artistic, and historical values. He expressed the aim of engaging youth

through dialogue, poetry, music, and culture to combat violence.

Kundi proposed inviting Russian scholars and ensuring the implementation of a 2020 agreement between the Peshawar Museum and the Moscow Museum of Oriental Studies, which had been stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response, the Russian Ambassador suggested organizing exhibitions on art and artificial intelligence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He welcomed the Governor's sentiments and proposals, saying that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are fortunate to have a capable and visionary leader like Kundi.

Health department established free medical camp for Pashtun Jirga

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Free Medical Camp Set Up for Participants of Pashtun National Jirga on Directions of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

On the directives of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, a free medical camp has been established for the participants of the Pashtun National Jirga under the leadership of Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali. The camp was set up by the Health Department to ensure the well-being of attendees. On the first day of the Jirga, Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali personally visited the venue, where he issued instructions to the District Health Officer (DHO) of Khyber and other relevant health officials to set up the

medical camp to take care of the participants' health.

According to the instructions of the Health Advisor, the medical camp will remain operational until the conclusion of the Jirga to ensure that participants face no health-related difficulties. Dr. Zafar Ali Khan, District Health Officer of Khyber, confirmed that the medical camp was set up immediately and is equipped with free medicines, health check-ups, and emergency services, including ambulances, available at all times. He further stated that the administration of the Pashtun National Jirga had welcomed this initiative by the Health Department and expressed their gratitude on behalf of the participants.

13 arrested, 10 cases for overpricing essentials

LAHORE (APP): In a significant move to enforce official prices, the Price Control Magistrates have conducted inspections at 1,999 locations, leading to the arrest of 13 individuals for overpricing fruits, vegetables, and other essential items.

Lahore Deputy Commissioner (DC) Syed Musa Raza told media on Saturday that during the last three days 10 cases have been registered and three shops have been sealed for violations of government-set prices. Furthermore, fines totaling Rs 3.029 million have been imposed for 403 instances of non-compliance.

The DC emphasized that Price Control Magistrates and Assistant Commissioners are actively ensuring adherence to official rates.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Health and Chairman Cabinet Committee for Law and order Khawaja Salman Rafique presides over the meeting at Home Department.

PU VC for innovation in urban horticulture, enhancing food security

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Ali has stressed the need for advancing research, promoting innovation in urban horticulture and enhancing food security for a sustainable future.

He was addressing an international seminar organized by the PU Faculty of Agricultural Sciences' Department of Horticulture. On this occasion, Mr Erik Arthur van Os and Christianus Petrus from Netherlands, Dean Faculty of Agricultural Sciences Prof Dr Muhammad Saleem Haider, Co-founder & Managing Director Spurt International Malik Mohsin Shahzad, faculty members and students were present. In his address, the VC highlighted that the seminar provided an excellent platform for knowledge exchange; collaboration and the development of sustainable solutions that can help shape the future of our cities. He also appreciated the Department of Horticulture, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences for highlighting an important

issue, which brings together experts from across the globe. He expressed the hope that insights and discussions in this event will contribute significantly in building greener and more sustainable urban environment.

Dr Muhammad Saleem Haider said that the event aims at bringing together thought leaders, researchers and experts to discuss innovative solutions for urban horticulture and addressing the increasing demand for sustainable green spaces in rapidly urbanizing cities. He said that the seminar focused on the crucial role of horticulture in shaping a greener and more sustainable future tackling issues such as food security, environmental conservation, and climate resilience in urban landscapes. He said that since the cities around the globe continue to expand, the need for innovative and sustainable approaches to green urban spaces becomes more urgent. Urban horticulture not only provides avenues for environmental.

It's very important to motivate youth in the field of sports: Saleem

Independent Report LAHORE: The participants of the training course organized for National Javelin Judges of Pakistan Horse and Mounted Archery Federation called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that our traditional sports are the hallmark of Pakistan and the youth associated with these sports have brought laurels to the country and the nation many times at the international level. He said that it is very important to motivate youth in the field of sports. Governor Punjab said that the promotion of sports in the society is very important for the physical and mental health of the youth. Governor of Punjab emphasized the promotion of indigenous javelin and said that the traditional sports embedded in the culture of

Punjab should be revived and in this regard all possible cooperation will be provided from the Governor House. He further said that the players who have brought glory to the country are the heroes of the nation and the asset of the country. On this occasion, Director Javelin Sardarzada Hussain Abbas Syed, Director Operations Ali Fawad and former MPA Javelin Judge Malik Khurram Gheba gave a detailed briefing to Governor Punjab on the performance of the Federation. Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan appreciated the efforts of the federation and distributed certificates among the judges. Muhammad Asad and Muhammad Arham, who won silver and bronze medals in Russia, while Arshak Naeem and Aurangzeb Mubasher, who represented Pakistan in Kazakhstan, were awarded the Pakistan Colour.



PESHAWAR: Tehreek Jawanan Pakistan Chairman, Abdullah Hameed Gul along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Peshawar press club.

Punjab reports 149 new dengue cases

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Health Department confirmed on Saturday that 149 new cases of dengue have been recorded across the province in the last 24 hours. Rawalpindi remains the hardest hit with 134 cases, followed by Bahawalpur with 3 cases, and Lahore reporting 2 cases. Sheikhpura, Jhelum, Faisalabad, Attock, Kasur, Mianwali, Khanewal, Nankana Sahib, and Narowal each reported one case. Over the past week, 997 new cases have been identified, bringing the total number of Dengue cases in Punjab for 2024 to 3,285. The health department has assured

that all necessary arrangements to counter the outbreak are in place, with adequate stocks of medicine available in public hospitals across the province. In light of the rising cases, the Health Department has issued an advisory urging the public to maintain clean and dry surroundings to prevent the spread of the Dengue virus. Citizens are also encouraged to cooperate with health teams working to control the outbreak.

For those seeking treatment or information, or to register complaints related to Dengue, the Health Department has set up a free helpline at 1033.

Himmat cards distributed among special persons

SIALKOT (APP): Punjab Land Record Authority (PLRA) Chairman Chaudhry Tariq Subhani along with Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Rana Arif Iqbal Harnah participated in the distribution of Chief Minister's Himmat cards among special persons.

Chaudhry Tariq Subhani said that the distribution of stipends had been made possible among the deserving people without harming their self-esteem with the

launch of the special program of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He said that 40,000 special persons of the province had been registered for quarterly assistance in the first phase and a total of 65,000 people would benefit from it and their number would increase gradually.

He said that the Chief Minister government has taken historic initiatives like "Apni Chhat Apna Ghar" and "Himmat Card" in a short span.



FAISALABAD: Senator/PMLN Central Leader Talal Chaudhary is offering Duaa after inaugurating the repair and renovation of Jaranwala-Faisalabad Road which would be completed with an estimated cost of Rs.2 billion.

Rs783m being spent on upgradation of 45 BHUs in Khanewal

KHANEWAL (APP): In a bid to improve healthcare services, the upgradation of 45 Basic Health Units (BHUs) is in progress across the district.

The project, estimated to cost approximately Rs 783.5 million, aims to enhance medical facilities and provide better healthcare services to residents. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali Bukhari directed officials concerned to complete the upgradation work within

the stipulated time. During a recent site visit, he inspected BHU 106 and BHU 157 to assess the progress.

He was accompanied by Deputy Director Development Shahid Rehman and Executive Engineer from the Buildings department, who provided a comprehensive briefing on the project's status. The DC inspected BHUs. He interacted with patients, inquiring about the availability of doctors, medicines, and overall facilities.



LARKANA: Leaders and members of Sindh Peoples Student Federation (SPSF) are holding protest demonstration for demanding constitutional courts, held in Larkana.

Jordan keen to expand trade ties with Pakistan: Ambassador

RAWALPINDI (APP): Maen Khreasat, Ambassador of Jordan in Islamabad has expressed keen interest to expand bilateral trade cooperation between Pakistan and his country, through enhanced bilateral cooperation across various sectors including tourism, Agricultural, tourism and health services.

He said that Jordan valued its historical and friendly relations with Pakistan and was keen to further

enhance its trade ties with it for mutual benefit. He further reiterated that RCCI would work tirelessly to support initiatives aimed at mutual growth and development, ensuring a prosperous partnership between Pakistan and Jordan.

The ambassador remarked this while talking to a delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) led by President Usman Shaukat, who called

on him on Friday evening. According to the details, the delegation which included Vice President Fahad Barlas, and EC member Falak Anjum discussed with the ambassador the matters related to bilateral trade, investment opportunities, networking & chamber to chamber connectivity and exchange of trade delegation to explore the potential cooperation between the two countries.

RCCI President Usman Shaukat in his remarks reiterated RCCI's commitment to facilitating joint ventures, promoting bilateral trade, and enhancing investment opportunities. He highlighted the chamber's readiness to assist in organizing business forums, exchanging trade delegations, and cultural exchange programs to strengthen bilateral economic ties between the two nations.



SIALKOT: Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif addressing the business community while congratulating the newly elected officials of the Chamber of Commerce, including President Ikram ul Haq.



LAHORE: A shopkeeper iron second-hand coats and paints at a Landa Bazaar in the Provincial Capital.

Azfar Ahsan meets Saudi investment minister to foster B2B investments

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Minister for Investment Muhammad Azfar Ahsan met with H.E. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih, Minister of Investment for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in Islamabad on Saturday.

They emphasized the need for consistency in partnerships to navigate complex geopolitical dynamics and foster regional stability.

Additionally, a visit to Riyadh by leading Pakistani business houses was agreed upon, where they will engage in B2B meetings with their Saudi counterparts to explore joint ventures and attract further investments into Pakistan.

H.E. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih and Muhammad Azfar Ahsan expressed optimism about the prospects for deeper cooperation and mutual prosperity.

They also highlighted the enduring strength of the relationship between the two countries, aiming to unlock untapped potential and foster sustainable economic development.

The conversation focused on fostering an ecosystem to strengthen the bilateral relationship, addressing key challenges faced by both countries, and outlining a strategic road-map for the future.

A project centered on food security was highlighted as a critical area for collaboration, aimed at

promoting stability and prosperity.

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They also highlighted the enduring strength of the relationship between the two countries, aiming to unlock untapped potential and foster sustainable economic development.

Atif Ikram says: Meeting of SCO in Pak will be an important milestone

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Shaikh welcomed the meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Pakistan and said that the meeting will be an important milestone.

Increasing Pakistani exports and business-to-business linkages is important. Sidelines talks require a one-point economic agenda.

President Atif Ikram said that the visit of the heads of the member countries is a manifestation of the world's trust, the participation of the member countries and observers in the meeting will bring economic benefits to Pakistan.

By holding this meeting in Pakistan, employment opportunities are expected by promoting investment in Pakistan.

The event was organized in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan and Bank Al Habib Limited, Multan. Kiran Amjad, Deputy Director of State Bank of Pakistan, attended as the guest of honor. Other key attendees included Yasir Siddique, In-charge SME Multan Zone, Bank Al Habib Limited, and Burhan Saeed, Chief Manager, Main Branch, Bank Al Habib Limited. Dr. Muhammad Nasir, Manager of Sanat Zar, hosted the seminar, which was attended by a large number of students.

Ombudsman directs for online e-Protector Stamp Facility

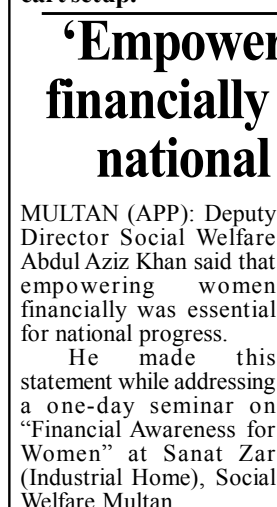
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi on Wednesday intervened to resolve the long-standing issue of affixing of e-protector stamp on the passports of Pakistanis intending to proceed abroad for employment or higher education.

As a result, the Bureau of Immigration has now started online e-protector stamp facility also, which is available at the airports too.

It may be informed that it is obligatory for all those traveling to middle eastern or other countries for employment to get the protector stamps affixed on their

passports otherwise they have not been granted permission to travel abroad and many had to return from the airports due to its non-availability. This resulted in not only the loss of foreign employment but also the money spent on buying the tickets.

On the directions of the Wafaqi Mohtasib online e-protector stamp facility is now available at all international airports of the country on 24/7 basis so that a protector stamp may be affixed on the passports of anyone desirous of going abroad who might have forgotten to get his passport stamped.



MULTAN: A vendor is busy displaying seasonal fruit Singhara to attract customers at his hand cart setup.

'Empowering women financially essential for national progress'

MULTAN (APP): Deputy Director Social Welfare Abdul Aziz Khan said that empowering women financially was essential for national progress.

He made this statement while addressing a one-day seminar on "Financial Awareness for Women" at Sanat Zar (Industrial Home), Social Welfare Multan.

The event was organized in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan and Bank Al Habib Limited, Multan. Kiran Amjad, Deputy Director of State Bank of Pakistan, attended as the guest of honor. Other key attendees included Yasir Siddique, In-charge SME Multan Zone, Bank Al Habib Limited, and Burhan Saeed, Chief Manager, Main Branch, Bank Al Habib Limited. Dr. Muhammad Nasir, Manager of Sanat Zar, hosted the seminar, which was attended by a large number of students.

Abdul Aziz Khan stated women play a crucial role in society's development. He stated that the students at Sanat Zar receive not only vocational training but also guidance in entrepreneurship.

During an important meeting held at PSGMEA, Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PSGMEA) Chairman Khawaja Masood Akhtar said that both PSGMEA and NAVTTC are trying to promote skilled people.

He said that he would fully support NAVTTC in all its activities which will help in the growth of skilled manpower.

SCCI stresses signing free trade agreement on Pak-Afghan trade

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqeem Khan on Saturday stressed the need for signing of a free trade agreement to improve Pak-Afghan bilateral trade.

Similarly, he urged for reviewing the present duties and tariffs structures and reduce them at an optimal level.

The SCCI chief demanded pragmatic steps for ease of doing business and taking the chamber and business community on board before implementation of rules and policies.

Fazal Moqeem was addressing a delegation of traders belonging to Khushal Bazaar, Gur Mandi Peshawar during a meeting held at chamber house on Saturday.

The delegation was

headed by a member of SCCI executive committee Saifullah Khan.

The Meeting was attended by SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, executive committee members Nadeem Rauf, Ashfaq Ahmad, Haji Aftab Iqbal, and Hamoodur Rehman, Gur Mandi Khushal Bazar Peshawar office bearers and members Haji Sher Ali, Sher Afzal, Fareequllah, Shaqfat Mehmood, Rehman Gul, Baghi Jan, Sultan Aziz, Haji Sanaullah Khan, Mahazullah and Imdadullah.

Traders at the meeting raised serious concerns over closure of seed supply from trade routes including Torkham, Kharlachi and Ghulam Khan, imports from Iran at various checkpoints, hurdles in supply of pesticides from

Multan and Kasur, districts of Punjab, and craters unfilled by SNGPL after digging for laying new pipelines, difficulties in provision of visa for China and other issues.

Fazal Moqeem assured the delegation to take up all issues with relevant authorities to resolve them amicably.

Earlier, the SCCI chief took a prompt notice and made telephone contact with SNGPL General Manager Peshawar Region Waqas Shinwari and apprised the senior officials about gas related issues. Swiftly taking action on complaints and reservations of traders, the SNGPL GM assured the issues would be resolved by Monday next. The SNGPL senior officer also invited the traders in his office to discuss issues in detail.

Gold prices up by Rs.1,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,600 and was sold at Rs.275,500 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.273,900 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 1,372 to Rs. 236,197 from Rs. 234,825 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs. 216,514 from Rs. 215,256, 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.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$16 to \$2,656 from \$2,640.

Model garment villages to increase exports: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Baitul-Mal Punjab Sohail Shaukat Butt said on Saturday that building of model garment villages in the province will help increase exports.

Talking to APP, Minister Sohail Shaukat Butt said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has formed a steering committee for the establishment of garment villages in the province.

According to a notification, Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Baitul-Mal Punjab Sohail Shaukat has been appointed as the convener of the steering committee of garment city villages'

project. The steering committee will shortlist locations for the garment villages. Sohail Shaukat Butt told APP that model garment villages will be built on the pattern of handicraft centers of Social Welfare Department. The steering committee will take steps to supply necessary equipment to the model garment villages, he said. Human resource training for the model garment villages project will be ensured and a joint venture with Toyota will help play a role in making it a success. The Social Welfare Department will provide all logistical support to the steering committee, the minister added.



LAHORE: A shopkeeper decorating dry fruits as the weather changes in the Provincial Capital.

SNGPL disconnects 10 meters, removes five illegal extensions

MULTAN (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) UFG Control Task Force, under the directions of the General Manager, has intensified daily operations and disconnected 10 meters, including one used for commercial purposes, and removed five illegal extensions.

During inspections, a residential consumer was found using a domestic gas meter for commercial purposes. The meter was immediately disconnected, and further departmental action has been recommended.

Additionally, eight consumers were caught red-handed using compressors to boost gas

FII Institute to unveil details about 8th edition of its annual conference on Tuesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Future Investment Initiative (FII) Institute will hold a news conference on Tuesday to unveil details about the upcoming eighth edition of its annual conference, which will take place from October 29 to 31 at the King Abdulaziz International Conference Center in Riyadh, under the theme "Infinite Horizons: Investing Today, Shaping Tomorrow."

The news conference, hosted by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), will feature FII Chief Executive and board member of the Future Investment Initiative Richard Attias, along with other FII leaders, strategic partners, and media representatives.

The news conference will discuss key issues and challenges facing the global community that will be addressed at 8th FII and explore the significance of the FII's commitment to fostering investment and shaping a better future.

The 8th edition of the FII will delve into new strategies for addressing global challenges, Africa's role in the global economy, women's leadership, investment practices, and more.

With over 5,000 expected guests and 500 speakers, the conference will cover a wide range of topics, including economic stability, equitable development, climate change, artificial intelligence (AI).



ISLAMABAD: A gypsy person is scavenging and gathering onions from a pile of discarded onions left behind by vendors at the Fruit and Vegetables Market.

MCL intensifies crackdown on illegal parking mafia

LAHORE (APP): The Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) is ramping up its crackdown against the illegal parking mafia and overcharging practices throughout the provincial capital.

On the special directives of Deputy Commissioner/Administrator Syed Musa Raza, MCL Chief Officer Shahid Abbas Khattia is leading efforts to identify and address illegal parking sites. Recent inspections at

Chowk Yateem Khana uncovered two illegal parking points, one of which was found overcharging customers. Similar actions have been taken on Church Road and Hall Road.

In Gulberg, authorities identified illegal activities at two parking sites, prompting immediate enforcement measures. A total of seven cases have been filed with local police against violators.

Spanish PM calls for halt to arms for Israel

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called on the international community to stop selling weapons to Israel, after a meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican.

"I do believe that it is urgent that, in light of everything that is happening in the Middle East, the international community stops exporting weapons to the government of Israel," he told reporters.

"This is an appeal that I will make...to the entire international community," he said, adding that it was important "not to contribute in one way or another to the escalation of violence and to the war and its expansion in Gaza, the West Bank or, in this case, to Lebanon."

His comments reflect those of the French president, who said countries should stop delivering weapons to fight in Gaza — prompting outrage from

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Sanchez is one of the most outspoken critics among European Union leaders of Israel's attacks in Gaza. He described Israel's military offensives in Lebanon on Wednesday as an "invasion", saying that the international community had to act.

Meanwhile, Ireland's foreign minister Micheal Martin on Friday condemned an attack by Israeli forces in southern Lebanon that left two United Nations peacekeepers wounded.

On Thursday, the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, UNIFIL, said Israeli fire on their headquarters in the country's south injured two Blue Helmets.

Prime minister Simon Harris said he was "deeply concerned" at the reports but Martin, who is also deputy prime minister, went further, calling it "an

extraordinary development, quite shocking".

"This marks a very serious intensification of IDF hostility towards UN forces and UN posts. Absolutely unacceptable. What happened over the last 48 hours prior to this was reckless and intimidatory," he said.

Ireland accounts for 347 of the 10,000 soldiers serving in the UNIFIL forces, which are charged with maintaining peace in the south of Lebanon.

Speaking to reporters in southwest Ireland Martin called on the international community to "re-ally put down a marker to Israel that this is unacceptable behaviour".

"The international community now need to collectively engage with Israel and put pressure on Israel to desist from this activity, to stop it, and to ensure that UN peacekeepers are not put in harm's way," he said.



Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, France's President Emmanuel Macron, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides, and Croatia's President Zoran Milanovic hold a press conference after a summit of Mediterranean countries at Paphos, Cyprus.

US clashes with China, Russia at Laos summit

Monitoring Desk

VIENTIANE: The United States and its allies clashed with Russia and China at a summit in Laos dominated by disputes on maritime claims and Ukraine. World leaders descended on the normally tranquil, temple-lined streets of the Laotian capital Vientiane, which marked a rare occasion bringing together the top US and Russian diplomats.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, meeting Asean leaders before the full

summit, reiterated calls for freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. "We remain concerned about China's increasingly dangerous and unlawful actions on the South and East China Seas, which have injured people, harmed vessels from Asean nations and contradicted commitments to peaceful resolution of disputes," Blinken said. Blinken also warned China over Taiwan, where the new leader delivered an annual speech last week.

US expands sanctions against Iran

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday expanded sanctions against Iran's petroleum and petrochemical sectors in response to Iran's missile attack on Israel, the Treasury Department said.

"This action intensifies financial pressure on Iran, limiting the regime's ability to earn critical energy revenues to undermine stability in the region and attack US partners and allies," the Treasury Department said in a statement. It adds the petroleum and petrochemical sector to an existing executive order that targets key sectors of Iran's economy.

Trump ratchets up rhetoric, calls for death penalty for migrants who kill Americans

Monitoring Desk

RENO: Donald Trump portrayed migrants as dangerous criminals during a rally in Aurora, Colorado, on Friday, calling for the death penalty for migrants who kill US citizens as he escalates the anti-immigration rhetoric that has fueled his presidential run. Flanked by posters of alleged members of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, Trump also said that if elected he would launch a national "Operation Aurora" to target the gang members.

Trump, the Republican presidential candidate, has noticeably hardened his

anti-immigration rhetoric in the final weeks of the Nov 5 election campaign, where he aims to defeat Democratic candidate Kamala Harris.

Illegal immigration is a top voter concern, and Trump is seen by most voters as the person best able to address it, opinion polls show.

"I'm hereby calling for the death penalty for any migrant that kills an American citizen or a law enforcement officer," Trump said to loud cheers from a large crowd of supporters.

Trump has already proposed an expansion of the death penalty for other

Nobel Peace winners warn of nuclear conflict's rising risk

Monitoring Desk

HIROSHIMA: Leaders of the group of atomic bomb survivors awarded the Nobel Peace Prize warned on Saturday that the risk of nuclear war was rising, renewing their call to abolish nuclear weapons.

"The international situation is getting progressively worse, and now wars are being waged as countries threaten the use of nuclear weapons," said Shigemitsu Tanaka, a survivor of the 1945 US bombing of Nagasaki and co-head of the Nihon Hidankyo group.

UN condemns Netanyahu's warning to Lebanese

Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: The United Nations said on Friday it was "appalled" by inflammatory language surrounding the conflict in Lebanon and asked leaders to end their "bellicose posturing".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week urged the Lebanese people to rise up against Hezbollah, or risk a similar fate to Hamas-run Gaza.

"We are appalled by sweeping inflammatory language on multiple sides," UN Human Rights Office spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani told a media briefing in Geneva.

"Recent language threatening Lebanese people as a whole and calling on

them to either rise up against Hezbollah or face destruction like Gaza, risks being understood as encouraging or accepting violence directed against civilians and civilian objects, in violation of international law."

She also decried as "unacceptable" the "ongoing denigration of the UN, in particular UNRWA", the UN agency supporting six million Palestinian refugees spread across Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

"This kind of toxic rhetoric, from any source, must stop," she said. Israel has long been at odds with the agency and alleged that some of its employees were involved in the October 7 Hamas raids.

'Relentless, deliberate' attacks by Israel destroying Gaza's healthcare, say UN experts

Monitoring Desk

GAZA: A UN report said that Israel's targeted and "wanton destruction" in Gaza was destroying the healthcare system in the Palestinian enclave. The report found evidence that both Palestinian prisoners and Israeli hostages have been tortured and sexually abused.

A UN commission on Thursday accused Israel of destroying Gaza's health care system through "relentless and deliberate attacks" in its yearlong war with Hamas and said that Palestinian prisoners and Israeli hostages have been tortured and sexually abused. The expert panel was commissioned in 2021 by the U.N.-backed Human Rights Council to look into rights violations and abuses in Israel and the Palestinian areas it controls. Led by Navi Pillay, a former U.N.

human rights chief, the panel members are independent experts and do not speak for the world body.

There was no immediate comment from Israel, which has long accused the U.N. of being biased against it and has not cooperated with the commission.

Israeli forces have raided hospitals in Gaza on several occasions, accusing militants of sheltering there. Palestinian medical officials have denied such allegations and accused Israel of recklessly endangering civilians. Hospitals can lose their protection under international law if they are used for military purposes.

The report accused Israel of deliberately killing, detaining and torturing Palestinian medical staff, of targeting their vehicles and of restricting permits for medical evacuations from Gaza.

China threatens Taiwan with more trade measures after denouncing president's speech

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China is studying further trade measures against Taiwan, China's Ministry of Commerce said on Saturday, two days after Beijing denounced a speech by Taiwan President Lai Ching-te.

The Chinese ministry said in a statement on its website that the Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan's ruling party, had not taken any practical measures to lift "trade restrictions" on China.

"At present, relevant (Chinese government) departments are studying further measures based on the conclusions of the investigation into trade barriers from Taiwan" against China, it added. Taiwan's China policy making Mainland Affairs Council said it regretted and "strongly protested" the move.

"Blatant economic coercion will only arouse the resentment of the Taiwanese people and cause the distance between the two

sides of the Taiwan Strait to grow wider and wider," it said in a statement. China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, detests Lai and his government's rejection of Beijing's sovereignty claims, saying only Taiwan's people can decide their future.

On Thursday at his keynote national day speech, Lai said the People's Republic of China had no right to represent Taiwan, but that the island was willing to work with Beijing to combat challenges like climate change, striking both a firm and conciliatory tone, drawing anger from China. The Saturday announcement from China's commerce ministry could portend tariffs or other forms of economic pressure against the island in the near future. China's Taiwan Affairs Office, which on Thursday said that Lai's speech promoted "separatist ideas" and incited confrontation.

Taiwan celebrates its National Day holiday against a background of Chinese threats

Monitoring Desk

TAIPEI: Taiwan celebrated its National Day holiday Thursday against the background of threats from China, which claims the self-governing island republic as its own territory.

Thursday's commemorations included military displays, but no heavy military equipment such as those seen in years past.

Addressing the threat from China, President Lai Ching-te took a firm but measured line while offering cooperation on areas from fighting infectious diseases to maintaining "regional peace and stability."

"We hope that China will live up to the expectations of the international community, that it will apply its influence and work with other countries toward ending Russia's invasion of Ukraine and end conflicts in the Middle East," Lai said.

"And we hope that (China) will take up its international responsibilities and, along with Taiwan, contribute to the peace, security and prosperity of the region and the globe," the president added.

The celebration marks the establishment of the Republic of China, which overthrew the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and relocated

to Taiwan as Mao Zedong's Communists swept to power on the mainland during a civil war in 1949. Taiwan was run under martial law until transitioning to full democracy in the 1980s and 1990s but maintains the original constitution brought from China and the ROC flag.

Lai took office in May, continuing the eight-year rule of the Democratic Progressive Party that rejects China's demand that it recognize Taiwan as a part of China. The Nationalists adhere to a unification stance that recognizes both sides of the Taiwan Strait as a single nation.

Maintaining its military pressure on Taiwan, China's People's Liberation Army sent 15 planes across the median line in the Taiwan Strait, prompting Taiwan to scramble jets, dispatch ships and activate missile systems.

In response to such threats, Taiwan has ordered billions of dollars in fighter jets, tanks, missiles and various upgrades to existing gear from the U.S., while revitalizing its own defense industry with the production of submarines and other equipment aimed at deterring or fending off a Chinese attack.



A machinery clears rubble at a site of an Israeli strike, amid ongoing hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, in Beirut, Lebanon.

Germany will send more weapons to Israel, says Scholz

Monitoring Desk

BERLIN: Germany will supply more weapons to Israel soon, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Thursday, after a significant drop in deliveries this year prompted opposition accusations that Berlin deliberately delayed the exports.

"We have not decided not to supply weapons. We have supplied weapons and we will supply weapons," Scholz told parliament at an event to commemorate the victims of the Oct 7 Hamas raid, countering an accusation from opposition leader Friedrich Merz.

The government had made decisions "that also ensure that there will be further deliveries soon," the chancellor said.

Merz, leader of

Germany's conservative opposition, accused the government of delaying arms exports to Israel, including ammunition and tank spare parts. "For weeks and months, the federal government has refused to grant export permits for ammunition and even spare parts for tanks," Merz said at the parliamentary session.

"We are aware of several specific cases where the government has withheld approval for equipment and material that Israel urgently needs to defend itself," Merz added.

Meanwhile Scholz rejected claims that Berlin had imposed a de facto stop on arms exports to Israel and said more defence goods would be sent soon.

Israel draws world ire as two more UN staff injured in Lebanon

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: Israel claimed that its forces fired at a "threat" near a UN peacekeeping position on Friday in Lebanon, acknowledging that a "hit" was responsible for wounding two Blue Helmets in an incident that has sparked a fierce diplomatic backlash.

The UN peacekeeping mission said two more of its members were wounded on Friday — a day after two Indonesian Blue Helmets were injured — leading the Israeli army to say it was "conducting a thorough review at the highest levels of command".

The Israeli statement also said the peacekeepers had been "inadvertently hurt" during fighting.

Thunberg leads pro-Palestinian, climate protest in Milan

Monitoring Desk

MILAN: Swedish activist Greta Thunberg attended a climate change and pro-Palestinian rally in Milan on Friday, days after her criticism of Israel sparked a row over protests in Germany.

More than 1,000 people, many of them teenagers, joined a peaceful march in the northern Italian city organised by Fridays For Future, the climate change movement Thunberg helped found. Wearing a keffiyeh, a traditional scarf symbolising the Palestinian struggle against Israel, Thunberg walked near the front of the procession as other protesters waved flags, held banners and danced to music. "Palestinians have been living under suffocating oppression for decades by an apartheid regime, and during the last year with Israel's live broadcasted genocide.

Dutch economy minister pushes for European chip industry coalition

Monitoring Desk

ROME: The Dutch economy minister said on Thursday he wants to form a European Union "coalition of the willing" to strengthen their domestic computer chip industries and remain competitive with the US and China.

On the sidelines of a G7 meeting of industry ministers in Rome, Dirk Beijaerts said that while the Netherlands is home to leading chip tool maker ASML, it wants to "facilitate other (EU) countries having several plants in

production, assembly, and packaging."

"To have a stronger EU, between the other global players, to get leverage, it's important to work together," Beijaerts said.

The Netherlands is willing to take a leading role, he said, noting that he has been cooperating with his Italian counterpart Adolfo Urso on the idea.

Although the Netherlands has the world's 18th largest economy and is not a G7 member, Beijaerts was invited to the meeting on technology policy.

2.5m businesses, households without power in Florida

Monitoring Desk

SIESTA KEY: The death toll from Hurricane Milton rose to 16 on Friday, as residents began the painful process of piecing their lives and homes back together.

Nearly 2.5 million households and businesses were without power, and some areas in the path cut through the state by the monster storm from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean remained flooded. Milton crashed into the Gulf coast late on Wednesday as a category 3 storm, smashing communities still reeling from Hurricane Helene two

weeks ago, which killed 237 people across the US southeast, including in Florida.

On Siesta Key, a beautiful barrier island near Sarasota where the storm made landfall, Milton left a desolate landscape. Some streets were still flooded on Friday. Fallen trees and debris — sofas, beds, chairs and appliances, much of it left behind by Helene — were strewn haphazardly on roadsides.

Resident Mark Horner, who moved there six years ago, said while his house was largely spared, the island "got hit really hard" and people were reassessing the future.



Displaced Palestinians make their way as they flee areas in the northern Gaza Strip, following an Israeli evacuation order, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Gaza City.

Don't turn blind eye to 'war crimes' in Palestine & Kashmir, Pakistan asks UN

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called on the world community "not to turn a blind eye" to the "war crimes" being committed in Palestine and Indian Illegally Occupied & Kashmir (IO&K), and underscored the need to eliminate impunity and secure justice for the victims of grave injustices.

"Crimes against humanity are among the most egregious violations of human rights, unsettling the very conscience of the international community," Ambassador Usman Iqbal Jadoon, deputy permanent member of Pakistan to the UN, told the General Assembly's Sixth (legal) Committee.

Speaking in a debate on Crimes against Humanity, he said Pakistan was "deeply concerned" about the ongoing cycle of occupation, oppression, and violence in Palestine.

"As we mark the

dreadful one-year anniversary of Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinian people, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza continues to worsen," the Pakistani envoy said, highlighting that this tragic situation was a direct result of over seven decades of illegal Israeli occupation and disregard for international law, including General Assembly and UN Security Council resolutions affirming the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

"These inhumane actions by Israeli occupation forces are not only unacceptable but also constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity and a 'plausible' genocide as ruled by the International Court of Justice (ICJ)," the Pakistani envoy said.

In line with the recent General Assembly resolution on implementing the ICJ Advisory Opinion, he said, "Israel must immediately and unconditionally

withdraw from all occupied Palestinian territories; end its unlawful policies and make reparations for the damages; and ensure the Palestinians can exercise their right to self-determination."

In this context, Ambassador Jadoon said also underscored the necessity for global cooperation to eradicate impunity for culprits and to ascertain justice for victims.

While the International Law Commission's draft articles and commentaries serve as crucial instruments for enhancing accountability by providing practical and insightful guidance to States, he emphasized that it was premature to establish any solid conclusions regarding their essence and layout. "It is vital to ensure that the definitions outlined in the draft articles on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity—specifically for crimes such as enslavement,



USTA MUHAMMAD: Provincial Minister Sardarzada Faisal Khan Jamali giving away appreciation certificate to a worker for her services in polio campaign.

18 graduates from Balochistan selected for IGP of Reko Diq Mining Company

KARACHI (APP): Eighteen (18) talented young graduates from Balochistan have been selected for the International Graduate Development Program (IGP) of Reko Diq Mining Company.

At a welcome ceremony held here on Saturday, the second cohort of the RDMC was announced by Barrick, the operator of RDMC under the programme launched for the Reko Diq project in July 2023.

CEO of Barrick, Mark Bristow said IGP since its inception had aimed to engage young graduates from Balochistan to equip them with the skills necessary for successful careers at Reko Diq and in the mining industry, said a press release issued by Barrick.

The CEO Barrick urged the selected youth to embrace this opportunity

to learn, collaborate and shape the future of the Reko Diq project, province and the country.

For the 2024 programme, a rigorous merit-based selection process led to the identification of 18 exceptional graduates from a competitive pool of over 3,000 applicants. Among those selected are four women, underscoring Barrick's commitment to gender diversity within the mining sector.

The graduates hold degrees in various fields, including Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Geological Engineering, Civil Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Mining Engineering, and Geology. Like the selected graduates of 2023, the second batch of talented youth from Balochistan will embark on an intensive two-year on-the-job training

programme at Barrick's mine sites at Veladero in Argentina and Lumwana in Zambia.

This hands-on experience is designed to equip them with practical skills and insights into world-class mining operations. Upon completion of the program, graduates return to Barrick operations in their home country, contributing to driving positive change in their communities. The selected cohort represents a diverse range of districts in Balochistan, including Panjgur, Gwadar, Quetta, Loralai, Khuzdar, Noshki, Musa Khel, Killa Saifullah, Zhob, and the Chagai district where Reko Diq is located. According to Barrick, the programme would not only help address the regional skills gap, but also promotes local empowerment and economic development.



KARACHI: CEO and President Barrick Gold Mark Baristow in a group photo with students of Balochistan selected in International Graduate Development Program.

NDMA hosts conference on humanitarian Response for Gaza, Lebanon

ISLAMABAD (INP): Under the directions of Prime Minister of Pakistan, NDMA convened a National Conference on Humanitarian Response for the war-ravaged people of Gaza and Lebanon in Islamabad.

The session was chaired by Federal Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal and was attended by Federal Secretaries and representatives from the media, NGOs, and international NGOs. The primary objective of the conference was to mobilize support from humanitarian partners and the community for relief efforts in Gaza and Lebanon.

Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the severe humanitarian needs arising from the ongoing crises in Palestine and Lebanon, emphasizing the urgent necessity to extend support to the affected population.

He reaffirmed Government's commitment to aiding the people in distress and underscored the importance of partnerships with humanitarian organiza-

tions and the people of Pakistan to amplify these efforts.

Minister Iqbal announced the establishment of a special account titled "Prime Minister Relief Fund for Gaza and Lebanon," created under the Prime Minister's directives to gather and channelize aid from the people of Pakistan for those in Gaza and Lebanon.

Chairman NDMA provided an overview of the humanitarian assistance dispatched to Gaza and Lebanon from October 2023 to October 2024. He apprised that the Government of Pakistan, in collaboration with various NGOs, has already sent 11 relief consignments totaling approximately 1,154 tons to Palestine, Gaza and Lebanon.

The humanitarian assistance included 10x consignments of approximately 1,151 tons to Palestine and one consignment of medicines to Lebanon, along with the safe evacuation of 71 Pakistanis from Lebanon via a special chartered plane.

Asad Umar comments on PTI leadership dynamics, future strategies

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Asad Umar, discussed the internal challenges faced by the party, particularly during the leadership of Usman Buzdar.

In an interview with Private TV Channel, Umar revealed that the presence of key figures like Jahangir Tareen and Aleem Khan had a significant impact on the party's dynamics, noting that Buzdar often felt threatened by their influence. Umar highlighted the broader context of party pressures, mentioning that many leaders were sidelined by the establishment when tensions escalated. Reflecting on his experience following his release from Adiala Jail, Umar emphasized that Imran Khan remains the party's core vote bank and stressed the importance of a well-thought-out strategy for PTI's future. Addressing the issue of constitutional amendments, Umar stated that building consensus is a lengthy process and cautioned against making hasty,



Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori and a delegation of MQM called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.

Governor Balochistan says We are determined to develop 1st women university of Province, raise education standard

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that we are making conscious efforts to put first women university of the province and raise standard of education further.

The Governor said that vice chancellorship of the University is not mere an honour but it is also a big responsibility. He said that we have gathered to witness the art pieces in the fine art exhibition based on the beautiful combination of the female students, colour and their creative capabilities.

He said that this excellent exhibition of the

fine art is a rare opportunity of expression of the human ideas.

These views were expressed by the Governor while addressing the participants of the fine art exhibition organized at the Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University here the other day.

The fine art exhibition was organized by the Fine Art Department of the Women University.

Also present on the occasion were the Provincial Minister for Education, Ms. Raheela Hameed Khan Durran displayed there.

The Governor said that the fine art exhibition is not mere for the artists

but we can also polish the creative talent of all students of the university through such activities.

He said that there's no dearth of talent in our women but lack of necessary facilities and opportunities create hurdles in their way.

The Governor urged the university administration to keep on such activities in future as well. He also exhorted the students to take wholehearted part in these activities.

Later, the Governor visited the exhibition and inspected the art pieces displayed there.

He also announced prizes for the outstanding artists.



SIALKOT: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif talking to media persons at his residence.

Kakar takes strict notice of death of pregnant female due to non availability of ambulance

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Health, Bakht Muhammad Kakar has taken strict notice of the incident of death of a pregnant woman due to non availability of ambulance in Gazag area of Kalat.

The Provincial Minister for Health sought report of the incident of passing away of a pregnant woman while she was on the way to Kalat from Gazag area due to non availability of ambulance back in Gazag the other day.

Meanwhile, the DSM of PPHI, Muejeb Baloch suspended the driver of BHU Gazag, Muhammad Yousaf on committing negligence and carelessness, on directives of the Deputy

Commissioner Ft. Lieutenant (Retd) Bilal Shabbir.

The Minister Health said that the concerned Deputy Commissioner, DHO and other concerned officials have been issued directives for ensuring availability of medicines and provision of other facilities in the remote areas.

He said that the negligence of staff would not be tolerated in the medical sector.

The Minister Health said that the concerned DHO has been directed to conduct inquiry into the incident through Deputy Commissioner Kalat.

He warned that no one would be allowed to play with precious lives of people.

Businessmen urge PTI to postpone Oct 15 protest rally

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBC) urged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to postpone their protest rally scheduled for October 15 in D-Chowk of Islamabad.

PBC President Khawaja Mehboobur Rehman in a statement said that due to presence of international dignitaries in Islamabad they should avoid holding protest rallies and demonstrations.

He further said that Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit scheduled to be held on October 15 to October 17, 2024 and successful holding of this summit will bring economic stability in Pakistan.

He said that instead of holding demonstrations and protest rallies they should focus on welcoming the valued guests.

Afghan ambassador visits University of Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Acting Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan, Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb, visited the University of Lahore at the invitation of its President, Awais Raouf.

The visit focused on discussions to enhance academic cooperation between universities in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

During his visit, acting Ambassador Shakeeb highlighted the importance of strengthening academic and research collaborations, particularly between Kabul and Lahore Universities.

He praised the scholarships provided to Afghan students, especially those pursuing studies in medicine, science, and social sciences.

Saudi Arabia unveils new rules for seasonal work visas

RIYADH (INP): The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has announced an extension for seasonal work visas, allowing individuals to stay for an initial period of 90 days, with the option to extend for an additional 90 days.

The move is expected to facilitate the accommodation of millions of pilgrims and workers during the Hajj season.

The ministry has also introduced stricter regulations to prevent the unauthorized sale of seasonal work (Ovisas). Companies or organisations found selling these visas will face a substantial fine of up to 50,000 riyals and risk being black-listed for Hajj and Umrah services for up to five years.



QUETTA: Chairperson of Quetta Foundation, Zarina Khaliji along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club.

Ahsan terms PTI's protest call as 'Political Terrorism'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, here on Saturday strongly condemned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) protest call on October 15, labeling it as 'Political Terrorism', aimed at maligning Pakistan and stopping its development and economic progress.

Addressing a press conference, the federal minister expressed disappointment at the timing of the protest, coinciding with a prestigious Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit being hosted in Pakistan, which he said was a great honor for the country.

"Now there is no doubt, that terrorism in Karachi and political terrorism protest calls are similar," the minister said adding the scriptwriter was the same who on one hand has been using terrorists to carry out explosive attacks, and on the other, are using PTI to spread anarchy and undermine Pakistan's vital interests.

He urged PTI supporters who genuinely

want change and development to recognize the harm caused by their party's actions. The PTI's dharnas (protest) back in 2014 delayed the Chinese President's visit to Pakistan, and their efforts to derail the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project have been detrimental to the country's progress.

In 2018, CPEC was the primary target and serious allegations were made to discourage Chinese investors and divert them to other countries.

Now that Pakistan has committed to CPEC Phase II with renewed enthusiasm, the PTI is attempting to undermine government's economic recovery efforts. It's crucial to acknowledge the damage caused by these actions and consider the consequences of supporting policies that hinder Pakistan's growth and development, he urged.

The minister said, Pakistan cannot afford to indulge in destructive politics. Just because PTI's leader is jailed, doesn't justify chaos.



NEW YORK: Pakistan's Ambassador in USA Rizwan Saeed Sheikh meeting with Governor of Texas Greg Abbott.

Govt taking serious steps for beautification of Quetta city, says Asfandyar Yar Kakar

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Parliamentary Secretary for Urban Planning and Chairman Quetta Development Authority, Asfandyar Khan Kakar has stated that the provincial government is taking serious steps for beautification and development of Quetta city.

He said that beautification, development of Quetta and public prosperity is included in the priorities of government.

However, he stressed that serious steps are needed to be taken for re-

solving the issues and hardships being faced in urban planning sector.

He said it is impossible to find out the solution to the issues of city without urban planning and Master Plan.

He stressed the need to ensure timely completion of the Master Plan for the beautification and development of the city.

He urged all the concerned departments to play their role for provision of the facilities to the coming generations under comprehensive planning.

Saudi investors express desire to invest in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interest of Saudi investors for investment in different sectors of Pakistan's economy has increased largely due to efforts of the government and support of Special Investment Facilitation Council.

As part of these efforts, a delegation of Saudi Najd Gateway Holding Company led by its Chairman Prince M. al Saud visited Green Corporate Initiative Headquarters, Islamabad to explore investment opportunities.

The delegation was briefed about the areas of

focus and operation of Green Pakistan Initiative aimed at stabilizing the country's economy through agricultural development.

The delegation was briefed about the satellite based system and its implementation for revolutionizing the agriculture sector. The delegation appreciated the

Green Corporate Initiative for ensuring national food security in Pakistan.

Prince Mansoor M. Al Saud agreed to take advantage of Pakistan's agricultural potential for mutual benefit of both countries.



QUETTA: MPA Prince Agha Umer Ahmedzai speaks during a reconciliation ceremony between Samlani, Shahwani and Lehri tribal at Kalat House.

Samina expresses deep grief, anger on brutal killing of miners in Duki

QUETTA (APP): Chairperson Standing Committee for Human Rights Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri on Saturday expressed her deep grief and anger over the brutal killing of innocent miners in Duki.

In her condemnation statement, she strongly condemned the incident and said that those who terrorize the sleeping unwashed laborers in the dark of night are devoid of humanity.

Enemies are trying unsuccessfully to destabilize Pakistan by destabilizing the peace and order situation in Pakistan, especially Balochistan, she said.

She said that targeting innocent people in cowardly incidents is not bravery in any way but these are the actions of the defeated elements who are the enemies of India and its fol-

lowers. Samina Zehri said that the terrorists involved in the Duki incident would be dealt with iron hands and could be sent to hell soon.

She said that the new wave of terrorism across the country, including Balochistan is the result of a well-thought-out plan against which the entire nation is united and has a strong determination to thwart the cowardly acts of terrorists. The Senator said that the determination of the Pakistani nation and the security forces would not decrease until the end of the last terrorist. She further said that the cowardly terrorist elements should know that they are facing a brave nation which has defeated terrorism in the past and would crush the evil intentions of the enemies in the future and the terrorists could be chased.