

# Independent

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## Pakistan, Qatar reaffirm commitment to deepen strategic ties

Pakistan, Qatar PMs discuss trade, investment cooperation, high-level exchanges

DOHA (APP): Pakistan and Qatar on Thursday reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening strategic bilateral ties, underscoring the importance of shared economic goals and regional stability.

The bilateral relations were discussed in the delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, followed by a one-on-one meeting encompassing a wide array of bilateral interests, according to a PM Office press release.

The leaders reviewed the entire spectrum of Pakistan-Qatar relations, exploring potential avenues for enhanced cooperation in trade, potential areas of investment, energy, and culture.

Both the leaders also discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest particularly the ongoing genocidal war by Israel against innocent Palestinian people and escalation of tensions in the region.

Prime Minister Shehbaz, who is on a two-day official visit here, commended Qatar's stance on Palestinian issue expressed by the Amir during the 79th UNGA held on September 24, 2024.

He appreciated mediation efforts by Qatar for immediate ceasefire and unimpeded supply of humanitarian aid.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also invited Amir of Qatar to visit Pakistan.

The prime minister's visit marks another milestone in the ever-strengthening partnership and expanding collaboration between Pakistan and Qatar.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani wherein they discussed avenues to further strengthen bilateral relations, particularly focusing on enhancing cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, energy, and cultural exchange.

In the "very extensive and productive" meeting, two leaders agreed on the importance of continuing high-level exchanges to promote understanding, foster cooperation, and identify new areas for growth, according to a PM Office press release.

The prime minister, who is currently on a two-day official visit to Qatar, acknowledged Qatar's contributions to Pakistan's economic growth and expressed his gratitude for Qatar's continued support in various sectors.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to deepening economic ties and emphasized the potential for expanded collaboration.

He also thanked his Qatari counterpart for hosting a large number of Pakistani diaspora acting as a human bridge between the two brotherly countries.

The leaders discussed global and regional issues, underscoring the need for peaceful solutions and mutual cooperation to address challenges.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also commended Qatar's principled stance on the Gaza conflict and its persistent efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.

He praised Qatar's humanitarian initiatives and diplomatic engagements aimed at resolving the conflict and easing the suffering of the people of Gaza, and also the role as a facilitator of dialogue and an advocate for a just resolution to regional conflicts, recognizing its efforts as vital to promoting lasting peace in the Middle East.



DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with Amir of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

## US State Dept reiterates Imran Khan's matter for 'Pakistani courts to decide'

Says Khan's release not interlinked with Trump's success in polls

WASHINGTON (INP): The US State Department has reiterated its stance on the ongoing legal proceedings against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, stating that it is a matter for the Pakistani courts to decide.

"As we have said many times, legal proceedings against the former prime minister are matters for the Pakistani courts to decide," said State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller during a regular press briefing in Washington.

Matthew Miller said that there is no truth in claims that Imran Khan could be released if Donald Trump is elected as the new president. Replying to a question regarding PTI leaders Latif Khosa's claim that US

diplomat Donald Lu was involved in a conspiracy to remove Imran Khan from prime minister office, Matthew Miller said that it is not true.

"The allegations that the US played any role in his removal from office are false. We've gone over that many number of times from this podium," Matthew Miller said. He said that Pakistani politics are a matter for the Pakistani people to decide in accordance with their laws and constitution.

"Ultimately Pakistani politics is a matter for the Pakistani people to decide in accordance with their laws and constitution,"

The spokesperson's remarks came in response to a journalist's statement who mentioned about the involvement of US diplomat Donald Lu in the former prime minister's ouster.

Khan, who remains incarcerated at the Adiala jail since August last year, had alleged that the US was behind his ouster in 2022, citing a purported cipher linked with the US envoy.

Miller also responded about how the members of Congress, who wrote a letter to President Joe Biden for the release of the deposed prime minister, were belittled on social media.

"I can tell you, we don't know who is behind circulating that information ultimately, but if people have issues that they want to engage with regarding US officials, whether they be executive branch officials or officials from the United States Congress."



Federal Minister for Planning & Development, Ahsan Iqbal Chairing a meeting to review the progress of ongoing projects under the CPEC in Islamabad.

## There will be no visa fee for Sikh pilgrims visiting Pakistan: Naqvi

Hosts Sikh pilgrims from USA at State Guest House

LAHORE (INP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi said on Thursday that there would be no visa fee for the Sikh pilgrims visiting Pakistan to pay respect to their religious sites, adding that pilgrims would get visa within half an hour.

The Interior Minister welcomed a 44-member American Sikh delegation at the State Guest House where he told them about visa on arrival facility extended to the US citizens, stressing that there would be no hassle even if they wanted to visit as many times as they can.

Mohsin Naqvi highlighted Pakistan's commitment to fostering easier access for Sikh pilgrims, recognizing that they have often faced visa challenges in the past. Recalling his time

as former chief minister of Punjab, he noted efforts to improve the conditions for Sikh visitors, adding, "During my tenure, I worked to address issues faced by the Sikh community."

Naqvi announced that Pakistan has now introduced an online visa application system specifically designed to facilitate Sikh travelers. Holders of American, Canadian, and UK passports can apply online and receive their visas within 30 minutes, a process Naqvi confirmed is also free of charge. He noted that this facility extends to Sikhs of Indian origin residing in these countries.

Providing a glimpse into Pakistan's vision for fostering Sikh tourism, Naqvi stated, "Just as Saudi Arabia holds significance for Muslims,

## President suffers foot fracture on arrival in Dubai

DUBAI (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari, suffered a foot fracture last night upon disembarking a plane at Dubai Airport, a President House Spokesperson said on Thursday.

He was immediately taken to the hospital for initial medical assistance. After examination, doctors applied a plaster to his foot, the spokesperson said adding that the plaster will remain for four weeks.

President Zardari has been advised to rest completely at home.

## Martyred Army officer, two soldiers laid to rest

RAWALPINDI (APP): A Pakistan Army officer and two soldiers, who lost their lives during counter-terrorism operation in the Bakakhel area of Bannu district, were laid to rest in their ancestral areas with full military honors.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), those who were laid to rest include Major Aatif Khalil Shaheed, Naik Azadullah Shaheed, and Lance Naik Ghaznafar Abbas. Earlier, the funeral prayer for Major Aatif Khalil was attended by both the Corps Commander of Rawalpindi and the Corps Commander of Peshawar, highlighting the significance of their sacrifice.

A large number of senior military and civilian officials, soldiers from the Pakistan Army, the martyrs' family members, and local dignitaries participated in the funeral and burial services.

Pakistan Army remains steadfast in its mission to combat terrorism, emphasizing that the courage and sacrifices of our soldiers strengthen the resolve in this ongoing fight.

## Pakistan reiterates no talks with TTP; asks AIG to act against militant groups

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday ruled out any talks with terror outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and reiterated its call for the Afghan Interim Government to act against the militant groups using Afghan soil to target Pakistan.

The Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, said that Pakistan rejected any offer or advice for talks with TTP as the country had done so on several occasions.

Asked to comment on a statement by an Afghan diplomat in Islamabad, she

said Afghan authorities had the responsibility to act against terror groups, primarily TTP as Pakistan had also provided the pieces of evidence to the Afghan authorities. She explained that this was not merely Pakistan's demand but also the international community.

The spokesperson condemned the recent Israeli attacks on Lebanon's Bekaa Valley and Baalbek region resulting in the tragic loss of civilian lives, including women and children, and the displacement of over a million people.



LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Sikh Yaatri delegation from USA at State Guest House.

## At UN, Indian and Pakistani delegates spar over Kashmir after Ambassador Akram's speech

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistani and Indian delegates Wednesday engaged in a fresh verbal duel at the United Nations that resulted from an earlier speech by Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram in which he called for applying the International Court of Justice's actions on Palestine to Jammu and Kashmir as well.

Speaking in a UN General Assembly debate on the work of ICJ last Friday, Ambassador Akram said that the World Court's set of measures on Palestine's case represented a significant contribution towards the resolution of the conflict, and emphasized that those steps must also be applied to the situation in Indian occupied Kashmir. "Many peoples, particularly the people of Palestine and occupied Jammu and Kashmir, continue to be subjected to foreign and colonial occupation and denied their right to self-determination," the Pakistani envoy had said,

noting that genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity are being committed, with impunity, by some rogue States. On Wednesday, Indian delegate R. Maythili reacted to Ambassador Akram's sharp comments and accused him of misusing the UN forum. She then claimed that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India, saying that Pakistan was in occupation of a part of that state.

Pakistani delegate Rabia Ijaz hit back at India immediately. "Jammu and Kashmir is not an integral part of India, it is a disputed territory as is evidenced by all UN Maps and official documents," she told the 193-member Assembly. The UN Security Council resolution 47 (1948), the Pakistani delegate said, notes the desire of India and Pakistan that "the question of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan should be decided through the democratic method."

## Pak lodges complaint over attack on ex-CJP

LONDON (INP): In response to an attack on former CJP Justice (retired) Qazi Faez Isa's vehicle in London, the Pakistan High Commission has filed a formal complaint with the UK authorities.

PTI activists attempted to obstruct the former chief justice's vehicle, which belongs to the Pakistan High Commission, in London, even trying to smash its windows. They chanted slogans upon spotting Qazi Isa's car and ran alongside it.

## PNS saves stranded fishing dhow with 23 fishermen in Gulf of Aden

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Navy Ship ZULFIQUAR promptly responded to distress call of Fishing Dhow AL MUHAMMADI. Upon communication with Pakistan Navy Ship, Fishing Dhow reported a seriously injured crew member as well defective engine and requested for necessary assistance. PNS ZULFIQUAR swiftly responded and dispatched its medical and technical teams which provided First Aid to the injured fisherman who had severely injured his hand while repairing the boat's engine.

## Ambassador of Japan bid farewell to Pakistani dignitaries, friends

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, WADA Mitsuhiro has hosted a reception at his official residence in Islamabad to bid farewell to Pakistani dignitaries and friends.

Ambassador WADA is going to leave Pakistan on 19th November and will take up his new assignment as Ambassador of Japan to Croatia. He assumed his office in October 2021, since when he has served as the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan for more than three years.

Looking back at his tenure, Ambassador WADA

said, "Pakistan is a country that is very friendly to Japan. But I've tried not to take this for granted and have made various efforts in economic cooperation, cultural exchange and personal interaction to further deepen the historical ties between our two countries." This year marks the 70th anniversary of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) to Pakistan. Ambassador WADA reiterated the importance of human aspects in Japan's ODA, saying, "we always seek to work together with the local people and eventually encourage them to stand on their own."



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mitsuhiro Wada, calls on Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## IHC orders to provide to PTI founder all the facilities including news paper

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has remarked all the facilities including news paper to which PTI founder Imran Khan is entitled to as per jail manual be provided to him.

High Court issued these directives to deputy superintendent Adiala jail Thursday.

Justice Arbab Tahir said to jail authorities (you should arrange the meetings, may it be whatsapp call or any way.

The court took up for hearing the petition filed by Noorin Niaz. Justice Arbab Tahir remarked "Shoab Shaheen Sahb, jail authorities say the meetings have been restored.

Shoab Shaheen requested court should seek

affidavit that restriction will not be imposed on meetings now.

Justice Arbab Tahir remarked as per jail authorities restrictions were imposed due to security reasons.

PTI founder is not allowed to talk to his sons.

Deputy Superintendent jail said facility of whatsapp call is not mentioned in jail manual.

Justice Arbab Tahir remarked you should get arrange meeting be it whatsapp call or in any way.

DIG jail Abdul Rauf and deputy superintendent Adiala Jail appeared in the court as per court's order.

Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Khalid Mehmod appeared in the court too.



KARACHI: Maritime Security Patrol rescued an Iranian Fishing Dhow AL MUHAMMADI with 23 fishermen onboard, stranded over 1200 Nautical Miles from its home port.

## Speakers call for extension of CPEC to Afghanistan

LAHORE (APP): Speakers at a seminar here on Thursday suggested that Pakistan must make progress towards (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) CPEC's extension to Afghanistan as a priority.

The speakers were unanimous in pointing out that promoting economic integration with neighbours and region was of crucial importance for Pakistan's economic recovery, growth and development.

They endorsed that CPEC as a hallmark of China's Built and Road Initiative (BRI) needed to be used as a key instrument for strengthening regional infrastructure, energy and trade/transit con-

nectivity, said a press release.

The speakers were unanimous that CPEC's extension to Afghanistan had to be a starting point towards achieving this objective. However, some of the speakers also suggested the need for bold efforts by Pakistan to overcome the impediments in the way of progress towards CPEC's extension to Afghanistan as a priority.

Former Ambassador Asif Durani said that it was a wrong perception that CPEC was not making progress; over the last ten years CPEC has made phenomenal advances through substantial Chinese investments.



EU, Germany, and ASP project leaders unite to strengthen climate resilience and social protection in Sindh.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Property valuation**

The FBR decision to increase its property valuation rates by up to 80pc in 56 Pakistani cities from next month is another attempt to boost tax revenue from real estate transactions and discourage speculative investment in the heavily undertaxed property sector.

Additionally, FBR has extended the scope of property valuation for tax purposes to 12 new cities. The valuations have been changed based on the type of property, its location and other variables. The valuations are raised periodically to close the gap with actual market prices of real estate in order to calculate such taxes as capital gains tax, federal excise and withholding tax, but the authorities have never been able to catch up with the market.

The market value of real estate is normally much higher than government-fixed rates. The entire system of fixing valuation rates for collecting taxes on real estate transactions is indicative of a massive informal, undocumented economy where most sellers and buyers neither want to pay taxes nor disclose the sources or size of their income.

Little wonder, the unregulated sector has emerged as one of the most attractive avenues for investment in Pakistan for wealthy individuals to evade taxes or park their dirty cash. The gains offered by property investments, sweetened by low taxation, also make real estate highly lucrative for corporates.

FBR has been trying to "bring real estate under effective taxation" by determining fair market property prices in major urban centres. However, it has always remained far behind the market because of the deep-rooted financial stakes of powerful lobbies: politicians, businesses, military, bureaucracy and overseas Pakistanis.

A World Bank study estimates that real estate transactions in a comparable economy could generate between Rs600bn and Rs700bn in tax revenues. Tax officials estimate Pakistan's actual collection from real estate transactions to be around Rs200bn. There are several reasons as to why FBR has not been able to effectively tax this large sector.

The existence of the undocumented economy is a major reason. Tax exemptions allowed to certain segments of the population, including military personnel and bureaucrats, is another crucial factor preventing realisation of the tax potential of this asset class. The informality perpetuated by the government in the real estate market, in fact, has led to the creation of a tax-free parallel currency — 'plot files' — which is as liquid as any other asset if not more. The government failure to regulate benami property transactions have complicated the situation. It means that a plot file may change hands multiple times, and for a very long period, without anyone involved in this chain of buyers and sellers paying any tax at all. Market valuation rates, no matter how realistic they are, will not help boost tax revenues without plugging such loopholes in the system.

**The third pillar**

F.S. Aijazuddin

One would need more than 10 fingers to count the number of lawyers who have governed Pakistan since its inception.

Our founder was a lawyer; our first prime minister a lawyer. Our former prime minister, sentenced to death by a court of law, was a lawyer. Others with law degrees have appeared in court, either as plaintiffs or as defendants. And a few have applied their juridical talents to bending or subverting the law.

One would imagine that Pakistan is awash with lawyers. It has 160,000 plus registered lawyers (98,000 in Punjab alone). In fact, we are not the most litigious nation, by far. Israel is, with 694 lawyers per 100K of population. The US has 401 lawyers per 100K. The UK has 226 per 100K, with almost as many lawyers — 153,600 — as Pakistan, serving a far smaller population.

Yet, the British judicial system, despite its "efficient legal processes, rigorous legal education, and a focus on mediation and arbitration", has a backlog of over 64,000 cases. Pakistan has 2.23 million cases waiting to be decided in all our courts. Of these, as of end December 2023, some 56,000 cases lay unresolved before the Supreme Court. Anyone commenting on our judicial practices is fearful of being summoned for contempt of court. The unarguable truth today is that many perceive the courts themselves as rebutting the system of impartial justice they took an oath to uphold.

It would not be unfair to assess the tenure of three recent chief justices of our Supreme Court.

Former CJP Saqib

Nisar (2016-19) began by having himself photographed in full robes and wig in his family parlour, surrounded by relatives. During his tenure, his judicial overreach knew no bounds — visits to the Punjab Institute of Mental Health and an obsession with Lahore's graveyards. He thought nothing of summoning senior law-abiding citizens to his court to pay him court. His connivance with Musharraf's regime in ousting Nawaz Sharif from the prime ministership in 2017 is a less memorable residue of his legacy.

A later successor CJP Umar Ata Bandial (2022-23) gave hope when, in his early days, he made an avowed commitment to clear the backlog of cases that were obstructing the flow of justice. "In his first month as CJP, the Supreme Court decided a record 1,761 cases." Soon, however, he too succumbed, like some fragile submersible, to external pressures.

Some parties accused him of bias, others of inaction. His suo motu action regarding the delay in polls in KP and Punjab in 2023 made him more enemies than friends — as if he did not have enough of the former within his colleagues on the bench.

CJP Qazi Isa (2023-24), during his swearing in, kept his wife by his side, to compensate for the humiliation she had suffered at the hands of their detractors. Many applauded when he opened the sittings of the Supreme Court to television.

He wanted the public to see justice being done. Others feared that such exposure would draw the Supreme Court into the glare of reality. They proved to be right. Like royalty after the intrusion of television into their private lives, the

gossamer mystique evaporated, exposing their human frailties.

Television coverage of the Supreme Court hearings became another soap opera. Almost from the outset, the schisms amongst their lordships became apparent. They used the SC courtroom to ventilate their opinions, not their learning. An eloquence of judges degenerated into a quarrel of judges.

To paraphrase Walter Bagehot's observation about parliament, the Supreme Court proved that it, too, "like every other sort of sovereignty, has peculiar feelings, peculiar interests; and it may pursue these in opposition to the desires, and even in opposition to the wellbeing of the nation".

The 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment to our Constitution, conceived in spite and delivered in haste, has destroyed that sovereignty, the once vaunted independence of our judiciary. Judges are now at the mercy of parliament.

The third pillar providing judicial checks and balances in our system has crumbled. The scales of justice have tilted in favour of legislative anarchy.

And for two superseded SC judges, the reward of a lifetime of dedication, hard work and public service has been reduced to naught by an arbitrary constitutional amendment. The novelist W. Gaddis once warned: "You get justice in the next world; in this world, you have the law."

Parliament has bulldozed an unjust law. Future parliaments would do well to heed Bagehot's advice. Their function is "not to win power by awing mankind, but to use power in governing mankind". -- Courtesy Dawn

**BRICS & Stone Age**

Shahzad Sharjeel

Mukesh Ambani, of the unending wedding ceremonies fame, recently enlightened Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang about the Sanskrit meaning of his company's name and its significance in the logfile of progress.

A little digression: we just witnessed two important conclaves where world leaders and nations aspiring to join their ranks got together to discuss ways of co-operation and agree upon the rules of competition. Pakistan hosted the delegates of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Islamabad, and Russian President Vladimir Putin recently welcomed the world leaders at the BRICS summit in Kazan. Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar attended the Pakistan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the BRICS meeting. He met Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines.

Easing one of the irritants between them, India and China have agreed to resume patrols along the disputed Line of Actual Control in Ladakh. Soon after Mr Modi returned home, the CEO of Nvidia, a leader in chipmaking and AI, visited India. We, too, can claim that Bill Gates, another tech giant, visits Pakistan more often than he goes to his company headquarters. But alas! He comes here to share his concerns over our horrific failure on the polio front: over 40 new cases so far this year. Who knows what else he discusses while here? We only hear the bits and pieces about giving each family free-range chicken to have fresh eggs. News on this enlightening front has also dried up since Imran Khan's imprisonment.

Returning to Ambani's pearls of wisdom, he informed Mr

Huang that in Hindi, 'Vidya' is the name of Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge. In the Vedic scheme of things, one who prays to the goddess of knowledge gets the attention of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity. In other words, to borrow from the geeky world of IT, knowledge and prosperity are interconnected on the circuit board of progress; without this connection, the motherboard of any development strategy is nothing but a motherlode of chicken droppings.

It is not as if no one of consequence visited us following the SCO summit. The English cricket team was here. Entire transport systems like the celebrated Metro between Rawalpindi and Islamabad were suspended, and major highways and arteries connecting the twin cities and beyond were routinely closed to facilitate the 20-strong visiting squad's commute between their hotel in Islamabad and the match venue in Rawalpindi.

It is beyond comprehension why these cricketers could not stay at a hotel in Rawalpindi to spare millions of people daily misery on the roads. If the five-star hotel in the garrison city does not meet the visiting princelings' standards, other accommodations are there to give any manor or mansion a run for their money. They can also be put through the rigours of Kakul Academy, albeit much closer to the sea level, while there.

On conclaves and sporting events and their follow-up, one has never heard a squeak from any quarter regarding the gains and investments resulting from these spectacles. It would be great if the Pakistan Cricket Board or some chamber of commerce could tell us about rev-

enue generation or a boost to the local economy from these unending hosting sprees. The state of planning that goes into these adventures could be discerned from the fact that stadium renovations are undertaken without any regard for timelines for the upcoming series. This recently resulted in most matches being played in Multan and Rawalpindi. Lahore has to be skipped, as we cannot risk thousands of PTI supporters turning it into a political ga-la. It is not for no-thing that cricket and the interior ministry are entrusted with the same person.

A few years back, we celebrated the return of international cricket to Pakistan. Remember, no one wanted to come here after the attack on the Sri Lankan team in 2009? One would like to ask who adopted and emboldened the forces who attacked the visiting team. The same benefactors now want us to celebrate the return of international cricket, but to what end, one must ask? To close down entire cities so that some boys could play ball?

Petty differences apart, all religions, ideologies, and philosophies hold the knowledge and its acquisition in the highest esteem. May we be granted some common sense, if not wisdom, to stop being mesmerised by jets doing aerobatics while letting off coloured smoke during parades and boys playing cricket to satisfy the 'boys' vanity.

We need to earn some Lakshmi. We cannot live on borrowed money or ideologies. We must decide whether to pursue a future of BRICS and SCO or be at the mercy of the bricks and stones brigade hell-bent on taking us back to the Stone Age. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News****Uzbekistan-Pak trade potential needs to increase from current \$311.1 million: Laziz Kudratov**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Laziz Kudratov has said that the current trade volume of \$311.1 million between Pakistan and Uzbekistan is far below its potential which needs to be increased.

The volume of mutual trade from January to September of this year reached US\$311.1 million, reflecting a 9.8% increase compared to the same period last year, Minister for Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Laziz Kudratov told APP in Tashkent.

The minister said that considering the economic potential of both nations, discussions are underway to expand the list of products eligible for the

preferential trade regime outlined in this agreement.

He said that by broadening the range of goods covered under the preferential trade agreement, "We anticipate a further boost in trade volumes through reduced customs duty rates in our bilateral trade relations and the creation of favourable conditions for local product exports."

He said that to further strengthen trade and economic cooperation between the two countries a bilateral trade agreement, a preferential trade agreement was signed between Uzbekistan and Pakistan on March 3, 2022.

This agreement came into effect on March 13, 2023, and currently establishes a preferential

trade regime for beans and peanuts cultivated in Uzbekistan, along with industrial chocolate and confectionery items, canned mixtures, copper wire, refrigerators, televisions, transformers, and electrical conductors, he said.

The minister said that with political will and ongoing economic reforms, transit trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan holds significant potential for growth in the future.

Replying to a question, he said that in 2021, a transit trade agreement was signed between Uzbekistan and Pakistan, which streamlined customs procedures for Uzbek long-haul drivers and facilitated the development of the southern transport corridor.



LAHORE: A Women browses and selects handcrafted decorative items especially truck art at a handicrafts shop near Delhi Gate.

**NPO, APO collaborate to enhance workplace in surgical industry**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Productivity Organization (NPO) and Asian Productivity Organization (APO) on Thursday successfully completed a project aimed at improving workplace environment management in Pakistan's surgical instruments industry through lean manufacturing practices. The workshop was held at Sialkot, which brought together

stakeholders, experts, and practitioners to share insights and strategies for implementing lean manufacturing techniques that prioritize workplace environment management, said a news release. During the event, the participants had the opportunity to learn about the latest methodologies, best practices, and tools to improve efficiency and sustainability within their operations.

**PSX continues with bearish trend, loses 1,319 points**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Thursday, losing 1,319.80 points, a negative change of 1.46 percent, closing at 88,966.77 points as compared to 90,286.57 points on last trading day.

A total of 546,274,609 shares were traded during the day as compared to 614,564,066 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 24.117 billion against Rs. 27.341 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 437 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 137 of them recorded gains and 240 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 60 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 73,617,949 shares at Rs 4.44 per share, Bank of Punjab with 42,667,349 shares at Rs 5.82 per share.

Non-licensee brands without having PS Mark on label found in Super Stores and were de-shelved. During the crackdown against illegal



QUETTA: A delegation of Quetta Chamber of Commerce meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

**DWP Technologies shines at Cisco, Ingram Partner award night 2024**

Independent Report

LAHORE: DWP Technologies, a division of Pakistan's leading business conglomerate, DWP Group, has secured two prestigious accolades at the Cisco and Ingram Partner Award Night held on October 23, 2024, in Karachi.

The company was honored with the Cisco Technology Partner of the Year and Security Partner of the Year awards, reinforcing its position as a leader in technology solutions and

cybersecurity.

DWP Technologies was honored as the Cisco Technology Partner of the Year, recognizing its exceptional annual performance and outstanding customer satisfaction across Cisco technologies, including Application Centric Infrastructure (ACI), SD-WAN, Collaboration, and Security. This award highlights DWP's dedication to delivering advanced, customized solutions and ensuring flawless project execution.

**Crackdown against sub-standards, illegal manufacturing**

Independent Report

KARACHI: As per directions of honorable Minister of Science and Technology, the Director Conformity Assessment CA Islamabad Zone assigned the task to Conformity Assessment Officers of Islamabad Zone for crackdown against Illegal / Sub-Standards and Non-License Products. In this regard Assistant Director and Field Officer conducted Market Surveillance of food and non-food mandatory products.

Non-licensee brands without having PS Mark on label found in Super Stores and were de-shelved. During the crackdown against illegal

keeping in stock and sale, some mandatory items such as Skin Cream, Toilet Soap, Hair Dye, Iodized Salt, Red Chilli Powder, Fruit Drinks, Pickles and Jams were found illegal / Non-License. The Manager of Departmental Stores were given notices to avoid keeping in stocks of mandatory food and non-food items/brands, which are not licensed and duly marked PS logo.

They were also warned that in case of non-compliance of the directives of the Authority, the illegal/un-licensed items will be confiscated and strict legal action will be taken.

**Experts, officials convene to unlock Bamboo's benefits for economy, environment**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Government officials, international organizations and experts on Thursday, in a workshop, explored bamboo's vast potential to address climate change, create economic opportunities, and reduce plastic use, as they gathered to develop a comprehensive national bamboo strategy.

The workshop began with a welcome address by Hammad Shamimi, Additional Secretary of MoCC&EC, (Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental

Coordination), who highlighted the importance of collective efforts in tackling Pakistan's climate challenges.

He noted that the Ministry is committed to sustainable solutions that address the pressing environmental challenges while simultaneously creating economic opportunities.

Bamboo has been used extensively for construction and woven products. Especially, bamboo was successfully used for building transitional and permanent shelters in response to natural calamities such as earthquakes and floods.

Among 1,600 species found globally, more than 900 are in Asia of which three are native to Pakistan: Arundinaria falcata, Bambusa bamboo, and Dendrocalamus strictus.

Bamboo has been used extensively for construction and woven products.

Especially, bamboo was successfully used for building transitional and permanent shelters in response to natural calamities such as earthquakes and floods.

**Rupee sheds 06 paise against dollar**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Thursday depreciated by 06 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.85 against the previous day's closing of Rs 277.79. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.40 and Rs 278.90 respectively.

The price of Euro increased by 96 paise to close at Rs 301.68 against the last day's closing of Rs 300.72, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.82.

**Iraqi Ambassador urges for strengthening Pak-Iraq bilateral trade**

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Ambassador of Iraq in Islamabad, Hamid Abbas Lafta on Thursday reiterated his country's resolve to enhance its bilateral trade with Pakistan in a range of business and investment areas. He underlined the need to increase the exchange of trade delegations between the two countries.

The ambassador remarked this in his meeting with the top brass of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) which was held during his visit here at the chamber on Thursday.

Ambassador Hamid Abbas while underscoring the shared historical, religious, and diplomatic ties between the two nations, noted that approximately two hundred and fifty thousand Pakistani pilgrims travel to Iraq annually, especially to Najaf and Karbala (Arba'in), demonstrating the significant movement of people between the two countries.

While pointing to the low trade volume between Pakistan and Iraq, he highlighted the opportunity for increased commerce.

## Smog Control Program: CM Maryam launches super seeder project

LAHORE (APP): Historic era of mechanized cultivation in Punjab begins as Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif launched the first and biggest Super Seeder project in the country's history. She inaugurated the distribution of super seeders among farmers at Rice Research Institute Kala Shah Kako. She highlighted that the use of Super Seeder will not pollute the environment. The Chief Minister announced to start modern agricultural equipment rental services in every tehsil. She set a target to start rental service of modern agricultural equipment to farmers at zero profit in 60-days. She said that the path of development passes through field. Maryam Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan Muslim League-N government is gaining momentum, adding that no one but the PML-N knows how to perform. She highlighted that there were 300 super-seeders in the whole of Punjab. "We are adding 1000 more from today while 5000 in total will be added in our five years' tenure," she said and noted that to get a super seeder worth Rs 13 lakhs, a farmer will have to pay just Rs 5 lakhs, the remaining Rs 8 lakhs will be paid by the government. The CM said that public cooperation is essential to eliminate smog. She added that seeing smoke from a chimney prompts immediate action as the smog spreads many diseases. Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that farmers will be given latest agricultural equipment at 60% subsidy while they have bought Rs 10 billion worth of agricultural inputs through Kisan Card. CM Maryam said that people from Kashmir are coming to Punjab due to cheap bread and low inflation. She observed that one must have to be sympathetic towards people to reduce inflation.

## Political stability in vital to economic development of the country: Governor

**Independent Report** LAHORE: Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan met Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Punjab House Islamabad. During the meeting, the overall situation of the country was discussed. Both the leaders expressed their determination to work together for the constitutional stability of the country, and the development of Punjab province. Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab

Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said political stability in the country was vital to the economic development of the country. Governor Punjab said that as coalition partner Pakistan Peoples Party believed in strengthening the government for political and economic stability in the country. He said that the challenges faced by the country could be overcome with the supremacy of democracy and rule of law.

## Two brothers die, third injured in Nowshera accident

PESHAWAR (APP): Two real brothers were killed, and another was injured when the motorcycle they were riding was hit by a tractor in the Khesghi Payan area of the Nowshera district, police reported on Thursday. The unfortunate incident took place in Shah Swar Chowk of Khesghi Payan where three brothers travelling on a motorcycle were hit by a tractor trolley.

## Governor Kundi calls for unified political stand on provincial rights

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that the province was the most affected due to terrorism and all the political parties should unite to get its rights from the federation. He emphasized that all political parties must put aside their differences and unite to advocate for KP's rights at the federal level. He made these remarks at a seminar organized by the Center for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA) at the University of Peshawar. The seminar, titled "NFC Award and the Case for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" was attended by members of parliament, political leaders, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar, faculty, and students. During his address, Governor Kundi highlighted the contributions of the Pakistan Peoples Party, which introduced Pakistan's first constitution and, in 2010, promoted equitable resource distribution through the NFC Award.

## KP CM inaugurates solarization project for public sector colleges

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, inaugurated the solarization project for government colleges in the province. Initially under this project, installation of a 10KVA solar system has been initiated in 80 government colleges, with already completed in 10 of them. The Chief Minister formally launched this important project in a ceremony held here at Government College Peshawar on Thursday. Provincial cabinet members, members of the provincial and national assemblies, relevant government officials, college faculty members, and a large number of students attended the ceremony. The project includes the installation of a 10 KVA solar system in each college, with a total cost of Rs 2.41 million per college. The solar system is expected to reduce electricity consumption by 1,100 to 1,200 units per month per college, saving around Rs 55,000 in monthly electricity bill for each college. The installation costs of the solar systems is also expected to be recouped within approximately three years. Similarly, each solar installation is expected to reduce the national grid load by 120 KW of electricity per month per college. If the system is installed in 290 colleges in the province, the national grid would save a total of up to 34.8 MW of electricity per month.

## LDA seals another 187 properties over rules violations

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) on Thursday sealed another 187 properties during its ongoing crackdown on commercialisation fee defaulters and rules violations here in the city. Under the directives of DG LDA Tahir Farooq, the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) is conducting daily operations against illegal commercial buildings and fee defaulters. Recently, LDA teams have executed actions in various areas, sealing a total of 187 properties. Significant operations took place in Poonch Road, Samanabad, Gulberg, and the Revenue Scheme in Johar Town. In Gulberg, 22 properties were sealed due to unauthorized commercial use and non-payment of fees.

## Father kills stepson

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): A man killed his stepson to avenge torture on his wife by her close relatives in a nearby locality. Police said on Thursday that Asiya Bibi, resident of Southern Muradpur at Khairpur Sadaat, had married to Dhani Bakhsh Machi and the couple had three children, 10-year-old Allah Wasaya, six-year-old Abdullah and three-year-old Tayyaba. The women said to have illegitimate relationships with friend of her husband, Pervaiz Machi.

## Station Commander says: Irfan Mehsud, a source of pride for nation

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Station Commander Dera Brig. Amir Hayat has said that Irfan Mehsud, a holder of over 100 Guinness World Records, was a source of pride for the area and the country as well. He expressed these views during a meeting with Irfan Mehsud, who holds over 100 Guinness World Records, here at his office on Thursday. The station commander added that the Pakistan Army will continue to encourage athletes who perform exceptionally in the field of sports. He congratulated Irfan Mehsud on his historic achievements and offered his support. He said that Pak Army would continue to extend all possible support for the promotion of sports along with maintaining peace and order in the country.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique addressing the 57th convocation ceremony of CPSP at local hotel.

## International News

## At least 30 Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes, hospital hit, says Gaza ministry

**Monitoring Desk** CAIRO: At least 30 Palestinians were killed in Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip on Thursday, mostly in the north where one attack hit a hospital, torching medical supplies and disrupting operations, the enclave's health officials said. Israel's military has accused the Palestinian militant group Hamas of using Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya for military purposes and said "dozens of terrorists" have been hiding there. Health officials and Hamas deny the charge. Northern Gaza, where Israel said in January it had dismantled Hamas' command structure, is currently the main focus of the military's assault in the enclave. Earlier this month it sent tanks into Jabalia, Beit Hanoun, and Beit Lahiya to flush out militants it said had regrouped in the area. Eid Sabbah, director of nursing at Kamal Adwan - which is in Beit Lahiya - told Reuters some staff had suffered minor burns after the Israeli strike hit the third floor of the hospital. There were no reports of any casualties at the hospital, which Israeli forces stormed and briefly occupied last week. Israel said it had captured around 100 suspected Hamas militants in that raid. Israeli tanks are still stationed nearby. The health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip called for all international bodies "to protect hospitals and medical staff from the brutality of the (Israeli) occupation". as U.S. mediators work on a proposal to halt hostilities between Israel and Lebanese armed group Hezbollah. The Israeli military has said its forces are operating in the hospital area based on intelligence about the presence of terrorists and terror infrastructure in the vicinity. "During the operation, it was found that dozens of terrorists were hiding in the hospital, with some even posing as hospital staff," said the military in a statement following Thursday's strike. Medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said on Thursday that one of its doctors at the hospital, Mohammed Obeid, had been detained last Saturday by Israeli forces. It called for the protection of him and all medical staff who "are facing horrific violence as they try to provide care".



ABU DHABI: Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi and CEO of Al-Ansari Exchange, Rashed Al-Ansari inaugurate the consular halls at Pakistan Embassy.

## Israel bombards historic Lebanon city as US scrambles for truce

**Monitoring Desk** BEIRUT: Strikes rocked the eastern Lebanese city of Baalbek, famed for its Roman temples, and its outskirts on Wednesday, hours after Israel issued an evacuation call for the area, AFP reported. The attacks came as US mediators were said to be working on a proposal to halt hostilities between Israel and Lebanon, starting with a 60-day ceasefire. Meanwhile, in his first speech as Hezbollah's leader, Sheikh Naim Qassem has said his group would agree to a ceasefire with Israel under acceptable terms, but added that a viable deal has yet to be presented. Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati also said he was striving for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hezbollah war within days. "We are doing our best... to have a ceasefire within the coming hours or days," Mikati said during a televised interview with Lebanese broadcaster Al-Jadeed, adding that he was "cautiously optimistic". Baalbek mayor Mustafa al-Shall confirmed strikes hit the city and its surroundings, while state media said "enemy warplanes launched a series of strikes on the Asira area of the city of Baalbek" and in a nearby town.

## Germany to close Iranian consulates after execution of dual national

**Monitoring Desk** BERLIN: Germany will shut all three Iranian consulates in Germany but allow the embassy to remain open in reaction to the execution of a German-Iranian national, the foreign ministry said on Thursday. "Our diplomatic relations are already more than at a low point," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said in New York. Germany has already recalled its ambassador to Iran over Sharmahd's execution and summoned the Iranian charge d'affaires to voice Berlin's protest.

## Nine injured in Russian drone attack on Kyiv, Ukraine's officials say

**Monitoring Desk** KYIV: At least nine people were injured, including an 11-year-old girl, and several apartments were on fire after a Russian drone attack on Kyiv, Ukrainian officials said on Wednesday. Falling debris from a destroyed drone sparked a fire in a multi-storey apartment building in the Solomianskyi district in Kyiv's west, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on his Telegram messaging app.

## Biden calls Trump's supporters 'garbage', puts Kamala in a fix

**Monitoring Desk** WASHINGTON: White House rivals Donald Trump and Kamala Harris launched a frantic last week of election campaigning on Wednesday, with the Democrat having to distance herself from comments by President Joe Biden that appeared to label Trump supporters "garbage." Harris traveled to North Carolina and onward to Pennsylvania, focusing again on two of seven battleground states that could determine who wins the closest election in modern US history. Republican Trump was also in North Carolina on Wednesday — in the town of Rocky Mount, about an hour's drive from Harris's Raleigh rally — and will then head to Wisconsin, where he will appear alongside US sports star Brett Favre. Trump is expected to reject the election result if he loses, with the Republican already seizing on isolated irregularities caught by election officials to amplify his claims of widespread "cheating." On Wednesday, Harris had hoped to be basking in the afterglow of a speech attended by tens of thousands outside the White House, where she warned her rival was unstable and itching for unbridled power. Instead, she was fending off questions about Biden's apparent gaffe when the president reacted to a warm-up speaker at a Trump rally referring to the island of Puerto Rico as "a floating island of garbage" in an off-color joke that risked alienating Latino voters.

## Security Council warns against attempts to dismantle UNRWA

**Monitoring Desk** UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday "strongly warned against any attempts to dismantle or diminish" the operations and mandate of the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA after Israel passed a law banning its operations. In a statement adopted by consensus, the 15-member body expressed grave concern over the legislation adopted by the Israeli parliament on Monday, which is due to come into effect in 90 days and has sparked international condemnation. The council urged Israel "to abide by its international obligations, respect the privileges and immunities of UNRWA and live up to its responsibility to allow and facilitate full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian assistance in all its forms into and throughout the entire Gaza Strip." UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has said Israel's ban on UNRWA, if implemented, would violate international law, the founding UN Charter and a 1946 UN convention on the diplomatic privileges and immunities granted to UN operations. UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini warned that the organisation's aid operations in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip were now at risk of collapse because of the new law. The Security Council "underscored that UNRWA remains the backbone of all humanitarian response in Gaza" and said that no other organisation can replace UNRWA's ability to serve Palestinians in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance. The move by Israel comes as the amount of aid entering Gaza has plummeted to its lowest level all year, according to UN data. A global hunger monitor has warned of a looming famine, and the UN has repeatedly accused Israel of hindering and blocking attempts to deliver aid, particularly to Gaza's north.

## Locked in Mideast wars and battered by sanctions, Iran is wary over US presidential election

**Monitoring Desk** TEHRAN: America's presidential election next week comes just after Iran marks the 45th anniversary of the 1979 U.S. Embassy hostage crisis — and for many, tensions between Tehran and Washington feel just as high as they did then. Iran remains locked in the Mideast wars roiling the region, with its allies — militant groups and fighters of its self-described "Axis of Resistance" — battered as Israel presses its war in the Gaza Strip targeting Hamas and its invasion of Lebanon amid devastating attacks against Hezbollah. At the same time, Iran still appears to be assessing damage from Israel's strikes on the Islamic Republic last Saturday in response to two Iranian ballistic missile attacks. Iran's currency, the rial, hovers near record lows against the dollar, battered by international sanctions over Tehran's nuclear program of enriching uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels. In public spaces, women still openly defy Iran's mandatory law on the headscarf, or hijab, a result of the mass demonstrations over the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini that still haunts the country. That has left a feel of fatalism among some on the streets of the capital, Tehran, as Americans cast ballots for either Vice President Kamala Harris or former President Donald Trump. Many are split on which candidate would be better for their country — if at all. "All U.S. presidents elected after the (1979) revolution had the same views about Iran and I think that's unlikely to change," said Sadegh Rabbani, 65.

## China detains South Korean on suspicion of espionage

**Monitoring Desk** BEIJING: China confirmed the detention of a South Korean citizen suspected of espionage, saying it had advised embassy officials, but without identifying the individual or detailing the charges. It is the first time a South Korean national is being held under an expanded counter-espionage law that took effect in July last year. The case could deter investment and operations by South Korean firms in the country's largest trade partner, following the departure of Japanese expatriates after a compatriot working for Astellas Pharma Inc faced similar charges. It centres on a former employee of Samsung Electronics who then worked at a Chinese chip firm, according to the Yonhap news agency.

## Saudi foreign minister denounces Israel's north Gaza assault as genocide

**Monitoring Desk** RIYADH: Saudi Arabia denounced Israeli attacks in northern Gaza as genocide on Thursday, telling foreign investors that some bilateral agreements it has been negotiating with Washington are "not that tied" to normalisation of its relations with Israel. Speaking on stage at an investment conference in Riyadh, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin



Federal Minister for Planning & Development, Ahsan Iqbal chairing a Senior Management Committee meeting at the MoPDSI, focusing on strategic planning and key national projects in Islamabad

## MPs from PML-N, allied parties term letter from US congress interference in internal affairs

ISLAMABAD (Online): Parliamentarians from ruling parties have declared letter from US Congress interference in internal affairs of Pakistan saying parliamentarians of no country has any right to interfere in the internal matters of Pakistan.

160 parliamentarians from PML-N and allied parties have written a letter to Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif saying the cases against PTI founder are pending hearing in different courts. Parliamentarians of any country have no right to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan. PTI founder introduced political violence and criminal threats against the state institutions. PTI founder was behind incidents of

massive rioting and vandalizing on May 9, 2023.

The letter further said PTI founder instigated the mob to attack parliament, state television building and radio Pakistan.

PTI founder had paralyzed the country in August 2014 and May 2022 due to his politics of chaos.

PTI founder has been instigating people for violence and chaos from jail in Islamabad and Lahore.

PTI founder used social media for fomenting chaos and lawlessness and threatening the state through digital terrorism.

Dissident elements from US and UK are playing role in PTI founder negative campaign. States of US and UK are compelled to take extra-ordi-

nary steps against their citizens

The views of US Congress about February 2014 general election are wrong. The elections were acknowledged as fair and just at international level.

It has been endeavor of PTI to vilify election exercise but it has not succeeded in it. PTI had done so in the general election in 2008 and 2013. His apologetic comments on Taliban, wrong gender views, insult of parliamentary democracy and disgracing diplomatic principles reflect his character.

It is strange that US Congress members are supporting such a person who was found disowning her daughter in the court at Los Angeles.

## PMYP, Bosnia agrees to explore avenues for collaboration in youth program

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Thursday stressed the importance of international partnerships in tackling youth challenges and promoting sustainable development.

During a meeting with the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Pakistan Emin Cohodarevic at his office, he welcomed the ambassador's enthusiasm and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to sharing knowledge and experiences in youth development.

The Ambassador Cohodarevic on the occasion expressed his heartfelt gratitude for Pakistan's continued support over the years, emphasizing the importance of fostering strong ties between the two nations.

He commended the initiatives implemented under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, which have significantly contributed to the development and empowerment of young people in Pakistan.

A m b a s s a d o r Cohodarevic highlighted the positive impact of these initiatives and expressed a keen interest in replicating this successful model in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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## IGP Nasir Rizvi issues directives for enhanced crime fighting measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police, Inspector General (IG) Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, presided over an important meeting regarding crime control at Central Police Office on Thursday.

A police spokesperson told APP that, the meeting was attended by DG Safe City Shakir Hussain Dawar, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Headquarters Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, DIG Security Muhammad Jawad Tariq, and other senior police officials.

During the meeting, IGP Rizvi assessed the implementation of orders related to crime prevention and the apprehension of criminals.

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Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi reviewed the overall crime situation in the federal capital and directed the officers to ensure timely arrests in cases of robbery, murder, and street crime, as well as to secure solid evidence in ongoing investigations.

IG Rizvi emphasized that protecting citizens' lives, property, and dignity is the top priority of Islamabad Police.

IG directed all police officers to ensure effective patrolling in the city and to combat criminal elements.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi presenting shield to Federal Insurance Ombudsman Mumtaz Ali Shah during Asian Ombudsman Association webinar.

## Kanwal praise CM's green initiatives, urges public support

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Parliamentary Secretary for Environment Kanwal Pervez Chaudhry on Thursday lauded Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for launching "green" initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and urged people to discourage the use of plastic bags.

In an interview with PTV News, she announced that the Punjab Environment Department has imposed a "green lockdown" in the smog-heavy areas of Lahore to tackle the city's persistent air pollution problem with strict instructions from the Punjab Chief Minister.

She revealed that the Chief Minister has issued a stern warning, emphasizing

zero tolerance for smog emissions from kilns and vehicles. She announced that approximately 8,000 industrial units have been converted to e-mapping, enhancing monitoring and regulation. Kanwal added that addressing the disposal of garbage is also a priority, with solutions currently under consideration.

"Public-private partnerships are being explored to tackle the issue of garbage disposal," Kanwal Pervaiz Chaudhry announced.

"We recognize the urgency of addressing this problem and are committed to collaborating with private sector entities to find innovative solutions", she added.

## Islamabad, Tehran explore new partnership in urban development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, and Iranian Envoy Reza Amir-Moghaddam, Thursday underscored the shared vision to advance urban sustainability, marking a promising chapter in the relationship between the two neighboring countries.

Both sides in a high-level meeting on World Cities Day, discussed avenues for mutual cooperation in urban development.

The Iranian Ambassador praised Islamabad's status as a green, beautiful, and meticulously planned city, noting that Pakistan and Iran share a deep cultural connection.

Highlighting this bond, he referenced streets in Iran named af-

ter Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal and appreciated Pakistan's gesture of renaming a road in Islamabad as Iran Avenue.

The ambassador emphasized Tehran's municipality's interest in collaborating on projects with Islamabad, particularly in infrastructure development and solid waste management, where Iran has considerable expertise.

Chairman Randhawa responded with enthusiasm, describing the CDA's ongoing efforts to enhance Islamabad's beauty and modernity.

He expressed a keen interest in learning from Tehran's urban management practices and welcomed the opportunity for collaborative projects in solid waste management and infrastructure.



ISLAMABAD: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) Enforcement taking part in Anti-Encroachment drive at sector G-7.

## Karsaz incident Court acquits major accused Natasha

KARACHI (Online): Court has acquitted one Natasha main accused in the incident of crushing the citizens with vehicle in Karsaz Karachi.

Karsaz incident related case came up for hearing in city court Karachi.

The defence counsel told the court the accused Natasha is ill and she cannot appear. Later City court Karachi accepted the affidavits presented by affected persons. The court acquitted the accused Natasha. The family members of affected of Karsaz incident filed the affidavit in court.



Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Ambassador for Bosnia and Herzegovina Emina Cohodarevic in Islamabad.

## Ayaz extends Diwali greetings to Hindu community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Thursday extended warm greetings to Pakistan's Hindu community on the occasion of Diwali.

In his message, the Speaker conveyed his best wishes and highlighted Diwali as a festival of light, peace, and joy for everyone. "Diwali is a festival of lights," remarked Speaker Ayaz Sadiq and added, "This celebration brings a message of light, peace, and happiness for all."

Emphasizing the importance of equal rights, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said, "All citizens residing in Pakistan are entitled to equal rights and protection." He further noted that sharing in each other's joys and sorrows is essential for promoting inter-faith harmony and fostering a spirit of brotherhood.

## HEC, University of Utah partner to promote capacity building in universities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the University of Utah here on Thursday have signed a partnership to promote capacity-building initiatives in public sector universities across Pakistan. This initiative, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA), aims to enhance faculty development, strategic planning, policy reforms and institutional governance.

The signing ceremony

was attended by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Deputy Mission Director USAID Andrew McKim and other senior officials from HEC, University of Utah, and USAID.

Adviser Global Engagement HEC Awais Ahmed and Professor of Civil Engineering University of Utah Dr. Michael Barber signed the document on behalf of their respective institutions. The initiative adds another 16 Pakistani universities to the fold of partnership, as 16 universities are already being supported through HESSA.

## Fake SPU officer escapes with rifle, raises alarms over Islamabad's security

ISLAMABAD (APP): A man impersonating as an officer of the Special Protection Unit (SPU) managed to escape with an SMG rifle and a reflector jacket from the Islamabad Police Headquarters.

According to information, a case has been registered against the individual at the Secretariat Police Station, as suspicions arise that the same firearm may have been used in recent bank heists within the city.

According to the First Information Report (FIR) filed by Security Division In-Charge ASI Ali Sher, the suspect arrived at the headquarters dressed in a police uniform, displaying a name tag marked "Dilawar" and

belt number "283." Claiming to be deployed with the SPU, he provided a fake mobile number and signed off on receiving the SMG rifle with serial number 2183 and a reflector jacket on October 19, intended for use during a VIP security route.

It is suspected that this weapon may have been used in recent bank robberies in Islamabad. Following the incident, security in the city has been heightened, with police checkpoints set up at various points across Islamabad. Authorities are conducting strict checks, especially on motorcycle riders wearing green helmets, affiliated with a specific bike service company.

## Minister emphasizes need for 'Market-Oriented' education in country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh on Thursday emphasized the importance of market oriented education in unlocking the country's economic potential and called for a market-driven approach to equip young people with skills that are valued by the global market.

Shaikh talking to PTV news channel emphasized to equip Pakistan's youth with the skills needed to thrive in these areas, contributing to the country's economic growth and global relevance.

"Developing expertise in maritime trade and logistics can unlock global career prospects, providing Pakistan's youth with a

competitive edge in the international job market," Shaikh added.

He further explained that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are strengthening their "brotherly" ties, with a focus on economic cooperation and mutual benefit.

The relationship between the two countries is longstanding and time-tested, with Pakistan expressing its desire to elevate these ties into a long-term strategic and economic partnership, he added.

Saudi Arabia is seeking skilled labor, IT professionals, and technical advisers from Pakistan and we are committed to meeting these demands, he highlighted.

This collaboration will not only benefit the two

nations but also contribute to building a prosperous and peaceful future for the region and the Islamic world, he added.

Bringing a collaborative approach between universities and industries is crucial for fostering innovation, economic growth, and mutual benefit, he said, adding, this synergy enables the exchange of knowledge, resources, and expertise, ultimately leading to better research outcomes and industry applications.

Federal Minister also revealed that Saudi Arabia has significantly expanded its investment portfolio in Pakistan, surpassing \$2.8 billion, adding, additionally, Denmark and Russia have expressed keen interest in investing in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Minister Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON in a meeting with PML-N leadership Azad Jammu Kashmir.

## IHC terminates ban on political conversation of prisoners

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday terminated the section of jail rule which imposed a ban on political conversation of inmates in jails.

Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan announced the verdict on a petition filed by MNA Sher Afzal Marwat.

The court said that the ban was a violation of constitutional provisions for freedom of expression.

It may be mentioned here that the petitioner has challenged the section 265 of jail rules before the IHC.

## Kazakhstan's Envoy Islamabad, Astana as sister-city status to boost cultural, economic ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin, on Thursday proposed establishing a sister-city relationship between Islamabad and Astana, alongside renaming an Islamabad street after a distinguished Kazakh figure.

Ambassador Kistafin, in a meeting with CDA chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa underscored his country's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Pakistan, spanning cultural, economic, and business fields.

He commended Paki-

stan for the successful hosting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, marking Kazakhstan's Prime Minister's visit to Pakistan as a testament to Islamabad's hospitality and scenic beauty.

Chairman Randhawa welcomed the initiatives, expressing CDA's readiness to formalize the relationship with Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and emphasized the potentials for collaboration in city development projects, including a new, advanced slaughterhouse.

## Court orders to release Imaan Mazari

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Thursday approved the post-arrest bail of Imaan Mazari Advocate and her husband after the Islamabad High Court dismissed their physical remand order.

The court ordered the police to release the accused.

Earlier, a division bench of IHC comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Suman Raffat Imtiaz heard the appeal against the physical custody of the two accused.

During the hearing, the court asked the prosecutor to read the application of remand and judicial order.

The chief justice questioned the prosecutor whether the remand order was as per the law and guidelines given by the Lahore High Court. The prosecutor answered "yes" and said that the order was as per law.

The court, however, dismissed the remand order and directed to send the accused to jail on judicial remand.

## Petition against imposition of fine for not behaving good with courts rejected

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has rejected the petition filed against imposition of fine amounting to Rs 1 lac for not behaving good with the subordinate courts.

Justice Shahid Bilal has remarked what one lac fine has been imposed on you is less as compared to how have you behaved with the courts. Fine amounting to Rs 10 lac should have been imposed on you.

He gave these remarks during hearing of petition filed by the petitioner Ijaz Goraya here Thursday.

A two members bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi took up the case for hearing.

The petitioner appeared in person in the court.

## PCRWR declares 30 brands of drinking bottle water unsafe

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) has declared that 30 brands of drinking bottled water were unsafe for human consumption due to microbiological or chemical contamination.

For the 3rd quarter of the year 2024 (July to September), 205 samples of mineral/bottled water brands were collected from 21 cities. Comparison of test results with the bottled water quality standards of Pakistan Standards & Quality

Control Authority (PSQCA).

Some 12 brands including Natural Pure Life, Bro H<sub>2</sub>O, Purifa Spring Water, Aqua Health, Meher Natural, Mountain Pure, Oslo, Smart Pure, Fiji, More Plus, Qudrat, and Natural were found to be unsafe due to the presence of higher levels of sodium, two brands (Black Seed Water, Natural) were found unsafe due to presence of high level of Turbidity than the permissible limit, said a press release issued here Thursday.



ISLAMABAD: A police personnel stand after robbery incident in Federal capital.

## Political experts expose India's false narratives on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Political analysts and experts have criticized the BJP-led Indian regime's attempts to project an illusion of peace and normalcy in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, stressing that India's propaganda cannot conceal the reality of the situation on the ground.

According to Kashmir Media Service, experts argue that India is misleading the global community by pushing a narrative of stability in Kashmir, when in truth, IIOJK remains the most militarized region in the world.

They highlight that the territory has been plunged into a suffocating atmosphere due to oppressive policies, with heart-wrenching accounts of killings, arbitrary arrests, and torture surfacing daily. The introduction of draconian laws is seen as a calculated move to alienate the Kashmiri people in their land. According to analysts, India's approach toward Kashmir is rooted in stubbornness, which impedes genuine efforts to resolve the long-standing dispute. They stress that only by granting Kashmiris the right to self-determination can true peace and normalcy be achieved in the region. Despite India's attempts to subdue the spirit of the Kashmiri people, experts contend that the strong resistance and unyielding desire for freedom among Kashmiris will ultimately thwart India's repressive designs. They believe that Kashmiris' resilience cannot be conquered through militarization, as the people's determination to reclaim their rights remains steadfast.