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RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir NI(M) and Federal Minister PD&SI Ahsan Iqbal offering Dua after attending funeral prayer of Major Muhammad Haseeb Shaheed who embraced martyrdom while defending the motherland in Harnai district

GoB spokesman refutes report
Independent Report
 QUETTA: The spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has refuted reports about directive of the provincial government to any international institution for halting its services in the province.
 In a clarification statement issued here on Thursday, the spokesman said that the provincial government has not directed to any international institution to stop its services in the province. Similarly, no directive has also been issued for non provision of security to any international institution.
 In this regard, the Provincial Home Department has also not issued any directive. He said that wrong information is being spread on the social media.

2 soldiers martyred, 3 terrorists killed in Harnai operation: ISPR

Lead vehicle was targeted by an IED, resulting in martyrdom of Major Muhammad Haseeb along with Havildar Noor

RAWALPINDI (APP): Security Forces killed three terrorists in an operation at Harnai District while two security personnel including a Major embraced martyrdom.
 "On reported presence of terrorists, planning to target innocent civilians in Harnai District, security forces under Major Muhammad Haseeb were immediately mobilized to sanitize the area," said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release.
 "Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location and resultantly three terrorists were sent to hell. However, during the operation, an improvised explosive device exploded on the lead-
 ing vehicle of security forces, resultantly, Major Muhammad Haseeb (age: 28 years, resident of District Multan), a brave officer, who was leading his troops from the front, along with Havildar Noor Ahmed (age: 38 years, resident of District Barkhan), having fought gallantly, made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat," it further said.
 Security forces of Pakistan, in step with the security forces, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan, and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.
 Meanwhile President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid tribute to Pakistan Army's Major Muhammad Haseeb and Havildar Noor Ahmed for embracing martyrdom during an operation against terrorists in district Harnai.
 The entire nation is thankful to the martyrs for sacrificing their lives in defence of their motherland, the president said in a statement issued by the President House Press Wing.
 He also lauded the security forces for killing three terrorists during the operation.
 PM Shehbaz Sharif, in a statement, said that the sacrifices of the officers and soldiers of Pakistan Army in war against terrorism will never go in vain.

CM directs to expedite pace of work on development projects, complete within stipulated time ensuring high standard

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has directed to the concerned authorities to expedite pace of work on the development projects and complete them within stipulated time maintaining high standards of work.
 The Chief Minister said that the allocated resources for the development projects are the taxes money of the general public, the wastage of which is not tolerable.
 He issued orders to release the funds from the Finance Department direct to the executing department.
 He said that as a Chief Executive of the province,

he is ready to take every kind of political pressure, just the officers should ensure merit.
 He also directed to end the unnecessary and long process after release of the funds by the Finance Department.
 The Chief Minister was chairing review meeting about implementation and progress of the approved development projects here on Thursday.
 The administrative secretaries of the concerned provincial government departments briefed the meeting about the development projects.
 The meeting decided to end the unnecessary and long process after release of the funds to the department.

ments from Finance Department.
 Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister insisted that we have to look into as to where the delay is occurred in progress of the development projects and what comes the hurdles in the way of implementation.
 He directed to the concerned and lengthy process after release of the funds.
 He said that the fruits of development process must reach to the general public.
 He said that performance of the departments is conditional with the speed of implementation on the development projects.

Nation stands in solidarity with armed forces in fight against Fitna al Khawarij

Sacrifice being made by the valiant officers and soldiers exemplify the unwavering dedication towards defending the country against the menace of terrorism

RAWALPINDI (PR): The funeral prayer for Major Muhammad Haseeb Shaheed (aged 28, resident of District Rawalpindi), who embraced martyrdom while defending the motherland in Harnai district, Balochistan, was held at Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi.
 General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff, Mr Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister PD&SI along with senior military and civil officials, officers, soldiers, and family members of the Shaheed, attended the ceremony.
 The Chief of Army Staff expressed that the sacrifice being made by the valiant officers and soldiers exemplify the unwavering dedication towards defending the country against the menace of terrorism.
 He highlighted that the nation stands in solidarity with the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies in the fight against Fitna al Khawarij and all those who hold their reins.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting to review progress on development projects.

Jam Kamal highlights Balochistan's challenges, vision for progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday highlighted the need for strategic development in Balochistan at Margalla Dialogue



2024.
 He emphasized the importance of addressing human security and governance in Balochistan, stressing the need for a comprehensive and consistent policy framework, said a press release issued here. He highlighted Balochistan's unique landscape and socio-political challenges, including its high poverty rate, with 45% of the population living below the poverty line, and low literacy rate of 45%, far below the national average.
 Jam Kamal Khan argued for decentralization of power and merit-based appointments, noting that coalition governments have long dominated Balochistan due to its small political party structure, which he said limits policy continuity. He also called for an economic consensus to address underdevelopment, pointing to the province's rich mineral resources and the strategic Gwadar Port. While Gwadar's development under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) offers economic opportunities, he warned of challenges posed by external influences. He advocated strengthening local industry and regulating border trade to support economic growth and ensure Balochistan's success, which he sees as vital to Pakistan's overall prosperity.

Governor Balochistan meets Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law & Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar Thursday met with Governor of Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail and MNA Jamal Shah to discuss legal and political issues of the province.
 The meeting focused on Balochistan's legal framework, welfare of the legal community, and a range of regional matters impacting the province's development and stability.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited various departments including media cell, monitoring room and news section, at Bilawal House in Karachi.

Bilawal accuses PML-N of not upholding political agreements

PPP chairman upset over government's failure to adhere to agreements, particularly during constitutional reforms; says I withdrew my name from JCP in protest as govt did not fulfil promise

KARACHI (Agencies): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed frustration with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), accusing the party of violating agreements and failing to provide PPP with respect in the federal government.
 Addressing the media at Bilawal House in Karachi on Thursday, Bilawal stated that the issue was not about personal grievances but about honour and political integrity. "Politics is about respect, not resentment. If the judiciary had representation from rural Sindh, we would have demanded equality," he remarked, referring to Pakistan's Supreme Court.
 Bilawal highlighted the government's failure to adhere to agreements, particularly during constitutional reforms, citing discrepancies in policy implementation. "During the constitutional reform process, the government made promises but then backtracked, adopting different approaches for Sindh compared to the rest of the country," he added.
 The PPP leader also criticised the lack of consultation in key governance decisions, particularly the approval of projects like the canals under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).
 "We had agreed on consultation, but instead, decisions were made without proper dialogue," Bilawal said, expressing disappointment at the government's actions.
 Statement on Killing of Chinese Nationals
 When asked about the recent killing of Chinese nationals in Pakistan, Bilawal condemned the act, aligning with the Chinese ambassador's statement that the murders were "unacceptable."

PM appeals nation to observe Namaz-e-Istisqa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday appealed to the nation to offer Namaz-e-Istisqa (prayers for rain) and pray to Allah Almighty for His mercy in the form of rain.
 The prime minister said that the federal and provincial governments should arrange Namaz-e-Istisqa in the mosques across the country.
 He especially urged the scholars and religious leaders to play their role in organizing Namaz-e-Istisqa.
 In a statement issued by the PM Office Press Wing, the prime minister emphasized that rainfall will improve the environment and can significantly help in mitigating the diseases.
 The prime minister stressed that in the current situation, there was an urgent need for Baran-e-Rehmat (rain).
 He called for seeking special prayers from Allah Almighty so that the human life may be relieved from the hardships.

Feedback from stakeholders key to develop effective system: CJP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi on Thursday said that feedback from all stakeholders would be essential to developing a responsive and effective system. As a part of commitment to strengthen service delivery and broaden access to justice, the Chief Justice convened a meeting at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.
 The meeting was attended by the academia from Pakistan's leading universities and prominent development experts and advocates including Dr. Ali Cheema, Vice Chancellor of Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS); Dr. Aftab, Rector, FAST University; Prof. Dr. Fazal Khalid, Rector, Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology (GIKI); Dr. Rizwan Riaz, Pro-Rector, National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST); Rauf Ata, President Supreme Court Bar Association (SBCA); Advocate Mansoor and Sher Shah, a noted development expert to lay the groundwork for comprehensive justice sector reforms. At the outset of the meeting, the Chief Justice welcomed the participants and highlighted the challenges being faced by Pakistan's justice system. He underscored that these reforms would encompass every tier of the judiciary, beginning at the Apex Court and extending through to the lower courts. Emphasizing a collaborative approach, he stated that feedback from all stakeholders—judges, lawyers, litigants, and citizens—would be central to developing a responsive and effective system.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail meeting with Federal Minister for Law Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

Implementation on Provincial Action Plan started: 90 habitual absentee teachers suspended in Dera Bugti

Chief Minister asserts action would be taken against absentee teachers without any discrimination; no compromise to be made on education

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The implementation on Provincial Action Plan (PAP) has been started from the home district of Chief Minister, Dera Bugti with action taken against the absentee teachers there.
 According to an official hand out issued here on Thursday, in all 90 habitual absentee teachers were suspended in Dera Bugti.
 In this regard, an inquiry committee has been formed, as mentioned in the official hand out. The process of dismissal from service would be started after completing the necessary action against the absentee teachers, it was further mentioned.
 It may be mentioned here that Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti presided over a meeting on the implementation on proposed PAP the other day.
 In backdrop of this, the Chief Minister asserted that action would be taken against the absentee teachers without any discrimination. He said that he would not do safarish of any absentee teacher in his home district, Dera Bugti too.
 He announced that every closed school would be opened right from Gwadar to Quetta and Zhob to Naserabad.

Pays homage to Major Haseeb & Havildar Noor: CM appreciates successful operation of security forces against terrorists in Harnai

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has appreciated the successful operation of security forces against terrorists in Harnai.
 In an official statement issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister paid homage to the brave soldier of security forces including Major Muhammad Haseeb and Havildar Noor Ahmed who embraced martyrdom while neutralizing the terrorists.
 The Chief Minister said that the martyr Major Haseeb commanded the force in the operation with courage and bravery and eliminated three terrorists.
 During the operation, Major Haseeb along with Havildar Noor Muhammad embraced martyrdom.
 He said that the nation is proud of its brave jawans, who rendered sacrifice of their lives for the country while taking the terrorists to their logical end.
 He also said that the whole nation is under debt of blood of their martyrs. The great sacrifices of the martyrs would always be remembered, he added.
 Mir Sarfraz Bugti expressed grief and sorrow with the bereaved families of martyrs and prayed for grant of patience to them.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over meeting regarding Schools department

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

China security ties

After a slightly turbulent patch, during which officials publicly used uncharacteristically direct language, Pakistan-China ties appear to have returned to cordiality. While speaking to the media on Monday, the Chinese foreign ministry's spokesperson reiterated Beijing's desire to strengthen bilateral ties with Pakistan. He said China would help Pakistan in its fight against terrorism, while resolving to "foil any attempt" to destabilise ties. The relationship has mainly been tested by the targeting of Chinese personnel in Pakistan by terrorists. Two major deadly attacks have occurred this year — last month in Karachi and in March in KP.

While reacting to unguarded comments by the foreign minister at an Islamabad seminar in October, the Chinese ambassador reiterated the need for Pakistan to take steps to safeguard the lives of his compatriots working in this country. Matters were further complicated after the Foreign Office termed the ambassador's remarks "perplexing". However, the latest comments from Beijing indicate that this incident may be behind us. Yet the fact remains that Beijing remains concerned about the security of its nationals in Pakistan, and if this matter is not addressed satisfactorily, it may affect bilateral ties. Some media reports have stated that China wants a joint security mechanism with Pakistan. These reports say the Chinese proposal involves the deployment of their own security personnel in this country. Pakistani officials are reportedly not comfortable with this suggestion, and no one in Islamabad or Rawalpindi has publicly commented on these plans.

While training of local forces and intelligence-sharing can be considered, putting Chinese boots on the ground in Pakistan is not a good idea. In fact, having any foreign armed force present in the country should be discouraged. Security should solely be the prerogative of Pakistan's military and civil armed forces. The Chinese concerns cannot be dismissed, as the relationship with Beijing, particularly in view of CPEC, is a key pillar of our foreign and economic policy. It is also a fact that lapses on Pakistan's part have allowed terrorists to target Chinese nationals. Yet instead of allowing foreign forces to operate on Pakistani soil to protect their nationals, closer CT cooperation with Beijing should be pursued. A dedicated division to protect CPEC schemes — manned by thousands of personnel — already exists. Capacity-building of this division, such as the provision of modern equipment and improvement in intelligence-gathering capabilities, should be the state's priority to ensure the security of Chinese nationals and projects. If Pakistan is serious about attracting foreign investment, the state must improve the security situation so that investors feel safe in bringing their citizens here. Moreover, foreign projects should prioritise the hiring and training of locals in their areas of operation to bring jobs and prosperity to underdeveloped and economically deprived regions.

Time to find out

F.S. Aijazuddin

How could 74.5 million Republican voters in the US have got it right, and the rest of the world got it wrong?

Nothing in recent history can match Donald Trump's dramatic re-entry into the White House. Adolf Hitler's success in the federal German elections of 1933 offers a pale parallel. Hitler's impact though was local, European, until it exploded across the globe. Trump's effect is ab initio international, with domestic undertones such as immigration and jobs.

Hitler never disguised his intentions. They were apparent in his incendiary manifesto Mein Kampf, published in 1925-26. (It sold 5.2m copies.) Hitler had written: "All great cultures of the past perished only because the original creative race died out from blood poisoning." He declared that it was "the sacred mission of the German people... to assemble and preserve the most valuable racial elements... and raise them to the dominant position."

Trump, too, has made no secret of his abrasive nationalism. America First. America uber alles. Trump claims that he has never read Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf. His first wife Ivana reportedly told her attorney that "Trump kept a book of Hitler's speeches in a bedside cabinet."

Trump may not have owned or read Mein Kampf. He has — as if by osmosis — absorbed its vitriolic xenophobia. In December 2023, at a campaign rally in Iowa, he asserted that "illegal immigrants inside the US are poisoning and destroying the blood of America". (Iowa voted loyally for Trump in 2016, 2020, and in 2024.)

Hitler, once in power, consolidated his authority by legislating the Enabling Act, which gave

him dictatorial powers. Trump has secured the White House, a majority in the Senate, and expects a majority in the House of Representatives. If he appoints two more judges to the US Supreme Court (he put three in during his first term), he will have a majority of five to four there as well. Such unbridled power should come with self-restraint.

Almost a century ago, in 1937, Jawaharlal Nehru (elected president of the Indian National Congress for a third time) wrote an anonymous essay warning himself against the dangers of cultism.

Published under the pseudonym Chana-kya, Nehru cautioned his public persona: "Men like Jawaharlal, with all their capacity for great and good work, are unsafe in democracy. He calls himself a democrat and a socialist, and no doubt he does so in all earnestness, but every psychologist knows that the mind is ultimately a slave to the heart, and logic can always be made to fit in with the desires and irrefragable urges of a person."

He continued: "A little twist and Jawa-harlal might turn a dictator sweeping aside the paraphernalia of a slow-moving democracy. He might still use the language and slogans of democracy and socialism, but we all know how fascism has fattened on this language and then cast it away as useless lumber."

Such brave self-analysis was cremated with Nehru. Modern elected autocrats, once in power, regard voters as "useless lumber", firewood to be used only to stoke the next election.

Leaders most beholden to the United States — Great Britain's Keir Starmer, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky — were quick off the block to congratulate presi-

dent-elect Trump. Our message of congratulations was not amongst Trump's top 20.

We need to admit that our relationship with the United States has slipped down many notches. That happened when the US re-hyphenated us, replacing Indo-Pak with Af-Pak. With Afghanistan off the US radar, we have little relevance on our own.

There was a time when the Shah's Iran was used as the conduit for America's policies in the region. Today, that role has been subcon-ra-cted to Saudi Ara-b--ia. Only a fly on the wall will know what was discussed between our COAS (whose tenure has been extended by three years) and Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman, meeting so soon after Trump's re-election.

Outsiders see Pakistan as a multi-headed gorgon, with many power centres. As Dr Henry Kissinger once famously asked: "Who do I call if I want to call Europe?" Who does PM Narendra Modi call if he wants to parley with Pakistan over Jammu & Kashmir, or the Indus Waters Treaty, or to discuss cross-border pollution? The Sharifs, and if so, which? The establishment, and if so, with whom and how?

We should not expect equivalence with India. It has over \$650 billion in foreign exchange reserves. We have \$15bn, mainly rotating deposits provided by 'friendly countries'. A nuclear-tipped peace is our only affordable option.

Our concern, and the world's, should now be how to handle President Trump. Should his harangues be taken literally, but him seriously? We all have the next four years to find out. -- Courtesy Dawn

Optimising COP29

Gulmina Bilal Ahmad

The global demand for skilled workers in green technologies is growing. This is important for Pakistan, where climate change and environmental degradation are urgent concerns. Green Technical and Vocational Education and Training is vital for developing skills needed to make key industries sustainable. However, substantial challenges remain in fully integrating Green TVET into the national development framework.

With COP29 in Baku focused on climate action and sustainable workforce development, Pakistan has an opportunity to formalise Green TVET strategies. Indeed, the country's vulnerability to climate change underscores the need for Green TVET. Pakistan is among the top 10 countries most affected by the impact of climate change. It accrues an annual loss of \$3.8 billion due to extreme weather events. The industrial and agricultural sectors, contributing more than 40 per cent of GDP and employing over 60pc of the workforce, are heavily reliant on obsolete, environmentally damaging practices, thus making it critical to transition to eco-friendly methods.

However, in adopting Green TVT, Pakistan will face several structural and economic hurdles, one challenge being the absence of a comprehensive national policy connecting green economic goals to vocational training. Although environmental concerns have been partially addressed in the National Climate Change Policy, the latter does not prioritise workforce development for green sectors. This indicates an institutional disconnect with organisations that are attempting to bridge the gap by integrating

green skills into their programmes.

Incorporating green skills requires strategic focus and institutional coordination. For instance, the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission has introduced some foundational green skills, aimed at building awareness of sustainable practices. However, these efforts require substantial expansion.

At COP29, where global leaders are discussing climate action and workforce development, Pakistan can advocate for Green TVET on an international platform. Efforts of organisations, such as the NAVTTC, could benefit from aligning with frameworks emerging from the climate conference, potentially securing commitments for funding and support from international partners. Such alliances could enable them to expand Green TVET programming and help Pakistan achieve both its climate and economic objectives.

There is also not much awareness of or demand for green skills among employers. Many industries lack an understanding of the benefits of green skills; their motivation to adopt sustainable practices is thus reduced. Critical sectors, including the construction industry and agriculture, still depend on resource-intensive methods, as they perceive the transition costs to be high. For instance, the construction sector, which contributes over 2pc to GDP, often resorts to energy-inefficient practices, while agriculture — the largest employment sector — has been slow to adopt climate-smart techniques.

These challenges deter TVET institutions from investing in green training programmes as

industry demand for these skills remains low. Creating awareness and a demand for green skills within industries requires focused outreach and partnerships to educate employers on the long-term economic benefits of sustainable practices.

Many vocational institutions also lack modern equipment, which is essential for teaching technologies, such as those related to solar panel installation or sustainable agriculture practices. Nearly half our TVET institutions are under-resourced, highlighting an immediate need to upgrade facilities to meet the demands of a green economy. Securing these up-grades is challenging as budget allocations are limited. Pakistan's TVET sector receives around 2.5pc of the national education budget, which would need to be scaled up in order to match countries that prioritise vocational training. Private sector investment in green skills training is also minimal, and although international funding options, such as the Green Climate Fund, exist, Pakistan has to do much more to access these resources.

Investing in Green TVET can speed up both economic growth and environmental resilience. By establishing cohesive policies, raising industry awareness, securing funding, and promoting TVET, Pakistan can build a workforce capable of supporting sustainable development in core sectors of the economy. This shift will not only reduce Pakistan's environmental footprint but also position the country as a proactive participant in the global green economy, aligning with COP29's objectives and working towards a more sustainable future. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

OGRA hosts workshop on track and trace technology for OMC's

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant move to enhance transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency in Pakistan's oil sector, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has organized a workshop focused on implementing effective track and trace technology. This event, conducted in collaboration with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the Oil Companies Advisory Council (OCAC), and the Oil Marketing Association of Pakistan (OMAP), brought together renowned solution providers from across the country to present potential digital solutions for the sector.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman of

OGRA highlighted the critical role a robust track and trace system could play in preventing financial leakages, enhancing economic stability,

"Implementing a comprehensive tracking system is essential, especially in challenging economic times, to protect the national exchequer, curb illegal activities, and boost the industry's overall integrity," he noted.

The Director General of FBR (Reforms and Automation) addressed participants, underscoring the need for a track and trace solution for the oil sector akin to systems already implemented in other industries.



KARACHI: Woman selecting and purchasing dry fruit from ship before selling after change weather in Provincial Capital.

MCCI urges govt to make tax reforms

MULTAN (APP): Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Shaikh has demanded the government to carry out reforms in the existing tax system and reduce electricity tariffs, in light of the high inflation rate, the energy crisis, and severe economic challenges facing the business community and the general public.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, he stated that the tax deficit of over Rs 180 billion in the first four months of the current fiscal year makes it essential for the

government to take timely and balanced measures to avoid placing further burden on the public.

He emphasized that instead of continually increasing taxes in new and different ways, the government should implement tax reforms that would improve the performance of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and address the weaknesses in policies.

The FBR should expand the tax base to avoid placing more pressure on existing taxpayers through new taxes, he said, adding that through tax reforms,



KARACHI: A delegation led by Acting President FPCCI Qurrat ul Ain meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori.

Govt aims to provide affordable, nutritious food to every citizen: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR) celebrated World Food Day on Thursday at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) in partnership with the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

Federal Minister for National Food Security and

Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, attended as Chief Guest, alongside prominent figures such as UN Resident Coordinator Mohamed Yahya and FAO Representative Florence Rolle. The event drew government officials, academia, UN agency representatives, and students.

In his address, Minister Hussain reiterated Pakistan's commitment to food security, emphasizing a need for cooperative efforts with both national and international

organizations. He stated, "Our commitment to national food security is unwavering, as we aim to implement inclusive policies that ensure every citizen has access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food." Highlighting this year's theme of food as a fundamental human right, Mohamed Yahya noted the urgency, as 40% of Pakistan's population experiences food insecurity.

Florence Rolle emphasized the importance of sustainable practices and

community-driven policies to foster resilience. "With over 783 million globally facing food insecurity, collaborative efforts bring us closer to a future where everyone's right to adequate food is realized," she stated. The nationwide campaign concluded with activities involving students, local farmers, and community members, underscoring a multi-sector approach to food security through equitable resource distribution and support for vulnerable communities.

OICCI highlights the critical role of the private sector for climate resilience at COP 29

Independent Report KARACHI: The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) underscored the essential role of public-private collaboration in tackling Pakistan's climate challenges at COP 29.

The OICCI, which is part of the Pakistan delegation at COP 29, organized a dialogue titled "Unlocking Pakistan's Climate Future with Public-Private Partnerships," at the Pakistan Pavilion and brought together prominent industry leaders, government officials, and global climate experts to discuss financing

strategies that can drive climate resilience and green investments in Pakistan.

O I C C I ' s participation in COP 29 reflects its dedication to promoting sustainable business practices and supporting policies that encourage climate finance.

As Pakistan continues its path toward meeting its climate objectives, OICCI remains committed to mobilizing resources and fostering collaboration to build a climate-resilient future. Through these initiatives, OICCI aims to lay the groundwork for a sustainable, climate-smart Pakistan.



Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Irfan Neziroglu called on the Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain in Islamabad.

Kisan cards provided to 485,000 farmers

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture Secretary Ifthikhar Ali Sahoo said on Thursday that till now more than 485,000 farmers had been given Kisan Cards. He said this while briefing the Kisan Card steering committee meeting which was presided over by Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman at Civil Secretariat on Thursday. The secretary said that in last 20 days, through Kisan Card, farmers had purchased seeds and fertilizers worth Rs 18 billion.

Under kisan card a facility of purchasing agriculture inputs on interest free loan from

registered dealers for cultivation of wheat had been given to farmers across the province, he added.

The meeting also discussed to give the facility of withdrawal of 30 per cent cash along with the purchase of agriculture inputs through Kisan Card.

Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman also directed the relevant authorities to complete the issuance process of Kisan Card at the earliest.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had ordered to increase the number of Kisan Cards from 500,000 to 750,000.

Gold prices dip by Rs.5,500 to Rs.266,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.5,500 and was sold at Rs.266,400 on Thursday against its sale at Rs. 271,900, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went down by Rs.4,716 to Rs.228,395 from Rs. 233,111 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs.209,362 from Rs.213,685.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3250 and Rs.2,786 respectively.

APEC gathering seen as gateway for trade between China, Latin America

BEIJING (APP): The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation will remain vital for globalization, with the group's meetings in Peru aiming to highlight its role as the gateway for trade and investment from China and Asia to Latin America, experts said.

Michael Walsh, Executive Director of the Pacific Basin Economic Council, an organization of CEOs and business leaders, said this year's gathering serves as a pivotal platform for fostering inclusive economic growth across the Asia-Pacific region, especially against the backdrop of changing

political winds with regard to trans-Pacific trade.

In the face of economic challenges and the attack on free trade, APEC is seeking to reinforce regional cooperation and globalization while supporting a sustainable recovery, he said.

The priorities for this year's meetings include trade and investment for inclusive and interconnected growth, innovation and digitalization to promote the transition to the formal and global economy, and sustainable growth for resilient development.

"We anticipate that the discussions will lead to actionable strategies that facilitate efficient implementation initiatives and interoperability in cross-border trade, allowing for a more equitable redistribution of resources and opportunities throughout the region," Walsh added.

A l e j a n d r o Indacochea, president of law firm Indacochea Asociados, said the APEC gathering is a significant event for Peru, which could become the hub of Latin American integration with Asia, China Daily reported.

Governor KP for constitution of special committee to address merged districts issues

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that constitution of a special committee has been requested to the Prime Minister of Pakistan to address the issues and grievances of the merged tribal districts. This initiative aims to alleviate the sentiments of discontent that have emerged following the integration of these areas into the provincial framework, the Governor said during a meeting with a delegation from the Mamozai National Alliance of Orakzai District, led by President Muhammad Zaman and General Secretary Muhammad Hanif. The delegation visited the Governor House to discuss various concerns with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, including the plight of temporary displaced persons (TDPs), compensation for the destruction caused by military operations, and other pressing issues. Former Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Tori was also present during the meeting. Governor Kundi emphasized that the solution to the province's unrest and challenges lied in the hands of its own people. He said, "Only we, the residents of this region, can correct our situation. No one else will resolve our issues. When peace is restored, tourism will flourish, businesses will grow, and our province will become the most prosperous in the country." The Governor also highlighted concerns regarding the funds allocated to the merged districts after the merger of FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He pointed out that, instead of being spent on the merged districts, these funds have been diverted to the settled districts of the province, leading to the deprivation of tribal areas' rightful share.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi called on by Mamozai Qaumi Ittehad representative delegation at Governor House.

CM KPK inaugurates School of Paramedical Sciences & Technology Park in Haripur

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, visited the Pakistan - Austria Fachhochschule Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology in Haripur on Thursday, where he formally inaugurated the newly established School of Paramedical Sciences and the Technology Park. Opposition Leader in the National Assembly, Umar Ayub Khan, provincial ministers Meena Khan Afridi and Arshad Ayub, and other officials accompanied the Chief Minister. The School of Paramedical Sciences, established at a cost of Rs283 million with the support of the provincial government, currently offers 38 bachelor's, 18 master's, and 8 PhD programs in various health education fields. Additionally, it provides diploma courses in 20 different disciplines. The Technology Park, developed at a cost of Rs992 million, was also inaugurated during the visit. Speaking at the event, the Chief Minister announced a Rs300 million grant for the School of Paramedical Sciences.



ABBOTTABAD: Motorway Officials putting flowers on grave of Sub-Inspector Shabbir Ahmed, Who died during duty on Hazara Motorway.

KP gov't fully alert to deal with smog: Saif

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Advisor for Information, Muhammad Ali Saif on Thursday stated that smog had not yet reached the dangerous level in the provincial capital, however the provincial government was fully ready to take precautionary measures to deal with any emergency situation. In a statement issued here, he said that the Chief Minister Ali Amin was closely monitoring the situation and had issued necessary directives to all the line departments to remain high alert. Saif also noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was providing daily reports, and the current air quality index (AQI) in Peshawar stood at an average of 112, which was satisfactory. He urged the public to avoid misinformation regarding AQI statistics and reiterated that there was nothing to be worried about.

Delegation of Indonesian Embassy visits GCWUS

SIALKOT (APP): A delegation of the Indonesian Embassy on Thursday visited the Government College Women University Sialkot (GCWUS). Ferry Junigwan Mardiansyah, Heryanto, and Andi Irawan Shamil were included in the delegation. According to the GCWUS, the delegation was welcomed by Pro Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zarrin Fatima Rizvi, Additional Director ORIC Dr Muhammad Umair Ashraf and Controller Examinations Malik Gulshan Aslam.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan participating in a public awareness event organized by the Internal Society of Internal Medicine regarding World Diabetes Day at Governor House Lahore.

CM Maryam denies cancer diagnosis; confirms parathyroid condition instead

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has addressed recent rumours about her health, categorically denying claims that she has cancer. In a social media statement, she clarified, "There are vlogs and rumours circulating on social media suggesting I have cancer, but I want to make it clear that I do not have cancer. I am dealing with a parathyroid condition." The clarification comes amid widespread speculation, particularly from vloggers and YouTubers, who claimed that the CM was suffering from a fatal illness. They also pointed to a family history of cancer, referencing her mother, who tragically passed away due to the disease. CM Maryam Nawaz's statement aims to dispel these rumours and provide an accurate update on her health. Expressing her thoughts in London, CM Maryam said: "The country has always witnessed the prosperity during the Nawaz Sharif-led government. The PML-N is having a track record of steering the country towards stability." She said, "I had undergone the operation of parathyroid from Geneva last year." CM Maryam said, "The hospital comprised of 1,000 beds is being built in Lahore, which will be the first state-of-the-art hospital in the public sector." "The medicines are being dispatched to the patients' houses. The 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' scheme had also been launched in the entire Punjab," she said. She made it clear that the meritocracy was prevailing in Punjab, saying, "The recruitment is being made in Punjab through meritocracy."

Lahore police fully alert for security of Sikh pilgrims

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Police have made elaborate arrangements for comprehensive security for Sikh pilgrims visiting Pakistan. In a statement issued on Thursday, CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana reiterated the police's commitment to safeguarding Sikh pilgrims, who traveled from around the world to perform religious observances. He emphasized that a robust security plan has been put in place specifically to protect these visitors during their stay. Kamyana highlighted that security around the religious and sacred sites of Sikhs in the provincial capital has been further strengthened. Lahore police were committed to providing the best security, not only in crime prevention, but also to all religious minorities. The Sikh pilgrims were our esteemed guests and no effort will be spared in ensuring their safety. The CCPO has also directed divisional officers to personally oversee the security arrangements, advising on-duty staff to remain fully vigilant.

14 buried, search for 11 missing persons continues

ASTOR (APP): The 14 victims of the tragic coaster accident were laid to rest in their native areas, with a large number of people attending the funerals on Thursday. According to Deputy Commissioner Astor, Muhammad Tariq said that a massive search operation is underway to locate the 11 missing persons, with the help of rescue 1122 Gilgit, Diamar, and Astor, along with dozens of local volunteers, scouring the area. He announced that the number of search teams would be increased.

Transparency ensured in medical universities' finances: Kh Salman

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique emphasized his commitment to transparency in the financial affairs of medical universities while presiding over a syndicate meeting at Rawalpindi Medical University on Thursday. The meeting reviewed the agenda items presented by the concerned officers. Khawaja Salman Rafique said that Rawalpindi Medical University had been directed to organise a meeting of allied health professionals soon, underlining the government's focus on advancing quality research in Punjab's medical universities. He added that the Punjab government is committed to providing quality education in government medical universities and directed improvements in sanitation arrangements in public hospitals. During the meeting, the syndicate approved the introduction of a Social Sciences curriculum in Medicine at Rawalpindi Medical University, along with various Ph.D. programs.

International News

Iran tells UN nuclear chief it won't negotiate under 'intimidation'

TEHRAN: Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Thursday that Iran will not negotiate under "intimidation" as he held crunch talks with the UN nuclear chief weeks before US President-elect Donald Trump takes office. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi said achieving "results" in nuclear talks with Iran was vital to avoid a new conflict in the region already inflamed by Israel's operations against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. His visit comes just days after Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said Iran was "more exposed than ever to strikes on its nuclear facilities" giving Israel "the opportunity to achieve our most important goal". Grossi said Iranian nuclear installations "should not be attacked" but Trump is expected to give Israel a far freer rein after he takes office in January. The IAEA chief described his meeting with Araghchi as "indispensable" in a post on X. Araghchi was Iran's chief negotiator in talks that led to a landmark 2015 nuclear deal with major powers, abandoned three years later by Trump. Araghchi posted that their meeting was "important & straightforward". He said Iran was "willing to negotiate" based on the "national interest" and "inalienable rights," but was not "ready to negotiate under pressure and intimidation". "We agreed to proceed with courage and goodwill. Iran has never left the negotiation table on its peaceful nuclear programme," he said. Grossi also met the head of Iran's atomic energy organisation, Mohammad Eslami. Eslami told a joint news conference that Iran would take "immediate countermeasures" against any sanctions from the IAEA's board of governors. "Any interventionist resolution in the nuclear affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran will definitely be met with immediate countermeasures," Eslami said. Grossi's visit is his second to Tehran this year but his first since Trump's re-election. During his first term in the White House from 2017 to 2021, Trump adopted a policy called "maximum pressure" which reimposed sweeping US economic sanctions that had been lifted under the 2015 deal. In response, Iran started to gradually roll back its commitments under the deal, which barred it from enriching uranium to above 3.65 per cent.



Iran's head of the Atomic Energy Organisation Mohammad Eslami and the United Nations nuclear chief Rafael Grossi hold a joint press conference in Tehran.

Human Rights Watch accuses Israel of war crimes in Gaza Strip

NEW YORK: Human Rights Watch said in a report released Thursday that Israel has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip, including massive forced displacements that amount to ethnic cleansing. A new report released by the New York-based rights group said people have been killed while evacuating under Israeli orders and in Israeli-designated humanitarian zones, where hundreds of thousands are crammed into squalid tent camps. The report said the widespread, deliberate demolition of homes and civilian infrastructure in Gaza—some of them to carve a new road bisecting the territory and establish a buffer zone along Israel's border—was likely to "permanently displace" many Palestinians. "Such actions of the Israeli authorities amount to ethnic cleansing," Human Rights Watch said. The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the report. Israel's blistering campaign in Gaza has killed over 43,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

Russia launches barrage on Kyiv

KYIV: Russia escalated its attacks on Kyiv early Wednesday, launching waves of drones and missiles in its first combined aerial assault on the capital in more than 70 days, authorities said. The attacks came as Washington and Seoul echoed warnings from Ukraine that North Korean troops had begun "engaging in combat operations" alongside Russian forces on the border between the warring countries. Ukraine's air force said its units had downed four missiles and 37 drones launched by Russia.

Palestinians say north Gaza destruction is widespread as rights group warns some may never return

CAIRO: Palestinians displaced from northern Gaza said Israeli forces had inflicted widespread destruction on their home districts in their latest six-week-old offensive and a rights group raised concerns Israel might put some areas permanently off-limits. Jabalia, one of the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps, as well as the towns of Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun and nearby villages, were among the first targets of Israel's ground offensive in October 2023 after Hamas militants attacked Israel. Tanks have gone in several more times in what Israel says are necessary operations against militants there who still pose a threat. On Thursday, it said its troops had killed dozens of "terrorists" and found a large quantity of weapons. Former construction contractor Abu Raed, who was displaced from Jabalia, said Israeli forces were blowing buildings up remotely after booby-trapping them or sending in robots. "The destruction before Oct 5, 2024 was big, but what happened in the past month can't be described in words. Most of the camp was destroyed this time," he told Reuters via chat app. "I have friends and relatives in Beit Hanoun, there are hardly any building standing there. Beit Lahiya also," the 75-year-old said.

French weapons system found in Sudan is likely violation of UN arms embargo, says Amnesty

CAIRO: Armored vehicles manufactured by the United Arab Emirates and equipped with French defense systems have been captured by the Sudanese army during the civil war in Sudan, Amnesty International says. The rights group said in a report on Thursday it had identified the UAE-made armored personnel carriers (APCs) in various parts of Sudan, including the Darfur region, where they were used by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in its fight with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). It added that the presence of the military vehicles on the battlefield "likely constitutes a violation" of a United Nations arms embargo that prohibits the transfer of weapons to Sudan. The civil war broke out in April 2023 after simmering tensions between the RSF and the Sudanese army escalated to intense fighting across the North African country, where rampant human rights violations were committed. More than 20,000 people have been killed in the conflict, according to the U.N., while 11.6 million have been forcibly displaced, including 8.3 million internally and 3.1 million people who fled to neighboring countries. Allies providing Sudan's warring parties with weapons are "enabling the slaughter," UN officials say. Sudan's claim that the UAE has been supplying the RSF with weapons that prolonged the 18-month war with the army has been denied by the UAE.

Six Israeli troops killed, deadly strikes in Lebanon

JERUSALEM: Israel suffered one of the deadliest days of its ground offensive against Hezbollah in Lebanon on Wednesday when six of its soldiers were killed in combat near the border. The soldiers "fell during combat in southern Lebanon", the army said in a statement. Their deaths mean 47 Israeli troops have been killed in combat with Hezbollah since September 30, when Israel sent ground forces into Lebanon. The army's announcement came after new Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said there would be no easing up in the war against Hezbollah. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on social media platform X shared an image of the "Golani" Brigade symbol—the unit the soldiers killed belonged to—a green olive tree against a yellow background, with a broken heart emoji.

Man kills himself with blasts outside Brazil's Supreme Court after failing to get inside

SAO PAULO: A man who failed in an attempt to break into Brazil's Supreme Court killed himself in explosions outside the building Wednesday that forced justices and staff to evacuate, authorities said. The two strong blasts were heard about 7:30 p.m. after the day's session finished and all the justices and staff left the building safely, Brazil's Supreme Court said in a statement.

Biden, Xi arrive in Peru ahead of face-to-face at Asia-Pacific summit

LIMA: US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping arrive Thursday in Lima for an Asia-Pacific summit overshadowed by the prospect of a world embroiled in trade wars under Donald Trump. Saturday's face-to-face will likely be the last meeting between the sitting leaders of the world's largest economies before Biden heads the reins back to Trump, who has signaled a confrontational approach to Beijing for his second term in the White House. Biden and Xi will likely "take stock of efforts to responsibly manage competition," a senior US administration official told reporters Wednesday ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. APEC, created in 1989 with the goal of regional trade liberalization, brings together 21 economies that jointly represent about 60 percent of world GDP and over 40 percent of global commerce. The summit program was to focus on trade and investment for inclusive growth and innovation for its members' common good. But uncertainty over Trump's next moves now clouds the agenda—as it does for the COP29 climate talks under way in Azerbaijan, and a G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro next week. "All that... the APEC leaders and G20 leaders will be talking about is the one world leader who is not there—and that is Donald Trump," Victor Cha of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank said this week. The summits will be "about one thing," he told reporters in Washington: "What to expect from the next Trump administration on trade, alliances." Xi and Biden will meet on the second and final day of the summit that will also bring together leaders and senior officials from Japan, South Korea, Canada, Australia and Indonesia.



BAKU: Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam posing for a group photo with federal minister for finance, Muhammad Aurangzeb and representatives of Founder Acumen, Green Climate Fund and USAID in an event on Acumen's Climate Action Fund for Pakistan at Pakistan Pavilion COP29 Summit.

Int'l community should honor its commitments regarding climate change: Tarar

BAKU (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday called upon the international community to honor the commitments made in the Paris Agreement and on the occasions of COP27 and COP28.

"The international community should honor their commitments so that the lives and property of people could be protected by building climate resilient infrastructure," said the minister while talking to the media during his visit to the Pakistan's Pavilion at COP29 in Baku.

Flanked by Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam and a young climate activist Zunaira, Atta Tarar said the climate change is the biggest threat

to the lives and property of the people in Pakistan and the government has been taking concerted measures to protect the people and culture from its affects.

The minister cited the recent flash floods due to heavy monsoon rains in Pakistan, and melting glaciers due to the global warming as an example. "The climate change is affecting our people, rendering them shelter less and damaging their crops and livestock," he added.

He said Pakistan has only been contributing 0.5 per cent to the carbon emissions, while there were other countries that had major contribution in this regard.

As regards the Pakistan's pavilion, he termed it vibrant which has been receiving people of international stature who

were being sensitized about the damage unleashed by the climate change on Pakistan, and also about the need for establishing the climate finance fund for the country.

To a query, he said every country should have climate finance strategy which would enable donor agencies and developed countries to fund the vulnerable countries as per the existing structure.

The Minister also introduced to the media the young climate activist from Balochistan, saying Zunaira is a voice of Balochistan.

He said Zunaira has been highlighting climate change effects on education in Balochistan. She is an accomplished individual who has contributed to policy paper of the United Nations.

FO refutes reports of sending security team by China for protection of its citizens in Pak

"We would not allow any effort to derail Pakistan-China strategic partnership," FO spokesperson asserts

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign Office (FO) while refuting the reports of sending security team by China for the protection of its citizens has said such reports are part of propaganda to harm the friendship between the two countries.

"fool proof security arrangements are being made for the safety of Chinese nationals. Dialogue continue to occur on the safety of Chinese nationals. The old standing relations between US and Pakistan are based on non interference in each other affairs, this was said by Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during her weekly press briefing her Thursday.

Pakistan will protect

Chinese nationals and institutions at every cost, she added. Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said this is an established fact that the terror groups receive support from India. She recalled that Pakistan arrested an Indian Naval Officer a few years back who was the mastermind of support for espionage and terror activities in Balochistan.

The spokesperson urged the Afghan authorities to take action against the terror groups and do not allow the use of their soil against Pakistan or any other neighboring country. She said Afghanistan should take Pakistan's repeated requests seriously and not test the patience of

Pakistani people.

Responding to a question, the spokesperson said Pakistan will continue to work with China for the safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions in the country.

She said Pakistan and China have a robust dialogue and cooperation on a range of issues including counter terrorism and security of Chinese nationals. She said this dialogue is based on mutual respect, mutually beneficial cooperation and respect for each other's 'sovereignty. As Iron brothers and strategic partners, the two countries have the resolve and capability to foil any attempts aimed at harming this relationship.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Privatisation and Board of Investment Abdul Aaleem Khan presides meeting of NHA.

Diamer Bhasha Dam: Ahsan calls for immediate land transfer to WAPDA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the progress and challenges of two major national projects: the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHPP) and the Diamer Bhasha Dam.

The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary Planning Kamran Rehman Khan, Secretary Ministry of Water Resources, Chairman WAPDA, Member Infrastructure Waqas Anwar and other key stakeholders to discuss updates and next steps, a news release said.

The 969 MW Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project, located near Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, holds great importance for Pakistan's energy needs.

Since its start in 2018, it has produced over 20,030 million units of electricity.

However, recent structural problems in the

project's Head Race Tunnel (HRT) have led to temporary power stoppages.

To resolve these issues, an international panel of experts, including a prominent Pakistani geologist, was appointed to identify the causes and suggest solutions.

The experts recommended steps to fix blockages and structural damages inside the tunnels.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal directed the concerned authorities to expedite repair work and develop a detailed plan based on scientific studies that could be able to justify the costs spent on the projects. He stressed that the remedial work must provide a sustainable solution, ensuring long-term stability and value for the investment. The meeting also focused on the Diamer Bhasha Dam, a key project on the Indus River.

This dam will store water for irrigation, help manage floods, and generate 4,500 MW of electricity.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal chairing a meeting to review the progress and challenges of two major national projects: the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHPP) and the Diamer Bhasha Dam.

Gilani calls for increased collaboration between Pak, Spain in diverse sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Thursday called for increased collaboration between Pakistan and Spain in diverse sectors as the two countries share commonalities and both have a shared vision for peace and sustainable development.

The Chairman Senate expressed these views in a meeting with 4-member parliamentary delegation of the Spanish Senate said a news release.

Welcoming the delegation, the Chairman Senate termed the relations between Pakistan and Spain as historic, however, he observed that there is still a huge scope for further deep-

ening the mutual collaboration in diverse sectors.

The Chairman Senate recognized the longstanding diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Spain, rooted in mutual respect and shared values and emphasized that this visit marks a valuable opportunity to further deepen these bonds and explore avenues for productive collaboration.

He recalled his visit to Spain in 2010 as Prime Minister and said that productive dialogue with Spanish and EU officials regarding Pakistan's textile industry, led to the EU's special trade package to boost Pakistani textile exports.

He further mentioned the visit to WTO head-

quarters, and the fruitful discussions on expanding Pakistan access to international markets and strengthening trade relations, which aligned with Pakistan broader economic goals.

He emphasized that the EU trade concessions were a milestone, facilitated by support from Spain, which provided significant economic benefits to Pakistan's textile industry.

The Chairman Senate also highlighted importance of inter-parliamentary relations in strengthening bilateral ties. He commended the Spanish Senate for prioritizing diplomatic outreach with Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani exchanging views with members of the Parliamentary delegation of senate affairs committee of the kingdom of Spain at Parliament House.

Provincial Ombudsman visits SKBZH, seeks report of absentee medical staff

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Ombudsman, Nazir Muhammad Baloch visited the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Hospital here on Thursday. The Provincial Ombudsman went round of different sections of the Hospital and inspected the facilities for patients there.

He also visited the booth of Balochistan health Care Programme and inquired about the health of patients treated in the hospital.

Also present on the

occasion was Executive Director of the hospital, Dr Noorul Amin Zehri, who briefed the Ombudsman about overall functioning of the hospital.

The ombudsman also inspected different equipment and machinery available at the hospital besides seeking report about the cleanliness.

Meanwhile, he checked the attendance of hospital staff and paramedics. He also sought report of the absentee medical staff of the hospital.

Two children killed in NW house blast

PESHAWAR (APP): At least two children were killed and their parents sustained injuries when the roof of a room collapsed after a blast inside a house in North Waziristan on Thursday morning. Local police said an apparent explosive material blast caused the roof of a room to cave in in Tabbi village of North Waziristan, killing two children. The father and mother of the children were also injured in the blast and shifted to hospital. Police said an investigation into the blast incident has been initiated to sort out.

BPPRA's Council reaffirms commitment to sustainable procurement practices

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (BPPRA) hosted a pivotal meeting at its headquarters here on Thursday.

Chaired by the Managing Director of BPPRA, Mr. Afzal Khoshti, the meeting brought together representatives from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Federal PPR, Punjab PPR, and AJK PPR, Sindh PPR,

KPK PPR, and GB PPR. KPP PPR also participated remotely.

The meeting focused on the implementation of and Structured Training Programs: Building capacity through targeted training initiatives.

Development of Sustainable Procurement Policies: Establishing forward-thinking strategies to integrate sustainability into procurement processes.

Challenges in the Oversight Role of PPRAs: Identifying bottlenecks and seeking actionable solutions to strengthen oversight.

A key highlight of the meeting was the recognition of BPPRA's pioneering efforts in the e-procurement domain. PPRAs from across the country lauded BPPRA's achievements in improving the procurement regime and establishing itself as a leader in innovation and transparency. BPPRA was commended for its role as a trailblazer in e-procurement.

Professionalization



QUETTA: Director National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) Lashkar Khan presiding over a meeting at QESCO Headquarters.

Reservoirs of gas decreasing in Pakistan: Gas supply for Sindh and Balochistan decreased to 700 MMCFD: GM SSGC

Independent Report
QUETTA: The General Manager Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC), Farooq Khan has stated that the total requirement of gas for Sindh and Balochistan is 1200 to 1250 MMCFD, however, we are getting supply of 700 MMCFD, this means there is a gap between demand and supply, which is increasing.

He said that the demand of gas is more and supply is less.

The General Manager SSGC was speaking to the media persons on launch of awareness campaign about the careful use of sui gas here outside the SSGC main office on Thursday.

Also present on the occasion were other senior officials and employees of

SSGC.

The General Manager SSGC maintained that the reservoirs of gas are decreasing in the country. Due to this, the gas supply issue is mounting with every passing day, he added.

To a query, he mentioned that the sui gas load shedding is not observed by the SSGC, rather only load management is done.

He said that gas related mishaps are occurred due to the use of sub-standard pipes, heaters and compressors, so these must be avoided.

Referring the awareness campaign of SSGC, the GM said that it is aimed at making the general public aware about proper use of the gas and precautionary measures in this regard.

SC seeks report from provinces regarding steps against pollution

ISLAMABAD (APP): A constitutional bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday sought reports from all provinces regarding measures against environmental pollution.

A six-member bench headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan and comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan heard the case.

During the course of proceeding, Justice Mandokhail remarked that environmental pollution was not only an issue of Islamabad instead it is the problem of entire country.



QUETTA: Asghar Khan Achakzai, Dr. Ishaq Baloch, Ghulam Nabi Marri, Mabat Kaka and others sitting in protest camp of student organizations in front of Press Club.

PAC expresses concerns on delays in completion of small dam projects

QUETTA (APP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Balochistan Assembly has expressed serious concern over delays in the completion of small dam projects across the province.

During a recent session chaired by Asghar Ali Tareen, committee members noted that the Irrigation Department had been assigned the construction of 100 small dams, originally scheduled for completion by 2020.

Despite work starting in 2017-18, only 11 dams have been finished, leading to significantly increased project costs and substantial losses to the national exchequer.

Members of the committee, including Rahmat Saleh Baloch of the National Party, Zabeth Ali of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, and Fazal Qadir Mandokhail,

also directed Irrigation Department officials to submit detailed reports on other major projects, such as the Kachhi Canal and other infrastructure initiatives.

Expressing concern over these prolonged delays, the committee members underscored the importance of completing these projects to support water management and agriculture in Balochistan.

Additionally, the committee scrutinized the Lasbela Industrial Estate Development Authority (LIEDA) for its outstanding dues to the Irrigation Department.

Despite charging industrial units in Hub Industrial City Rs250 per 1,000 gallons of water, LIEDA has only been paying Rs7 per 1,000 gallons to the Irrigation Department, a rate unchanged since 1994.

Pak, Russia for enhanced coord. among regional countries for peaceful Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Russia on Thursday called for enhanced coordination among the regional countries for a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

The Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation on Afghanistan, Ambassador Zamir Kabulov paid a day long visit to Pakistan.

He called on Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch and later had detailed discussions with Additional Secretary (Afghanistan and West Asia), Ambassador Ahmad Naseem Warrach.

The two sides exchanged views on relations with Afghanistan and called for enhanced coordination among the regional countries for a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

Zero tolerance for corruption: Aleem orders cleanup, 6-lane expansion for key motorways

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aaleem Khan on Thursday has adopted a zero-tolerance policy within the National Highway Authority (NHA), directing for taking strict and indiscriminate action against corrupt officers and officials. In this regard, the NHA Chairman has been given a one-week deadline to initiate necessary measures. Aaleem Khan emphasized that the cleanup effort would tolerate no leniency or influence ('Sifarish'), stressing that only qualified, honest, and capable officers should occupy all positions, according to a press release.

During a high-level meeting of NHA here, Abdul Aaleem Khan out-

lined a comprehensive plan to enhance the efficiency and capacity of Pakistan's motorway network, which includes increasing the Lahore, Sialkot, and Kharian-to-Islamabad Motorway to six lanes to accommodate growing traffic demands.

Aaleem Khan further directed the NHA to work towards removing barriers on motorways and introducing electronic toll plazas to prevent lengthy queues.

Federal Minister Abdul Aaleem Khan said that all highways and motorways should be connected to cameras and CCTVs so that every vehicle can be monitored.

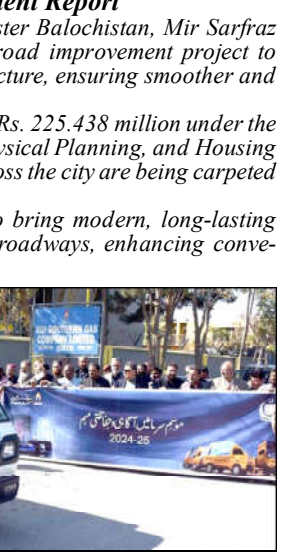
In addition to these modernization efforts, the meeting addressed the construction of critical highway projects.

CM launches major road improvement project in Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, launched a major road improvement project to upgrade Quetta's infrastructure, ensuring smoother and safer travel for citizens.

With an investment of Rs. 225.438 million under the Communication Works, Physical Planning, and Housing Department, key roads across the city are being carpeted in multiple phases.

This initiative aims to bring modern, long-lasting improvements to Quetta's roadways, enhancing convenience and mobility for all.



QUETTA: Sui Southern Gas Company holding an awareness and protection rally during winter.

Budget of Rs. 1.5 bn allocated for provision of books in Govt. educational institutions

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chairman, Balochistan Text Book Board, Dr. Gulab Khan Khilji has stated that the budget of Rs. 1.5 billion has been allocated for provision of the books in the government educational institutions. He said that the offer had been called from all over the country to maintain transparency in the printing of books in which over 14,000 publishers and printers participated.

The Balochistan Text Book Board accepted the offer at the cost 40 percent lesser this year than last year.

With this, Rs. 750 million were saved to the government kitty, he added.

The Chairman Text Book Board said that it is his endeavour to provide books timely in all government schools of the prov-

ince so as to start the academic process at the earliest.

He said that the printing of books would be completed by end of December this year well before start of the new academic year.

He said that the Directorate of Schools would ensure formulation of the mechanism of timely supply of the books in all districts of the province.

He said that the modern research based curriculum would be taught to all children of the province so that they may compete the students of Islamabad and Lahore.

He said that the educational reforms of the present government under leadership of the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti have been appreciated in other provinces of the country.