

Independent

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Bilawal chairs PPP Coordination Committee meeting

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Coordination Committee met at Bilawal House under the Chairmanship of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, to coordinate and prioritise responses to the ongoing political challenges.

Members also noted the growing surge in terrorism in the country and the absence of a new consensus to combat the new challenges resulting from new ground realities.

The PPP Chairman directed committee members to engage with political parties to determine on what issues political consensus can be formed, in order to present recommendations before Party's Central Executive Committee later this month.



LAHORE: Governor Sindh, Kamran Tessori addresses to media persons during Meet the Press Programme, at Lahore press club.

Inflation rate drops to 4.9% in November, lowest in 6.5 years

ISLAMABAD (APP): The core inflation measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI) decelerated further to 4.9 percent during November 2024 as compared to 7.2 percent recorded during October 2024, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Monday.

According to PBS data, the CPI based inflation during the same month of last year (November 2023) was recorded at 29.2%. On month-on-month basis, it increased by 0.5% in November 2024 as compared to an increase of 1.2% in the previous month and an increase of 2.7% in November 2023.

"Pakistan Inflation as measured by CPI has made another multi-year low," commented Advisor to Finance Minister on Economic and Financial reforms Khurram Schehzad on X.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has arrived in Mashhad, Iran. He was warmly received at the airport by Vice Governor General of Razavi Khorasan province Mohammad Ali Nabipour and Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, Mudassar Tipu.

On chief secretary sindh's directives FIR registered against tree cutting near PIDC

Two KMC officials including DG Parks & Horticulture removed from the posts.

Independent Report
KARACHI: Chief Secretary Sindh, Asif Hyder Shah, has taken serious notice of the cutting of trees near PIDC in Karachi. Expressing his strong displeasure, the Chief Secretary has directed an immediate inquiry into the incident and issued orders for strict action against those responsible.

On the directives of the Chief Secretary, an FIR No 156/2024 at Civil Lines police station has been registered against the individuals involved in cutting four trees at PIDC. The Karachi Metropolitan Council (KMC) has also been instructed to initiate disciplinary action against any employees found to be in-

involved in or negligent regarding this unlawful activity. Subsequently, the Karachi Municipal Corporation issued two separate notifications, directing the Director General Parks & Horticulture, KMC, and the Director MUCT, KMC, to report to the headquarters.

Furthermore, Deputy Commissioner South has been given 24 hours to submit a detailed inquiry report. The Chief Secretary emphasized the importance of preserving greenery in urban areas, especially in Karachi, where trees play a crucial role in combating rising pollution and improving environmental sustainability.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the Federal Cabinet Meeting.

Takes key decisions in different sectors Cabinet approves National Prevention of Violent Extremism Policy 2024

PM hopeful of further cut in policy rate after 'record decline' in inflation; Reduction in inflation to lessen common man's burden; Urges ministers to focus on fiscal growth after achieving initial milestone of economic stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Cabinet, on the recommendation of the Interior Ministry, approved the National Prevention of Violent Extremism Policy 2024 on Monday. The cabinet also approved in principle the proposal of the interior ministry with respect to the establishment of Islamabad Central Business District Development Authority.

The meeting, on the recommendation of commerce ministry, authorized to file review petition against the Supreme Court of Pakistan's decision of lifting ban on the export of Monosodium glutamate (Ajinomoto).

The decision was taken in the light of the report of the expert's special

committee that was formed to monitor the impacts of Monosodium glutamate on human health. The report had termed the Monosodium glutamate safe for human health. The committee was comprised of representatives from Pakistan Scientific and Industrial Research, National Agriculture Research Center, National University of Sciences and Technology, Institute of Food and Nutritional Sciences, Federal Ministry of National Food Safety and Research, Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority and Board of Investment.

The meeting of the federal cabinet was held here under the chairmanship of

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

The cabinet, on the proposal of ministry of education and professional training also gave a go ahead to the renewal of the Memoranda of Understandings with respect to University of Cambridge, Saint Antony's College University of Oxford, University of Jordan, Peking University China, University of Hydral Berg, and Pakistan Chairs in Germany.

Furthermore, the cabinet, on the recommendation of ministry of education and professional training approved nomination of Dr Habib ur Rehman and Dr Kamran Ansari as subject experts in the Board of

Engineering and Technology (UET) Lahore and the nomination of Dr Mumtaz Muhammad Shah and Dr Muhammad Ahmed Farooqi as subject experts in Board of Governors of Center of Excellence in Mineralogy, University of Balochistan Quetta.

The federal cabinet, on the proposal of ministry of law and justice and in line with Sindh High Court orders approved the amendment in the jurisdiction of special courts. On the recommendation of ministry of law and justice and in line with Balochistan High Court orders, the cabinet also approved amendments in the jurisdiction of special courts.

Imran arrested in six additional cases, remand extended

RAWALPINDI (INP): Imran Khan, the founding chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Prime Minister of Pakistan, has been arrested in six more cases, according to authorities.

These arrests occurred on September 28, October 4, and October 5.

Prosecutor Amin Minhas confirmed that Khan will be taken on a seven-day physical remand on Monday for the six cases. The remand in the case registered by the New Town police station has already been completed, and the remand in the remaining cases will be processed today.

Currently held in Adiala Jail, Khan's health is reported to be stable.

Jail sources indicate that there is no truth to the rumors claiming that the former prime minister has been transferred from Adiala Jail.

Dar arrives in Mashhad, Iran to attend ECO ministerial meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday arrived in Mashhad, Iran to attend the 28th meeting of the Council Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

He was warmly received at the airport by Vice Governor General of Razavi Khorasan province Mohammad Ali Nabipour and Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, Mudassar Tipu, according to a press release issued by the Deputy PM Office.

In his address at the ministerial meeting, DPM Dar will reiterate Pakistan's commitment to the ECO Charter and highlight the potential of greater connectivity in the ECO region, through the development of road and rail networks; liberalization of visa regimes and simplification of border procedures; and to attain sustainable growth and enhance the geo-economic potential of the ECO region.



KARACHI: Parliamentary Secretary of Information and Broadcasting Barister Danyal Chaudhry and Speaker Sindh Assembly Syed Awais Qadir Shah meet the YPF delegation, led by President Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar, to discuss YPF's role in legislative initiatives and youth engagement.

Danyal Chaudhry says: Committee formed to probe disinformation

KARACHI (APP): The Parliamentary Secretary of Information and Broadcasting Barister Danyal Chaudhry on Monday said that a Committee on Disinformation had been formed to probe into issues related to spreading disinformation.

He said that the Committee would take strict action against those, who were in forefront of spreading disinformation specially be-

longing to parliamentary issues. While talking to media persons, during his visit to Sindh Assembly leading a delegation of Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF) including its President MNA Syeda Nausheen Ifikhar and General Secretary MNA Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani, he said that the Committee had power to pronounce 10 years sentence.

Danyal Chaudhry said that those, who were involved directly or indirectly in attempts to sabotage Parliament, sovereignty of the country, and its stability would be made accountable. Meanwhile, YPF President Syeda Nausheen Ifikhar said that their purpose of visiting Karachi was to develop coordination with provinces and form YPF at provincial levels.

Sindh declared Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus free province

KARACHI (APP): Sindh province has been officially validated as eliminated for Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus (MNT), a monumental milestone in Pakistan's healthcare journey.

The announcement was made during a debriefing session held with the Provincial EPI at local hotel Karachi, chaired by Secretary Health Sindh, Rehman Iqbal Baloch, alongside officials from the Federal Directorate of Immunization, EPI Sindh, UNICEF, WHO, and international experts.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naheed Ashraf exchanging views with Western Fleet Commander, Rear Admiral Mansour Bin Saud Al-Juaid at Naval Headquarter.

SC suspended two SHC decision regarding SPSC Independent Report

KARACHI: The Supreme Court has suspended two significant decisions of the Sindh High Court following an appeal by the Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC).

The appeal was filed by SPSC challenging the Sindh High Court's directive to conduct interviews for certain unsuccessful candidates. A three-member bench, led by Justice Aminuddin Khan, heard the case.

SPSC's counsel, Hafiz Ehsan Khokhar, informed the court that in 2021, 22,877 candidates appeared for the combined competitive examination conducted by the commission. Of these, 186 candidates passed the written exam and were subsequently interviewed. However, the Sindh High Court, acting on petitions from some unsuccessful candidates, ordered oral interviews for 11 such candidates.

The counsel argued that under the law, marks cannot be increased after the written exam.

CM Murad says: Thar Coal transmission challenges hold back promise low-cost power

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that Thar Coal was the most affordable source of electricity generation in the country, however, due to transmission constraints, there are instances when the delivery of this inexpensive power is hindered, preventing the full potential of Thar Coal from being realized.

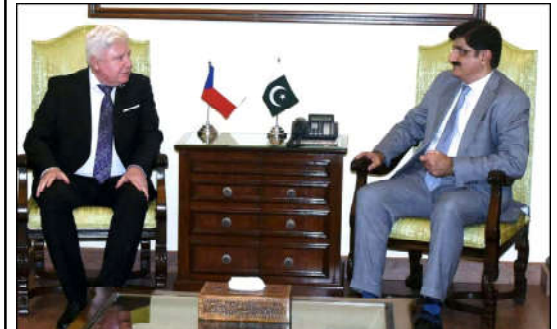
"Since 2019, 27000 GWh of electricity has been generated from Thar Coal Block-II at a significantly lower fuel price of Rs 4.8 per kWh, compared to Rs 19.5 per kWh for imported coal, which has resulted in a foreign exchange saving of approximately \$1.3 billion, a communique said on Monday.

He said this on Monday while presiding over a 28th Thar Coal

Energy Board meeting at CM House. The meeting was attended by Minister Energy Nasir Shah, MNA Shazia Marri, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, and Secretary Energy Musadik Malik. MD Thar Coal Tariq Shah. From the Federal government (through video link) Federal Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Federal Secretary Energy Fakhre Alam, and others attended the meeting.

Shah said that Thar Coal represents the most economical source of electricity generation within the country, and it is also locally sourced.

"Despite its cost-effectiveness, the evacuation of power from Thar faces challenges due to transmission limitations."



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with the Ambassador of the Czech Republic, Ladislav Stienhubel during meeting held at the CM House in Karachi.

CJP agrees to many requests of SCBAP for efficient dispensation of justice

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr Justice Yahya Afridi has agreed to early fixation of all types of bail applications soon after the filing, restoration of the chamber hearing to interim applications and many other steps requested by the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan (SCBAP).

The President SCBAP, Mian Muhammad Rauf Atta, accompanied by the General Secretary, Mr. Salman Mansoor, met with the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, to discuss challenges faced by the legal fraternity in ensuring efficient dispensation of justice at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The Chief Justice was acceded to many genuine requests of the Bar. He agreed to early fixation of all types of bail applications soon after the filing and to allow the request of restoration of the chamber hearing of the cases with regard to interim applications and stay matters. CJP indicated that throughout the week, judges nominated by the Supreme Court would be hearing the cases in chamber. Following the SCBA leadership's request, the Chief Justice agreed to increase the number of judges assigned to chamber appeals to further expedite the process.



HYDERABAD: Minister for Irrigation, Jam Khan Shoro along with Dr. Arabella Bhutto, Vice Chancellor Shaheer Allah Buksh Soomro (SABS) University cutting inaugural ribbon during the inauguration of 19th Annual Degree Show held in Jamshoro.

Talpur directs free-of-cost courses at social welfare centers to empower communities

Independent Report
KARACHI: Mir Tarique Ali Khan Talpur, Minister for Social Welfare Department, undertook a series of visits to vital welfare facilities in Hyderabad today. During these visits, he assessed the services being provided to the community and issued important directives to enhance their accessibility and quality.

The Minister visited the Pilot Social Welfare Complex in Qasimabad, where he reviewed the ongoing services offered to the community. These include computer courses, language classes, and beautician courses. While the center previously charged a nominal fee of Rs. 200 for adults and children, the Minister instructed that these courses should now be provided free of cost to support and empower

the community. "Education and skills should not be a luxury. These initiatives are meant to uplift our people, and making them free of cost will ensure everyone has equal access to opportunities," said Mir Tarique Ali Khan Talpur. The Minister also inspected the under-construction Rehabilitation Center for Senior Citizens in Qasimabad. This center, designed to accommodate 50 senior citizens, will offer comprehensive facilities, including food, shelter, and other essential services. The Minister directed the concerned officials to expedite the civil works and ensure the project's completion within the current financial year. "Senior citizens are the backbone of our society. It is our duty to provide them with comfort and care in their later years."

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

The ban question

Renewed talk about banning one of the country's largest political parties shows nothing but the impoverishment of democratic thought in the Pakistani power elite. Following the forcible eviction of the PTI's latest protest from the federal capital, some entities have once again taken to describing the party as a 'terrorist outfit' and are seeking its proscription. Thankfully, the PPP, JUI and some others have opposed the measure, calling it a bad idea.

Others, perhaps most surprisingly the ANP, have made no bones about the fact that they wish to see the PTI removed from the picture completely. However, the parties that want the PTI to be banned do not seem to realise that they are veering away from the very 'democratic' credentials they claim to possess.

The recent round of condemnations started with the Balochistan Assembly, which passed a resolution on Thursday amid an opposition walk-out calling to ban the party after its recent protests. Even by the sketchy standards of democracy in the province, this marked a new low. A similar resolution was also tabled in the Punjab Assembly, but this could not be passed with the same alacrity shown by the Balochistan Assembly, seemingly due to the PPP's opposition to the move.

Meanwhile, the federal cabinet considered imposing governor's rule in KP but again, saner minds seemed to have prevailed. None of this, however, is as disappointing for a student of Pakistan's political history as the fact that the heir of Khan Abdul Wali Khan, Aimal Wali, current chief of the Awami National Party, has also joined the chorus of those seeking a ban on PTI, going so far as to call it a "waste that should be disposed of".

Among Pakistan's mainstream political parties, only two have been formally banned. One was the National Awami Party, led by Wali Khan, which was proscribed in 1975 but then came back to life as the ANP. The other was the Awami League, and the disastrous consequences of banning it led to the secession of East Pakistan. After usurping power, the dictator Gen Ziaul Haq attempted to ban the PPP too, and was instrumental in carving some factions out of it, but Bhutto's party also endured.

This history shows that bans simply do not work. All parties make mistakes, and the state and the citizenry can sometimes clash in violent ways. But this cannot be used to justify denying the public their constitutional right to organise under whatever banner they wish.

Instead of resorting to such arbitrary calls, all parties must focus on contributing positively towards the country's political culture by working to mitigate the divisions that exist between them and focusing on a negotiated solution. That is the only viable path forward in Pakistan's case.

Slicing Syria

Zarrar Khuhro

As I write this, Syrian rebels are in control of half of the ancient and strategically vital city of Aleppo. In a rapid three-day advance that saw government forces melt away, the rebels captured town after town before entering Aleppo. This is not only the biggest rebel advance in almost a decade, it is also the only time rebels have assaulted Aleppo since 2012, when they seized control of eastern Aleppo before being subjected to a brutal siege by Russian and Syrian forces in 2016, which ended in their retreat.

The offensive has upended the fragile balance established since the Russian and Iranian intervention — aided by a large deployment of pro-Iran forces like Hezbollah, various Iraqi militia groups and also the Al Fatehmiyoun and Al Zeinabiyoun militias — helped Bashar al-Assad's floundering Syrian Arab army (SAA) retain control over approximately 70 per cent of the country.

The rebels — an alphabet soup of groups with differing ideologies and composition — retained control of the rest of Syria and have enjoyed the support of a changing cast of regional actors, notably Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which has carved out a 'buffer zone' in northern Syria, ostensibly as a defence against attacks by the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

The rebels have also received political and logistical support (along with not-so-covert military aid) from several Western powers, notably the US, which retains 900 soldiers in Syria, ostensibly to protest against a resurgence by the Daesh.

The current advance is being spearheaded by Hayat al-Tahrir Sham (HTS) along with smaller

groups and seemingly a not insignificant number of foreign fighters, such as Uzbeks and Chechens. Reports also seem to indicate that the SDF is cooperating with Russia and Assad's SAA, and while the fog of war is hard to penetrate, this would make sense given Turkey's support for the Syrian rebels.

Interestingly, the fall of Aleppo has also been welcomed by Taliban militant Hafiz Gul Bahadur, whose group hosted several Arab fighters in the past, some of whom went on to join HTS or its predecessor groups.

HTS has an interesting history: its leader, Abu Mohammed al-Golani, was the commander of Al Qaeda's Syria branch, and directed several bombing campaigns which targeted civilians as much as they did government forces. Since then, he has 'moderated' his stance enough to gain the tacit support (or at least end the opposition) of the US, which had designated HTS as a terrorist group. During Donald Trump's first presidency, the US acknowledged that HTS was no longer on its active target list.

This offensive comes at a time when none of Assad's allies — Iran, Russia or Hezbollah — have resources or troops that can be mobilised quickly to aid Assad's forces, which have often proven themselves incapable of fighting.

And it is no coincidence that this offensive — while undoubtedly planned well in advance — was launched just a few days after the Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire. Having lost a great part of its most senior leadership, and having suffered casualties and a serious depletion of their war material stocks, Hezbollah is in no position to aid Assad. Hezbollah also opened it

self up for infiltration and intelligence gathering by Israel due to their involvement in Syria and may eschew another such involvement so soon, even if they had the resources to manage it.

The same largely goes for Russia, which is bogged down in Ukraine, where its best generals and troops must, of course, be deployed at the expense of the hitherto quiet Syrian front. Now, while some Russian air assets are indeed being deployed, it may well be too little, and certainly far too late, to slow the advance. Strategically, the prospect of losing a chunk of Syria poses a dilemma for Russia, which relies on the Syrian port of Tartus, which is effectively Russia's only foothold in the Mediterranean, and allows the Russian navy to repair, refuel and resupply without having to resort to its Black Sea bases.

In effect, this advance opens up new fronts for Russia, Hezbollah and Iran. The obvious beneficiaries are Israel and the US.

Depleted by its war against Israel in support of Gaza, Hezbollah needs to keep its overland supply routes open in order to be prepared for the inevitable second round with Israel, and the advance directly endangers those routes.

Israel, meanwhile, is sitting pretty, having closed the Lebanese front and redoubled its destruction of Gaza. Tel Aviv has a long history of supporting anti-Assad forces and even evacuating Al Qaeda-linked forces to occupied Golan for medical treatment by Israeli army medics. In 2018, outgoing Israeli chief of staff admitted to having armed anti-Assad rebels after years of denials. The dismantling of the 'axis of resistance' remains the goal and this is just one more step towards that end. -- Courtesy Dawn

Education reforms

Muhammad Memon

Educational reforms in the country have, from the start, struggled with issues of inequality, access, quality, and relevance. Major challenges have included insufficient public spending on education, low literacy rates, gender disparity, an inadequate infrastructure, and poor delivery. The national education policy of 2009 was a landmark reform. It emphasised increasing literacy rates, improving quality, and addressing gender disparities. However, it was not fully implemented due to many hurdles.

Pakistan is committed to the Education for All initiative, which aims at providing quality education to all children, particularly focusing on girls, marginalised groups, and those living in rural areas. Pakistan also undertook higher education reforms, notably with the creation of the Higher Education Commission in 2002. The HEC was tasked with improving research, funding, and infrastructure for the universities.

To bridge the gap between education and the workforce, Pakistan has focused on reforms to enhance technical and vocational education in order to improve employability and economic productivity.

The Federal Ministry of Education has introduced a curriculum and assessment reform through a systematic process to improve the quality of education. The HEC has introduced teacher education reform, which helped revamp pre-service teacher education in the country. In order to assure the quality of teacher education, the HEC introduced accreditation for teacher education programmes. The Inter-Board Coordination Committee has intro-

duced a grading scheme for the SSC and HSC examinations conducted by the Boards of Secondary and Intermediate Education in the country — again a positive step towards improving the quality of education. The respective provincial governments have also made a number of interventions for improving the quality of education, but their impact is yet to be determined.

Sindh has introduced teacher licensing managed by the Sindh Teacher Education Development Authority. Although it is at the initial stage, it will help professionalise teacher education and improve teacher quality. Like other provinces, Sindh has also introduced a cluster-based continuous professional development policy, replacing the ad hoc approach to in-service teacher education. A critical mass of human resources, including master trainers, guide teachers, and subject coordinators, has been developed. They will be responsible for teachers' continuous professional development. Under this policy, the subject coordinators have been playing a pivotal role in conducting classroom observations and formative assessments for coaching purposes. The Sindh government has plans to develop the accreditation framework and the continuous professional development qualification framework to promote quality teaching.

In order to fully transform the education system, reforms should focus on increasing public spending, which needs to be substantial in order to ensure that schools are well-funded and equipped with modern teaching resources. There should be a nationwide initiative to improve teacher training and professional development. This would raise the qual-

ity of instruction and improve student learning outcomes.

Education for girls must be a priority, especially in the rural and tribal areas. Incentive programmes, community engagement, and awareness campaigns will help resolve cultural barriers. Using technology for remote learning and optimising digital education platforms can reduce some of the geographical disparities in our education system. Given the country's cultural and regional diversity, educational reforms should be localised to meet the unique needs of each region, while ensuring alignment with the larger national educational goals.

Educational reforms are normally project-driven and funded by donors. Although there are some successes, the projects tend to function in isolation rather than integrating with the mainstream. Donor-driven projects normally take off late due to procedural matters. A thorough implementation plan seems to be the best solution for effective results.

The sustainability of education reforms and their impact have been a long-standing issue, which must be tackled. Any education reform must be part of the national/regional education development plan based on a needs assessment.

Pakistan has an opportunity to reshape its education system into one that meets the needs of all its citizens. A balanced approach, combining investment in infrastructure, teacher quality, curriculum and assessment reform, and technology integration, could provide the foundation for a more equitable and effective education system in the country. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM satisfied over pace of Pakistan-Saudi bilateral projects, cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed his satisfaction with the progress in cooperation and investment projects between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, hailing the longstanding friendship between the two nations.

Chairing a review meeting, the prime minister highlighted that Pakistan's

collaboration with Saudi Arabia continued to grow across various sectors, underscoring the strategic partnership between the two countries. "Saudi Arabia has been a reliable partner in Pakistan's challenging times, and we are committed to deepening this cooperation," Prime Minister Shehbaz said.

The meeting also included a briefing on the remarkable progress of

bilateral investments.

The meeting was briefed about the progress on bilateral cooperation in various fields in the second meeting of the Pakistan Saudi Arabia Joint Task Force held in November.

It was informed that within a short span of time, both the countries had signed of 34 memorandums of understanding (MOUs), seven of which have already been formalized

into agreements. These agreements, valued at \$560 million. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musaddik Malik, and National Coordinator of the Special Investment Facilitation Council Lieutenant General Sarfaraz Ahmed.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding KSAs Investments in various sectors in Pakistan, in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with Ms. Melinda Bohannaon, Director General for Humanitarian and Development at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

Pakistan's regional exports increase 4.09% during Jul-Oct 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries increased by 4.09 per cent in the first four months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) compared to the corresponding months of last year.

The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$1506.131 million, which is 14.33 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$10,507 billion

during July-October (2024-25), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan carried out its border trade with farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives.

Pakistan's exports to China witnessed a decrease of 14.58 per cent from \$952.385 million last year to \$813.441 million during last year.

Kisan Board Sialkot president appointed

SIALKOT (APP): With the approval of the Provincial President Kisan Board Punjab Central, Chaudhry Asmatullah Waryah has been appointed as the President of Kisan Board, district Sialkot.

On the appointment of Chaudhry Asmatullah Waryah as the President of Kisan Board district Sialkot, Jamaat-e-Islami District Ameer Chaudhry Imtiaz Ahmed Baryar, Sheikh Atique-ur-Rehman, Dr. Khalid Khalil, Muhammad Ramzan, Arif Mahmood Sheikh.

PCJCCI says: Chemical industry provides key linkages for products tech

LAHORE (APP): Chemical industry provides key linkages in terms of product technology to several industries, such as automotive, engineering, consumer durables, food processing and petrochemicals.

Globally, the chemical industry is one of the largest and fast-growing sectors; a market of about USD 4 trillion with over 70,000 products. Pak-China Joint

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Vice President Zafar Iqbal disclosed this in a think-tank session held here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Monday.

He mentioned that it is also recognized as the 'mother of industries' since it is vitally important for overall industrial development and self-reliance, being a major provider of raw material to almost all sectors.

PSX stays bullish, gains 1,917 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 1,917.63 points more points, a positive change of 1.89 per cent, closing at 103,274.95 points as compared to 101,357.32 points on the last trading day.

A total of 1,556,252,523 shares were traded during the day as compared to 915,509,804 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs

47.097 billion against Rs. 35.978 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 462 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 339 of them recorded gains and 85 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 38 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 213,514,857 shares at Rs 1.46 per share, Energyco PK with 196,907,321 shares at Rs 5.72 per share and Fauji Foods Limited.

Finance Minister apprises FCDO of structural reforms program

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday apprised the Director General of Humanitarian and Development at the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Ms. Melinda Bohannaon of the government's stabilization and structural reforms program.

According to press release issued by finance ministry, during the

meeting with finance minister, Ms. Melinda Bohannaon was accompanied by Ms. Jo Moir, Development Director, and Louie Dane, Senior Economist.

Senior officers from Finance Division also attended the meeting, the statement added.

He outlined key initiatives, including the privatization agenda, rightsizing of the federal government, pension reforms, and reforms in state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

He highlighted that the quarter 1 tax revenues (YOY) increased by 25.6% in FY 25.

Ms. Bohannaon appreciated the government's comprehensive reforms program and assured the full support to FCDO.

The Federal Minister further shared details about the upcoming ten year Country Partnership Framework with the World Bank (WB), noting that Pakistan will be the first country to enter such a framework.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Seven ships, MSC Positano, Cussler, SM Falcon, Tsukuba Galaxy, Al Jasra, Energy Centaur and Al-Diab-II carrying Container, Palmoil, Chemicals, LNG Gas oil and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal, Engro Yopak Terminal, Engro Elengy Terminal, FOTCO oil Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively on Sunday. Meanwhile another containership 'MSC Silvana-VIII' also arrived at outer anchorage on today Morning.

DCs directed to ensure payments to sugarcane farmers within 10 days

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Commissioner Silwat Saeed has directed the deputy commissioners of Faisalabad division to take appropriate steps for payment to the sugarcane farmers within 10 days after purchase of the produce.

Chairing a meeting here on Monday, she said that the government is committed to save the farming community from exploitation. In this

connection, strict action would be taken if management of any sugar mills is found involved in exploitation of sugarcane growers, she warned.

She said that Punjab government has issued stringent directions for protection of farmers' right. If any sugar mill failed to ensure full payment to the sugarcane growers within 10 days, the premises of such sugar mills would be sealed.

Qaiser Sheikh lays foundation for two new public parks in Chinio

FAISALABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh laid foundation stone for establishment of two new public parks in Chinio on Monday and vowed his commitment to public service and urban development in the area.

Among the new public parks in the city included "Fatima Ladies Park" in Mohalla Mashki Shah and "Irfan Qaiser Sheikh Park" near Lorry Adda Chinio.

Addressing the foundation stone ceremony, the minister highlighted these projects as part of a broader initiative to create recreational spaces for the residents. "Parks and sports grounds contribute to a healthier and happier society", he said, adding that these facilities would enhance Chinio's urban landscape and quality of life. The minister also arranged an open court at his office in Chinio and heard public grievances relating to provision of civic amenities, utilities and health services.

He said that redressal of public problems was collective responsibility.



CHINIO: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh, distributing sewing machines to the poor ladies while holding a "Khuli Kachehri" (Open Court).

Awareness campaigns vital to tackle climate challenges: Rana

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan has said that awareness campaigns are of utmost importance to tackle challenges of climate change.

He said this while addressing PM's Green Youth Movement Capacity Building Training on Climate Action Toolkit at Aiwan-i-Iqbal on Monday. He said that gym clubs in 137 public sector universities and green movement clubs had been set up, adding that more than 18,000 persons have been registered as club members. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also wrote a letter to the members to encourage them, he added.

Rana Mashhood said that after 137 public sector universities, private universities had also been contacted in this regard and there were 268 universities across the country. He said, "We are focusing to make gym clubs in all public and private universities by next year." Later, colleges and schools would be approached in this regard, he said and added that currently smog was the biggest health hazard.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the 1st meeting of Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority.

KP cabinet decides to declare instigators in Kurram as terrorists

Decides to take decisive action in Kurram for lasting peace

PESHAWAR (APP): The 18th meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, on Monday decided to take decisive action in Kurram for lasting peace and declare the instigators in the area as terrorists.

The meeting was attended by cabinet members, Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretaries, and relevant administrative secretaries.

The cabinet decided to identify elements spreading hatred between two and put their names on Schedule IV and take strict legal action

against them under the law, said a press release issued here after the meeting. The cabinet was informed that so far 133 people have been killed in the area while 177 were injured. It was told that a Grand Jirga has been constituted to mediate and ensure a peaceful resolution to Kurram conflict. The Jirga would remain in the area until peace was fully restored.

Meanwhile the government would dismantle all the bunkers in the area as part of security measures and heavy weapons would be confiscated from civilians. Similarly, 65 security checkpoints would be

established on Kurram highway to ensure safe travel. The cabinet decided to ask the federal government to deploy Frontier Constabulary in the area.

The meeting took important decisions related to payment of financial assistance to the victims including the bereaved families and injured of the clashes.

Compensation to the owners of damaged properties would be made on the basis of an ongoing assessment and survey in the area. It was said on the occasion that an initial amount of Rs 380 million has been released for

compensation, with more funds to follow if needed.

The government would facilitate the dignified return of displaced families to their homes.

The cabinet formed a committee comprising the Provincial Minister for Law, Adviser on Information, and relevant parliamentarians to oversee the entire process.

The cabinet also decided to provide bulletproof and bombproof vehicles to the civil administration and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in sensitive districts, including Kurram.

CM Punjab says: Punjab's first regulatory authority established to tackle inflation, encroachments

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired the first official meeting of the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA) to address crucial issues such as inflation and encroachments, here on Monday.

During the meeting, the CM set a target to make PERA operational within three months.

The meeting also saw the approval of key matters related to the authority's establishment, appointments, regulations, and other procedures.

Nawaz directed that all appointments and hiring within PERA be carried out with complete transparency and merit. She also emphasized the need for an effective monitoring system for the authority's operations. Additionally, the formation of committees related to PERA was approved, and positions for the headquarters, divisions, districts, and tehsils were also approved. Each tehsil will have Sub-Divisional Enforcement Officers, Investigation Officers, Senior Sergeants, and Sergeants appointed.



LARKANA: Participants are holding awareness walk led by District Council Larkana Chairman, Aijaz Ahmed Leghari in connection of World AIDS Day organized by Bridge Consultant Foundation held at Arts Council in Larkana.

Speakers call for ending gender-based violence

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University Department of Gender Studies in collaboration with the United Nations Women and the Women Development Department, Punjab University, Ms Saman and Nabila Malik from UN Women, Islamabad, faculty members and a large number of students were present.

In her address, Dr Ra'ana Malik emphasized the critical importance of rising voices against gender based violence in Pakistan. She highlighted the PU's commitment to fostering awareness and mobilizing change in society.

On this occasion, Chairperson Department of Gender Studies Prof Dr Ra'ana Malik, Secretary Women Development Department, Punjab University, Ms Saman and Nabila Malik from UN Women, Islamabad, faculty members and a large number of students were present.

In her address, Dr Ra'ana Malik emphasized the critical importance of rising voices against gender based violence in Pakistan. She highlighted the PU's commitment to fostering awareness and mobilizing change in society.

CM condemns attack on police in D.I Khan

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, strongly condemned the incidents of firing on a police mobile van and a check post in Dera Ismail Khan, resulting in the martyrdom of Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Mir Ghulam and injuries to other police personnel.

Expressing deep sorrow over the loss, the Chief Minister offered heartfelt condolences to the family of the martyred officer and prayed for the elevation of his rank in the afterlife.

Eradicating women harassment, drug trafficking in educational institutions vital: Governor

FAISALABAD (APP): Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that eradicating women harassment in educational institutions is most important to enable them to play their due role in national development freely.

He was addressing the 11th convocation of the University of Faisalabad here on Monday. Chairman Board of Governors Mian Muhammad Haider Amin, Vice Chairman BoG Dr Muhammad Hamza Amin,

Deans, Faculty, parents and a large number of students were present on the occasion.

The governor said that comprehensive policies are being framed to eliminate women harassment as well as clean educational institutions from drug trafficking. He said that some anti-state forces were hatching conspiracies against the country since it came into being. "Our enemies do not want us but we pay tribute to our armed forces who

are sacrificing their lives on borders to protect the homeland," he said.

The governor also paid rich tribute to the martyrs of law enforcement agencies.

He also extended warm congratulations to the teachers, graduating students and their parents.

"I appreciated the selfless efforts of parents who have overcome challenges to support their children's dreams," the governor said.

International News

56 people killed in stampede following clashes at a Guinea soccer match, authorities say

Monitoring Desk
CONAKRY: Fifty-six people were killed and several injured in a stampede at a soccer stadium in southern Guinea, following clashes between fans, Guinea's government said Monday.

Authorities are conducting an investigation to establish those responsible for the stampede on Sunday, Communications Minister Fana Soumah said in a statement read on national television.

Among the victims are several children according to local media and a coalition of political parties.

The stampede broke out on Sunday afternoon at the stadium in the city of Nzerekore during the final of a local tournament between the Labe and Nzerekore teams in honor of Guinea's military leader, Mamadi Doumbouya, Guinea's Prime Minister Amadou

Oury Bah said on the X platform.

"During the stampede, victims were recorded," Bah said, without giving details. The regional authorities are working to restore calm in the area, he added.

Local media reported that security forces tried to use tear gas to restore calm after the chaos that followed a disputed penalty.

"This (the disputed penalty) angered supporters who threw stones. This is how the security services used tear gas," Media Guinea, a local news website, reported. It said several of those killed were children while some of the injured being treated at a regional hospital are in critical condition.

Videos that appeared to be from the scene showed fans in a section of the stadium shouting and protesting the refereeing before clashes broke out as people poured onto the field.

People were running as they tried to escape from the stadium, many of them jumping the high fence.

Videos also showed many people lying on the floor in what looked like a hospital as a crowd gathered nearby, some assisting the wounded.

The National Alliance for Alternation and Democracy opposition coalition called for an investigation. It said the tournament was organized to drum up support for the "illegal and inappropriate" political ambitions of the military leader. Guinea has been led by the military since soldiers ousted President Alpha Conde in 2021. It is one of a growing number of West African countries, including Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, where the military has taken power and delayed a return to civilian rule.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visit an exhibition of Ukrainian unmanned vehicles, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv.

ICC collected more evidence in last 18 months than it has in past 20 years, says chief prosecutor

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: The International Criminal Court (ICC) has collected more evidence and information in the past 18 months than it has in the 20 years since it was founded, its chief prosecutor said on Monday.

Karim Khan emphasized the court's recent intensified efforts during his address at the 23rd session of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) to the ICC's Rome Statute.

The ICC has received the most evidence and documents in its history in the

last year, with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and victims submitting a large number of documents and evidence under Article 15 of the Rome Statute, he noted.

Of the 30 arrest warrants issued by the court, the chief prosecutor said 18 were issued within the last three years.

Stressing that the law must be applied equally to everyone, Khan said the protection that people on one side of the world enjoy is no different than that on the other.

Turkish foreign minister to participate in NATO meeting in Brussels

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan will travel to Brussels to take part in a two-day meeting of NATO foreign ministers starting on Tuesday.

According to Turkish diplomatic sources, the meeting in the alliance's headquarters will be held in three sessions.

In the first session, which will be attended by Jordan's King Abdullah II, the crisis in the Middle East and cooperation between NATO and Amman will be discussed.

Cyclone Fengal toll rises to 20 in South Asia

Monitoring Desk
FENGAL: The death toll from Cyclone Fengal's fierce push through Sri Lanka and southern India reached 20 on Monday as downpours and flooding followed the storm's wake after its winds calmed.

Fengal made landfall in India's Tamil Nadu state on Saturday, bringing the highest 24-hour rainfall seen in 30 years to nearby Pudukcherry, before weakening to a normal low-pressure weather system by Monday morning. More deaths were reported in Sri Lanka after Fengal skirted the island na-

tion on Friday bringing intense rains that triggered landslides. Sri Lanka's disaster management agency said a total of 17 people had been killed in the country while nearly 470,000 others were taking shelter in temporary relief camps. India recorded three deaths from electrocution as a result of the storm, Tamil Nadu disaster management minister KKSSR Ramachandran told reporters late Saturday. He did not give further details on what caused the deaths, adding that damage from the cyclone was otherwise "minimal".

Indonesia, Canada sign comprehensive economic partnership

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Indonesia and Canada on Monday signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) that aims to strengthen economic ties between the two G20 members, three years after negotiations began.

The agreement will take effect in 2026 and was signed in Jakarta by trade ministers of both countries.

Zelenskyy says Ukraine wants to retake territory under Russian control through diplomacy

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday said Kyiv wants to retake its territory currently under Russia's control through diplomatic means.

"Our army lacks the strength to take back some territories, like Crimea. That is true. We do have to find diplomatic solutions," Zelenskyy said in an interview with Japan's Kyodo News.

He said a diplomatic solution to the issue can only be considered when Kyiv knows it is "strong enough" to prevent any further military actions by Russia.

Reiterating that support from partners for Kyiv is "not enough," Zelenskyy urged NATO to invite his country for membership talks as soon as possible.

He said the war that started in 2022 has entered a "complicated period," claiming about 12,000 North Korean soldiers have been deployed to Russia's border region of Kursk, which Ukraine invaded in August.

He argued it is "indisputable" that Russian President Vladimir Putin will use the North Korean soldiers as "cannon fodder" to reduce its own losses.

The Ukrainian president said he has information about casualties among North Korean soldiers on the front line, but did not provide specific numbers.

He said US President-elect Donald Trump and his incoming administration are aware of Ukraine's position and "victory plan," and that his team is studying the contents of the plan.

French claim of ICC immunity for Netanyahu has no legal basis: Ex-Greek foreign minister

Monitoring Desk
ATHENS: In the wake of international arrest warrants issued for Israel's prime minister and former defense chief, France joined a handful of countries saying they will not uphold the decision should the accused enter its territory.

Despite initially vowing to "adhere to its international legal obligations" after the International Criminal Court (ICC) warrants were issued more than a year into the country's genocidal war on Gaza, France's Foreign Ministry said last week that Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant had immunity to the court's decision. However, according to a former Greek foreign minister, France must backtrack on its position again, as it contradicts legal principles.

George Katrougalos, who is also a professor of international law, noted that the French government's reasoning is based on the fact that Israel is not a

party to the ICC's founding document, the Rome Statute, and this makes Netanyahu and Gallant immune to the court's order for their arrest. "We have not heard something like that from France when Russian President Putin has been indicted with an arrest warrant against him by the very International Criminal Court," Katrougalos told Anadolu. Russia, like Israel, is not a signatory of the Rome Statute. He emphasized that article 27 of the statute clearly states that there is no immunity for heads of state or government who are indicted or sentenced by the ICC, adding, "Exactly that was the mission of the ICC. Bringing heads of government, strong people, who have committed crimes, to justice."

On the potential legal consequences for states that do not comply with ICC decisions, Katrougalos warned that failing to implement such decisions would violate international law.

Ex-NATO chief Stoltenberg suggests Ukraine could temporarily cede territory for peace

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: Former NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has suggested that temporary territorial concessions to Russia could help establish a cease-fire in the ongoing Ukrainian conflict.

In an interview with German media outlet Table Briefings published on Monday, Stoltenberg emphasized that diplomatic negotiations and compromise could pave the way toward a cease-fire agreement.

"We need a cease-fire line, and of course ideally this (the Ukrainian part) should include all areas currently under Russian control. But we see that this may not be realistically achievable in the immediate future," Stoltenberg said.

"If the cease-fire line means that Russia contin-

Vanuatu urges top court to recognise climate change harms

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: Vanuatu on Monday urged the United Nations' top court to recognise the harm caused by climate change in its judgment on the legal obligation of countries to fight it and address the consequences of them contributing to global warming.

Vanuatu, one of the small island states that has spearheaded the effort to get the World Court to give a so-called advisory opinion, was the first of more than 100 states and international organisations to give its views during two weeks of proceedings.

"We find ourselves on the front lines of a crisis we did not create, a crisis that threatens our very existence."

Bilawal reaffirms Commitment to create inclusive, equitable society for PWDs

KARACHI (INP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable society for persons with disabilities (PWDs) on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Endorsing the 2024 theme, "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future," he emphasized the importance of recognizing the leadership and contributions of PWDs in building a better Pakistan.

In a statement issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House Monday, Chairman PPP highlighted that his party has always been at the forefront of advocating for the rights of marginalized communities, including persons with disabilities. "From ensuring job quotas

to implementing inclusive education policies, we have consistently worked to empower PWDs and integrate them as equal contributors to society," he stated.

Chairman PPP emphasized that providing equal opportunities and access to public infrastructure, healthcare, and education for PWDs is not just a legal obligation but a moral duty of any progressive society. "We need to dismantle societal prejudices and stereotypes that perpetuate inequality and foster an environment where every individual can thrive," he added.

He endorsed the 2024 theme, asserting that persons with disabilities must not only be included in decision-making processes but also be empowered to lead efforts for a sustainable future. "Their leadership is pivotal to achieving a truly inclusive Pakistan,

he remarked.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari made special mention of the Sindh Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act 2018, calling it a landmark legislation for the rights of persons with disabilities. He urged the federal and other provincial governments to strengthen the implementation of disability rights legislation and learn from Sindh's example to ensure Pakistan moves towards a more inclusive future in line with international commitments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari concluded by reiterating that the Pakistan Peoples Party remains steadfast in its mission to champion inclusivity, equality, and dignity for all citizens, leaving no one behind.



LAHORE: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori in a group photo with senior journalists during luncheon hosted by Chairman Neo News Prof. Dr. Chaudhry Abdul Rehman.

Young Parliamentarians Forum and Sindh assembly unite to launch provincial chapter

Independent Report
KARACHI: In a landmark meeting at the Provincial Assembly of Sindh, the Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF) Pakistan, led by Member of National Assembly and President YPF Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar, engaged in productive discussions with Honourable Speaker Syed Awais Qadir Shah and members of the Sindh Assembly. This meeting set the stage for the official establishment of the YPF Sindh chapter, an initiative aimed at empowering young lawmakers and encouraging collaboration on social and legislative issues.

The YPF delegation, comprising board members, legislators, and se-

retariat members from the National Assembly, included Mir Jamal Khan Raisani (General Secretary YPF), Muhammad Iqbal Khan (Information Secretary YPF), Barrister Aqeel Malik, Danyal Chaudhry, Raja Osama Sarwar, Saad Waseem Sheikh, Kiran Imran Dar, Akhtar Bibi, Shaista Khan, Syed Ali Gillani, Ali Jan Mazari, Salahuddin Junejo, Pir Ameer Ali Shah Jeelani, Zulfiqar Sattar Bachani, Muhammad Miqdad Ali Khan, Muhammad Saad Ullah, Usman Ali, and key officers from the National Assembly Secretariat, including Syed Shamoosh Hashmi, Muhammad Mushtaq, and Zafar Zultan.

Speakers urge Collaborative efforts to address water woes in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan's largest metropolitan city, Karachi, is grappling with water scarcity due to a lack of appropriate preventive policies and actions.

The city's water supply relies on surface water and groundwater sources; however, the supply is insufficient, and the water quality falls short of acceptable standards.

These issues were highlighted by speakers during a workshop titled Strengthening City-Wide Partnership to Promote Collective Action for Water Stewardship (SCWP), held at a local hotel here.

The session identified and discussed local water-

related challenges. The event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from various government departments such as the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWS&C). It also included religious scholars from different sects, such as Jamia Darul Uloom, representatives from civil society, academia and researchers from NED University, and representatives from private sector businesses. The session aimed to establish a workable Collective Action Platform for addressing water related issues.

Ahsan discusses legal matters to fix responsibility for NJHPP tunnel collapse

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday chaired a meeting on the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHPP) to finalize and present recommendations for immediate remedial measures aimed at the early rehabilitation and operationalization of the project.

The minister also discussed legal issues with the Secretary for Law and Justice and the Attorney General for Pakistan to establish a strong legal basis against those responsible for the collapse of the tunnel, a news release said.

Additionally, the minister emphasized the internal accountability process concerning poor project management by WAPDA.

During the meeting, officials briefed the minister on the project's technical issues, stating that while some problems had been identified, accountability was still under investigation.

Ahsan Iqbal expressed serious concerns over the delay, highlighting that it had hindered timely investigations and accountability. "From the outset, an accountability mechanism should have been in place to monitor progress and assign responsibilities, especially for a project of this scale," he remarked.

The minister directed that both approaches to the investigation be pursued, including engaging an international consultant and speeding up the completion of ongoing work, adding that all mega projects like Diamer-Bhasha Dam must be free of poor project management.

He stressed the need for an independent validation of NESPAK's work by international experts to avoid similar recurring issues in the future, and stated that the reform of NESPAK must be undertaken as a priority.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning & Development, Ahsan Iqbal chairs a high-level meeting to expedite immediate solutions for the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project.

Launch of roadmap for addressing domestic violence in Sindh

Independent Report
KARACHI: The Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and Pathfinder International, supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) under the AWAAZ II program, have officially launched the Roadmap for Addressing Domestic Violence in Sindh through the Implementation of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2013 and Rules 2016. The launch event

was held at the Mövenpick Hotel in Karachi on Monday, December 2, 2024.

As part of the Sindh Government's Technical Working Groups (TWG) under the Multi-Sectoral Coordination Committee (MSCC), which addresses gender-based violence (GBV), the SHRC led the development of the roadmap to address domestic violence in Sindh through a multi-sectoral approach. In collaboration with TWG partners, including UNFPA and Pathfinder International, the roadmap

represents a unified approach to implementing practical solutions and actionable steps to improve the enforcement of the Domestic Violence Law, ensuring better protection for survivors.

This initiative serves to align with the global priorities highlighted by the 2024 theme of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence: "Unite to End Violence Against Women", marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

District Admin Matiari to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities on Dec 5

HYDERABAD (APP): On the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Yousif Shaikh, the district administration of Matiari will observe the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 5 in Bhit Shah.

The theme of the event is "Promoting Leadership of Persons with Disabilities for a Sustainable Future." The program will highlight the rights of per-

sons with disabilities, their participation in social activities and their leadership roles.

Various activities, including speech competitions, tableaux and student presentations will be organized to mark the occasion.

Heads of various public and private institutions from the district, along with representatives of social organizations are expected to attend the event.



LARKANA: Women participating in a awareness walk on the mark of World HIV/AIDS Day organized by Bridge Consultant's Foundation Pakistan at Arts Council Road.

Bridge Foundation, UNDP organize event to mark World AIDS Day

LARKANA (APP): The Bridge Foundation, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), marked World HIV/AIDS Day on Monday at the Arts Council of Larkana.

The event featured a seminar aimed at raising awareness about HIV and AIDS, with several notable attendees, including Ijaz Ahmed Laghari, the District Council Chairman of Larkana, and various local leaders.

During the seminar, Ijaz Ahmed Laghari emphasized the importance of public awareness regarding preventive measures against AIDS. He highlighted that

HIV and AIDS can be managed effectively through regular treatment.

"It is alarming that Pakistan ranks second in the world for HIV/AIDS," he stated and explained that the disease can spread through unsafe practices such as the reuse of syringes, untested blood transfusions, and non-sterilized medical equipment, but it is not transmitted through casual contact like shaking hands.

According to the Sindh AIDS Control Programme (SACP), as of November 30, 2020, over 42,000 people were screened for HIV, with 1,438 testing positive at the Ratodero ART Centre.

PM to pay a two-day Saudi Arabia visit from today to attend Water Summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to pay a two-day visit to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on December 3-4, 2024 to participate in the "One Water Summit."

A joint initiative of Saudi Arabia, France, Kazakhstan, and the World Bank, the Summit aims to promote global cooperation and a coherent international approach towards water resource management through high-level political commitments, according to a curtain raiser issued by the Foreign Office.

At the Summit, the prime minister will deliver a keynote address at a Roundtable focusing on restoration, preservation, and adaptation in the context of fresh water resources and wetlands.

Under-20 Sport festival concluded in Nawabshah

HYDERABAD (APP): District Administration in collaboration with Sports Department, organized sports competitions in Under-20 Youth Sports Festival that concluded here today with spirit and enthusiasm at Bilawal Sports Stadium.

The closing ceremony was attended by Member Provincial Assembly, Ghulam Qadir Chandio, Member Provincial Assembly Chaudhry Javed Iqbal, Secretary Sports Abdul Aleem Lashari, Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Division Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider, Deputy Commissioner Shehar Yar Gul Memon. The ceremony was also attended by former Governor Rotary Club International Syed Tehzeeb-ul-Hassan Kazmi, District President Pakistan Peoples Party Muhammad Saleem Zardari.



KARACHI: Deputy Commissioner Korangi Masood Bhutto along with inspecting and sealed non-standard soap manufacturing factories during the operation against non-standard soap manufacturing factories, located on Korangi area in Karachi.

KCCI for immediate withdrawal of MRP regulation on imported tea

KARACHI (INP): President Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) Muhammad Jawed Bilwani, in response to concerns expressed by the Pakistan Tea Association (PTA) over fixation of Minimum Retail Price (MRP) of Rs1200 per kg flat rate on the import of black tea in bulk for further sales tax and withholding tax, urged the government to withdraw this unjust regulation immediately, stating that this measure would not only penalize legitimate importers by forcing them to pay higher taxes but also make tea expensive, particularly for the poor segment of society.

"Setting the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) at a flat rate per kilogram will disproportionately impact the lowest income groups in both urban and rural areas, equating their burden to that of higher-income groups," he warned. "This move will place an addi-

tional strain on lower and lower-middle-class households, who are already grappling with the severe effects of rising inflation on essential commodities," he added while exchanging views with members of PTA delegation during their visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI).

Chairman PTA Muhammad Altaf, Vice President KCCI Faisal Khalil Ahmed, Chairman KCCI's Federal Taxation Subcommittee Abu Bakar Shamsi, Valuation Chairman PTA Salim Amanullah, Executive Committee Members PTA Sohail Anwer, Abdullah Qadir Qudria, and Abdul Basit Abdul Razzak along with KCCI Managing Committee Members were also present at the meeting.

Jawed Bilwani suggested that instead of applying a flat rate to all types of imported tea, a more thoughtful approach should be adopted.



KARACHI: Members of Sindh Blind Action Committee are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, held at Karachi press club.

Karachi professor dismissed from services for harassing female colleague

KARACHI (INP): Federal Ombudsman on Monday announced the dismissal of a professor in Karachi for harassing a female colleague.

According to Federal Ombudsman for anti-harassment, Federal Urdu University for Arts and Science and Technology (FUUAST) professor Hafiz Ishaq was proven guilty for harassing female teacher.

According to the spokesperson of Federal Ombudsman office, lady professor filed complaint against Professor Hafiz Ishaq for 'harassment'.

FUUAST professor Hafiz Ishaq was found guilty during the proceedings.

ATC sends PTI founder to jail on judicial remand

RAWALPINDI (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) has sent PTI founder Imran Khan to jail on judicial remand in New Town police case and other cases.

The case registered against PTI founder in New Town police station came up for hearing in the court Monday.

ATC judge Amjad Ali Shah heard the case in Adiala jail. PTI founder was presented in the court in case pertaining to New Town police station on completion of 6 days physical remand. The court sent Imran Khan to jail on judicial remand. PTI founder was also sent to jail on judicial remand in more 6 cases.

The case registered against PTI founder related to September 28 protest was also heard. Investigation officer Rashid Kiyani and prosecutor Zahir Shah appeared in the court along with team while Faisal Chaudhry and Muhammad Faisal Malik counsel for PTI founder also appeared in the court.

Saleem expresses displeasure over delays in Jamshoro dev. projects

HYDERABAD (APP): A meeting chaired by Sindh Chief Minister's Special Assistant for Public Health Engineering and Rural Development Muhammad Saleem Baloch, expressed displeasure over delays in Jamshoro development projects. The meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner Office, Jamshoro was attended by MPA Dr Sikandar Khan Shoro, MPA Malik Sikandar Khan, former MNA Sikandar Ali Rahpoto, Deputy Commissioner Jamshoro Ghazanfar Ali Qadri and officers from the Public Health Engineering and Rural Development department, along with officials from other district departments. According to a handout issued on Monday, Muhammad Saleem Baloch was briefed on the ongoing development schemes under the Public Health Engineering and Rural Development department in Jamshoro district.



HYDERABAD: Minister for Irrigation, Jam Khan Shoro take keen interest in different stalls during the 19th Annual Degree Show held at Shaheed A-Ilah Buksh Soomro (SABS) University in Jamshoro.

Lifting ban on PIA in Europe is a significant achievement: Business Leader

KARACHI (INP): The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, the President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, the President of All Karachi Industrial Alliance, the Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board, and the President and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Monday that the lifting of the four-year ban on the flights of Pakistan's national airline PIA in European countries is an excellent achievement.

He said the move would reduce the airline's losses, increasing its market value, which is encouraging.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that efforts should also be made to lift the ban imposed by the UK and the US, and action should be taken against the political swindlers who tried to destroy PIA for personal interests.

Otherwise, he warned that damaging national assets and interests for political benefit would continue.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the ban on PIA in several countries, including Europe and America, was imposed to benefit a foreign airline whose head was a friend of the leader of a fanatic group in Pakistan.

For this purpose, the then Minister of Aviation made a statement in the National Assembly that the licenses of many pilots in PIA were fake, leading to a ban on the carrier.

The organization that checks airlines' safety and performance standards also pushed the PIA rating to the lowest level.

Later, the Islamabad High Court clarified that the Minister of Aviation's statement was wrong, but no action was taken against him for harming the national interests.

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NDF Pakistan Larkana observes International Day of persons with Disabilities Larkana

LARKANA (APP): National Disability and Development Forum (NDF) in collaboration of DEPD Government Sindh, National Disability Alliance NDA and Age Disability and Diversity Task Force (ADDTF) observed here Monday International Day of persons with disabilities at NDF Rehabilitation Center Wakeel Colony Larkana.

Abid Lashari President NDF said that the day is observed to show case hidden abilities of children with disabilities, it highlights the importance of the segment. People with disabilities are not different but equal parts of society, they must be encouraged at all levels.

Mr. Lashari further said that NDF provides here a comprehensive range of life therapy services at the Rehabilitation Center, including physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and psychotherapy. The parents of children receiving services at the center expressed their gratitude for the free rehabilitation support provided by the NDF Rehabilitation Center in collaboration with the DEPD, Government of Sindh.

Saeed Jatoti Deputy Director DEPD Government of Sindh lauded NDF Pakistan for its dedication and efforts as an active service provider and a reliable partner organization of the DEPD.

He reaffirmed the Sindh Government's commitment to supporting initiatives that enhance the lives of children with disabilities.