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PM underscore need for strong political will, global leadership to tackle water crisis

Says our duty to ensure that these rivers, lakes and aquifers that have nourished civilisations for centuries must not be reduced to tales of the past; Also underscored the importance of ensuring the sustainable management of water resources worldwide

RIYADH (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday underscored the need for strong political will, and global leadership to overcome the water crisis posing existential threat to the nations around the globe.

The prime minister, addressing the One Water Summit on the Margins of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP-16) under the theme "Restore, Preserve, and Adapt" here expressed his profound gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, France, and Kazakhstan, as well as the World Bank for organizing the timely summit, to deliberate upon, one of humanity's most pressing

challenges: water security. He said that water was the lifeblood of the planet; a cornerstone of economic development, food security, and environmental sustainability. "This life-sustaining resource, however, is coming under increasing stress. Nearly half of the world's population is facing, water scarcity, for at least part of the year. Billions remain, without clean drinking water, as water pollution, is rising, at alarming levels," he added. The prime minister underlined that the water resources were fast depleting and degrading which was displacing millions, and causing, unprecedented destruction. "This is not a distant threat, but an alarm bell, for

collective action. Pakistan is no stranger to these challenges. Our rivers, glaciers and aquifers are increasingly vulnerable to the impact of climate change, and population growth," he said.

He apprised the leaders at the summit that Pakistan was still grappling with the 2022, catastrophic floods, that caused, widespread damage, to its water resources and irrigation sector, in addition to affecting, millions of lives and livelihoods.

At the same time, he said droughts posed an equally potent threat to the country. "Nearly 70% of our land consists of arid and semi-arid areas, and around

30% of our population, is directly affected by drought-like conditions. Projected temperature increases in Pakistan, are significantly higher, than the global average," he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz highlighted that such catastrophic disasters and challenges were likely to scale up further in the absence of concerted international actions as it was one of the top ten countries, most vulnerable due to climate change.

Commenting on the transboundary water management, he said that water transcended political boundaries, connecting nations and fostering shared ecosystems. "Pakistan, therefore,

attaches great importance to transboundary cooperation. The Indus Water Treaty, which governs, the sharing of the Indus Basin's waters, is one example of such an arrangement."

He added that the treaty witnessed unprecedented challenges in the recent years, due to a number of factors, including construction of upstream dams, whereas its effective functioning was key to maintaining regional peace and stability.

The prime minister also shed light on the 'Recharge Pakistan' initiative that aimed to address, climate induced, flood risks, and mitigate drought impacts, through ecosystem based adaptations.



RIYADH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the family photo of the One-Water Summit.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to transform economic ties

RIYADH (APP): Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have agreed to bring about a qualitative change in their economic, trade and investment relationship.

The understanding to this effect reached during a meeting between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz on the sidelines of the 'One Water Summit' in Riyadh on Tuesday.

Both the leaders expressed satisfaction at the pace of progress of the implementation of the Saudi MoUs and agreements regarding investment in Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked the Crown Prince for his most genuine affection for the people of Pakistan. He reiterated his invitation to the Crown Prince to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

The Crown Prince spoke of his great pleasure at meeting the Pakistani Prime Minister for the fifth time over past six months. He said that this was the evidence of the genuine love and affection that connect the peoples of the two countries.

Meanwhile, in his post on social media handle X, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that frequent high level exchanges between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are paving the way for mutually beneficial economic cooperation between the two countries.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir during the field training exercise near Narowal and Sialkot.

Armed forces fully capable of safeguarding territorial integrity, says COAS

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) affirmed that the Pakistan Armed Forces, with the resolute support of the nation, are fully capable of safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our beloved motherland against the entire spectrum of threats.

In his interaction with the participants of field training exercise near Narowal, Sialkot, he emphasized the critical importance of maintaining constant preparedness to counter any potential threats posed by adversaries, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release.

The COAS visited troops participating in a field training exercise near Narowal and Sialkot. He was given a comprehensive brief on the objectives and

conduct of the exercise, which aimed to refine professional skills and battlefield procedures essential for addressing emerging operational challenges.

During the exercise, integrated fire and maneuver operations were conducted by various elements, including Armour, Infantry, Mechanized Infantry, Artillery, Air Defence, Army Aviation and Anti-Tank Guided Missile units.

The exercise also demonstrated the effective employment of electronic warfare capabilities and information operations designed to disrupt enemy communications and counter disinformation strategies in a modern battlefield environment.

The COAS spent the day in the field alongside the troops, commending their training standards, operational readiness, and high state of morale.

Missing persons case: Regular or joint session of parliament be summoned and matter be resolved: SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) constitutional bench while issuing notice to Attorney General (AG), interior ministry and other respondents and summoning reports from all respective institutions in missing persons case has observed regular or joint session of parliament be summoned and the problem be resolved.

SC constitutional bench presided over by Justice Amin ud Din Khan took up the case for hearing Tuesday. Justice Jamal Mandokhail remarked nation and court are looking to parliamentarians. In my view the case of missing persons is very important. The cases of missing persons are running in high courts and SC.

Thousands of people are missing. Here Aitzaz Ahsan and Latif Khosa like politicians are standing. Parliament has to find out solution to this problem.

Justice Naeem Afghan remarked the motive for recording statements of the recovered persons was this if any one from army is involved then it should be written to GHQ for their court martial. If other institutions are involved then order for initiating proceedings against responsible persons be issued. If any case of missing persons has to be made example then be courageous.

Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Javed Iqbal said missing persons issue has been discussed in the cabinet and cabinet has constituted sub-committee which will present its recommendations to cabinet. Government wants to address missing persons matter finally.

Justice Jamal Mandokhail remarked the issue of missing persons will not be resolved through making statements.

Govt proposes 5-year jail, Rs1m fine for spreading fake news

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has proposed a five-year imprisonment or a fine of Rs1 million for individuals found guilty of deliberately spreading fake news, as part of initial amendments to the cybercrime law, a private TV channel reported on Tuesday.

The draft introduces significant changes to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA), including the establishment of a Digital Rights Protection Authority (DRPA) with extensive powers to block or remove online content deemed harmful to public safety or state interests.

According to the draft, spreading false information, inciting fear, or disrupting peace through online platforms could lead to severe penalties.

PTI trying to hoodwink masses through false narrative of bodies: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was trying to hoodwink the people through fake narrative and lies.

Lambasting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, in a media talk, he said that the party was creating a false narrative of firing on the protesters.

He once again challenged the PTI to present a single piece of evidence showing a law enforcement agencies personnel firing

bullets directly on the protesters.

"There is not a single video in which law enforcement agencies person can be seen directly firing upon protesters. They have all kinds of videos but there is no video evidence (of direct firing) as this never took place", he maintained.

The minister said that a video of a man running away in which he was saying that he hit by a gunshot, went viral.

Attaullah Tarar said the same person in another video was claiming that he had got an injury on his hand.

Imran says he 'still holds trump card close to his chest'

RAWALPINDI (INP): After the embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) faced an abrupt end to its "final call" protest in Islamabad, Aleema Khan, sister of incarcerated party founder Imran Khan, said on Tuesday that her brother "still holds trump card close to his chest".

"PTI founder told me that he would not reveal his trump card right now," Aleema told reporters after meeting the former premier at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, where he has been incarcerated for more than one year. She said that she "waited for six hours yesterday but she was not permitted to meet Imran".

Aleema also dismissed rumours about the PTI founder's deteriorating health conditions, saying that he is "totally fine".

Detailing his brother's stance on the outcomes of the "do-or-die" protest, she claimed that the PTI founder had no access to newspapers and television in prison to stay updated about the country's developments.

She added that the PTI founder received information about the Islamabad demonstration from his lawyers who met him today and yesterday.

According to the briefing, 206 terrorists have been killed in 7984 intelligence-based operations till October this year. During the meeting, it was decided to take comprehensive measures to prevent the activities of banned terrorist organizations on social media. In this regard, with the co-operation of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), the accounts of terrorist groups will be blocked, while the provinces will take steps under a comprehensive strategy to stop the usage of illegal SIMs. The top officials of all relevant institutions, including PTA, were directed to present an effective mechanism in the next meeting.

The interior minister condemned the recent incidents of terrorism in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He emphasised that full cooperation would be provided to improve the professional capabilities of the Counter-Terrorism Forces in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to deal with terrorism, adding that the police and Frontier Constabulary would be strengthened.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chairing National Action Plan's Coordination Committee meeting.

Interior Minister chairs key meeting 206 terrorists killed in 7984 IBOs till October

Govt for enhancing coordination between National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), provinces

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chaired an important meeting of the National Action Plan (NAP) Coordination Committee in Islamabad on Tuesday. During the meeting, it was decided to enhance coordination between the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and the provinces. The minister said that a National Fusion Center has been established for effective coordination.

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based operations till October this year. During the meeting, it was decided to take comprehensive measures to prevent the activities of banned terrorist organizations on social media. In this regard, with the co-operation of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), the accounts of terrorist groups will be blocked, while the provinces will take steps under a comprehensive strategy to stop the usage of illegal SIMs. The top officials of all relevant institutions, including PTA, were directed

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Pakistan, France agree to enhance cooperation in agri, IT, clean drinking water sectors

RIYADH (APP): Pakistan and France on Tuesday agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation especially through the business to business contacts in the areas of agriculture, livestock, IT, skills development and clean drinking water.

The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed in a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and French President Emmanuel Macron here on the sidelines of the One Water Summit.

The prime minister stressed upon the need to further strengthen mutually advantageous economic and trade ties between the two countries. He warmly congratulated President Macron on the successful co-hosting of the One Water Summit in Riyadh.

Commending France's leadership role on climate change and development issues, Prime Minister Shehbaz recalled with appreciation President Macron's strong advocacy for the people of Pakistan in the wake of 2022 devastating floods

the latest regional and global developments. The deputy prime minister arrived here on Monday to attend the moot where he would 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.

Pak, Iran agree to deepen bilateral coop. in all spheres

MASHHAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday held a bilateral meeting with Iranian counterpart Abbas Aragchi wherein both countries agreed to deepen bilateral cooperation in all spheres.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) being held here.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on areas of mutual interest and

the latest regional and global developments. The deputy prime minister arrived here on Monday to attend the moot where he would 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.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Irfan Neziroglu, Ambassador of Türkiye called on Minister for Defence & Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

Muqam reviews progress of development projects in GB

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engr Amir Muqam on Tuesday reviewed the progress of development projects in GB and to resolve their problems on priority basis.

The meeting held on the special instructions of the prime minister and was attended by Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan, Chairman WAPDA Gen (Retd) Sajjad Ghani, GB Ministers and other senior officials, said a press release.

Decisions were taken on important issues in the meeting and a comprehensive strategy was formulated to ensure timely completion of various development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan. The meet-



ing directed to issue the tender for the water scheme within two months, while it was decided to complete the tender for the sanitation and sewerage scheme in four months.

The federal minister instructed the authorities concerned to complete the tenders of the schemes under PC-1 under the approved development projects

within two months and to submit Revise PC-1 immediately so that the projects could be approved by the Ministry of Planning and Development soon.

During the meeting, it was decided that regular meetings will be held every month to review the progress made in implementing the decisions taken in that regard.

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Competing narratives

While the state may have succeeded in beating back PTI supporters from the capital's red zone last week, the battle of narratives between both sides with regard to the deaths that reportedly occurred during the confrontation continues.

The PML-N-led government insists no PTI supporters were killed by law enforcers, while the latter remains adamant that its activists were targeted by the state. The federal information minister told a press conference that no PTI worker was killed during the clashes, while accusing the Imran Khan-led party of spreading fake images and videos on social media to support its narrative. Moreover, the government says four security personnel died in the violence and around 190 were injured while confronting protesters.

While figures quoted by PTI leaders and supporters initially varied greatly, the party now says that 12 supporters died in the melee, and that the state is hiding the truth. It is also a fact that the administration is worried about the PTI narrative on social media, which is why it has formed a joint task force to trace those behind the "massive malicious campaign". In the midst of these claims and counter-claims, instead of focusing all its energies on hunting down the PTI's keyboard warriors, the state would be better off supporting a transparent investigation into the reported deaths. While countering fake news is essential, it is more important to ascertain if there were actual deaths during the confrontation. The reported deaths of law enforcers must also be probed.

Therefore, a judicial commission acceptable to both sides can be formed to conduct an impartial inquiry into the matter. This would put to rest rumours and ensure that justice is served.

It is also important for the government as well as the opposition to agree to some rules of engagement regarding future protests. The right to protest is part and parcel of the democratic process, but some SOPs need to be hammered out and agreed to by all parties so that future demonstrations do not end in bloodshed.

Also, the prime minister has suggested the creation of a special anti-riot squad. If this plan goes ahead, the state needs to give clear guidelines regarding where and how this squad is to be deployed, while its core mandate should be handling volatile situations through non-lethal means. The government's efforts to project the PTI's protest campaign as "anti-state" also needs a rethink. As stated above, all parties and groups have a constitutional right to peacefully assemble.

Criticism of the government, therefore, cannot automatically be treated as criticism of the state, as this gives licence to the administration to brand all opposition parties and critical groups as "anti-national". A clear demarcation is required between anti-government protests, and anti-state activities.

New normals

Tasneem Noorani

Namaz is the time to take a break from worldly matters to stand before Allah and seek His mercy and guidance. But despite one's best efforts, thoughts wander to mundane matters — as they do to the unintended consequences of the events taking place in our country.

In the 1980s, the MQM was created to take care of the monopoly of a party in Karachi. For the next 30 years, we saw the MQM's new culture of violence in Karachi impeding the city's economic, physical and social growth. From the 'city of lights', Karachi became the world's second most unsafe city after Caracas.

In the 1970s, we had to fight fears of the Soviets invading our country after Afghanistan. Simplistically, we took to the idea of training and funding civilians, religiously inclined or financially driven, as mujahideen, and having them cross the western border. It was a win-win. Rulers could prolong their rule; the country and rulers could get dollars. Everyone was happy. The unintended impact was the introduction of drugs and the Kalashnikov culture, which have flourished since.

We also saw that after the USSR's withdrawal, while we expected the mujahideen to return to their mundane village life, they, having become used to power and pelf, morphed into the Taliban.

While we encouraged the Afghan Taliban to destabilise and then take Afghanistan from the US, we expected the Pakistani Taliban to melt away and forget about the power they enjoyed. Now the Taliban, our own handiwork, whether it was through educating

them in our madrassahs or giving them arms and training, are not in our control. They are actively involved in destabilising Pakistan.

In the 1980s, we were seen to support Kashmiri fighters infiltrating occupied Kashmir, resulting in brutal counterinsurgency action by the Indian state, which led to the brutalisation of ordinary Kashmiris, and diluted the sacrifices of the genuine freedom fighters.

In the 2020s, in order to neutralise a political party, we have again hit upon the idea of using the faceless force of the state to bring everyone in line, whether it be a defiant politician, an independent judge or a cheeky policeman. While the temptation to use force in all its forms, without actually killing anyone, is tempting for the state, there will be unintended consequences like before.

The first new normal is the militarisation of the police. Earlier, police officials, while entertaining the wishes of the rulers, always had at the back of their mind the thought that any excesses committed by them could land them in trouble with their department or that the courts could hold them accountable. Now that amne-sty, medical cover and compensation to their families have been assured at the highest level, the level of brutality is unprecedented.

This new norm where the police force is fixed on obliterating the government's political opponents will come to haunt future oppositions. The second new normal is a unique way of arresting a person to ensure punishment before trial, by raiding the home of the victim and traumatising his family, without regard to the unwritten norms of the sanctity of home and

family, which had hitherto been assured in our culture. The destruction of furniture, electronics, windows, crockery, vehicles et al, is the norm now, while there is no mention of this method of punishment in any law book.

The third new normal is multiple FIRs and arrest of undesirable persons. Previously, a person was charged, arrested and given bail if the court felt that keeping him/her in jail was not legally justified. That discretion has been taken away. That is why the state does not find any need to incarcerate anyone under the MPO, which apart from procedural requirements and no provision for arbitrary arrests by the government, has a maximum limit for the detention period.

The fourth new normal is the most serious feature, and a forebearer, of a lawless society. The Supreme Court is, by definition, the highest and most powerful forum and final arbitrator in the state. Its rulings have the effect of law. In this case, in order to tide over short-term exigencies, we disobeyed the court's unambiguous orders of holding elections in provinces, followed by disregarding the order of the full court (the highest conceivable forum) in the case of special seats. While life goes on as normal, this expediency will come home to roost.

Imagine a hotly contested football match with 80,000 fans equally divided between the two sides, watching a match where one team refuses to obey the red card shown by the referee, and continues to play with the expelled, or insists that a goal scored on an offside cannot be refused. You will certainly see a free for all amongst the fans in the stadium to 'settle' the problem. We need to prevent that from happening here. -- Courtesy Dawn

Economic growth

Rashid Amjad

There are indeed signs that the economy is stabilising. The PSX share index has, for the first time, crossed 100,000 points. The rupee-dollar exchange rate has remained stable over the entire year despite speculation to the contrary. The inflation rate has come tumbling down to around six per cent when even the most optimistic projection was of near double this number. The recurring dreaded current account deficit has turned positive with a spurt in exports and a windfall rise in remittances, albeit with controlled imports.

These are all positive developments. But will this trend continue? Most importantly, if it does will it ignite sustained high growth, or as is the case with many developing countries, will it end up in the low-growth equilibrium trap of macro stability without growth?

While the government has taken full credit for stabilising the economy, these developments are of course not just the result of its efforts. To start with, the slowing down in the rate of inflation is global after the end of Covid-19 which sent consumers on a worldwide spending spree. This decline has also been helped by stable oil prices.

As to the stock market, it is firmly in the hands of a few speculators. And past booms have fizzled out at the same speed as stocks have climbed! In any case, hardly any new companies have been listed on the stock market over the last year.

The increase in remittances is indeed welcome but the government should beware that amongst its most likely causes is the return of poverty to Pakistan after nearly two decades

of its declining, a situation worsened by the current government policy of not fulfilling its commitment to buy wheat at a minimum support price and pushing up rural poverty as prices fell to half this promised price. As growth slows down and subsidies on essential items are removed, unemployment and poverty will rise further and the government will be hard-pressed to find the resources to increase direct income support to the poor.

There is then always the fear that as stabilisation measures kick in and aggregate demand is compressed, the economy could slip into a deep recession. The lull in the housing and real estate market if it collapses could create a vacuum which could push the economy in this direction as the collapse of the housing market had done earlier in Japan and more recently in China. This will push the government into a conundrum, leaving it little room for manoeuvre given the tight fiscal constraints the IMF programme has imposed on it. The government should be prepared for such an eventuality.

On the external front, there are already serious concerns building up of global economic uncertainty as Donald Trump takes office next month. While the dollar will, in all probability, strengthen given his announced trade curbs on imports from China, Canada and Mexico in the first instance, a major trade war can erupt with each economy adopting policies designed to protect its own interests. As in the past, this could trigger a global recession which would hurt developing countries including Pakistan. We must also remember that de-

spite improvements in our current account balance we are still vulnerable to external shocks. We possess under three months of foreign exchange reserves to finance imports and a significant gap this financial year in the foreign exchange external balance (including debt repayments). Despite high expectations, foreign investment (Saudi Arabia) and promised debt rollovers (China) have still not materialised.

The real question is that even if the economy stabilises as it has many times before will it ignite higher growth with poverty reduction?

The targeted 3pc growth for this year is less than half of what the country needs, in view of its population and labour force, to make a dent in rising poverty and malnutrition. Though growth is expected to pick up in subsequent years, it will still be much less than required and much lower than what India has posted (over 7pc) in the last three years.

There are some emerging green shoots (for example, IT and AI) which could serve as drivers of economic growth. But it is already difficult to get our ruling elite to pay their due taxes and well-nigh impossible to get them, or for that matter any foreign investor, to risk investments in the current political milieu. Few can blame them after the recent events.

The only way to get out of the interdependent political and economic dead ends is a political detente, or what former senator Mushahid Hussain has termed a 'cooling off' period, in the current confrontation between the major stakeholders. But have we ever learnt from our past mistakes? -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Ahsan congratulates PSX for stellar 60% growth in 2024

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, on behalf of the Prime Minister, congratulated the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on achieving over 60% growth in 2024.

Speaking at the PSX gong striking ceremony on Tuesday, Ahsan Iqbal lauded the exchange's performance, stating it showcased Pakistan's resilience and economic potential.

During his address, Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the importance of four key factors for national development: peace, political stability, consistent policies, and commitment to reforms. He noted that without creating a conducive ecosystem, even the best intentions would be futile. "Pakistan needs these four pillars more than ever," he stressed.

Reflecting on Pakistan's long-term goals, Ahsan Iqbal underlined the need to honor the vision of Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal as the nation approaches its centenary in 2047. "We cannot afford to lag behind economically," he said, calling for strategic progress.

He highlighted the shift from the political ideologies of the 20th century to the economic competition of the 21st century. The minister also announced the forthcoming National Economic Transformation Plan, emphasizing the need for export-led growth and the branding of "Made in Pakistan" products.

He noted that no Pakistani company currently exceeds a \$2 billion valuation, stressing the importance of connecting with

global supply chains for economic survival.

Recounting past achievements, Ahsan Iqbal recalled that when the PML-N assumed office in 2013, the country faced severe crises, including terrorism, energy shortages, and target killings in Karachi. He added that the PML-N restored peace, controlled load-shedding, and advanced the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

However, he criticized the political instability that followed in 2018, which he said disrupted national progress, particularly CPEC's special economic zones (SEZs). When the government resumed power in 2022, Ahsan Iqbal said the focus shifted to preventing Pakistan's economic collapse, with difficult decisions made to stabilize the country.



RUSSIA: Pakistani Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaish Ahmed Khan Leghari meets Russian Minister for Transport Mr. Roman Starovoyt on the occasion of 9th session of Pak-Russia IGC.

ICCI, OBF-UK agree to coordinate business events to boost exports

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the Overseas Business Forum-UK (OBF), led by its Chairman Farooq Khan, visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Tuesday.

The delegation was warmly welcomed by ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, and other ICCI members, said a press

release. The meeting focused on strategies to enhance Pakistan's exports, with the aim of improving the country's foreign exchange earnings.

Both parties agreed to jointly organize business events that would showcase Pakistan's export-oriented products and facilitate business-to-business (B2B) meetings.

To ensure smooth coordination, the ICCI and OBF-UK decided to appoint focal persons for the respective tasks.

Gold prices increase by Rs 700 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs 700 and was sold at Rs 275,200 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 274,500, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went up by Rs 600 to Rs 235,940 from Rs 235,340 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold increased to Rs 216,278 from Rs 215,728.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, MSC Silavana-VIII, DM Bea, Iolaos and Pacific ERA carrying Container, Palm oil, Coal and MO Gas, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal, Pakistan International Bulk Terminal and FOTCO Terminal respectively on Monday. Meanwhile another containership 'Maersk Newark' also arrived at outer anchorage on today Morning. Nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of those two ships, MSC Silavana-VIII and AL JASRA left the port.

Railways earn Rs. 33b in five months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has achieved an unprecedented earning of over Rs. 33 billion during the initial five months of the current financial year 2024-25 with the untiring efforts of the department, despite facing several financial challenges.

"The department has earned this revenue from passengers and freight trains, while surpassing the target through the consistent efforts and hard work of the Railway workers,"

official sources in the Ministry told APP.

Pakistan Railways has achieved a historic financial milestone through generating Rs. 33 billion revenue over the past five months, reflecting a 14 per cent year-on-year growth compared to Rs. 29 billion during the same period last year.

"This marks an incremental gain of over Rs four billion, attributed to enhanced operational efficiency and strategic revenue optimization," the sources revealed.

Pakistan, Russia discuss expansion of bilateral connectivity

MOSCOW (APP): Minister for Energy Sardar Awaish Ahmed Khan Leghari and Russian Minister for Transport Mr. Roman Starovoyt, in a meeting held here Tuesday, positively assessed the prospects of expanding bilateral connectivity which would not only benefit Pakistan and Russia but also the entire region.

Sardar Awaish Ahmed Khan Leghari is on a visit to Moscow to co-chair the 9th session of Pakistan-Russia IGC, said a press

release. Sardar Awaish Leghari appreciated the growing level of cooperation between Pakistan and Russia.

The two sides took stock of all bilateral cooperation projects in the transport sector including road, rail and air, it further said. Both sides agreed to continue contacts and enhance cooperation.

Awaish Leghari also invited Russian minister Starovoyt to visit Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media Fahd Haroon meeting with Kyle Gardner, Head of Public Policy and Government Affairs, Google South Asian Markets.

OICCI organizes conference for empowerment of PWDs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) here on Tuesday hosted its second Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Conference on the occasion of the International Day for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs).

The event convened a diverse group of CEOs, HR heads, business leaders, and policymakers for impactful discussions advocating for the inclusion of the PWDs in the workforce.

Themed "Amplifying the Leadership of Persons with Disabilities for an Inclusive, Sustainable Future" the event highlighted the imperative

for businesses to adopt accessible and inclusive workplace practices. In his opening remarks, OICCI Managing Committee member Ahmed Khan Bozai, emphasized the importance of addressing systemic barriers that hinder PWD inclusion. He stated, "True inclusion goes beyond breaking barriers—it's about building a workplace culture that values the strengths of every individual. When businesses embrace diversity, they not only unlock innovation but also create environments where everyone feels they truly belong and can contribute meaningfully."

PTCL partners with Mumtaz city to empower 2,000 homes with flagship high-speed internet

ISLAMABAD: Country's leading ICT services provider, Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has signed a strategic agreement with Mumtaz City to revolutionize connectivity for its residents and businesses through its premium and flagship internet service, Flash Fiber.



This collaboration highlights the shared vision of PTCL and Mumtaz City to deliver a modern connectivity infrastructure that fosters seamless digital experiences and accelerates technological progress in one of Pakistan's rapidly growing urban hubs.

Under the terms of the agreement, PTCL will take on the comprehensive design, development, and deployment of a state-of-the-art optical fiber network across Mumtaz City.

This advanced infrastructure will provide high-speed internet access to 2,500 plus homes and high-rise structures, delivering unmatched connectivity and high-capacity networks that cater to the demands of modern living. This deployment is a key step towards empowering the Mumtaz City community with high-speed internet solutions.

The signing ceremony was attended by Nauman Durrani, VP Business Operations North, Salman Ali Bajwa, VP Sales PTCL, and Aqil Jamal Butt, Chief Executive, Mumtaz City, along with senior officials from both sides.

Chairs cabinet meeting CM Maryma approves special package for security personnel martyred, injured by PTI mob

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired 20th meeting of the provincial cabinet to discuss and decide on major agenda items.

The provincial cabinet strongly condemned brutal violence and attacks on police and rangers during PTI's violent protest on November 24, and offered Fateha for the security personnel martyred in the protest.

The cabinet approved special packages for those martyred and injured in the protest. These packages include a total of Rs 29 million for the martyred constable of Punjab Police, a Rs 01 million each for police and rangers personnel injured in the

brutal violence of PTI workers.

The CM said that 172 police personnel were injured during the brutal protest of PTI workers, most of them are in critical condition. She said it is shameful to see the condition of the injured personnel undergoing treatment at CMH Rawalpindi, and to note that their killers are our people. She highlighted seeing the violence, the brutality of PTI workers is evident.

The CM said the security personnel were beaten by groups with nailed sticks and rifle butts, adding that the skulls, legs and arms of the personnel undergoing treatment at CMH Rawalpindi were fractured due to the

merciless violence of PTI workers' mob. The SP was beaten so mercilessly with nailed sticks that his skull and brain were damaged and his eye was swollen, she said.

The CM said, "I have never seen such a display of brutality, cruelty and violence in my life. A policeman was shot at close range, which went through his body." She lamented that the constable martyred by the violence of PTI workers has little children. A special force of 10,000 trained security personnel will be established in Punjab to combat riots. Attacks on Dera Ghazi Khan and Mianwali check posts have increased. She directed to improve the security arrangements.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the 20th meeting of Punjab Cabinet.

Punjab Governor says: Elimination of drug trafficking in educational institutions is first priority

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the elimination of drug trafficking in educational institutions is the first priority. He stated this today while addressing the farewell ceremony of Principal Brigadier (Rtd) Mujahid Alam at Lawrence College Ghora Gali Murree. A large number of faculty members, teachers and students of the college were present on the occasion.

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the young generation is the asset of the country. Along with education, he said that moral education and character building is also important for them.

He said that it is the responsibility of teachers to involve students in positive activities. Governor Punjab said that a political leadership involving the young generation in subversive activities is tantamount to anti-nationalism. He said that the young generation rejected the politics of violence.

ATC acquits accused in 8-year-old murder case

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday acquitted a man accused of murdering two children in Liaquatabad eight years ago. ATC Judge Manzer Ali Gill announced the verdict on conclusion of arguments from both sides. The court held that the prosecution failed to substantiate the charges against the accused, Haroon Masih, who was brought to court from jail for the hearing.

The case dates back to 2016, when Liaquatabad police registered an FIR against Masih, alleging his involvement in the killing of two children.

KPCM Gandapur asks universities to focus on students' grooming

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Tuesday asked the public and private universities in the province to focus on students' grooming apart from traditional education to firmly counter the national and international challenges.

Addressing the fourth convocation of Iqra National University on Tuesday, he urged students to embrace challenges, remain resilient, and learn from setbacks. "One failure cannot stop your progress; keep moving forward with faith and determination," he added.

He emphasized the importance of celebrating others' successes, calling it a hallmark of great individuals.

The CM lauded Iqra National University for its rapid progress and expressed pride in participating in its convocation.

Highlighting the role of the private sector, he said, "No government can progress without public and private sector support."

outside Sessions court. The petitioner was shown to have been arrested in case No 863/24 registered in police station Rang Mahal.

Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) discharged him from the case on November 23 but the Islam Pura police again arrested him in evening on November 23 in case No 3691/24 illegally. ATC discharged him from this case on November 25.

On November 26 Police station Shafiq Abad arrested him in case No 4250/24 illegally.

Sessions court discharged him from this case. Counsel for petitioner said local police is harassing petitioner continuously.

Contempt of court petition filed in LHC against CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz

LAHORE (Online): Contempt of court petition has been filed against Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Maryam Nawaz in Lahore High Court (LHC).

PTI leader Akmal Khan filed contempt of court petition against CM Punjab through advocate Khurram Latif for harassing him despite court's orders.

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz, IG Punjab police, CCPO Lahore and others have been made respondents in the petition. The petitioner has taken plea in the petition that LHC had issued order on November 22 for stopping to harass him illegally and on the same day Islampur police abducted him illegally

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is making every possible effort to bring prosperity and convenience to the lives of persons with disabilities.

To help them lead dignified and successful lives, the university offers free education from matriculation to PhD level," said the Vice-Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, in his statement on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Minister highlights Punjab govt measures for special persons

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Mal Department organised a prestigious ceremony on International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The event, held at a local hotel, was attended by Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Mal Punjab, Sohail Shaikat Butt, as the chief guest. The ceremony was attended by Secretary Social Welfare Javed Akhtar Mahmood, DG Sikandar Zishan, and other department officials. Representatives from international organizations, including the British Council, FCDO, UNFPA, Awaz II, NGOs, and special persons, also participated enthusiastically.

Addressing the attendees, Provincial Minister Sohail Shaikat Butt highlighted that for the first time in Punjab's history, the Humqat Card, was launched under the leadership of the chief minister to benefit special persons. He mentioned that so far, 40,000 special persons have been issued Humqat Cards, with an additional 25,000 individuals to be supported in the second phase.

Sohail Shaikat Butt elaborated that after thorough verification at their doorsteps, special persons have been provided with financial assistance of Rs. 10,500 each.

AIOU provides free education to persons with disabilities: VC

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PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Social Welfare and Women Empowerment, Syed Qasim Ali Shah along with others take interest at stall during celebration ceremony in connection of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, held at Nishtar Hall in Peshawar.

Senate Chairman visits Uch Sharif, condoles death of ex-MNA

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani visited the shrine of Hazrat Mahboob Subhani in Uch Sharif on Tuesday. He offered prayers and laid a floral wreath at the shrine. He also visited the shrines of other elders from his family. The Gilani families from Multan,

Uch Sharif, and Jamal Din Wali offered condolences on the death of former MNA Syed Ali Hassan Gilani and performed the ceremonial turban tying for his nephew Syed Ghaus Moeenuddin Gilani. Former Punjab Governor Makhdoom Ahmad Mahmood, Syed Iftikhar-ul-Hassan Gilani.

Governor KP visits Data Darbar

LAHORE (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday visited Data Darbar, the shrine of famous Sufi saint Hazrat Ali Bin Usman Hajveri, commonly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh.

Faisal Karim Kundi laid a 'chaddar' of flowers on the grave and along with devotees also prayed for the progress and stability of Pakistan and durable peace in the country.

Prayers were also offered for the welfare and wellbeing of Muslim Ummah.

Later on, Faisal Karim also distributed "Langar" (free meal) among the devotees. Speaking on the occasion, the governor highlighted the significance of spiritual figures and sacred sites as an integral part of the country's cultural and social heritage. He emphasized their role in providing spiritual solace to people and fostering social harmony.

International News

France's Macron, Saudi crown prince sign strategic partnership, call for Lebanon elections

Monitoring Desk
RİYADH: French President Emmanuel Macron and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman signed a strategic partnership on Monday aimed at deepening bilateral ties and de-escalating conflict in the Middle East, including Lebanon, where the two leaders called for presidential elections. The French leader arrived in Saudi Arabia on Monday for a three-day state visit just as a political crisis threatens to topple the French government.

After a meeting with Prince Mohammed, the de facto ruler of the oil-rich Gulf kingdom, Macron's office announced the signing of a new partnership aimed at improving cooperation in "defence, energy transition, culture, mobility between the two countries".

The two leaders also "agreed to make every effort to contribute to de-escalation in the region", including helping to consolidate the fragile ceasefire between

tween Israel and Lebanon. "Together, they called for the holding of presidential elections in Lebanon with the aim of bringing the Lebanese people together and carrying out the reforms necessary for the stability and security of the country," the statement from Macron's office said.

Macron touched down in Riyadh in the afternoon, where he was greeted by an honour guard of sword-bearing servicemen and celebratory cannon fire as he disembarked from his plane. He did not comment on the political situation in France as he arrived. Macron's visit began as France's less than three-month-old minority government faced the prospect of being forced out by a vote of no confidence in the coming days.

The far-right National Rally party said it would vote to oust Michel Barnier's government after the prime minister used an executive tool to push through a social security

budget bill without parliamentary approval.

The left-wing is also expected to back the motion, which could be held as early as Wednesday. If successful, it would oust the government that was appointed in September after snap polls.

Macron's three-day stay also coincides with a flare-up of violence in Syria, where anti-government rebels have seized Aleppo, the country's second-largest city.

The fighting in Syria follows France's brokering of a ceasefire in neighbouring Lebanon, where Israel has been fighting Hezbollah.

Macron's state visit is the first by a French president to Saudi Arabia since Jacques Chirac in 2006, cementing what the presidency calls a "very close relationship". In 2021, Macron became one of the first Western leaders to meet Prince Mohammed in Saudi Arabia after the 2018 murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at Riyadh's consulate in Istanbul.



French President Emmanuel Macron meets with Saudi's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman during an official visit in Riyadh.

ICJ opens hearing on climate change

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: The future of the planet is at stake during hearings at the top United Nations court, a representative for Vanuatu said on Monday, opening a historic case that aims to set a legal framework on how countries should tackle climate change.

More than 100 countries and organisations are set to present before the International Court of Justice over the next two weeks, the highest number ever.

"The outcome of these proceedings will reverberate across generations, determining the fate of nations like mine and the future of our planet," said Vanuatu's representative for climate change, Ralph Regenvanu.

"This may well be the most consequential case in the history of humanity," Regenvanu told the 15-judge bench in the panelled hall of the Peace Palace in The Hague.

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Putin is 'not interested in peace,' says NATO chief

Monitoring Desk
ATHENS: NATO's new chief on Tuesday drew a grim picture of Russia's leadership, saying that President Vladimir Putin is "not interested in peace."

Referring to the Ukraine war that Russia launched in February 2022, Secretary General Mark Rutte said: "He is pressing on, trying to take more territory. Because he thinks he can break Ukraine's resolve."

"Ukraine is entering another crucial winter. And Russia's aggression shows no sign of abating."

South Korea President Yoon declares martial law, slams domestic opponents

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law in a surprise late-night TV address on Tuesday, slamming domestic political opponents and sending shockwaves through the country.

Yoon said opposition parties had taken the parliamentary process hostage. He vowed to eradicate "shameless pro-North Korean anti-state forces" and said he had no choice but to take the measure to safeguard constitutional order. Yonhap news agency cited the military as saying activities by parliament and political parties would be banned, and that media and publishers would be under the control of the martial law command.

Yoon did not cite any specific threat from the nuclear-armed North, instead focusing on his domestic political opponents. It is the first time since 1980 that martial law has been declared in South Korea. South Korea has had a series of authoritarian leaders early in its history but has been considered democratic since the 1980s.

The Korean won was down sharply against the US dollar. A central bank official said it was preparing measures to stabilise the market if needed. South Korea's parliament, with 190 of its 300 members present, passed a motion requiring the martial law declared by President Yoon to be lifted, live TV showed. Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok has convened an emergency meeting among top economic officials, his spokesman said in a text message.

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Ukraine says it will not accept any alternatives to full membership in NATO

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Ukraine on Tuesday said that it will not accept any alternatives to Kyiv's full membership in NATO, pointing to the "failure" of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum which will mark the 30th anniversary since its signing later this week.

"With the bitter experience of the Budapest Memorandum behind us, we will not accept any alternatives, surrogates or substitutes for Ukraine's full membership in NATO," a Ukrainian Foreign Ministry statement said.

It said that Kyiv is convinced that the only real security guarantee for Ukraine is its membership in NATO, adding that inviting the country to join the alliance will deprive Moscow of its "illusions about the possibility of hindering Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration."

The statement argued that not providing Ukraine

with effective security guarantees in the 1990s was a "strategic mistake" that Russia "exploited" and that the Budapest Memorandum failed to prevent the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

"Failure of the Budapest Memorandum to fulfill its functions has led to a catastrophic increase in security threats not only for Ukraine, but also for other countries and regions, including Europe, the Euro-Atlantic area, Central and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and international peace and security in general," it further said. The ministry also defined the Budapest Memorandum as a "monument to short-sightedness in strategic security decision-making."

"It should serve as a reminder to the current leaders of the Euro-Atlantic community that building a European security architecture at the expense of Ukraine's interests.

UN commission says 'brutality of past years' must not be repeated in Syria

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria on Tuesday urged warring parties in the country to strictly adhere to international law and protect civilians, warning that the dramatic increase in hostilities since Nov. 27 threatens to spread to new parts of the country.

"The brutality of past years must not be repeated, or Syria will be driven onto a new trajectory of atrocities," the chair of the commission, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, said in a statement.

"We call on all parties to break from their past patterns and ensure they protect and respect civilians, their human rights and the Geneva Conventions," Commissioner Hanny

Megally, for his part, said the commission is investigating reported attacks impacting civilian infrastructure in the city of Aleppo, including at least one hospital and a university dorm, as well as reported airstrikes on Idlib and other densely populated civilian areas.

"Both the airstrikes and the rapid changes in territorial control are causing massive displacement of civilians," Megally warned.

The commission is closely monitoring the treatment of civilians, including minorities and prisoners of war as opposition forces advance into government-controlled areas, according to the statement.

The situation is also "volatile" in northern Aleppo, the commission said.

Thailand, Malaysia brace for fresh wave of floods as water levels ease

Monitoring Desk
KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia and Thailand are facing a second wave of heavy rain and potential flooding this week, authorities said on Monday, even as some displaced residents were able to return home and the worst floods in decades began receding in some areas.

Since last week, 27 people have died and more than half a million households in the neighbouring Southeast Asian countries have been hit by torrential rain and flooding that authorities say have been the most severe in years.

The immediate situation has improved in some areas and water levels have eased, according to government data on Monday.

White House defends Biden pardoning son as criticism mounts

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The White House said on Monday that President Joe Biden pardoned his son Hunter in part to protect him from future persecution from political opponents, but his move drew fierce criticism, with some Democrats saying it undermined public trust in the rule of law.

Biden, a Democrat whose term ends on January 20 when Republican President-elect Donald Trump takes office, signed

an unconditional pardon for Hunter Biden on Sunday and said he believed his son had been selectively prosecuted and targeted unfairly by the president's political opponents.

Biden said in the past that he would not pardon his son, including to ABC News in June when he was asked if he would rule it out and replied "yes." His surprise move was panned by his Republican political opposition.

DPM Dar stresses effective implementation of ECO trade agreement for regional prosperity

MASHHAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday urged the member states to ensure effective implementation of the Economic Cooperation Organization Trade Agreement (ECOTA) to help strengthen regional security and economic prosperity through mutually beneficial intra-regional trade.

“However, it is a matter of great concern that the ECO region, comprising an area of 8 million square kilometers and half a billion population - roughly 15% of the World population, has intra-regional trade of, unfortunately, less than 8% of region's aggregate, and only about 2% in global trade, which is in stark contrast to other regional groupings such as the EU where the intra-regional trade stands above 70%, and the ASEAN, where it is around 23%,” the deputy prime minister said addressing the 28th Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers (COM) being hosted here. He said the ECOTA was a landmark intra-regional preferential trade agreement, which was conceptualized exactly in line with the founding and fundamental goals of the organization to create amenable and conducive conditions for the promotion of sustainable economic development of the region, aiming at joint welfare and well-being of member states.

“ECOTA primarily aims to lower tariffs in our region over an agreed timeframe and provides an excellent platform for the promotion of our region's economic interests by trade promotion and facilitation. Despite a considerable period since its inception, it is yet to see day the light of implementation. So far, only five member states have signed the agreement,” he added. Dar said that as the coordinating country on ECOTA, Pakistan attached great importance to its early implementation, and urged all member states to take a broader and more holistic view of the matter. The deputy prime minister told the gathering that ECO Vision 2025, adopted during the 13th ECO Summit in Islamabad in 2017 was a key document that guided.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of Task Force established in view of recent law and order situation.

Sindh Coastal Highway to help developing coastal belt, impeding sea erosion: Ahsan

KARACHI (APP): The Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, during a visit of Sindh Coastal Highway on Tuesday, said that the project would help addressing the issue of sea intrusion and opening growth avenues in coastal areas of the province.

The federal minister inspected the construction process of Sindh Coastal Highway at Gharo and also received a briefing from the officers concerned.

The minister while talking to media at the occasion, said that federal government was working for development of coastal areas of Sindh in collaboration with the provincial government.

The project has been initiated by the Sindh government and federal government has pledged to complete.

“We may have political differences and we contest elections against each other but on the matters of national solidarity, integrity and development and growth of the country, we put all the differences away, sit on a table and work jointly,” he noted.

IHC stays action against ex-DG NAB

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday stopped the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) from taking legal action against its former Director General (DG) Shahzad Saleem on alleged misconduct and served notices to respondents.

IHC's Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard the case against initiation of inquiry and charge-sheet against former DG NAB on alleged misconduct.

The petitioner's lawyer prayed to the court to stop the bureau from taking legal action against his client and declare the inquiry against him as illegal.

The court stopped the action of NAB against the petitioner till the judgment on the case and also served notices to NAB for December 16. The court also sought a complete inquiry report and para-wise comments against the plea.

PM for punishing rioters who martyred LEAs personnel, damaged public properties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to take all-out measures to strictly punish the protesters who martyred and injured the personnel of law enforcement agencies and damaged public properties during the sit-ins in Islamabad.

The prime minister, chairing the meeting of the task force formed to investigate the riots in the November 24 sit-in in the federal capital, said that the progress on legal action against the rioters would be reviewed weekly.

He said the attack on Islamabad by the insurgents during the official visit of the Belarusian president caused great embarrassment for the country.

The prime minister said that a world-class anti-

riot force would be raised in the country to meet the contemporary requirements. By establishing a forensic lab, the Islamabad Safe City would be upgraded to international standards for which all necessary resources would be utilized. In the briefing, the prime minister was told that the weapons, cartridges, shells and other pieces of evidence had been collected from the crime scene those would be sent for forensic analysis. The identification process of the rioters is also being carried out swiftly, who would later be produced before courts. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Economic Affairs Minister Ahd Cheema, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarra, Advisor to PM Rana Sanaullah and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf exchanging views with Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, Irfan Neziroglu at Naval Headquarters.

FIA identifies 924 social media accounts in 'anti-state propaganda' crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Cyber Crime Wing in Balochistan has launched a significant crackdown against individuals involved in anti-state propaganda on social media. Under the leadership of Director Imran Mahmood, the operation has gained momentum, identifying 924 suspicious social media accounts over the past three months.

The accounts flagged by the agency include 487 on Facebook, 190 on TikTok, 147 on Twitter, 88 on Instagram, and 12 on other platforms. Details of these accounts have been forwarded to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), which has already blocked 312 accounts.

The Cyber Crime Wing established a dedicated team

to monitor and analyze social media activities, using advanced technology to track suspicious behaviors across various platforms, including Facebook, X, and TikTok.

Investigations are underway into 14 cases registered against individuals linked to these activities. The FIA also revealed that 28 social media applications could be exploited by anti-state elements for propaganda and anonymous communication. Director Imran Mahmood emphasized the agency's commitment to combating such activities, stating that no leniency would be shown to those undermining the state's interests. “All available resources are being deployed to apprehend the culprits,” he said.

SC dismisses petition against rejection of nomination papers of presidential candidate

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) constitutional bench while dismissing the petition against rejection of nomination papers of presidential candidate Asghar Ali Mubarak has imposed fine amounting to Rs 20000 on him.

A 6-member SC constitutional bench under Justice Amin ud Din Khan took up for hearing the case against rejection of nomination papers of presidential candidate Asghar Ali Mubarak.

Justice Jamal Mandokhail remarked “you

filed petition under 184/3. What public interest is involved therein.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked why did you not resort to high court.

Justice Amin ud Din Khan remarked the petition has become infertile now.

The court dismissed the petition filed by petitioner Asghar Ali Mubarak with fine. The court ordered the amount of penalty be deposited in national treasury and receipt be presented in the court.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal addressing at the opening ceremony of the World Islamic Finance Forum hosted by IBA.

Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi highlights role of ombudsman in good governance at international summit

Ombudsmanship has taken firm roots in Pakistan; Calls for greater sharing of experiences and best practices amongst Ombuds Institutions

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman), Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has said that addressing maladministration and protection of human rights is inextricably linked to good governance, accountability and inclusivity.

He was addressing the International Ombudsman Summit - 2024 in Hong Kong organized on the eve of the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman in Hong Kong, China. Mr. Qureshi, who is the current President of the 47-member strong Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), said that the United Nations, too, recognizes the importance of the institution of Ombudsman in strengthening democracy,

good governance and the rule of law.

Good administration and efficient service delivery constitute the most essential features of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he added. He further said that these goals have a direct bearing on the role and functions of Ombudsman institutions working to build peaceful and inclusive societies, accountable institutions at all levels and providing easy access to justice. He added that the scope of work of Ombudsman institutions is witnessing speedy expansion and now includes issues like the climate change, business rights, public accessibility and inclusivity. Alluding to Pakistan's experience, Mr. Qureshi said that Ombudsmanship has taken firm roots in the country.

Following the success of Wafaqi Mohtasib Institution in providing free and expeditious administrative justice to the general public, the concept has been replicated to other essential areas impacting the welfare of general public.

He added that 14 Ombudsman Institutions are functioning in the country at the Federal and Provincial levels and contributing in improving service delivery of the government agencies in their respective areas of competence.

The International Ombudsman Summit at Hong Kong is being attended by over 140 Overseas participants, representatives of the UN bodies including a large number of the member institutions of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA).



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, met with a Chinese delegation led by Ms. Scarlet, Head OPH Health Care Project.

NA body directs to ensure implementation of minimum salary in media houses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sub-Committee of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting on Tuesday directed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and PEMRA to ensure that all media houses pay 37,500 minimum salary fixed by the government.

The 1st meeting of the committee was held here under the patronage of Syed Aminul Haque to discuss the current state of payment of salaries and outstanding dues and to suggest measures for ensuring rights of media workers.

The committee further directed the concerned authorities to stop advertisements of media houses in case of defiance, and take immediate steps to eliminate the system of third-party contracts in media houses and take measures to increase the number of Implementation Tribunal for Newspaper Employees (ITNE) to 5 as soon as possible. Syed Aminul Haque directed to take steps in accordance with

the policy for complaints regarding dummy newspapers and payment of PBA dues.

Secretary Information and Broadcasting, Ms. Ambreen Jan, Chairman PEMRA Muhammad Saleem Baig, Chairman ITNE Shahid Mehmood Khokhar and Principal Information Officer Mubashir Hasan briefed the Committee on redressal of grievances and payment of salaries to journalists and media workers. Earlier, the committee was apprised by the various representatives of the journalist bodies including NPC, PFUJ, RIUJ, PRA etc. about the non-payment of timely salaries, absence of job security, lack of fringe benefits to journalists.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ms. Ambreen Jan, Chairman PEMRA Muhammad Saleem Baig, DG (IP) Ashique Hussain, Chairman Implementation Tribunal for Newspaper Employees (ITNE) Shahid Mehmood Khokhar, members of the committee.

British envoy, CDA Chairman, explore collaborative avenues

ISLAMABAD (APP): British Deputy High Commissioner Matt Cannell met with Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), here on Tuesday to discuss areas of mutual interest and opportunities for enhanced cooperation.

Chairman Randhawa warmly welcomed Mr Cannell and highlighted Islamabad's commitment to fostering partnerships with the UK. During the meeting, he underscored the importance of collaboration in education, healthcare, climate change, and sustainable urban development. The Chairman also emphasized the need to strengthen people-to-people connections and social sector initiatives.



HONG KONG: Federal Ombudsman Ijaz Ahmed Qureshi addressing International Ombudsmen Conference 2024 on eve of 35th anniversary of establishment of Ombudsman office.

IGP Islamabad says: Protection of life and property of citizens is of utmost priority

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired important meetings at the Central Police Office (CPO) Islamabad, DIG Security/Head-

quarters Muhammad Jawad Tariq, DG Safe City Shakir Hussain Dawar, AIG Operations Abdul Haq Umrani, SSP Safe City Muhammad Shoaib Khan, and other police officers were present at these meetings.

IGP Islamabad reviewed the ongoing recruitment process in the Islamabad Police. He issued orders to all officers to complete the recruitment process as soon as

ECP unveils framework to enhance gender inclusion in electoral process

ISLAMABAD (APP): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday unveiled the “Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Framework” (GMSIF) to promote gender equality and inclusivity in elections.

The framework, which will be in effect from 2024 to 2028, focuses on marginalized communities, aiming to ensure a more inclusive electoral process.

Omar Hamid Khan, Secretary of the Election Commission of Pakistan, stated that the newly launched “Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Framework” (GMSIF) is the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region, aiming for full gender and social inclusion in the electoral process.

Nighat Siddique, Additional Director General of the Gender Wing, explained that the main goal of the project is to make the electoral process more inclusive and accessible for women, minorities, people with disabilities, and transgender individuals.

The framework involves reviewing and revising electoral laws, policies, and procedures.

Chairman CDA meets with investors to discuss open auction of hotel plots

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Tuesday met with a delegation of investors here to discuss the upcoming open auction of prime hotel plots in Islamabad.

During the meeting, Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa highlighted the critical need for international-standard five-star hotels in Islamabad to cater to the growing demand for hospitality services.

He emphasized that this initiative would play a pivotal role in enhancing the city's capacity to host national and international events, and tourism, thereby boosting the local economy and global recognition of Islamabad as a premier destination.

To address this, CDA is offering five-star hotel plots for open auction, marking a significant opportunity to promote the hotel industry and meet the increasing demands for high-quality accommodations in the city.

The investors were given a detailed briefing regarding the specific hotel plots being offered for auction, plots number 6 and 8, located in Sector F-5, one of Islamabad's most sought-after and prime locations.

These plots present an ideal opportunity for investors to develop world-class hotels, commercial centers, and service apartments, which will not only cater to the growing demand for luxury accommodation but also contribute to the expansion of Islamabad's business and tourism sectors.

Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa further outlined the investor-friendly terms that have been introduced to encourage participation in the auction.

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quarters Muhammad Jawad Tariq, DG Safe City Shakir Hussain Dawar, AIG Operations Abdul Haq Umrani, SSP Safe City Muhammad Shoaib Khan, and other police officers were present at these meetings.

IGP Islamabad reviewed the ongoing recruitment process in the Islamabad Police. He issued orders to all officers to complete the recruitment process as soon as

zans' lives and property and to provide them with all necessary facilities.

He also reviewed the performance of Safe City Islamabad. The DG Safe City briefed IGP Islamabad about the overall performance of the Safe City Command and Control Centre.

He said that the efficiency of Safe City should be increased, and maximum technical support should be provided to the Investigation Wing.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

فاتحہ خوانی

وزارت اطلاعات و نشریات کے ڈائریکٹر
وپریس قونصلر، قونصلیٹ جنرل آف پاکستان دہلی

محمد صالح کے مرحوم والد

کے ایصال ثواب کیلئے درجہ ذیل شیڈول کے تحت

فاتحہ خوانی کا اہتمام کیا گیا ہے

روز: بدھ، بمورخہ: 4 دسمبر 2024، بوقت: 03:00 بجے

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منجانب

پریس انفارمیشن ڈیپارٹمنٹ، اسلام آباد