

‘JKLF believes in peaceful, amicable solution of Kashmir dispute’

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) has always believed in a peaceful and amicable solution of Kashmir dispute for which the organization, in general, and its leadership, in particular, has rendered unprecedented sacrifices.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the JKLF Chief Spokesman, Muhammad Rafiq Dar in a statement issued in Islamabad reiterated party stance that JKLF has always expressed its readiness to engage in any seriously held Kashmir issue resolution process.

It is a proven fact that the use of force and the time gaining strategy yielded nothing but has only added to the miseries of people, he added

Giving his reaction to the proposed state elections in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), he termed the management of elections as a futile exercise. He said JKLF views these elections as a part of a long-pending strategy of India to sidestep the fundamental issue of addressing the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Such elections, like in the past, raises skepticism not hopes, and the actors, old or new, involved in staging the drama are doomed to fail, he informed.

The spokesman said JKLF believes that the elections held under the heavy military presence in occupied Kashmir without addressing the aspirations of the people, will face similar skepticism.

● Fazl Supports Constitutional Court, But Disagrees on Implementation: PPP

Govt Falls Short of Two-Thirds Majority

● Supreme Court Challenged Over Controversial Constitutional Amendment Bill

MUDASSER CH.

ISLAMABAD

The government’s efforts to introduce the 26th Constitutional Amendment faced a setback in just the initial phase, as the federal cabinet meeting, where the amendments were to be approved, has been postponed.

The postponement has been attributed to the government’s inability to secure the backing of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

Therefore, according to sources, it is unlikely the government will move the 26th Constitutional Amendment Bill in today’s sessions of parliament, which had been re-convened to especially table the bill.

Due to the setback, normal proceedings continued in the National Assembly where a three-point agenda was scheduled for discussion, according to the sources. The sessions of both the National Assembly and the Senate resumed behind schedule and were later adjourned indefinitely.

Meanwhile, Pakistan’s National Assembly session descended into chaos on Monday as treasury and opposition benches engaged in a heated debate over the government’s proposed constitutional amendment bill. The session, initially scheduled for 11 am, began late at night and was eventually



adjourned indefinitely.

The government’s efforts to secure a two-thirds majority in parliament hit a snag after Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman sought more time to review the amendment draft. Senator Irfan Siddiqui of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) revealed that Fazl’s arguments were well-justified, but he needed more time.

Today’s lower house of parliament session comes after the ruling coalition apparently failed to manage the required numbers i.e a two-thirds majority in parliament despite strenuous efforts on Sunday which arguably centred around Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman’s assent to the proposed amendments.

The session, originally scheduled to commence at 11am yesterday finally got underway late night and was then deferred till today has now been adjourned indefinitely. The possibility of the prospective constitutional amendments comes amid speculations revolving around an extension in the tenure of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa — who is set to retire in October this year — after the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) sought an early issuance of notification regarding the next top judge last month.

However, the government needs to secure a two-thirds majority in parliament to successfully pass any constitutional amendment.

After yesterday’s efforts failed to convince the JUI-F head to lend his support, senior

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Senator Irfan Siddiqui, while speaking to Geo News earlier in the day, claimed that the government’s bid to table the constitutional package has been “postponed indefinitely”. He revealed that though Fazl’s “arguments were well-justified” and didn’t oppose the amendments on principle grounds, adding that he needed more time to review the amendment draft.

Speaking on the NA floor, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that in the government’s opinion, the constitutional amendment draft aimed at removing the constitutional imbalance and there was no politics involved in it. The constitution allowed the parliament to legislate, he said.

He said the amendment draft had been

talk of the town for few days, when a consensus would be reached on it then it would be floated in the House. “As per the wishes of 250 million people, the institution has to be respected as mentioned in the Constitution.

The constitutional court exists in several countries of the world. It is not that this court will be run by the government, it will also be run by the judiciary,” he said, apprising the assembly that 2.7 million cases were pending in the courts.

The defence minister remarked that parliament’s role in appointing judges should not be a rubber stamp. Their role should be a manifestation of the people’s power, he maintained. Asif noted the draft’s summary had been presented before the parliament and in his opinion nobody would differ

with it.

Commenting on the negotiations on the said amendments, Adviser to Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah said that meetings with the JUI-F chief were not “abortive” but they achieved results. He added that Fazl and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had decided to broaden the scope of consultation for the good of democracy.

“It is not something fruitless or a matter of winning or losing,” he said, adding that today’s NA meeting would be adjourned indefinitely to complete the consultation process. Addressing the session, PTI leader Asad Qaiser thanked the speaker for issuing production orders for his party leaders. He also saluted Fazl for his bravery and courage over his stance on the constitutional amendments.

Qaiser said the law minister himself said he did not have the draft, questioning where did the draft come from. The government must bring amendments but first they should be discussed in the House. Whereas, you are sneakily legislating in the night during holidays,” he said.

He said if the government wanted to introduce a law, it should be shared with the bar association and debated in the house so that people could know about it.

Responding to Qaiser, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said the draft would be brought forward once the bill

was presented in the house. “If the bill’s draft had not been sent to the cabinet, then how it could be brought to the House?” he asked.

“First the matter is raised in the cabinet, then cabinet’s special committee scours it. After passing through the cabinet and special committee, the bill goes to the parliament,” he said.

Referring to the proposed constitutional amendment, Tarar said it was a “working paper” at the moment and its draft would be brought forward after getting cabinet’s approval. He said it was a package for the masses, which contained good news for them, as fate of numerous court cases hanged in the balance for 18 years.

The PML-N leader apprised the forum that the government had consulted its allies on the matter. The constitutional amendment was not a new thing, it was a part of the Charter of Democracy, he added. Tarar further said it was the parliament’s job to set the country’s direction, stressing that the chief justice would not fix rates for commodities.

He said some things had attained the political consensus, while proposals have come on the others. “Proposals have come from the Baloch friends, Maulana [Fazl] and the PPP on some matters,” he said, adding that the amendments would be made in consensus with the political parties.

CM Bugti, Governor Mandukhail greets Muslims on Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi

● Balochistan Minister Sarfraz Chakar Domki Passes Away in Karachi

GHULAM YASEEN

QUETTA

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Monday congratulated all the Muslims on the auspicious occasion of birthday of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

The chief minister, in his message on Eid-e-Milad-un Nabi (SWW), said, “Today is a great day not only for the Muslims but for the entire universe and humanity that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) came to this world as the merciful. With his arrival, the darkness of ignorance began to disappear from the world.”

CM Bugti said that on the auspicious day, there was a need to commit

fully follow the Prophet’s (PBUH) teachings to inculcate the values of unity, harmony and tolerance.

He said the was of special importance for the Muslims.

“It is a matter of pride for us that we are the Ummah of the Prophet (PBUH) whom the Creator of the Universe sent as a Mercy for All the Worlds.

“As an his Ummah, we should fully follow the good deeds, unity, forgiveness, tolerance. Religious tolerance should be further promoted.”

He said that one could achieve success in the world and the hereafter by following the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and also establish a true welfare society

The chief minister

prayed that Allah Almighty night grant “us the ability to walk on the straight path and to adapt our lives according to the code of life told by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and make Pakistan an Islamic welfare state in the true sense and the cradle of development and prosperity”.

Meanwhile, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandukhail on Monday said that we as Muslims commemorate the birth of the greatest prophet of mankind on this blessed day of 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal.

In his message on the occasion of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi, he is a beacon of mercy and a beacon of light for all mankind saying that our lives could be filled with goodness and piety even today with the teachings of Muhammad



Arabi (PBUH).

His life is a bright model for all of us to get rid of the problems and difficulties faced by the nation and Ummah, he said.

He said that His compassion, wisdom and leadership helped and guided the world towards unity, social justice and lasting peace.

The Governor said that we should pray that Allah Almighty creates complete unity, consensus and solidarity among all

the Muslims of the world so that they could be united as one nation.

On the occasion of celebrating Eid Milad-ul-Nabi, it is also important that we reflect on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), provide financial support to orphans and the poor and try hard to follow your great character and teachings, he said.

He said that the need of the hour is that we spread love, brotherhood, tolerance and goodness

among all human beings irrespective of race and colour.

Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandukhail prayed that the blessings of Allah be upon Muhammad Arabi (PBUH) and his family.

May Allah grant us the opportunity to do acts of compassion and charity, he said.

Meanwhile, Balochistan Municipal Minister Sardar Sarfraz Chakar Domki, who had been battling a lung and kidney disease, passed away on Monday in Karachi.

Sarfraz’s family revealed that the late minister had been receiving treatment at a private hospital in Karachi for the past 10 days before he breathed his last today. Sarfraz’s brother, Sardar Hair Bayar Khan

Domki, said that the late minister’s body is scheduled to be shifted to Lehri in Balochistan’s Sibbi district, as he will be laid to rest in their native ancestral graveyard.

Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti expressed his grief and sorrow over the death of the late minister who was elected to the Balochistan Assembly from PB-8 in Sibbi on a Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) ticket.

“Sarfraz was a shrewd, reliable politician and a tribal figure,” Bugti said.

“Sarfraz Chakar Domki always played a positive role in the political and tribal system of Balochistan and was an active member of the Balochistan cabinet,” added the CM.

CM Sindh Murad Ali Shah also expressed grief over Sarfraz’s death. “Sarfraz’s services for PPP will always be remembered.”

Sarfraz, as the PPPP candidate, won the Balochistan Assembly election by securing 27,677 votes.

Previously, Sarfraz also served as the provincial minister of Balochistan Labour and Management from 2018 to 2023.

Earlier, he was the provincial minister for culture, archives and tourism in 2018.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti also prayed Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal abode with peace and granting courage to bereaved family members.

ADB President Asakawa lauds Pakistan’s economic reform agenda, reaffirms support

● Gunvor Group Chairman, Total Energies VP meet PM to discuss investment in petroleum sector

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Masatsugu Asakawa, accompanied by his delegation, met with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and commended his government for its comprehensive reforms and reaffirmed ADB’s continued support for Pakistan.

During the discussions, Asakawa praised Pakistan’s long-standing relationship with ADB as one of its founding members.

He also reaffirmed ADB’s support for infrastructure development, climate resilience, and

institutional reforms in Pakistan.

While appreciating ADB’s long-standing and steadfast support to Pakistan, the prime minister informed the visiting president about a series of reforms introduced by the government. The key reforms include enhancing tax revenues, improving financial sustainability of the energy sector, enhancing climate resilience, reduction in untar-getted subsidies and scaling up social protection.

The prime minister emphasized that he is personally overseeing the progress of these reforms to ensure their successful implementation and long-term impact, underscoring the Government’s commit-



ment to sustainable economic growth and stability.

The prime minister appreciated ADB’s generous support of over US\$ 1.5 billion in response to the devastating floods of 2022. He showed Pakistan’s keen desire to work with the development partners in climate resilience projects including agriculture.

The prime minister and president of ADB also witnessed the loan signing of the Sindh Emergency Housing Reconstruction Project amounting to US\$400 million and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Roads Development Project worth US\$320 million.

Both these projects are part of the ADB’s flood commitments.

Federal Ministers for Planning & Development, Investment & Privatization, Economic Affairs, Finance & Revenue and other senior government officials also attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Gunvor Group Chairman Torbjorn Tornqvist and Vice President Oceania & Southeast Asia Total Energies Mehmet Celepoglu Monday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed potential investment in Pakistan’s energy sector.

During the meeting, the prime minister highlighted that after attaining stability, the country’s economy was now moving on the path of growth and development.

‘Mysterious’ constitutional package aimed at keeping him

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Strongly criticising the much-hyped judiciary-centric constitutional package shrouded in mystery, jailed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan claimed on Monday that the ruling coalition is attempting to introduce amendments to the Constitution in a bid to keep him behind bars.

“New amendments would destroy the country’s future,” said Khan during an informal conversation with journalists at Rawalpindi’s Adiala Jail. Taking aim at the rulers, he said: “They have decided to destroy the judiciary.” When questioned about his opinion on a

separate court for constitutional cases, the incarcerated former premier has a different point of view as he thought the “current rulers are afraid of the Supreme Court, therefore, they want to constitute a [separate] constitutional court.”

The cricketer-turned-politician further alleged that the federal government was involved in these practices “to hide election fraud.”

The major opposition party has been touting for a long time that the February 8 general elections were “rigged” which he said snatched their big-scale electoral victory via “manipulation in the results through Form-47.”

“They are afraid that

everything will be reversed if election-related matters are exposed,” he added.

Announcing his future strategy, the PTI founder said that his party would never remain silent and register a strong protest against the coalition government’s moves.

Treasury and opposition benches have engaged in a tug-of-war in both houses of the parliament over the incumbent government’s prospective constitutional amendment bill which allegedly includes legislation to extend the tenure of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa — who is set to retire in October this year — as well as the retirement age of the judges.

Protested against non-arrest of murderers of martyred journalist Nasrullah Gadani of Mirpur Mathelo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MIRPUR MATHELO



Against the non-arrest of the murderers of the martyred journalist Nasrullah Gadani of Mirpur Mathelo, journalists and political social leaders protested outside the office of SSP Ghotki in Mirpur Mathelo, demanding the arrest of the accused. The announcement of the protest movement, According to the details, journalists and political and social leaders under

the leadership of Asad Pitafi, for the arrest of PPMNA secretary Abdullah Lound and Barkat Lound, the murderers of the martyred journalist Nasrullah Gadani of Mirpur Mathelo. Allah Gadani protested in front of the Mirpur Mathelo press club and shouted slogans and took out a rally which reached outside SSP Ghotki's office

through different routes where a protest was held and repeated. Asad Pitafi, Abdul Majeed Jalbani, Azhar Kalwar, Saeed Bozdar, Yakoob Gadani, the brother of the martyred journalist, Hanif Soomro Advocate Amar Dayo, Sikandar Samejo and others said that the named accused in the murder case of the martyred journalist Nasrullah Gadani is MNA of Pakistan Peoples Khalid Ahmed Khan Lound should be removed from the party and removed from the MNA ship and Municipal Chairman Shehbaz Lound should be removed and the hidden accused in the murder case MNA Khalid Ahmed Khan Lound's secretary Abdullah Lound and Barkat Lound should be arrested. should be brought to the dock, otherwise the scope of the protest will be widened,



ISLAMABAD: An illuminated view of a building decorated with colorful lights, in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) celebrations, in the Federal Capital. — Staff Photo

KU Pharmacy Science Club organizes first science fair

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

The Karachi University Pharmacy Science Club on Monday arranged its first science fair at the new building of the faculty of pharmacy. The event attracted students from various universities across Karachi who participated and showcased their innovative products and scientific projects, all aimed at solving real-world problems and contributing to societal well-being. Speakers mentioned that it was significant in nurturing the next generation of innovators and researchers. With a

focus on healthcare, environmental sustainability, and technological advancements, the students' innovations contribute directly to improving society, the event provides a window into the future of science and technology, inspiring new ideas and fostering collaboration across institutions. KU Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Professor Dr Muhammad Harris Shoaib inaugurated the daylong event, and along with the faculty, engaged with the students explored their groundbreaking projects, and underscored the importance of research in the field of

health sciences. In addition, guest speakers and a panel of esteemed judges were present, offering valuable insights and feedback to the participants. The fair featured a variety of categories, showcasing the diverse talent of students. Among these, the "Pharmaceutical Sciences Category" stood out, comprising three specialized sub-categories. The technology sub-category was meticulously evaluated by Dr Zaad Hashmi and Yamna Majid, whose keen insights into technological advancements helped spotlight projects with the potential to revolutionize the



field. Management Science projects were evaluated by Dr Zaad Hashmi. Also, the category of Computer Sciences was swiftly judged by Usman Amjad who witnessed ideas of some innovative models. The Formulation sub-category was judged by Dr Talha Usmani, Dr Jibrin Khan, and Dr Mahwish Fatima, who assessed each project based on its innovation,

and practicality. Lastly, the Cosmeceuticals sub-category was evaluated by Kamran Alam and Shakeel Ahmed, who provided expert analysis on the efficacy and market potential of the showcased products. In addition to the pharmaceutical projects, the fair also featured the Biotechnological Sciences Category, which was assessed by Dr Ghias Ahmed and Dr Omair

Anwar Mohiuddin, both esteemed scholars in biotechnology. The Microbiological Sciences Category was judged by Rehana Saeed, Tazeen Hussain, and Sadaf Farooqui, who thoroughly evaluated the microbial innovations presented by students, particularly in areas like environmental microbiology and clinical applications. The healthcare partners - Sehat Kahani, Dawn Healthcare, and Nadeem Medicos - played a vital role by hosting the Healthcare Bootcamp, where students' vitals such as blood pressure and calcium levels were checked, promoting the

importance of health awareness. The beverage partner, Quice, ensured that participants and attendees stayed hydrated and refreshed throughout the day. During the closing ceremony, a prize distribution was held where winners from each category received awards, and all participants were presented with certificates for their contributions. The KU Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Professor Dr Harris Shoaib praised the students from various universities for their active participation and commended both the organizing team and participants for their hard

work. Professor Dr Iqbal Azhar also addressed the audience, encouraging students to continue innovating, emphasizing the importance of technology advancements, and highlighting the role students play in shaping the future. According to them, the first science fair serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating the power of youth-driven innovation and its potential to address society's pressing challenges. They mentioned that the faculty members Dr Iyad Naeem, Dr Asia, and Dr Sana Sarfaraz, who, as patrons of the event, played a pivotal role in organizing the science fair.

ADG RDA directs housing societies to adopt all possible anti-dengue measures

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Additional Director General (ADG), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Awais Manzoor Tarar here on Monday directed the approved housing schemes to adopt all possible anti-dengue measures. Chairing a meeting held at RDA office, the ADG instructed the owners and sponsors of the housing schemes to take solid steps to ensure

implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the Punjab government to control dengue. The ADG instructed the housing societies to nominate representatives and form teams under a focal person to implement anti-dengue SOPs. These focal persons would coordinate with the Assistant Director of Planning, RDA, and provide regular reports on their efforts to control dengue. Awais Manzoor Tarar



warned that FIRs would be lodged against those from whose properties dengue larvae would be detected. He underlined the need to adopt immediate dengue control measures and preventive and long-

term strategies to protect the environment and public health. The meeting was attended by Deputy Director Planning, Muhammad Samiullah Niazi, Assistant Director General, Waqar Ahmad, Assistant Director Planning, Mehwish Saleem, Assistant Director Building Control, Muhammad Daud, Assistant Director Architecture, Syeda Rida Sultan and several owners and sponsors of housing schemes.

Pakistani Zaireen attending Urs of Khawaja Allauddin Sabir in India

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Pakistani Zaireen accompanied by Deputy Head of Mission, Pakistan High Commission, New Delhi, Asif Khan on Monday placed the traditional Chaddar at the Shrine of Hazrat Khawaja Allauddin Ali Ahmed Sabir (RA) at Kaliyar Sharif. Some 81 Pakistani Zaireen arrived in Kaliyar Sharif on Sept 14 to participate in the 756th annual Urs of Hazrat



Allauddin Ali Ahmed Sabir (RA), and will remain there till Sept 20, a message received from India said. After placing the traditional Chaddar on behalf

of the people and Government of Pakistan, Deputy Head of Mission and the Zaireen offered prayers for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

On arrival at the Dargah, Deputy Head of Mission and Pakistani Zaireen were welcomed by Sajjada Nasheen Hazrat Shah Ali Manzar Aijaz Quddusi Sabri. Asif Khan thanked the Sajjada Nasheen and the organizers for facilitating the visit on the auspicious occasion. The Pakistani Zaireen attend the annual Urs Mubarak of Hazrat Khawaja Allauddin Ali Ahmed Sabir (RA) under the framework of 1974 India-Pakistan protocol on visits to religious shrines.

Advisor directs immediate anti-dengue fumigation in hotspots

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR

After assuming charge of the Health Department, Advisor on Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ahtisham Ali on Monday, issued directives to intensify anti-dengue operations. He instructed the relevant authorities to ensure the anti-dengue fumigation in hotspot areas without any delay. He emphasized that controlling the spread of dengue is one of his top priorities. "The dengue season is at its peak, and we must limit its spread through public cooperation," he stated. Providing details on dengue cases, the Health Advisor mentioned



that there are currently 18 active dengue cases in the province, with 119 individuals having recovered. So far, 137 cases of dengue have been confirmed across the province. He lauded the health department for its efforts in containing the outbreak, noting that no deaths have been reported this year due to dengue, nor has there been a sig-

nificant rise in cases as anticipated. "This is a clear testament to the efficiency and proactive approach of the health department," he added. Ahtisham Ali also gave special instructions to the Director of Public Health, Dr. Irshad Ali, to focus on curbing the dengue outbreak in five key districts, including Abbottabad and Peshawar.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Monday directed the authorities concerned to expedite construction work on Islamabad Model Jail to ensuring its timely completion. The CDA chairman in that regard chaired a meeting which was attended by the Project Director of the Public Works Department (PWD) along with other relevant officers of CDA and PWD. The meeting dis-

cussed the modalities of smooth transition of the construction work on the Islamabad Model Jail from PWD to CDA. Discussions were held to ensure that the transition process takes place efficiently and promptly for making CDA an executing agency for the project in consultation with the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Planning, Development and Initiatives. Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized that till the complete transition, PWD should work in full coordination with CDA to ensure seamless pro-



gress of the project. A briefing was also given on the current status of the completed and ongoing work at the Islamabad Model Jail. Chairman Randhawa stressed the importance of completing the Phase-I of construction work by the assigned dead-

line. This phase includes the completion of critical infrastructure such as the boundary wall, barracks, the administrative block, roads and watchtowers (sentry posts). According to the briefing, approximately

70-80% of the boundary wall and administrative block have already been completed, while work on the barracks and watchtowers (sentry posts) is still underway. Following the successful completion of Phase I of the Islamabad Model Prison, the work on Phase II will soon commence under the supervision of CDA. This project, once completed, will mark a significant advancement in Islamabad's infrastructure, providing a state-of-the-art facility for the prisoners that meets modern standards of safety and security.

178th Passing-Out Parade held at Shahdadpur Police Training College

STAFF REPORTER

HYDERABAD

The 178th passing out parade was held at Police Training College Shahdadpur, which was attended by the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Hyderabad Tariq Razzak Dharejo as the chief guest. Addressing the police recruits who completed their training, he emphasized the need for them to perform their duties with utmost integrity and to utilize their strength to eradicate crime and drug traffick-



ing from Sindh. He urged them to use the training they received to serve the public positively. Dharejo further stated that the police were currently facing significant

challenges, and to effectively combat dacoits in the katcha areas, the police need to be equipped with modern facilities and equipment. Principal of the

Training College Zahida Parveen mentioned that they were taking steps to provide the new recruits with the best possible training according to modern requirements, ensuring the protection of the public lives and property. A total of 578 personnel passed out during the parade, including 228 female constables. The passing-out recruits also demonstrated some skills, and the chief guest expressed his satisfaction and congratulated the Principal of the Training College.

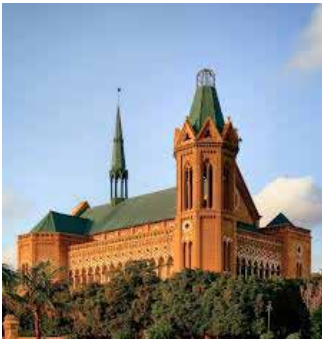
Probe Ordered into Theft of Paintings from Karachi's Historic Ferrier Hall

● Culture Minister Forms Committee to Investigate Stolen Paintings

ASAD ALI SHAH

KARACHI

Sindh Provincial Minister for Culture and Tourism Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah has taken strict notice of the theft of paintings from the historic Ferrier Hall building in Karachi. Expressing his indignation, Minister Shah formed a two-member investigation committee comprising DG



Culture and DG Antiquities to probe the matter and submit

a report as soon as possible. The disappearance of the paintings, created by young artists, came to light through social media. Minister Shah assured that all cultural values of Sindh will be protected and preserved, and promised to take strict action if any negligence or omission is

found. The investigation committee will thoroughly probe the matter and submit a comprehensive report. Further action will be taken based on the findings of the report. Minister Shah emphasized the importance of preserving cultural heritage and protecting young artists, stating that they are the country's capital and will not be tolerated with injustice.



A gypsy woman preparing bread for her family at makkis area. — Staff Photo

ICT Police devise elaborate security for processions of Eid Milad un Nabi

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have chalked out an elaborate security plan for the main procession of Eid Milad ul Nabi on 12th Rabi ul Awal (September 17) with Strict patrolling will be ensured throughout the procession and other religious gatherings across the city.

Following the directives of Inspector General (IG) ICT Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi and Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Syed Ali Raza, ICT Police will undertake comprehensive security and patrolling duties.

According to the Police Spokesperson DIG Syed Ali Raza has mandated that all SPs, SDPOs, SHOs, and other police

officials visit the procession routes to ensure effective coordination among security personnel.

He said police officials will guide the officers and boost their morale to carry out their duties responsibly.

He said over 2000 police personnel, including specialized teams of commandos, will be deployed for security duties during the occasion.

SPs will also visit various police posts along the procession route to monitor security and brief officers on effective security measures, he said.

Traffic police officers will manage traffic to ensure smooth flow and minimize disruptions, he added.

He said walk-through gates will be installed at all entry points of the

procession, and metal detectors will be used to screen participants. Each participant will undergo a full body search before being allowed entry, he added.

He said snipers will be stationed on rooftops to provide additional security for the procession.

Streets, roads, and other routes along the procession path will be sealed to ensure security, he said.

All police stations will be involved in performing security and patrolling duties within their respective areas.

DIG Syed Ali Raza emphasized that it is the prime responsibility of the police to protect both lives and property, and the ICT police are committed to ensuring fool-proof security for Eid Milad-ul-Nabi, he added.

Climate change not merely environmental issue but existential threat undermining human rights: Shamim Shwal

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Representative of the Indian Muslim Women's Union (IMWU), Shamim Shwal has called upon world leaders particularly the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to prioritize climate action as a fundamental human rights issue.

Taking part in an interactive dialogue along with Special Reporters on climate change in Geneva,

Switzerland Ms Shwal while referring to the alarming effects of climate change in Indian Occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir, said that despite the overwhelming evidence of climate change's impact there was currently no dedicated mechanism at the Human Rights Council that addresses this crisis holistically, a news release said.

Citing the Amnesty International report, she said that the humanity was under threat from

climate change.

"Kashmiris are witnessing the alarming effects of climate change firsthand", the IMWU representative said, adding that daily temperatures were rising, with fluctuations ranging from 0.3 to 1.9 degrees Celsius.

The rising temperature, she said, has dire consequences for Kashmiri communities, particularly for those who rely on agriculture and horticulture for their livelihoods.

"The maximum snow-



melt has led to shrinking snow-covered areas, disrupting our agricultural practices and threatening our water resources", Mrs Shwal added.

Stressing the urgent need to confront the cli-

mate crisis, particularly in the context of Indian occupied Kashmir, she said that the Special Rapporteur on climate change has emphasized that a safe climate was a vital element of the right

to a healthy environment and essential for human life and well-being.

The climate change, she said, was not merely an environmental issue but an existential threat that undermines the full enjoyment and realization of all human rights.

She said that the people of Kashmir were deeply concerned about the transformation of their green fields, forests, and agricultural lands into industrial zones.

"This shift not only jeopardizes our environ-

ment but also creates an atmosphere of fear among the local population living in the foothills of the Himalayas", she maintained.

She also sought the international audiences' urgent attention towards the growing health related issues, including skin problems and other ailments, which were on the rise in Kashmir as a result of these changes.

Referring to the reports about Kashmir's water scarcity, she said that rising temperature and fast melting glaciers

were issues of serious concern that merits immediate action.

The IMWU representative urged the council to take decisive steps to address these challenges.

Seeking an end to the heavy military deployment in the Himalayas, she said, "The movement of the army and the deployment of heavy weapons not only contribute to the melting of glaciers but also exacerbate the already precarious situation faced by the local population".

Stronger Parliament essential for safeguarding rights of people: Naveed Qamar

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Senior leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Syed Naveed Qamar said on Monday that a stronger Parliament would be essential for safeguarding the rights of the people.

Speaking on the floor of the House, he said, "A stronger Parliament would make its representatives stronger and play a key role in safeguarding the rights of the people."

Naveed Qamar said that a special committee had been constituted at the request of the PPP Chairman to build con-

sensus. However, he clarified that this committee is not a replacement for the National Assembly's Committee on Law and Justice.

The PPP lawmaker said that no one can compromise on the sanctity dignity of the House, adding that PPP has also reservations about the amendments currently circulating in the media.

Taking part in the debate, Shahida Begum said that mutual consensus should be established before tabling the constitutional amendments in the National Assembly.

She praised Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for constituting a special



committee of Parliament at the request of Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. This committee will allow members from all parties to speak and discuss the matters.

Shahida Begum commended the Charter of Democracy (CoD), signed between Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for its role in strengthening democracy and reforming national institutions through consultations

with all political parties.

Dr. Farooq Sattar of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) said that if the government intends to present constitutional amendments to Parliament, working papers should be provided to both the coalition partners and the opposition.

He stressed that strong provinces are crucial for a strong federation and urged the government to take MQM-P into confidence as a coalition partner.

Chairman Milli Awami Party Mahmood Khan Achakzai suggested that any proposed constitutional

amendments should be presented to a special committee of Parliament.

He assured the House that his party would support any amendments aimed at strengthening democracy and the supremacy of Parliament.

Mahmood Khan added that all members of Parliament, who have taken an oath to protect the Constitution, desire the supremacy of Parliament and the rule of law in the country.

He urged the government and political parties to transfer resources to the provinces to strengthen the federation and serve the larger interest of the country.

Chinese institutes contribute to developing major standards for elder care in Pakistan

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Several Chinese universities, vocational colleges, and enterprises have played a key role in the development of major standards for elder care health and wellness in Pakistan, further strengthening Sino-Pak collaboration in the education and healthcare sectors.

According to recognition certificates issued by the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) and the Pakistan Nursing & Midwifery Council (PNMC), faculty members from renowned Chinese institutions, including Jiangsu Vocational Institute of Commerce, Anhui Vocational College of City Management, Xuzhou Open University, Beijing Youth Politics College, Dezhou Vocational and Technical College, Changsha Social Work College, Guangxi Vocational & Technical College, Pingxiang Health Vocational College, ITMC Technology Co Ltd, and UNI Services International Pvt Ltd, contributed to the development of these essential



standards.

The collaboration also extends to joint efforts in developing curriculum standards, digital resources, and practical training software for elder care, as well as the establishment of a comprehensive teaching resource database. These resources are now being implemented in Pakistani colleges and universities.

This cooperative initiative marks an important step in advancing elder care in Pakistan, allowing both countries to explore further cooperation in smart elder care in a more refined, standardized, and professional manner, according to a report from China Economic Net.

China and Pakistan have

a history of close cooperation in standardization. In 2022, the National Standardization Administration of China (SAC) and the Pakistan Standards & Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation on mutual recognition of standards.

The agreement will help support participation in international standardization organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), while also improving information exchange on standardization between the two countries.

IFA conducts 24,137 operations, serves notices to 9346 food outlets

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Director of the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA), Irfan Nawaz Memon, chaired a performance meeting of the authority, during which he was informed that 24,137 operations had been conducted so far, resulting in improvement notices being issued to 9,346 businesses.

Acting Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of Islamabad Food

Authority (IFA), Aneeq Anwar, while sharing the performance report of the authority, stated that the authority has imposed fines amounting to Rs. 14.36 million on 804 establishments found violating health standards. The crackdown also led to the sealing of 172 outlets for selling harmful products.

Meanwhile, licenses have been granted to 107 food points in Islamabad, reflecting the authority's efforts to formalize the industry. In response to

public complaints, 15 legal cases were registered, following action on 477 citizen reports.

He said that with an unwavering commitment to quality assurance, the authority's latest report underscored its relentless pursuit of adherence to food safety standards across the Federal Capital.

On the occasion, he appealed to the masses to cooperate with the food department in identifying illegal food production units that were operating

in small houses to ensure public safety.

Notably, the authority imposed a complete ban on the sale of Chinese salt, and gutka, emphasizing its commitment to upholding stringent standards of food safety and hygiene.

Irfan Nawaz Memon reiterated the authority's dedication to fostering a healthy environment for the citizens of the federal capital.

He emphasized that strict action should be continued against those food outlets that were

involved in selling adulterated or unhygienic food items.

The safety of citizens was the topmost priority of the IFA and no negligence would be tolerated in this regard, he warned.

To raise public awareness, several campaigns on healthy food are ongoing. Director Irfan Memon urged his team to expedite their efforts, especially focusing on the sale of harmful milk. He also emphasized the need to expand licensing efforts across the city.

Pakistan committed to global ozone layer protection for human, environmental sustainability: Romina

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam said that Pakistan has demonstrated a strong commitment and played its role as a part of global efforts to protect the ozone layer through its participation in international agreements, implementation of national policies, and collaboration with global partners.

The country's efforts in phase-out initiatives under the Montreal protocol to restore and preserve the ozone layer for future generations has been globally recognised and presented as a case study, the PM's climate aide highlighted while

addressing as a chief guest at the national experts' dialogue regarding the World Ozone Day 2024 held here on Monday in the climate change & environmental coordination ministry.

On the occasion of World Ozone Day 2024 being marked today globally under the theme "Ozone for Life: Solutions for a Warming Planet", she reaffirmed the present government's dedication to preserving the ozone layer and combating climate change.

Romina Khurshid Alam highlighted that this year's theme emphasises the critical role of the ozone layer in protecting life on Earth and highlights the interconnectedness of ozone layer

protection and climate action. It reflects the ongoing efforts to address both ozone depletion and global warming, reinforcing the importance of continued international cooperation and innovative solutions to tackle these environmental challenges.

The United Nations' annual Ozone Day is observed every year on September 16, aiming to celebrate the adoption of the Montreal Protocol and raises awareness about the importance of the ozone layer. It also serves as a reminder of the global commitment to protecting this vital component of Earth's atmosphere and addressing the broader challenges of environmental sustainability.

The PM's coordinator



said that there is pressing need to engage all stakeholders' including educational institutions and media practitioners and raise their understanding about the importance of the ozone layer, a critical component of Earth's atmosphere, which protects life by blocking harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

"Not protecting ozone layer is a grave risk for

human health and environmental sustainability. Because, its depletion poses various risks including increased incidences of skin cancer, cataracts, and adverse impacts on ecosystems," Romina Khurshid Alam warned.

"However, Pakistan recognises the importance of this protective shield and has committed to adhering to the Montreal Protocol's goals for the protection of

the ozone layer," she informed the participants.

Highlighting Pakistan's efforts for phase-out of ozone-depleting gases, she said that the country contained use of first generation of ozone depleting substances by 2009 and achieved a 50% reduction in drochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) by January 2020.

Pakistan is also on track to meet our 67.5% reduction target by 2025, having transitioned many industries to ozone-friendly technologies, Ms Alam emphasised.

"Our collective determination towards human and environmental sustainability continues as we prepare for the forthcoming hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) phase-down

under the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, an international agreement to gradually reduce the consumption and production of HFCs.

Secretary climate change & environmental coordination ministry Aisha Humera Ch. said that World Ozone Day 2024 is a testament to the collective efforts of nations in addressing one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time. Pakistan is proud of the progress we have made and remains resolute in our commitment to protecting the ozone layer and combating climate change.

"World Ozone Day serves as a powerful reminder of the collective effort required to protect our planet's deli-

cate balance," the climate change ministry secretary remarked.

She said Pakistan is proud to be a part of the global movement to preserve the ozone layer, and we will continue to work diligently to ensure a healthier environment for current and future generations.

She said further that the protection of the ozone layer is integral to ensuring a stable climate and a healthy environment. Our ongoing initiatives and international collaborations reflect Pakistan's dedication to these goals.

"As we move forward, our focus will remain on implementing effective solutions and fostering public awareness," the climate change ministry secretary stressed.

Back to the IMF

The latest long-awaited IMF bailout looks to be all but secured, with the Fund finally including Paki-stan on its Executive Board agenda scheduled for September 25, when it will likely take up and ap-prove the new \$7 billion bailout programme for Pakistan. The country had reached an agreement with the multilateral lender on a new 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) back in July, with some attributing the delay in the ratification of the programme to challenges in securing the needed external financing requirements. Now that the government has secured a \$12 billion debt rollover from China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, along with an additional \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion from Saudi Arabia in the shape of an oil facility and commercial financing from foreign banks to cover the exter-nal financing gap, the government appears to be confi-dent that the loan programme will finally be approved. While the road here has been long and hard, things are not likely to get any easier from here on out. At least, not if the government is actually serious about delivering long-term sustainable growth. Constantly relying on friendly countries to roll over debts and extend external financing eve-ry few years is not a sustainable strategy and far too many governments have prioritized political gains over the fiscal discipline that progress within the IMF programme requires in the past.

That being said, the IMF’s communications director has noted that the new EFF arrangement follows the successful implementation of the 2023 nine-month Stand-by Arrangement and that consistent policymak-ing has helped bring about a resumption of growth, decline in inflation and a rise in forex reserves in Pakistan. The decline in inflation is par-ticularly notable, which fell into the single-digit territory at 9.6 per cent in August. This helped pave the way for a substantial 200 basis points (bps) rate cut by the SBP earlier this week, bringing the policy rate down to 17.5 per cent. This will hope-fully aid the ongoing revival of growth. However, Pakistan’s challenge has historically been growing in a manner that it can afford. The country’s import-led growth model often results in unmanageable current account deficits and balance of payments crises. In this context, funding from multilateral lenders and other external partners can be seen as a bandage on what is a flawed economic setup and not a permanent solution. Turning the economic scene around on a permanent basis will re-quire changes that help bring more money into the country than exiting it.

While the government may have averted further economic turmoil for now, this might not be a feel-ing shared by most ordinary Pakistanis for whom the promise of economic stabilization may seem distant. Many are still reeling from skyrocketing power bills and rising prices that have made basic necessities increasingly unaffordable. The recent budget, which included new tax hikes on salaried individuals, has further strained household budgets. While inflation has decreased, the persis-tent high cost of living casts a long shadow over the economic outlook for ordinary citizens. The govern-ment’s task ahead involves more than just managing short-term fiscal needs. To genuinely turn the economic tide, Pakistan must undertake substantial reforms that go beyond superficial fixes and try to create a sustainable economic model that reduces dependency on external funding and address-es long-term growth chal-lenges. This involves broadening the tax base, eliminating inefficien-cies in the public sector, and tackling politically influential groups that have historically evaded fiscal re-sponsibility. Without this commitment to fiscal discipline and genuine reform, Pakistan could well see itself standing right back at square one in the near future.

(Courtesy The News)

Disturbing reality

Yet another chilling reminder of the dangerous path Pakistan finds itself on presented itself on Thursday when a man accused of blasphemy was shot dead in police custody at the Cantonment Police Station in Quetta. The shooter? A policeman. The story is similar: the deceased was accused of having committed a blasphemous act, he was taken into custody by the police, and a mob then gathered around the police sta-tion. But then the story shifts from the similar to something even scar-ier: a member of the police force, an institution tasked with upholding the law, took it upon himself to act as judge, jury, and executioner -- and shot the accused.

When those responsible for upholding the law become vigilantes, the foundation of justice crum-bles. Due process is not just a legal formality; it is the cornerstone of any fair and just society. Every accused person, regardless of the crime, deserves a fair trial and it is courts, not indi-viduals, that are supposed to determine guilt or innocence based on evi-dence.

Only the legal system has the authori-ty to decide punishment -- not a mob, and certainly not a rogue officer. In the case at hand, the decision to move the accused to a more secure location at the police station was appropriate but the fact that a police officer killed him after this trans-fer highlights a deep failure in how law-enforcement personnel are trained to handle such sensitive situations. The officer responsible has been arrested, and an investigation is underway but the unfortunate fact is that mob violence, especially in cases involving allegations of blasphemy, is an all-too-common occurrence in Pakistan -- part of a dis-turbing trend that shows no signs of slowing down. And now we have individual law-enforcement indi-viduals also perhaps taking the law into their hands.

Vigilantism is anarchy, plain and simple and Pakistan, with its deep divisions and history of religious intolerance, teeters on the edge of this cha-os all too often.

Moving past this problem will not be easy. The state must play its role as the final arbiter in all accu-sations, ensuring that justice is served through the courts.

This is not just about law enforcement but about healing the wounds opened by decades of intolerance and communal strife. Beyond im-mEDIATE responses to such incidents, a sustained national effort is needed to uphold the principles of jus-tice and protect rule of law. Law enforce-ment must be re-trained, communities must be educated, and the state must firmly reject all forms of vigilantism -- especially within its own ranks.

Only then can we hope to rebuild public trust and restore confidence in the legal system. The road to justice must be paved with due process, respect for the law, and a commitment to protect every citizen, re-gard-less of the accusations they face. Anything less risks pushing Pakistan further into the abyss of anarchy.

(Courtesy The News)

Another rate cut

A third rate cut in a row by SBP – this time by 200 basis points – must be a source of satisfaction for industry leaders most of whom were expecting the benchmark policy rate to go down around this much only, though there were some who were advocating for a more dramatic 500 basis points reduction to spur economic growth, based on a positive real interest rate of 10 per cent. The central bank has, however, been cautious all along, and rightly so: while the inflation rate has come down quite considerably – to 9.6 per cent in August from 12.6 per cent in June – weak inflows and continued debt repayments are still among the major concerns.

As is believed, theoretically, the cut in the cost of working capital will encourage private sector investment and spur economic activ-ity, thereby creating the much-needed employment opportunities. And as the ease of doing business and access to finance in the coun-try is at the lowest in the region, the reduced cost of borrowing in the wake of the policy rate cut will help exporters whose products had been rendered uncompetitive due to extremely expensive working capital, coupled with a very high energy tariff. On the flip side though, the repeated interest rate cut – from 22 bps to 17.5 pbs in three bimonthly assessments – is in conflict with the IMF’s demand to rather enhance it to something around 24 per cent so as to overcome the current account deficit on way to achieving macro-economic stability.

While the 44 per cent rise in the volume of remittances – to the tune of \$1.813 billion – in the first two months of the ongoing fiscal year must have come easing monetary pressures, what’s direly needed is to galvanise the SIFC mechanism to bring in foreign investment and increase inflows to tackle the current account bal-ance.

(Courtesy The Express Tribune)

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Paradox of depopulation

BY HUSSAIN H ZAIDI

In 2023, India replaced China as the globe’s top-pop-ulated country. Having peaked at 1.413 billion in 2021, the Chinese popula-tion contracted the follow-ing two years to 1.409 bil-lion.

Beijing, which had announced, and subse-quently strictly enforced, a one-child policy in 1980, intro-duced a two-child pol-icy in 2016 before allowing families to have three chil-dren in 2021. The policy has been augmented with mone-tary and non-monetary ben-efits (such as paid leaves) for men and women who opt to enlarge their families. However, as initial statistics together with prevalent social trends bear out, the success of the three-child policy remains doubtful.

Several other countries, particularly advanced econ-omies, are facing depopula-tion. In Japan, the world’s third-largest economy and Asia’s most advanced nation, the population peaked in 2008 and then began to fall. It’s projected that the Japanese population will shrink by 50 per cent from the peak level by the end of this century.

South Korea, one of Asia’s biggest success stories in high-quality development, has the lowest fertil-ity rate in the world. Like Japan, South Korea is also pro-jected to have its population shrunk by half at the turn of the century from the current level of 51 million.

Why should depopulation be a matter of concern in the aforementioned countries, and other such nations? As a rule, depopulation together with increased life expec-tancy is accompanied by a grow-ing share of old people in the total population. In China, the old (aged 65 and above) currently con-stitute 14 per cent of the total popu-lation and may exceed 25 per cent by 2050. In Japan, the old ac-count for 29 per cent – the highest anywhere in the world – of the popula-tion and are forecast to make up 35 per cent by 2040. Currently, 19 per cent of South Koreans are aged 65 or above. The share is likely to rise to 37 per cent by 2045. This means that in the

coming years in these coun-tries, social security spend-ing will go up substan-tially at the cost of, say, infrastruc-ture-related expenditure. Not only that, but the labour force will also shrink, eco-nomic output fall, and the dependency ratio rack up by a long way.

A study published in the July 2020 edition of the pres-tigious journal ‘The Lancet’ predicts that the Chinese economy will overtake the US to become the largest by 2035. However, the demo-graphic shifts in the two countries will make the US reclaim the top slot before the end of the century. China and the US will be the sec-ond and third most popu-lated nations respectively behind India and Nige-ria.

Unlike Western countries, notably the US and UK, the East Asian nations are not likely to open their borders to absorb workforce from outside, given the exclusive character of their cultures. So, de-population seems inevitable.

Japan and South Korea have for several years taken to capital-intensive and information and com-muni-cation (ICT), including AI-based development, to shed reliance on labour, while China is trying to catch up with both its neigh-bours. The growing number of the old is also giving rise to the silver economy – dedi-cated to providing goods and services to senior citizens – which will create jobs and contribute to economic expansion. However, only the affluent among the aged will be able to be-come part of the silver economy. Alternatively, the state will have to bankroll such ser-vices, which will make a big hole in its kitty.

At any rate, depopulation is the price of development. When a nation moves up the economic trajec-tory, people tend to become more prag-matic. Having more chil-dren, or having them at all, is felt as an economic burden or a distraction from the more important pursuit of career development.

Both men and women also tend to marry late, which shortens their biological par-enting period. Once such

patterns become a norm, like old habits, they’re diffi-cult to discard. That’s why the govern-ment’s efforts in China to encourage large families aren’t likely to bear fruit, even though the Chi-nese are the most disciplined nation on earth.

Having fewer kids is not only an effect but a cause of economic development as well. Francis Bacon once remarked that one who mar-ries and has children has made himself hostage to for-tune. What he meant was that married people are on the whole more risk-averse and are less likely to get out of their comfort zones than single ones. For economic development, two conditions are essential: the presence of risk-taking entrepreneurs and the perfect mobility of labour. All else equal, unmarried or small families are better placed to satisfy these conditions than mar-ried people and couples with no or fewer children.

At the other end of the scale, many developing countries are facing rela-tively high population growth. A case in point is Pakistan. At the turn of the century, the country’s popu-lation was 139.55 million, which by 2017 had risen to 207.77 million, registering a rather high cumulative growth of 49 per cent. The 2023 Digital Census puts Pakistan’s population at 241.5 million, meaning that in 23 years our population has increased 73 per cent, at an average annual rate of 3.2 per cent. Youth bulge is one principal consequence of rapid population growth, as more than 64 per cent of the people are below 30 years of age.

The above-referred Lancet study predicts that Pakistan’s population will peak at 314 million in 2049. However, by 2100, the num-ber would come down to 248 million. Pakistan will still be the fifth most populous country. The fertility rate for Pakistan will decline from a high of 3.4 per cent in 2017 to 1.3 per cent in 2100.

The higher the relative size of the young population, the greater the supply of the workforce and the less the

spending on old age and post-retirement benefits.

A predominantly young population also means a growing demand for goods and services. Such demo-graphic credentials can, however, prove an asset only if substantial investment is made in hu-man resource development and employ-ment generation. Jobless and disgruntled youth are highly susceptible to indulg-ing in deviant behaviour swayed off their feet by dream sellers and fortune seekers masquerading as saviours.

Economies like Pakistan with abundant unskilled labour and scarce capital and land are already subject to the law of diminishing returns, which translates into decreasing marginal productivity of labour, as the workforce expands. Because of a highly skewed resource distribution, a significant segment of the labour force remains unemployed and needs to be exported to the economies that are better off. Not only that, the peo-ple’s wants well exceed pub-lic resources. No matter how many schools and hospitals the government sets up, such facilities will remain in short supply in the face of a spiraling population. Such societies are overpopulated and thus need to cut down on the birth rate.

The notion of a high or low population is relative. A nation is over- or under-pop-ulated relative to its resources. By the same token, a baby boom or bust is good or bad depending on the resource base of a coun-try. This accounts for the notion of an optimal popu-lation size, which is commensurate with the national resources available to sustain it.

By all accounts, Pakistan’s population is far above the optimal level, putting severe strains on its scarce resources, and stretching them to their limits. The cur-rent population growth rate of 2.5 per cent is again too high for the country. The high and fast-growing popu-lation is a ticking bomb that needs to be defused before it wreaks havoc.

(Courtesy The News)

The system is not clean

BY MUDASSAR FAROOQ

The Suthra Punjab Campaign was initiated with the noble aim of improving sanitation standards across Punjab. However, the campaign’s implementation has been criticized for its focus on superficial measures rather than addressing the deep-rooted issues faced by the sanitary workers. Despite the campaign’s intention to elevate sanitation standards, there has been little to no substan-tial improvement in the lives of the sanitary work-ers.

On June 22 this year, the Punjab chief minister dis-tributed commendation certificates among the san-itary workers for the excel-lent cleanliness arrange-ments on Eid. However, much work is needed by the provincial authorities to uplift the dignity and rights of workers in the province.

The campaign’s progress is marked by clean-up drives and awareness ini-tiatives, but it has largely failed to ensure the provi-sion of proper safety gear and equipment for the workers and many sani-tary workers continue to operate without essential protective equipment, which exposes them to hazardous waste, toxic chemicals, and infectious diseases.

A letter issued by the Punjab Local Government Board states that “Perusal of the reports received from all 229 local govern-ments on Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company dashboard revealed that most LGs either have less quantity of safety gears for sanitary workers or don’t have it at all”.

This negligence has led to numerous instances where workers have lost their lives in the line of duty, highlighting the dire need for reforms in occupa-tional safety standards. A study titled ‘Shame and Stigma in Sanitation’ revealed that between 2011 and 2021, approxi-mately nine workers died in Sindh, along with 11 in Punjab and one in Islamabad. In Pakistan, no law has been enacted so far to ban manual scavenging.

Sanitary workers in Punjab face dire working conditions, a lack of proper equipment, and inadequate job security, which collec-tively paints a grim picture of systemic neglect and exploitation. This not only jeopardizes their health but also violates basic labour rights. The absence of protective gear and ade-quate training means that these workers are fre-quently at risk of severe injuries, illnesses, and even fatalities.

The government heavily relies on Christian workers for sanitary work, as many Muslims have refused to do this job. According to WaterAid Pakistan, 80 per cent of sanitation workers in Pakistan are Christians, despite them making up just 2.0 per cent of the gen-eral population according to the 2023 census.

Economically, the situa-tion is equally bleak. Many sanitary workers are employed on a daily wage basis without any formal employment contracts, which leaves them vul-nerable to exploitation and job insecurity. In metropolitan cities, employment is being outsourced to third-party vendors and they are forced to work on the terms and conditions of those ven-dors. It is said that most public offices are going to eliminate regular vacan-cies for sanitation workers and are converting sanitation workers into ‘contingency staff’ category.

So instead of getting health, social security and other pensionary benefits, workers are compelled to work on compromised wages on a daily basis with ‘thekedars’, which is sheer violation of national labor laws. This exploitation does not end here; ‘thekedars’ further pressurize workers to bring their own equipment if they wish to be employed. This practice must be repudiated and their services must be regu-larized.

The Punjab Labour Policy should be revised to include a dedicated chap-ter on sanitation workers, or a separate law specifi-cally for them should be introduced. This precari-ous employment arrange-ment denies them the ben-

efits usually linked with permanent jobs, such as health insurance, pensions, or paid leave. Moreover, the lack of regularization has trapped these workers in a cycle of poverty, as their meagre wages fail to keep up with the rising cost of living.

Sanitation workers are continuously demanding job security. Hundreds of workers from various dis-tricts in Punjab petitioned the Service Tribunal, which directed authorities to regularize their employ-ment. In response, the local government granted them ‘permanent workman’ status instead of making them ‘regular employees.’ As permanent workmen, they remain ineligible for pen-sion benefits.

The workers challenged this before the Lahore High Court, with nearly 20 writ petitions filed by hun-dreds of workers across the province, seeking their conversion from ‘perma-nent workmen’ to ‘regular employees.’ A representa-tive of the secretary of local government appeared before the court, withdrew the earlier orders declar-ing them permanent work-ers, and pledged to issue new directives.

Now, the workers are looking towards the local government authorities for deciding their fate; the response from local gov-ernments has been largely insufficient. Many munici-palities have not fully com-plied with these court orders, continuing to employ sanitary workers on a temporary basis with-out the benefits or protec-tions that come with regu-lar employment.

This non-compliance per-petuates the cycle of exploitation and financial instability among sanitary workers. The reluctance of the government and munici-pal bodies to regularize the services of these work-ers also violates the funda-mental rights enshrined in the constitution of Pakistan. Pakistan is a sig-natory to various interna-tional conventions, includ-ing ILO conventions that advocate for safe working environments and the rights of workers to decent work. The continued

neglect and mistreatment of sanitary workers is con-trary to these international commitments, reflecting a broader disregard for global labour standards and human rights obliga-tions.

The treatment of sani-tary workers in Punjab also stands in stark violation of constitutional guarantees and fair labour practices. Specifically, Article 9 of the constitution ensures the right to life and liberty, while Article 14 upholds the dignity of the individ-ual and Article 25 prohib-its any form of discrimina-tion and exploitation. By failing to provide sanitary workers with safe working conditions and regular employment, the govern-ment is failing to uphold these constitutional guar-antees on all fronts.

The chief minister of Punjab has publicly acknowledged the match-less performance of sani-tary workers by calling them ‘heroes of the nation’ and giving them letters of appreciation; though this does not seem to extend to providing them with job security. Despite support-ive statements, the imple-mentation of promised reforms and court direc-tives has been slow, and many sanitary workers con-tinue to face the same chal-lenges.

The Suthra Punjab Campaign must be rede-fined with clear goals, timelines, and accountabil-ity mechanisms to ensure its promises are met. The efforts of local govern-ments, though well-inten-tioned, have not been translated into significant improvements for the work-ers on the ground.

It is time activists and rights-based organizations, striving to protect the dig-nity of the marginalized classes, initiate campaigns and hold policy dialogues to play a constructive role in the formulation of a unified service policy and ser-vice structures for sanitation workers so as to pro-protect and ensure their basic rights to life, livelihood, and equality.

The writer is an advo-cate. He can be reached at: mudassar.clc@gmail.com (Courtesy The News)

ADB lauds comprehensive reforms, reaffirms continued support

BUSINESS
REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The President, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Masatsugu Asakawa here on Monday lauded the government for undertaking comprehensive reforms, leading to progressive signs of economic recovery.

During a meeting with Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Minister, Ahad Cheema, he reaffirmed ADB's continued support to Pakistan for complementing its development and reform agenda.

President ADB reposed his trust in Pakistan's reform agenda and appreciated the required tough stabilization measures taken by the government to bring about macroeconomic stability in the country.

He also assured of bank's continued support in the areas of Public Private Partnership, climate and disaster resilience enhancement, Domestic Resource Mobilization, promoting Women Inclusive Finance and Energy Sector reforms.

Meanwhile, appreciating ADB's long-standing and steadfast support to Pakistan, Minister Ahad Cheema briefed the President on a series of reforms introduced by the government.

The key reforms include enhancing tax revenues, improving financial sustainability of energy sector, reduction in untargeted subsidies and scaling up social protection.

Asakawa together with Secretary Economic Affairs, Kazim Niaz also attended the ground-breaking ceremony of a new ADB office building in Islamabad.



RAWALPINDI: Traders preparing “Langar” for the participants of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi, procession in Bani Chowk. — Staff Photo

CCOCIP discusses measures to expedite CPEC projects

- Ahsan opens NICAT investment ecosystem to foster technological innovation, entrepreneurship

BUSINESS
REPORTER
RAWALPINDI

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Chinese Investment Projects (CCoCIP) which focused on expediting several ongoing projects under the CPEC framework.

The meeting discussed the provision of electricity to the Rashakai Special Economic Zone (SEZ), import/export policies for Gwadar Free Zone, transit trade with Afghanistan and Central Asian countries via Gwadar Port, international transshipment of seafood, and the development of the Karachi Coastal Comprehensive Development Zone, according to a news release.

The Planning minister emphasized the need for a proactive approach in serving investors, adding “We must treat our investors like customers.”

He directed all relevant ministries to provide their comments on pending matters within few days to ensure smooth progress.

“Decisions should be taken swiftly, and investors should not be kept waiting for long, as delays discourage investment,” he stressed.

Ahsan Iqbal directed secretaries of the ministries concerned to develop actionable plans and address unresolved issues and end pendencies.

Discussing security measures for Chinese officials working on CPEC projects, he stressed that security protocols should not create an atmosphere of fear or hinder business operations.

The meeting reiterated the government's commitment to resolving any bottlenecks faced by Chinese investors and ensuring that CPEC projects continued to progress without delays.

The Planning minister called for enhanced coordination among ministries and smooth decision-making to boost investors' confidence and accelerate the realization of key projects.

The meeting was attended by key government officials, including Federal Minister for Petroleum Division Musadiq Malik, Federal Minister for Energy Awaiz Laghari, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, and secretaries from the relevant Ministries, along with representatives from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Secretariat and the Planning Ministry.

Meanwhile, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday inaugurated NICAT investment ecosystem aimed at fostering technological innovation and entrepreneurship in the country, providing a platform for transformative



collaboration across the aerospace and technology sectors.

The National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT) has launched the investment startups ecosystem in collaboration with the Ignite National Technology Fund and the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP), a news releases said.

The initiatives brought together prominent industry leaders, government officials, investors and innovative startups.

Addressing the launching ceremony, the minister highlighted the significant steps taken by the government in the fields of science and technology, reaffirming the commitment to transforming Pakistan into a modern, technology-driven economy.

He said the incubation centers like NICAT contributed to the development of an innovative ecosystem in which tech entrepreneurship could thrive, and emphasized “a country with bustling

Citing examples of world class universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Stanford and MIT, the minister said, “One peculiar thing you will find in these universities is that their laboratories and libraries remain open round the clock. There's no concept of off-duty hours in the world's best universities because innovators have no deadline.”

He emphasized on the need to create an environment that fostered critical thinking and problem solving skills in Pakistan's universities, eventually establishing stronger links between universities and industries.

He shed light on the government's major scientific and technological initiatives at the national level, including the establishment of National Centre for Artificial Intelligence, National Centre for Cyber Security, National Centre for Robotics and Automation, National Centre for Big Data and Cloud Computing and National Centre for Genomics.

Ahsan Iqbal noted that the centers were playing a crucial role in fostering a robust scientific environment within the country.

He said Pakistan held a unique history and strategic geographic importance, adding despite facing various challenges, the country had learned from its hardships and emerged stronger.

“Pakistan, though faced with numerous difficulties in its early days, is now the world's seventh nuclear power. Our industrial and defence sectors have made remarkable advancements, exemplified by the development of state-of-the-art aircraft like the JF-17 Thunder,” he remarked.

The minister also stressed the urgent need to equip Pakistan's youth with digital skills, stating that future progress would belong to nations that adopted modern technologies.

CCP issues show cause notices to ten steel suppliers for collusive bidding

BUSINESS
REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has issued show cause notices to ten steel suppliers for collusive bidding.

The CCP has issued show cause notices to ten steel structure suppliers involved in procurement tenders floated by various Distribution Companies (DISCOs) for the alleged collusive bidding a, prima facie, violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010, said a press release issued here on Monday.

The ten undertakings include M/s. AM Associates (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Ajmer Engineering Electric Works (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Khalifa Sons (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Siddique Sons Engineering (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Vision Engineering (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. AW Engineering (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. FN Power (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Gujranwala Cable (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. AH Associates (Pvt) Ltd, and M/s. Process Dynamics (Pvt) Ltd.

The CCP took suo motu notice and initiated an enquiry under Section 37(1) of the Competition Act, 2010. During the enquiry, search and inspections were also conducted at the premises of three Lahore-based companies, where critical documents and records were impounded for further examination.

During the enquiry, Engineering (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. AW Engineering (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. FN Power (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Gujranwala Cable (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. AH Associates (Pvt) Ltd, and M/s. Process Dynamics (Pvt) Ltd.

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Associates, M/s. Ajmer Engineering, and M/s. Khalifa Sons were found to have engaged in collective decision-making regarding the rates and quantities quoted, with the apparent aim of manipulating tender outcomes for mutual benefit.

The enquiry report found that this collusive behavior included mutual agreements on the number of firms participating in tenders, predetermined price-fixing, and strategic non-participation to ensure that the pre-selected firm would win. Such practices constitute a, prima facie, violation of Section 4(2)(a)(b)(c) (e) of the Competition Act, 2010.

The CCP's enquiry further concluded that the anti-competitive behavior of these ten companies extends beyond provincial boundaries, affecting market dynamics across Pakistan.

Pakistani Rupee Gains Momentum

- KSE-100 index gains 397 points in the opening session on Tuesday

BUSINESS
REPORTER
KARACHI

As of today, the USD to PKR interbank rate is 278.85, with the Pakistani rupee buying at 278.35 and selling at 278.85. This indicates a positive trend for the Pakistani currency in the interbank market.

The Pakistani rupee (PKR) appreciated against the US dollar (USD) in interbank trading, with the exchange rate decreasing by 10 paises to Rs278.10. Meanwhile, the Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE-100) index rose by 397 points, or 0.50%, to reach 79,730 points.

The positive momentum comes ahead of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Executive Board meeting on September 25, where Pakistan's new \$7 billion loan program is expected to receive approval. IMF Director of Communications, Julia Kozack, confirmed the development, stating that discussions with Pakistan were successfully concluded in July.

The loan program aims to support Pakistan's economic reforms and stability efforts amid ongoing fiscal challenges. The approval of the loan is crucial for addressing the country's external financing gap.

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmed assured that arrangements have been made to address the external financing gap during a recent analyst briefing. The briefing highlighted ongoing efforts to stabilize the economy.

Market analysts believe the IMF loan approval will boost investor confidence, leading to further gains in the stock market and currency exchange.

Key Highlights:

- Pakistani rupee appreciates by 10 paises against USD in interbank trading
- KSE-100 index rises by 397 points, or 0.50%, to 79,730 points
- IMF Executive Board meeting on September 25 to review Pakistan's \$7 billion loan program
- SBP Governor assures arrangements in place to address external financing gap
- Analysts expect IMF loan approval to boost investor confidence and economic stability.



Economic progress hinges on business community's success: MNA Malik Abrar

BUSINESS
REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The government is fully cognizant of the challenges faced by the business community and is making concerted efforts to address their concerns, ensuring their well being and contributing to the country's prosperity.

This was said by Member National Assembly (MNA) Malik Abrar Ahmed while addressing the hugely attended Founder Group's reception hosted by Group leader TWA Tarnol Wajid Ayub in honour of President

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, said a news release here on Monday.

The event was attended by Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, MNAs Anjum Aqeel Khan, Raja Khurram Nawaz, Malik Shohail Khan Kamal, Ehsan Bajwa, MPAs Raja Hanif, Ziaullah Shah, Malik Maqsood, former MPA Sardar Iftikhar Khan Mittu and former Deputy Mayor Islamabad Chaudhry Riffat Javaid.

Malik Abrar highlighted the vital role of the business community in powering the economy, underscoring the



ism development.

The main initiatives included conducting foreign trips to explore new business opportunities and hosting Tourism Summits in Skardu to showcase the breathtaking treasures of the northern areas. These efforts have helped highlight the region's vast tourism potential, attracting investors and tourists alike, he added.

He urged policymakers to consult with business leaders and involve them in the decision-making process while formulating economic policies. This collaborative approach, he argued, is crucial for creating sustainable and effective policies that drive economic growth and development.

Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik said that ICCI, under the visionary leadership of President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, is dedicated to serving the business community with unwavering commitment and selflessness.

With a focus on pro-

moting economic growth and development, the Chamber has been instrumental in addressing the concerns of entrepreneurs and traders, providing them with a platform to voice their issues and find solutions.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General United Business Group, emphasized the need to accord respect to the business community if Pakistan is to achieve progress and prosperity. He stressed that recognizing the contributions of business leaders is essential for inspiring the younger generation to pursue entrepreneurship and excel in their lives.

Furthermore,

Bakhtawari urged the government to incorporate the success stories of businessmen into educational textbooks. This, he believes, will not only encourage the business community but also motivate young people to emulate these role models and strive for excellence.

Nasir Qureshi, Council Member ICCI acknowledged the challenges being faced by the business community, but praised the ICCI for its unwavering support.

He commended Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, citing their selfless dedication to serving the community and society at large. He described them as

a source of inspiration and motivation for the business fraternity, exemplifying the ICCI's commitment to promoting the interests of its members.

Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, former President ICCI stressed the imperative of unity among the business community to effectively address their challenges and compel the government to take decisive action.

Sheikh Aamir Waheed, former President of the ICCI urged the government to prioritize the resolution of the IPPs (Independent Power Producers) issue, citing its significance for the business community..

Conference of Pakistan’s consuls in US cities decides to intensify contacts with community, resolve problems

WEB DESK
WASHINGTON

A day-long conference of Pakistan’s Consuls General in New York, Chicago, Houston and Los Angeles — presided over by Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh — concluded Sunday after deciding to actively engage with the community, improve service delivery, and promote people-to-people ties with the U.S., especially by boosting business linkages.

“The Pakistani community is our biggest asset; It’s the most enduring link in Pak-US relations,” Ambassador Sheikh told the conference, as he called for stepped up efforts to resolve their issues.

“We must accelerate efforts to organize our community, especially professional organiza-

tions, so that they can play a greater role in their respective areas of operation”, he added.

Trade and commercial officers at the respective Consulates were also present.

According to a press release of Pakistani embassy, the Consuls General apprised the Ambassador of the services being rendered to the community in their jurisdictions including visas, passports, and other consular services. The meeting discussed various problems faced by the applicants and decided to approach relevant federal and provincial government departments to find their solutions.

The meeting also explored the possibility of extending biometric verification facilities for land transfers, vehicle sales, and bank account verifications, the press



release said.

In his remarks, the Ambassador also highlighted new initiatives taken by the government to ease the visa regime, especially for businesses and tourism, and stressed the need to create maximum awareness about them.

Trade Officers provided briefings on ongoing efforts to promote bilateral trade, detailing steps taken to introduce Pakistani products and connect businesses with potential partners in the United States. Ambassador Sheikh emphasized the necessity of attracting investment in priority areas, particularly in self-sustaining businesses that have the potential to create job opportunities for the youth.

Ambassador Sheikh stressed that the specific trade requirements of each U.S. state should

Trump Unharmed: Gunshots Fired Near Former President, Suspect Detained

WEB DESK
NEW YORK



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is safe following gunshots in his vicinity, his campaign said in a statement on Sunday. The statement did not provide further details, and Reuters could not immediately determine where Trump was located when the campaign issued the statement.

Trump was in Palm Beach on Sunday, according to the Wall Street Journal, and his Mar-a-Lago Club is based there.

This incident follows an assassination attempt in Pennsylvania on July 13, where Trump was shot and wounded in his upper right ear.

Here are the details of the July 13 incident:

- Location: Butler Farm Show Grounds in Pennsylvania

- Time: 6:11 p.m.
- Shooter: Thomas Matthew Crooks, a 20-year-old man from Bethel Park, Pennsylvania
- Weapon: AR-15 style rifle
- Injuries: Trump was shot and wounded in his upper right ear; one audience member was killed, and two others were critically injured
- Shooter’s fate: Crooks was killed by the United States Secret Service’s Counter Sniper Team
- The July 13 incident has been regarded as the most significant security failure by the Secret Service since the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan in 1981.

UNGA adopts 79th session’s agenda, including addressing nuclear legacy & lethal autonomous weapons

WEB DESK
UNITED NATIONS

The UN General Assembly has adopted the work programme for its seventy-ninth session, deciding to include items on addressing the legacy of nuclear weapons and on lethal autonomous weapons systems in its agenda, while Russia and Ukraine voiced opposing views on the body’s consideration of an item relating to the war-hit eastern European country.

Acting on the recommendation of its steering committee, the 193-member Assembly decided that the gen-

eral debate, which will be held from 24 to 30 September, will continue on Saturday, 28 September. [The general debate will not be held on Sunday, 29 September.]

More than 130 heads of state/government, including Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, are expected to attend the high-level debate.

The Assembly President Philéon Yango of Cameroon, highlighted the Committee’s other recommendations on the organization of the session, concerning rationalization of work, closing date of the session, the general debate and

the conduct of meetings.

The Assembly also took note of information on the ‘right of reply’ — particularly the organ’s practice that statements delivered in exercise of the right of reply to addresses made by Heads of State be in writing.

It decided to consider the draft agendas titled “Addressing the legacy of nuclear weapons: providing victim assistance and environmental remediation to Member States affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons” and “Lethal autonomous weapons systems” under the



“Disarmament” heading on its agenda. (LAWS are weapons that select and apply force to targets without human intervention).

Under the “Organizational, administrative and other matters” heading, it decided to consider the draft agendas titled “Eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War”, “Observer status for the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative in the General Assembly” and “Observer status for the International Coffee Organization in the

General Assembly”.

During the meeting, Russia disassociated itself from consensus on the decision to include the item titled “The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine” in the Assembly’s agenda. Stating that this wording does not reflect reality and intentionally misleads the international community, the Russian representative stressed that it also denies the fundamental principle of self-determination.

“The bloody pro-Nazi coup in Kyiv in 2014 initiated by the West” caused the systematic persecution and physical elimination of ethnic

Russian, Russian-speaking and Christian Orthodox residents in Ukraine, the Russian representative said. Meanwhile, she continued, this agenda item only serves to propagate the Kyiv regime’s unsubstantiated accusations and propaganda. Further, because the topic of Ukraine is also discussed in other forums, this agenda item is a clear example of duplication of efforts.

The representative of Ukraine, for her part, thanked the Assembly for the inclusion of this agenda item. “We deeply regret the disrespectful attitude displayed by the Russian delegation towards the General

Assembly, the most-representative principal organ of this Organization,” she said. Against the backdrop of the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, retaining this item in the agenda is of paramount importance.

“We are convinced that the vigilant attention of the General Assembly as a primary deliberative policy-making and representative body is indispensable in addressing Russia’s heinous acts of terrorism,” she stressed, adding that Member States have shown substantial interest in this year’s debate on the item — which only underscores its significance.

Tribal shootouts near PNG gold mine kill at least 30

WEB DESK
PNG

Shootouts between hundreds of tribal warriors have left at least 30 people dead in Papua New Guinea’s highlands, police said Monday, as security forces were given emergency powers to quell the violence.

Police said the unrest started in August when “illegal miners” inflicted life-threatening injuries on a landowner in the Porgera Valley, home to one of Papua New Guinea’s largest gold deposits.

Peace talks failed, and the situation spiralled into intense tribal fighting that saw 300 shots fired on Sunday alone, according to police commander Joseph Tondop.

Police said 30 men had been killed across the rival clans and hundreds of women and children displaced, with “many” homes burned to the ground.



Two officials were also killed while waiting for a lift home after work, said Tondop.

Police Commissioner David Manning said “lethal force” would be used to restore order in the hard-to-reach highlands region.

“Put simply, this means if you raise a weapon in a public place or to threaten another person, you will be shot,” Manning said in a statement at the weekend.

“This deteriorating situation has been caused by illegal miners and illegal settlers who

are victimising traditional landowners and using violence to terrorise local communities.”

Police said illegal miners from the Sakar clan had been squatting on land owned by their Piande rivals.

Alcohol sales have been banned and an overnight curfew is in place, added Manning, who vowed to remove the artisanal miners from the valley.

Tribal conflicts are a frequent occurrence in Papua New Guinea’s highlands, but an influx of automatic weapons has made clashes dead-

lier.

The latest burst of fighting had been turbocharged by the presence of more than “100 high-powered weapons in the wrong hands”, police said.

Security teams have been posted along the highway leading to the mine, using loudhailers to broadcast messages of peace.

– ‘Stop the spiral’ –

The Porgera gold mine once accounted for around 10 percent of Papua New Guinea’s yearly export earnings.

But recurrent flare-ups of tribal violence and a drawn out government takeover have slowed production in recent years.

Gunfights between rival clans living near the mine killed at least 17 in 2022.

And at least 26 people were killed, including 16 children, when three villages in East Sepik province were attacked earlier this year.

Germany wants trade with Kazakhstan, won’t circumvent Russia sanctions, Scholz says

WEB DESK
ASTANA

Germany is interested in expanding trade with Kazakhstan while also ensuring such trade is not used to circumvent EU sanctions on Russia, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on a visit to the Central Asian nation.

“I am grateful for the trusting dialogue between us, through which we want to prevent trade between us from being misused to circumvent sanctions,” Scholz said.

After Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the West imposed sweeping sanctions on Russia, prompting Moscow to seek circuitous routes for importing technology and goods.

Sources have told Reuters that Russian businesses seeking goods banned by the West sometimes procured them from companies based in neighbouring



Kazakhstan or other former Soviet nations. The Astana government has said it would abide by the sanctions.

Both Scholz and Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said their countries were interested in increasing trade in oil, rare earths, lithium and other raw materials.

“Both sides benefit from this exchange

because it allows us to diversify our economies and make them more resilient,” Scholz said. “A very concrete example of this is the oil supplies from Kazakhstan, which helped us a lot after Russia failed as a supplier.”

The two met ahead of a broader meeting between Scholz and all five Central Asian leaders, an example of more

active Western diplomacy in what has traditionally been Russia’s backyard.

Kazakhstan has already stepped in to replace Russia as the supplier of crude for Berlin’s Schwedt refinery. Scholz’s visit comes after Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened to curb sales of metals such as titanium to “unfriendly” nations.

Iran’s president says direct talks with US possible if it abandons its hostility

WEB DESK
DUBAI

Iran could hold direct talks with the United States if Washington demonstrates “in practice” that it is not hostile to the Islamic Republic, President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday.

Pezeshkian was responding to a question at a news conference in Tehran on whether Tehran would be open to direct talks with the US

to revive a 2015 nuclear deal.

Former US president Donald Trump reneged on that deal in 2018, arguing it was too generous to Tehran, and restored harsh US sanctions on Iran, prompting Tehran to gradually violate the agreement’s nuclear limits.

“We are not hostile towards the US, they should end their hostility towards us by showing their goodwill in practice,” said Pezeshkian, adding:

“We are brothers with the Americans as well.”

After taking office in January 2021, US President Joe Biden tried to negotiate a revival of the nuclear pact under which Iran had restricted its nuclear programme in return for relief from US, European Union and UN sanctions.

However, Tehran refused to directly negotiate with Washington and worked mainly through European or Arab intermediaries.



Biden says US Secret Service needs more help

WEB DESK
WASHINGTON

The US Secret Service needs more help, President Joe Biden said on Monday after an apparent assassination attempt on Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump was thwarted over the weekend.

Biden, speaking to reporters, said he did not yet have a full report of the Sunday incident at Trump’s Florida golf course and that he was thankful the former president was ok.

Donald Trump was

safe on Sunday after the Secret Service foiled what the FBI called an apparent assassination attempt while he was golfing on his course in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Secret Service agents spotted and fired on the gunman in bushes near the property line of the golf course, a few hundred yards from where Trump was playing, law enforcement officials said.

The suspect left an AK-47-style assault rifle and other items at the scene and fled in a vehicle but was later arrested.



Polish PM pledges \$260m aid package for storm-ravaged regions

WEB DESK
POLAND

Prime Minister Donald Tusk on Monday announced millions of dollars in aid for those in Poland hit by Storm Boris, as the toll in the country climbed to four following torrential rains and flooding.

Since Thursday, swathes of Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia have been hit by high winds and unusually heavy rainfall.

“At the moment we have ensured a reserve of one billion zloty (\$260 million) for places and people affected by the flood,” Tusk told reporters.

“From today, anyone affected by the flood... and here I mean through flooding, collapsed buildings,



flooded garages, lost cars, losses linked to the flood... will be able to easily” claim funds, he added.

Four people have died in Poland from the storm, according to an updated toll Monday from police.

“We have four dead in the areas affected by the catastrophe,” Polish police spokeswoman

Katarzyna Nowak told AFP, adding however that the exact causes of death still needed to be clarified.

Fourteen people have died as Storm Boris lashed central and eastern Europe with torrential rains and flooding, several more are missing and millions have been evacuated from their homes.

I haven't done justice to my talent: Faheem

SPORTS REPORTER

MULTAN

Pakistan all-rounder Faheem Ashraf recently stated that he is considering the ongoing Champions One-Day Cup as a platform that will pave the way for his comeback to the national team. Faheem is representing Saud Shakeel-led Dolphins in the Champions One-Day Cup. he scored 35-ball 41 and took one wicket in Dolphins' season opener against Panthers.

During an interview with a local news channel, the 30-year-old all-rounder expressed his dissatisfaction with his performances, highlighting the need for improvement. But he also acknowledged that at times his good performances were overlooked. "A career has its ups and downs, but a good performance can open many doors. What's destined will come, and if it's not in your destiny, it won't happen," said Faheem.

"Perhaps I haven't done justice to my talent. At times, it's disappointing when, despite performing, opportunities don't come your way. But I try to stay positive and avoid negative thoughts," he added. Faheem also commented on the importance of the Champions One-Day Cup for him and other players, who are eyeing a comeback to the Pakistan team for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. "Some will be trying to make a comeback, while others will be looking to cement their places. It's an important opportunity for young players to perform and get noticed by selectors and franchise teams," he stated.

"I'm aiming to perform well here and make a comeback for the Champions Trophy," he further added.

Pakistan's Hockey Hopes Dashed as China Wins Thrilling Semi-Final

- China in final with 2-0 win over Pakistan in penalty shootout

SPORTS REPORTER

HULUNBUIR CITY

China defeated Pakistan 2-0 in the penalty shoot-out during the Asian Hockey Champions Trophy 2024 semi-final clash here at the Moqi Hockey Training Base on Monday.

Pakistan and China both managed one goal each in the regular time after an intense battle, however, the Green Shirts failed to score a single penalty, leading to their ouster from the tournament.

The home side scored two goals in the penalty shoot-out to secure their place in the final.

For the unversed, Pakistan lost only one game in the group stages with arch-rivals India defeating them 2-1 in the final group match.



Pakistan started the blockbuster clash on a high as they took the lead just 10 minutes into the first quarter, courtesy of a precise assist from Hannan Shahid, who fed the ball inside the circle to Nadeem.

Nadeem effortlessly smashed the ball into the net to give Pakistan a head start.

Pakistan's lead, however, was short-lived as India earned a penalty corner.

India's skipper

Harmanpreet Singh took the penalty corner for India and successfully sent his drag-flick into the bottom-right corner, helping India equalise just a few minutes later.

The defending champions took the lead in the

second quarter when Abhishek fed the ball to Harmanpreet near the circle, who similarly converted it into a goal.

The remaining two quarters of the blockbuster Asian Hockey Champions Trophy clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India remained goalless despite both sides making ferocious attacks on each other's goalposts.

The 2-1 victory over Pakistan, meant India won all of their group-stage fixtures and topped the standings with 15 points. Whereas, Pakistan had two victories and as many draws before their defeat against India.

Remember, Pakistan have already qualified for the semi-final of the ongoing Asian Hockey Champions Trophy 2024 after thumping China 5-1 on Thursday.

Penpix of contenders in the race to become next IOC president after Bach

WEB DESK

PARIS

The candidates to succeed Thomas Bach as president of the International Olympic Committee and become the most powerful figure in sports governance were unveiled on Monday.

Bach was first elected to an initial eight-year term in 2013, succeeding Belgian Jacques Rogge, and re-elected for four years in 2019.

The 70-year-old German announced shortly before the end of the Paris Olympics in August he would not seek a third term declaring: "New times are calling for new leaders."

AFP Sports profiles the contenders who will vie for election at the IOC session in Athens, March 18-21 next year:



Despite the rules laid down last Thursday which on age alone could be a barrier, Coe has shown the same single-minded determination he displayed in his legendary athletics career in declaring himself a runner -- the question is can he emerge, like he did twice in successive Olympics (1500m in 1980/84), a winner.

His golden touch has carried on into his administrative career. He was a Conservative Party lawmaker for five years, ran both the successful bid for the 2012 London Olympics and hosting of them before taking over in 2015.

Aakash 'doubtful' of India visiting

WEB DESK

MUMBAI

Former cricketer-turned-analyst Aakash Chopra has recently raised doubts over the prospect of India visiting Pakistan for the upcoming ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025.

The ICC Champions Trophy 2025 is scheduled to take place in Pakistan from February to March, however, India's participation in the tournament is uncertain as the BCCI seeks the government's approval to visit the country. Remember, reports emerged in Indian media, citing a source from the BCCI, that the Indian team will not be visiting



Pakistan for the upcoming ICC event. Further reports claimed that the board has formally proposed Dubai and Sri Lanka as potential venues for hosting India's matches.

Aakash Chopra, during an appearance in a podcast on Raj Shamani's YouTube channel, opined that the chances of India visiting Pakistan are low considering the current political situation between the two

countries. "The chances [of India visiting Pakistan] are very slim, to be honest. While cricket is back in Pakistan and the Asia Cup was held there, the hybrid model worked before with matches in Sri Lanka," Chopra said. "Although teams like England, New Zealand, and Australia are visiting Pakistan, I doubt India will go. The final decision is not just in the hands of the BCCI but also involves the government's policy." Chopra suggested the hybrid model as a viable solution, like last year's ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023. India stuck to their stance of not visiting Pakistan, resulting in Sri Lanka stepping in as the co-host. "We might end up playing our matches.

India thump Korea to set-up Asian Hockey Champions Trophy final with China

WEB DESK

HULUNBUIR CITY

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh scored a brace and powered India to a crushing 4-1 victory over South Korea in the second semi-final of the Asian Hockey Champions Trophy here at the Moqi Hockey Training Base on Monday.

Defending champions India will now face China in the final on September 17 at the same venue.

The Men in Blue had a dream start to the knock-out clash as Uttam Singh opened the scoring for them in the first quarter.

The three-time champions, fuelled with momentum, continued to attack South Korea's defences



and were rewarded in the second quarter when Harmanpreet Singh doubled their lead.

The Men in Blue were even more ruthless in the third quarter.

Just two minutes into the third quarter, midfielder Sumit Walmiki made a sensational aerial

switch to Jarmanpreet Singh, who brilliantly brought it down before smashing a stunning goal to make it 3-0 for India.

South Korea responded within a minute when Yang Jihun pulled one back but his strike eventually turned out to be solitary.

Harmanpreet once again breached Korea's defence in the dying minutes of the third quarter and restored India's lead to three goals.

The fourth quarter remained goalless despite several attempts from both sides.

Earlier in the day, former champions Pakistan succumbed to a shock loss at the hands of China in the first Asian Hockey Champions Trophy semi-final in a penalty shoot-out.

The ongoing tournament is the eighth edition of the Asian Champions Trophy. Pakistan have won the tournament in 2012 and 2013, while India have won in 2011, 2016 and 2023.

Azerbaijan Grand Prix: three things we learned

WEB DESK

BAKU

Oscar Piastri's win in Baku means Max Verstappen and Red Bull face a scrap to hang on to their titles after being toppled from the lead of the constructors' championship while McLaren have confirmed their current superiority, and Williams their future potential.

Even as Red Bull's influential advisor Helmut Marko conceded that they have no chance of retaining the teams' title, it was clear in the aftermath of a tense and intriguing Azerbaijan Grand Prix that the power has shifted in Formula One.

AFP Sport looks at three things we learned from Sunday's drama on the streets of Baku: Red Bull concede team

title

Lando Norris's feisty drive to fourth from 15th on the grid kept alive not only his slim hopes of the drivers' crown but also, with the aid of Carlos Sainz's collision with Sergio Perez, ensured that McLaren took a healthy 20-point lead over Red Bull in the constructors'.

No wonder that Marko, the eminence grise of the Milton Keynes-based outfit, admitted all hopes of resisting McLaren were gone.

He did, however, see an upside in the drivers' title race.

"The positive is that Oscar Piastri is close to Lando Norris in terms of points and there are team orders at McLaren... Therefore, clarity will not follow so easily."

Norris cut the lead of three-time champion Verstappen by just three

points to 59 with seven races and three sprint races to go, but even that may still not be cushion enough for the Dutchman to retain his crown if he cannot find winning form again.

He is winless in seven outings and struggling for podium finishes while both McLarens and both Ferraris, with Mercedes close too, have shown the form to beat him. "Max couldn't even hook it up," added Marko of the skittish RB20 car.

"The tyres failed. The brake temperatures went up. The car has potential but its set-up is very sensitive."

Red Bull, he said, expected a major upgrade for next month's United States Grand Prix that may be their final chance to rescue the season for Verstappen if Norris avoids further mishaps.

History making first Blind Women's Cricket Match held in Karachi



SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A new sports history was made in Karachi, the first blind women's cricket match in the history of Karachi was held in which Civil Lions Youth Cricket Foundation XI defeated PACC XI by 9 wickets. Organized by Civil Lions Youth Cricket Foundation, with the Collaboration of Binai Education Foundation, Edu-cation Pakistan Foundation, American Cultural

Center, Rotary Club of Karachi Avenue and New Elite Lions Club. PACC President Makhdoom Ali Riaz was the chief guest, who distributed the prizes along with Civil Lions Youth Cricket Foundation Chairman Javed Jhangra, Salman Elahi and Imtiaz Ahmed Sheikh. Binai Education Foundation Chairperson Sarwat Naseem Shah, PACC Jilani Yusuf, Chairman Event Zohaib Jhangra, Sohaib Ansar, Imran Katya.

African players in Europe: Wissa 22-second goal in vain

SPORTS REPORTER

PARIS

Yoane Wissa scored after just 22 seconds for Brentford in the Premier League at the weekend, but his goal was in vain as defending champions Manchester City recovered to win 2-1 at home.

The 28-year-old winger had returned to England after helping the Democratic Republic of Congo secure 2025 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying victories over Guinea and Ethiopia.

Here, AFP Sport highlights some of the Africans who starred in the major European leagues.

Wissa maintained his hot streak, scoring for the third time this season, netting at the Etihad

Stadium with a header after City defender John Stones got into a muddle with goalkeeper Ederson. City hit back to win thanks to an Erling Haaland double.

The Egypt captain failed to score for the first time in the Premier League this season as the Reds crashed to a shock 1-0 home defeat against Nottingham Forest. Salah had scored once in each of Arne Slot's first three games in charge of Liverpool.

The Gabon midfielder swept Wolves into a first-half lead at the end of a counter-attack. However, Newcastle United's greater quality proved decisive after the break and a couple of late goals condemned the home side to a 2-1 loss.

The former Barcelona

winger got off the mark for the season in La Liga with a smart near-post finish to send Betis ahead in their 2-0 win over Leganes. The Morocco international had netted twice for the Andalusian side against Ukrainian club Kryvbas in Europa Conference League qualification.

Ghana international Williams played an impressive supporting role as Athletic edged to a 3-2 win at Las Palmas, conjuring a hat-trick of assists. The veteran forward put a ball in from the right for Oihan Sancet's opener before teeing up his brother Nico for Athletic's second. Inaki set up the Basques' third with a clever slide to knock the ball back for Aitor Paredes to convert.

Shadab, Usama spin Panthers to victory over Lions

- Shadab, Usama Mir picked three wickets each to set up Panthers' second win of the tournament

SPORTS REPORTER

FAISALABAD

Shadab Khan and Usama Mir took three wickets each after Mubasir Khan and Haider Ali's half-centuries to steer Panthers to an 84-run victory over Lions during the Champions One-Day Cup here at Iqbal Stadium on Monday.

Panthers were booked for 283 in the first innings, however, they successfully defended the total as they bundled Lions for a meagre 199.

Mohammad Hasnain provided the first breakthrough, dismissing Sajjad Ali in the first over with seven runs on the board.

Ammad Butt removed Abdullah Shafique in the next over, while Omaid Bin Yousuf scored a quick 20 before getting run out, leaving Lions reeling at 44-3.

Imam-ul-Haq showed resistance as he stitched an 83-run stand with Irfan Khan for the fourth wicket, pushing the total to 127.

He looked in good touch during his 62-ball innings of 60, which was laced with five

boundaries and two sixes before Shadab Khan ended his stay at the crease.

Meanwhile, Usama Mir removed Irfan Khan, who scored a cautious 35 off 50 balls with two boundaries and one six.

Khushdil Shah played a 32-ball knock, scoring 22 runs, while wickets kept falling around him. He also fell prey to Shadab Khan.

Ahmed Daniyal (16) and Sirajuddin (19) then added a 32-run stand for the ninth wicket before falling in consecutive overs, ending Panthers' innings at 199.

Usama Mir and Shadab Khan claimed three wickets each, while Mohammad Hasnain picked two.

Earlier, Panthers found themselves in a precarious position as they lost four wickets inside the first ten overs with 51 runs on the board.

Mubasir Khan and Haider Ali then knitted a solid partnership of 144 runs for the fifth wicket, completing their half-centuries in the process.



He remained the top-scorer for Panthers with 90 off 97, which featured ten boundaries and three sixes.

Meanwhile, Haider continued his strokeplay, adding another 67 runs for the sixth wicket with captain Shadab Khan (37).

At 262-5, Panthers were in a position to post a big total, however, Ahmed Daniyal removed Haider and Shadab in the same over to bring

Lions back into the match. Haider departed after scoring 84 runs from 99 balls, laced with five boundaries and three sixes, while Shadab scored a 29-ball 37 with five boundaries.

Panthers failed to recover and lost their next three wickets for only 20 runs, bundling out for 283 in 46.5 overs.

Ahmed Daniyal and Shaheen Afridi took three wickets each for Lions, while

Aamir Yamin and Sirajuddin bagged two each. The innings began with Sajjad Ali being dismissed for a duck by Mohammad Hasnain in the fourth ball of the chase. Abdullah Shafique followed shortly, falling lbw to Amad Butt for just 1 run from 5 balls, leaving the team at a precarious 8 runs for 2 wickets. Imam-ul-Haq anchored the innings with a valuable 60 runs off 62 balls, including 5

boundaries and 2 sixes, before being dismissed by Shadab Khan.

Omaid Yousuf added a quickfire 20 runs from 17 balls, with 1 four and 2 sixes, but was run out by Mohammad Hasnain, adding to the pressure on the batting side.

Irfan Khan struggled, scoring 35 runs from 50 balls with 2 boundaries, before being stumped by Usman Khan off the bowling of Usama Mir. Khushdil Shah contributed 22 runs from 32 balls, hitting 1 four and 2 sixes, but was dismissed by Amad Butt.

Aamer Yamin scored a brisk 10 runs from 8 balls, hitting 2 boundaries before being dismissed lbw by Shadab Khan. Shaheen Shah Afridi, the captain, failed to score and was bowled by Usama Mir. Ahmed Daniyal managed 16 runs from 14 balls, including 2 boundaries, before being dismissed by Saim Ayub.

Sirajuddin added a quick 19 runs from 13 balls, hitting 2 sixes, before falling to Mohammad Hasnain.

Earlier, Panthers won the toss and batted first. Saim Ayub and Azan Awaiz opening the batting. However, the

start was shaky as Azan early, caught by Irfan Khan off Sirajuddin for just 1 run.

Saim followed shortly after, caught by wicketkeeper Sajjad Ali off Aamer Yamin for 10 runs off 20 balls.

Umar Siddiq's brief stay at the crease ended with him scoring a duck, as he was caught by Sajjad Ali off Shaheen Afridi.

Usman Khan tried to inject some momentum into the innings with a 11 runs off just 7 balls, hitting two boundaries before being caught by Omaid Yousuf off Sirajuddin. This left the team reeling at 31-3 by the 4th over.

The rescue operation began with Mubasir Khan and Haider Ali, who formed a crucial 144-run partnership.

Mubasir played a steady yet aggressive knock, scoring 90 runs off 97 balls, which included 10 boundaries and 3 sixes. He was finally dismissed, caught by Sirajuddin off Yamin, just 10 runs short of a well-deserved century. Haider Ali complemented Mubasir's innings with a solid 84 off 99 balls, hitting 5 fours and 3 sixes before being caught by Omaid Yousuf off Ahmed Daniyal.



An illuminated view of Jamia Masjid Hirabad decorated with colorful lights in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAWW) celebrations. — Staff Photo

Dengue larvae reported at 1184 sites in ICT; DC for strict SOPs implementation

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has intensified its fight against dengue as cases rose across the Federal Capital.

In this regard, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon chaired a key meeting on dengue control, and reviewed ongoing efforts to combat the spread of disease.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, officials from the Health Department and Additional Deputy Commissioners attended the meeting.

The DC was informed that currently, Rawalpindi has reported 297 dengue cases, while Islamabad has seen 238 cases to date. In the past 24 hours alone, six new



cases emerged in Islamabad, raising concerns about the spread of the virus in the Federal Capital.

Meanwhile, positive dengue larvae was reported at 1184 different sites of the city during September 9 to 15.

The ICT administration had conducted 1150 operations aimed at preventing the growth of dengue larvae.

Special teams were working in border areas, where conditions are favorable for mosquito

breeding.

In addition to preventative measures, authorities were cracking down on businesses violating anti-dengue standard operating procedures (SOPs). So far, 259 business centers have been sealed, 500 people arrested, and 694 cases registered for failure to comply with the guidelines.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need to intensify operations, urging officials to focus on high-risk areas and increase inspections to curb the outbreak.

Tarar grieved over demise of senior director Altaf Hussain

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Monday expressed profound grief and sorrow over demise of Senior Director of Pakistani film industry Altaf Hussain.

The minister, in a condolence message, sympathized with the bereaved family, while highlighting the deceased's contribution for the Pakistani film industry.

Altaf Hussain directed many memorable films in

his life and contributed to the uplift of the Pa-kistan's film industry through his sheer hard work and dedication, the minister noted.

He said the death of Altaf Hussain is an irreplaceable loss not only to the Pakistani film industry but also to the entire country.

The minister lauded the services and contributions of Altaf Hussain for the film industry.

He prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in the eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with fortitude.

Pakistan-Indonesia joint military exercise concludes in Pabbi



STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

A joint exercise was conducted between Pakistan Army and Indonesian armed forces at National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Pabbi, on Monday.

Exercise Elang Strike-II is second exercise in Counter Terrorism domain between both the countries, said Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement.

The week-long exercise commenced on

September 8, 2024. The exercise was aimed at mutually beneficial sharing of experience and training methodology between the two armies which have strong brotherly relations.

At the closing ceremony, General Officer Commanding 17 Division was the Chief Guest. Colonel Budi Wirman, Defence Attaché of Indonesia also attended the closing ceremony.

The troops displayed highest standards of professional excellence during the conduct of exercise.

U.S. Appreciates Pakistan's Role in Assisting Afghan Resettlement

● Dar, US under secretary of state discuss bilateral relations

MUDASSER CH.

ISLAMABAD

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar on Monday emphasised the importance of positive and productive engagement between Pakistan and the US, highlighting the ongoing macroeconomic and regional security challenges, particularly the infiltration of insurgency through the porous Afghan border.

Dar, who is also the country's foreign minister, said this during an interaction with the US Acting Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs John Bass, at the Foreign Office in Islamabad. The meeting was also attended by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Horst.

Both officials discussed approaches to expanding bilateral cooperation on economic and security issues, including countering terrorism and violent extremism, and the importance of fostering



regional stability and prosperity, according to a US Mission handout.

Earlier this month, the US strongly condemned the August 26 terrorist attacks in Balochistan, which resulted in the deaths of over 50 people, including 14 security personnel.

The US State Department's spokesperson Matthew Miller,

at a news briefing, said that "Washington strongly condemned the deadly attacks that targeted security officials and civilians, including the murder of 23 innocent civilians in Musakhail".

The assaults were the most widespread in years by ethnic militants fighting a decades-long insurgency to win secession of

the resource-rich province, home to major China-led projects such as a port and a gold and copper mine.

Under Secretary Bass expressed his gratitude for Pakistan's continued cooperation in assisting Afghans in resettlement pathways to the US.

The Under Secretary congratulated the

Munir. The meeting focused on matters of military cooperation, geopolitical issues, and security situation along the Pak-Afghan border.

Pakistan has witnessed a surge in militant attacks since the Taliban government returned to power in neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021, mostly in the border province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but also in Balochistan, which abuts Afghanistan and Iran.

At least 170 militant attacks were killing 151 civilians and 114 security personnel in Balochistan last year, according to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies.

Against this backdrop, the federal cabinet in June this year approved Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, a reinvigorated national counter-terrorism campaign following the Central Apex Committee's recommendations under the National Action Plan to root out terrorism.

Bilawal greets nation on Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH)

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended heartiest greetings to the entire nation on the blessed occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him).

The PPP Chairman remarked that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) came as a beacon of mercy for all of humanity, and every

aspect of his life serves as a guiding light for us.

He emphasized that the message of the Prophet (PBUH) transcends time, place, and borders, offering wisdom and guidance for all generations and communities.

The PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari urged the nation to work towards building a society grounded in the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), where peace, toler-



ance, and brotherhood prevail. "We must follow the example of our beloved Prophet (PBUH) by striving to bring ease and comfort to the lives of others,"

he said.

He concluded by encouraging everyone to embody the values of compassion and kindness that the Prophet (Peace Be

Upon Him) stood for, in both personal and collective efforts.

Meanwhile, CM Bugti said that on the auspicious day, there was a need to commit fully follow the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings to inculcate the values of unity, harmony and tolerance.

He said the was of special importance for the Muslims.

"It is a matter of pride for us that we are the Ummah of the Prophet (PBUH) whom

the Creator of the Universe sent as a Mercy for All the Worlds.

"As an his Ummah, we should fully follow the good deeds, unity, forgiveness, tolerance. Religious tolerance should be further promoted."

He said that one could achieve success in the world and the hereafter by following the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and also establish a true welfare society

ECP to hear PTI intra-party case on Sept 18

● Faisal Vawda calls govt incompetent

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday fixed the intra-party case of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for hearing.

According to the cause list issued by the ECP, the hearing has been fixed for Sept 18. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has approached the Lahore High Court seeking permission for a rally in Lahore on Sept 21.

The petition was filed in the Lahore High Court by Aliya Hamza and Imtiaz Mahmood Sheikh on behalf of PTI, naming the deputy commissioner of Lahore, the Punjab government, and others as respondents.

The petition argues that while Maulana Fazlur Rehman was allowed to hold a rally at Minar-e-Pakistan, PTI is being denied the same, which is unconstitutional.



tional. Denial of permission for the rally is a violation of fundamental rights, it added.

Furthermore, the petition states that the high court had ordered the deputy commissioner of Lahore on Aug 9 to grant permission for the rally, but the order was not followed. The court is requested to instruct the district administration to allow PTI to hold the rally on Sept 21 in Lahore, it added.

Meanwhile, notices have been issued to PTI leaders Barrister Gohar

Khan and Raoof Hasan.

The ECP sought arguments from the PTI in the case to be heard on Sept 18.

Earlier, the ECP had rejected four miscellaneous pleas of PTI in the intra-party election case.

The PTI's reservations on the ECP jurisdiction had been rejected in the intra-party case.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has rejected the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) four miscellaneous pleas in the intra-party election case.

The ECP has also issued the 10-page verdict written by ECP Sindh Member Nisar Durrani.

The PTI reservations on the ECP jurisdiction had been rejected in the intra-party case.

The request for postponement of intra-party elections in certain seats until the decision of the commission was also rejected.

The PTI request for PTT's pending cases had also been dismissed.

The ECP directed PTI to move to court for the

return of documents taken from the FIA to the party office.

As per written judgment, the commission was responsible to review the legal requirements for intra-party elections under Section 208 of the Election Act, 2017.

Responding to the ECP decision which rejected all pleas of PTI in intra-party election, Barrister Gohar insisted that they hadn't yet presented any arguments on the application and rejection of their pleas by ECP was wrong.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar insisted that "Rejection of our pleas is unfair, ECP decision is mean."

He also asserted that staging public gathering was their fundamental right and wouldn't cancel it. The PTI chairman stressed that they would hold peaceful public gatherings for the release of Imran Khan and wouldn't harm any-

one or disturb law and order.

Meanwhile, Senator Faisal Vawda has described the government as incompetent and ineffective.

In an informal discussion with media on Monday, he expressed dissatisfaction with the government's inability to pass the constitutional amendment, despite two days of efforts, raising questions about its performance.

When asked about the failure to pass the amendment, Vawda remarked that such results were expected from a government that lacked competence.

He also pointed out that many government members were trying to evade responsibilities, urging the media to question them.

Vawda hinted at giving his analysis and prediction soon, claiming that significant changes in the government were imminent.

GB govt increases K2 permit fees, introduces new regulations

STAFF REPORTER

GILGIT

In a move aimed at streamlining mountaineering operations and promoting sustainable tourism, the Gilgit-Baltistan government has announced significant changes to permit fees and regulations for climbing K2, the world's second-highest peak.

According to a notification issued by the Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism, Sports, Culture, Archaeology, and Museum Department, the permit fee for foreign climbers to scale K2 has been set at \$5,000 for the summer season (April-September), \$2,500 for autumn (October-November), and \$1,500 for the winter season (December-March).

Pakistani climbers will pay Rs100,000 for the summer season, Rs50,000 for autumn, and Rs30,000 for winter.

The notification also outlines several important regulations, including:

Climbers can only scale one peak per permit. Groups are limited to a maximum of 20 members. High-altitude porters must be insured for up to Rs2 million, while low-altitude porters will be insured for up to Rs 1 million. Environmental fees will be deposited into the GB Adventure Tourism Account.

All expedition briefings and debriefings will be conducted at the tourism offices in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The changes are effective immediately, and climbers are advised to contact the Gilgit-Baltistan Council for further information.

The revised fees and regulations are expected to boost revenue for the region and promote responsible mountaineering practices.