

# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
ہم سے ابو عوانہ نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے  
عبدالملک نے ان سے جاہلین سرزد کیے کہ  
تجی کریمؓ نے فرمایا جب قصر ہلاک ہو  
جائے گا تو پھر اس کے بعد کوئی قصر نہیں پیدا  
ہو گا اور جب کسی ہلاک ہو جائے گا تو اس  
کے بعد کوئی نہیں پیدا ہو گا اور اس بات  
کی قسم جس کے ہاتھ میں میری جان ہے قرآن  
کے خزانے اللہ کے راستے میں خرچ کرو گے۔  
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6629)  
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## Positive indicators validate govt's right economic direction: PM

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the positive indicators including the reduced policy rate and inflation, surged remittances and agricultural exports, and ongoing efforts to boost IT exports evidenced that the government's economic policies were heading in the right direction.



## 'Good news': Pakistan ranked among top tiers of Global Cybersecurity Index: minister

State Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that Pakistan's inclusion in the top tiers of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) 2024 Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) report is good news for the country's IT industry. Addressing a press conference she said that Pakistan position in ITU-2021 Global Cyber security was at 79 while in the current report, Pakistan ranked among the Top-tier 46 countries.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

## High morale

KPK: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir addressed Pakistani troops during a visit to Orakzai District on Friday.



Photo: ISPR

## Army chief reiterates commitment to defeat terrorists' nexus: ISPR

Naveed Ahmad Khan continue fighting with dedication and a spirit of sacrifice," he added.

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir reiterated the armed forces' commitment to comprehensively defeating hostile terrorist networks and eradicating illegal activities, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday.

During his visit to Orakzai District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the army chief interacted with troops who recently participated in counter-terrorism operations in Tirah Valley, the military's media wing said.

It added that General Syed Asim Munir was given an in-depth briefing on the current security situation, ongoing intelligence-based counter-terrorism actions, and multi-faceted strategies being employed to ensure stability in the merged districts.

The army chief praised the high morale and readiness of the officers and troops to effectively respond to all types of threats. General Syed Asim Munir also emphasised that peace achieved through significant national sacrifice would be preserved at all costs. "The sacrifices of martyrs strengthen the resolve to

# PM chairs high-level review meeting on Monkeypox situation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the current situation and precautionary measures being taken to prevent the spread of Monkeypox (Mpx) in the country.

The prime minister emphasized the importance of vigilance and preparedness, directing authorities to adopt all necessary measures to prevent the virus from spreading within the country.

"All necessary precautionary measures to prevent Monkeypox should be adopted," the prime minister said directing the officials concerned to raise public awareness about preventive steps.



He also instructed that scanning at all airports, seaports, and land entry points must be

strictly enforced to detect any potential cases.

The prime minister said Pakistan was not currently facing an emergency situation related to Monkeypox. However, he stressed the need for continued preparedness, particularly by the Ministry of Health and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

He called for the establishment of quarantine centers across the country to accommodate any affected individuals.

During the briefing, officials informed the prime minister that while the African continent remained the most affected by Monkeypox, Pakistan had so far recorded only five cases, all diagnosed after individuals arrived in the country from abroad. The detected cases were

of the Clade-II strain, which was considered relatively less dangerous.

It was informed that daily review meetings on the situation were being held at the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) to ensure real-time monitoring and response.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also maintaining communication with Pakistani embassies abroad regarding the global Monkeypox situation.

The provinces have been directed to procure and stock testing kits and other equipment, while quarantine centers have been set up in major cities across the country.

The meeting was told that some 600,000 people had been screened so far as a precau-

tionary measure.

It was further informed that public awareness campaigns were being carried out by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the Ministry of Health, and media outlets to educate the public on Monkeypox. The national helpline, 1166, had also been activated to provide guidance on the disease.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif instructed the NDMA and the Ministry of Health to remain on alert and prepared for any potential emergency.

The meeting was attended by chief secretaries of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Health Coordinator Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, NDMA Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik and senior officials.

## Bilawal Bhutto calls for 'New Democratic Charter'



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Foreign Minister and Chairman Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari invited the political parties to unite for a 'New Democratic Charter'.

Speaking to media representatives at the Parliament House, Bilawal emphasized the need to strengthen the 'Charter of Democracy' and improve working relationships among political parties.

He stressed the importance of breaking the current parliamentary deadlock and solving the country's core problems.

"Our aim is not merely to stay in government but to address the basic issues affecting the people," Bilawal stated, adding that if governance fails to solve these problems, its purpose is lost.

Responding to a question related to the extension of the Chief Justice of Pakistan's tenure, Bilawal Bhutto dismissed it and termed it an individual matter.

He called for constitutional amendments with actual implementation.

He also remarked that Maulana Fazlur Rehman plays a key role in the opposition and called for his contribution positively where necessary.

## FIA to probe posts from PTI founder's social media accounts against national security: Tarar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday said the Federal Investigation Agency would probe into the handling of the PTI founder's social media accounts which were being used to create chaos and anarchy in the country, and undermining the national security.

"He (the PTI founder) should be ashamed of undermining the national security, inciting people for anarchy and committing the sedition," said the minister while talking to the



media.

Tarar said the FIA had decided to investigate into the handling of the social media accounts of the jailed PTI founder. It would be ascertained that who is the handler of his social media accounts, and whether such posts were being made on his behalf or it was done on directives of someone else, he added.

He said a botch attempt had been made to conspire against the sitting chief justice and heads of other institutions. Through these posts, he tried to mobilize the people against two major state institutions which is highly condemnable.

## IHC declares PTI MNAs physical remand null and void



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday declared the eight-day remand of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers as null and void.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq announced the reserved verdict after hearing arguments from the both parties.

This development comes as ten arrested PTI members were recently issued production orders to attend the National Assembly session.

Previously, police stormed the parliament on Tuesday, arresting several prominent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, including party chairman.

## Speaker declares parliament lodges as sub-jail

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, has declared the Parliament Lodges as a sub-jail for detained members of the National Assembly (MNAs) from the Pakistan



Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The decision was made following the arrest of several PTI MNAs, who will now be kept in their respective lodges within the Parliament complex.

The National Assembly Secretariat has issued instructions to the relevant police authorities regarding this arrangement.

This practice is in line with the tradition of designating the lodges of detained MNAs as sub-jails when production orders are issued for their appearance in court.

## Traders encircle FBR team in protest, refuse to pay 'advance tax'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) team faced opposition and was surrounded by traders as it visited a Lahore market to collect the advance tax under the Tajir Dost Scheme.

The traders warned the FBR team that they would not pay even a single rupee and told them to leave the market or face the consequences.



# Murad, Aurangzeb discussed economy, and measures to strengthen it further

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb in their meeting at the CM House discussed the overall economy and measures being taken to strengthen it.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Federal Secretary of Finance Imdadullah Bosal, PSCM Agha Wasif, and Provincial Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi.

The chief minister told the federal finance minister that the Sindh Revenue Board has been given a Rs350 billion collection target during the current financial year. Similarly, the mechanism to collect agricultural tax was being strengthened.

The finance minister, Mr Aurangzeb, stated that significant



measures were being implemented to strengthen the national economy. The initial results are evident as the inflation rate has dropped to single digits.

Sindh CM took up the issue of

federally funded projects (PSDP) in Sindh for which funds were not being released, as a result, even the ongoing project of Jamshoro-Sehwan road to which his government has also contributed Rs7 billion was going on

at a slow pace. He also discussed the dualization of the Mehran Highway. The federal finance minister assured the CM that the federally funded projects would be looked after properly.

It was agreed that the federal and provincial governments would work together to strengthen the national economy by promoting industrialisation, the agriculture sector and attracting investment.

The projects launched in PPP mode by the Sindh government were lauded in the meeting. The CM said that the Thar Coal Mining project was the largest project launched in PPP mode. Currently, the Malir Expressway and Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge on the River Indus are major projects going in PPP mode, the CM said.

The chief minister and federal finance minister agreed to work together to strengthen the economy.

## Counter Terrorism Department Punjab CTD Killed Two Terrorists in Dera Ghazi Khan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Punjab Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) claimed to have killed two terrorists in an exchange of fire between the CTD police and the militants.

According to the spokesman for CTD, the law enforcement agencies on information carried out an operation on Dera Ghazi Khan Quetta Road, here on Thursday night,

during which terrorists opened fire, the CTD personnel returned the fire, on a result due to an exchange of fire between the Counter Terrorism Department and terrorists, two terrorists were killed by the firing of their own accomplices, and the others two terrorists managed to escape from the scene taking the advantage of darkness.

The CTD also recovered explosives, two rifles, bullets, and a hand grenade from the hideouts of the militants, who had completed a plan to target important installations and conduct terror activities in a large scale in the province. The process of identifying them was under way, he said and added that further investigation continued and a search operation was launched for the arrest of the fleeing terrorists.

## Lahore High Court upholds death sentences in Chhotu Gang case



Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Lahore High Court Multan Bench Mr. Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan and Mr. Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhry in the Divisional Bench in a case of Police Station Bangla Icccha Rajanpur in 2016 where in six police officers/officials were martyred and in this case seven police officials were seriously injured and almost twenty four police officials were taken hostage. While pronouncing the verdict in this case, the leader of Chotu Gang, Ghulam Rasool alias Chotu, along with eleven other accused, Nadir, Deen Muhammad, Khalid alias Khalidi, Ishaq, Akram alias Akri, Sher Khan, Bahram, Bashir, Mujeeb ur Rehman, Hussain Baksh and Pyara were sentenced to death while dismissing the appeal filed by them, their death sentences were upheld. Moreover, while giving benefit of doubt to the eight accused Ghulam Haider, Hakim, Razak, Majid, Nasir, Juma alias Bhatta, Rashid and Abdul Wahid they were acquitted from the charges.

## Police Officers Honored for Meritorious Conduct in Waziristan



Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: A dignified ceremony was held at the DPO office in Wana on Friday to recognize the meritorious conduct of police officers. The ceremony was attended by police officers and personnel from across the district.

District Police Officer Farmanullah Khan awarded cash prizes and certificates of appreciation to the deserving officers and policemen.

He praised the officers for their bravery and performance, stating that there will be encouragement for good performance and questioning for bad performance.

The DPO expressed pride in the performance of the Lower South Waziristan District Police, saying that they have shown their full potential in every difficult time.

He added that the police force is fully capable of handling every challenge and that the policemen have always achieved success beyond expectations.

He also acknowledged the challenges faced by the police in Waziristan but expressed satisfaction that the men have always demonstrated their full potential in difficult times.

He said that he has never seen such a brave and fearless force as the Lower Waziristan Police and considers it an honor to take command of it. The ceremony was also attended by other police officers of the Lower South Waziristan district. The DPO's speech was followed by the distribution of certificates and cash prizes.

## Protest

FAISALABAD: Activists of Pakistan Labour Qaumi Movement hold a banner during protest rally in favor of their demands, in the city.



Photo: Online

# Multan police, a major operation, firecrackers worth millions of rupees were recovered

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: City Police Officer DIG Multan Sadiq Ali Dogar Addressing to the Press Conference in police line Multan. He said that police station Shah Shams Multan During Crime Checking stopped a Hyundai Mini Truck at Sui Gas Chowk Multan as suspicious, and upon checking, fireworks worth lakhs of rupees were seized. The goods were recovered and the accused Adnan was arrested.

While in the second operation, an accused identified as Ehsan-ul-Haq was arrested from the grain market, from which a huge quantity of fireworks was recovered. Fireworks were being sent to Faisalabad for supply. Shah Shams police seized the fireworks and arrested the accused. A case



has been registered against the arrested accused in Shah Shams police station and police action is being taken. City

Police Officer Multan DIG Sadiq Ali Dogar said that Under the supervision of SP Cantt

Division Javed Tahir Majeed, SHO Police Station Shah Shams Rao Mehtab Alam along with Assistant Sub-Inspector Muhammad Saleem and his other team have arrested the accused and released them.

Arrested accused, Adnan Son of Muhammad Anwar Qoum Rajput Saknah Mahalla Sharif Town Dijkot Faisalabad and Ihsan-ul-Haq, son of Mushtaq Ahmad, Qum Malik, Teli-Sukna, Mohalla Sharif, Town-Dajkot, Faisalabad, while the police of fireworks

37 cotton china matches, out of which 11000 boxes of china matches, 3000 shrillies and 08 cartons of fireworks cakes have been exported. Multan police have arrested the accused and registered cases against them

# Forced Labor Persists in Punjab's Brick Kiln Industry Despite Laws and Vigilance Committees

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Forced Labor Persists in Punjab's Brick Kiln Industry Despite Laws and Vigilance Committees

A meeting held on Wednesday in the local hotel on 'Labor Facilitation Network meeting for the protection of workers rights' expressed their concern over a lack of effective implementation of laws which, they believed, encouraged forced labour in Punjab.

Labour Facilitation Network, aimed to raise awareness of bonded labor laws and assess their enforcement. Key issues

highlighted included Ineffective implementation of laws and vigilance committees

Denial of social security cards to kiln workers.

Poor working conditions and lack of basic facilities.

Need for enforcement of labor laws and social protection schemes

They expressed their concern over working of DVCs, which is active but did not shows the results and also failed to enforce the laws against bonded labor.

The objective behind organising the seminar was to raise awareness of bonded labour law at district level and assess its

enforcement.

One key issue highlighted in this meeting that despite of existence of legal provisions, it should be mandating that issuance of the cards to all workers.

"Not a single kiln worker possesses the social security card, which is a clear violation of the law," the speakers regretted.

Saleema bibi said his community had been working at kilns for generations without any basic facilities, like healthcare, education or social security cards having been offered to them.

Tauqeer Talib shared we need to provide by awareness sessions & awareness banners which helps

to get aware maximum number of people in community.

Ashiq Bhutta spoke on importance of social protection schemes marginalised communities, which was providing them with financial assistance, in times of need, including marriage and death grants, medical benefits and education for their children.

The seminar participants urged government and NGOs to come together in providing housing, sanitation and safe drinking water facilities as well as alternative livelihoods to kiln workers during rainy season so they could manage their living without falling into debt.



Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES	
<b>Namaz Timings</b>	
Fajr	4:26 am
Zohr	12:04 pm
Asr	4:31 pm
Maghrib	6:17 pm
Isha	7:41 pm

EMERGENCY	
Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

Women Police Stations	
Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY	
Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS	
CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS	
CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224

**Safe Punjab, Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Multan, Sardar Moharan Khan, held a meeting**

**Bureau Report**

MULTAN: In line with the vision of the Chief Minister of Punjab, Safe Punjab, Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Multan, Sardar Moharan Khan, held a meeting with the administration of educational institutions in Multan. The meeting was attended by the administrative officers of these institutions, as well as the in-charge officers of traffic duty assigned to these institutions. The purpose of the meeting was to manage the traffic congestion during the opening and closing hours of schools and colleges.

CTO Multan issued instructions to the administrators to work alongside the traffic police in implementing measures. All educational institutions are to provide two security guards who will serve as traffic regulation guards on the road. Institutions with senior classes will include five students in the Traffic Help Volunteers (THV) program and provide them with caps, armbands, and sashes.

School administrations should instruct parents not to wrongfully park their vehicles during pick-up and drop-off times. School and college administrations should use barriers to control traffic in front of their institutions. "CTO said citizens will always find the city traffic police by your side; our vision is a Safe Punjab."

**Boosting AJ&K's Digital Skills**

# New Software Technology Park in Bagh and a Freelancing Hub in Palandari Inaugurated

BAGH: In a monumental step towards digital empowerment of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Software Technology Park (STP) in Bagh was inaugurated today by Lieutenant General Syed Imdad Hussain Shah (Commander 30 Corps) accompanied by Major General Umar Ahmad Shah, Director General Special Communications Organization (SCO) along with prominent civil and military officials. This is Sixth STP established in AJ&K, following successful facilities in Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Bhimber and Kotli, reinforcing the region's shift towards digital inclusivity. Earlier, Major General Umar Ahmad Shah, HI(M), Director General SCO inaugurated a new Freelancing Hub in

Palandari. This addition brings the total to twelve free lancing hubs in AJ&K. These hubs aim to develop IT skills of youth through connections and collaborations with major and district-level IT centers/ STPs.

Lieutenant General Syed Imdad Hussain Shah, Commander 30 Corps lauded SCO's role in digitizing AJ&K and Gilgit-Baltistan, praising their efforts to extend technological literacy and infrastructure to far-flung regions. He noted that initiatives such as STPs and Freelancing Hubs are revolutionizing region and integrating youth into broader digital economy, thereby ensuring a brighter future.

During inauguration, Major General



Umar Ahmad Shah highlighted SCO's strategic mission to transform Azad Kashmir with advanced technological infrastructure.

He emphasized on empowering youth in remote areas with digital skills for self-reliance and global competitiveness. He stressed that transformation is not just about infrastructure but skill development and creating job opportunities for youth to shape their own future.

AJ&K's transformation into a digital hub is nearing reality, promising a bright future for its youth. SCO's mission to modernize region is fostering innovation and global engagement from even the remotest areas.

## Painting Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of United Arab Emirates to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, posing for a group photograph with visitors during painting exhibition title Fractured Landscapes- Flourishing Spirits by Abid Hassan at Gallery-6, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online Sultan Bashir

## Visits of Parliamentary Delegation to IMCB I-8/3

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: A group of parliamentarians and educationists on Thursday visited IMCB I-8/3 to inspect the recent restoration and renovation of the college, which was done by FBlSE on the special initiative of Ministry of Education and Professional Training.

The delegation included MNAs Ms. Nuzhat Sadiq, Ms. Nafeesa Shah, Khawaja Izhar ul Hassan, Senator Gurdeep Singh, Director General FGEI Maj Gen Qaisar Suleman, and Rector Nuttech Lt Gen (Retired) Moazzam Ejaz. Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah, Executive Director IBCC, DG FDE & Chairman FBlSE Mr. Junaid Akhlaq.

The delegation was received by College principal and Director Colleges FDE, Prof Shahid Mahmood Abbasi, who also accompanied the



delegation during the visit and also briefed its members.

Secretary Education and Professional Training Mohiuddin Wani, who was also with the visiting delegation, had taken keen interest in the renovation work, which include new computer lab fully equipped with about 40 computers, fully furnished library, new gym with newly

installed equipment and machines, new dispensary, smart class rooms, renovated student washroom facilities, facelift of the main building and several other additional works.

The delegation highly appreciated the renovated facilities and educational environment being provided by the college. The delegation

members visited various classrooms, computer lab, dispensary, library and other places. They interacted with teachers and students and asked questions. They were satisfied with the response of the students.

After the visit, the delegation members praised the role of Mr Wani for uplifting educational standards in ICT& make public sector school

## APL, CDA Collaborate on Tree Plantation Drive in Islamabad

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Attock Petroleum Limited (APL) and Capital Development Authority (CDA) held a Tree Plantation Drive in Islamabad on Friday.

The successful collaboration was held at the Green Belt on Club Road as part of ongoing efforts by APL and CDA to propagate a greener and sustainable future. Senior Management of APL; Director-General, Environment; Member Environment; and Senior Officials of CDA attended the event, and took the opportunity to plant more trees in the Green Belt to reiterate their commitment for an environmentally sustainable future.

## NUST and Jhpiego host art competition on climate change

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: NUST School of Health Sciences (NSHS) in collaboration with Jhpiego, Pakistan hosted an art competition on climate change and its impact on health and communities. Themed "HER Climate" with HER standing for Healthy Communities & Environment Resilient, the competition sought to engage students in a creative exploration of climate issues through their artwork. The event witnessed exuberant participation from over 100 students, who showcased their creativity while reflecting the crucial intersection of climate and community health.

An overwhelming number of faculty and students from NSHS, Bahria University, SZAMBU and Fazia Medical College attended the event. Prominent amongst the attendees were Dr Zaeem Zia, District Health Officer Islamabad; Dr Osman Hasan, Pro-Rector Academics, NUST; and Prof Dr Rizwan Ashraf, Principal NSHS. Dr Zaeem highlighted the importance of youth involvement in addressing climate change. He said, "It is essential that we engage young people in the conversations about climate change. Their innovative ideas and perspectives are critical to developing solutions for a sustainable future. The artworks displayed today reflect their commitment to making a difference."

## SPARC demands immediate action against prominent tobacco companies for unlawful price reduction

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) has called for immediate action following the unauthorized reduction in cigarette prices by a prominent and leading tobacco brand. The company has drastically lowered its prices from Rs. 483 to Rs. 283, a move that not only violates existing tobacco control laws but also poses a severe threat to public health, particularly targeting youth and minors.

Previously, at the price of Rs. 483, the company paid approximately Rs. 74 in taxes per pack. With the new price of Rs. 283, they are now paying only Rs. 43 in taxes – a reduction of Rs. 32 per pack. This decrease significantly impacts the country's economy, as it results in a substantial reduction in tax revenue.

Dr. Khalil Ahmad, Program Manager at SPARC, has strongly condemned the actions of Benson & Hedges, stating, "The unlawful reduction of cigarette prices by such companies represents not only a blatant disregard for tobacco control laws but also a dangerous tactic that could lead to higher rates of tobacco use among younger individuals. This deliberate act makes it easier for youth to start using addictive tobacco products, which can have severe and long-lasting health consequences."

The Program Manager – Dr. Khalil Ahmad lastly said that there is an urgent need for enhanced regulatory oversight to address and counteract the tactics employed by tobacco companies to target vulnerable populations. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms are crucial to ensure public health and ensuring the effectiveness of tobacco control policies.

## Habib Metropolitan Bank and Pak Suzuki join hands

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: HABIBMETRO recently announced a strategic alliance with Pak Suzuki to revolutionise supply chain finance. This partnership will enable PSML's suppliers to access early payments from HABIBMETRO on approved invoices via 'CashNow', a cutting-edge fintech platform.

CashNow will handle the technological aspects of this invoice discounting scheme, providing suppliers with rapid access to working capital.

"HABIBMETRO is dedicated to foster growth with a particular emphasis on supporting SMEs. With the Digital Supply Chain Financing initiative, we aim to enhance operational efficiency and customer experience by offering seamless processing and improved turn-around-time. Our partnership with Pak Suzuki Motors underscores our commitment to delivering innovative financial solutions to our customers," said Khurram Shahzad Khan, President & CEO of HABIBMETRO.

## AKU Book Launch: Teaching and Teacher Education in Pakistan

KARACHI, SEPTEMBER 13, 2024: The Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) hosted Baatein Kitab Ki, a book launch event for Teaching and Teacher Education in Pakistan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, authored by Professor Anjum Halai, Vice Provost, AKU and alumna of AKU-IED's Master of Education programme. Dr Halai, a distinguished educator with extensive experience in Pakistan and internationally, has made significant contributions to the field of education.

In her new book, published by Oxford University Press, Dr Halai explores the pivotal role that teachers play in student learning, motivation, and overall development. The book highlights the stark challenges facing Pakistan's education system, where many students lag behind their expected grade levels. Government

spending on education is still low and even in higher education, the departments of education in the universities do not necessarily enjoy the same status and access to funding and resources as do the other professional education institutions such as in medicine and engineering.

Divided into two integrally linked sections, Teaching and Teacher Education in Pakistan offers a comprehensive examination of the teaching profession and teacher education across the continuum of teachers' careers in the Pakistani context. The book provides a unique contribution by bringing together historical and contemporary perspectives on teaching and teacher education, situated within Pakistan's socio-cultural, political, and economic landscape.

The first section traces the evolution of education since Pakistan's independence in 1947, examining the efforts



of policymakers and decision-makers to enhance the quality of education. Despite these efforts, Dr Halai observes that educational outcomes remain weak, and the system continues to fall short in

adequately serving Pakistan's children and youth.

In the second section, the author draws on classroom-based research from Pakistan to offer insights into the critical issues affecting teaching and their implications for teacher education. She underscores the central role of teachers in ensuring the quality of learning outcomes and calls for a responsive teacher education system that equips educators to prepare students for the demands of a diverse, dynamic, and digital world.

At the event, Dr Halai emphasised the importance of teacher agency, stating, "Teachers must not be seen as passive recipients of policies and reforms. It is the teacher who leads the dynamics of teaching and learning at the grassroots level. Teachers' voices and participation in decision-making are crucial to elevating the status of the teaching profession."

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# A Catalyst of Change: Overcoming Challenges in BS Program at Colleges

**Dr Khan Zeb**

The commencement of Bachelor of Studies (BS) programs in the colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has brought drastic changes in the education sector of the province, since the past decade. Pakistan Higher Education Commission (HEC) replaced the two years bachelor's and master's programs with four-year bachelor's programs/BS nationwide. The introduction of the BS programs has impacted educational institutions at both levels (college and university). Earlier, bachelor's degree (2 years) were persued at colleges and master's degrees (2 years) at universities. In the light of HEC policy BS programs are initiated in the colleges along with universities.

To address the gap created by abolishing the two-year BA/BSc program, colleges have adopted the BS programs, following the lead of universities. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, initially introduced as a pilot project in 93 colleges in April 2011, the BS program (2 years and 4-years-Associate Degree and Bachelor of Studies respectively) was later extended to all colleges of the province in 2020. However, many institutions lacked the required infrastructure and resources to effectively implement the policy and hence the program was not stated or was limited to two years associate degree program. Subsequent attempts in 2023 to extend the BS program to remaining institutions, encounter similar challenges, especially in the periphery colleges and are continued with associate degree programs.

The introduction of the BS program

at the colleges is a welcome move to increase higher education opportunities for students, particularly in areas where universities do not exist or are inaccessible due to geographical or financial constraints. The programs at colleges are highly affordable (in terms of accessibility and fees) compared to universities. The public sector universities were overcrowded and some students quit education due to failure to get admission in the desired program or could not afford financial costs (fees, accommodation etc). Hence, the burden on universities is reduced which could not provide admission and hostel facilities to all aspirants. At the same time, universities' admission has been negatively affected by the introduction of BS at colleges.

The BS program aims to broaden students' knowledge, understanding and comprehension in the specific subject area. This semester-based program regularly engages students and teachers in learning activities- incorporating classroom lectures, laboratory work, quizzes, assignments, exams and feedback, and fieldwork in some discipline areas. The program is intended to produce productive and skilled youth which can contribute to national development. Additionally, the purpose of extension (of BS) to the colleges was to provide higher education opportunities at the doorstep to unprivileged classes of society.

Despite its benefits, the program faces structural, methodological, and infrastructural challenges at the colleges. These include a lack of well-trained and research-oriented (MPhil, PhD) faculty, inadequate administrative staff, lack of physical space, and insufficient facilities,

including chairs, tables, lab equipment, updated libraries, and functional computer laboratories to meet the needs. Without these resources the goals/purpose of BS program cannot be achieved.

Additionally, the central transfer and posting policy negatively impacts students' learning processes, such as the transfer of teachers in the midst of the semester. The transfer policy should be student-centric and prior approval [of faculty transfer] from the respective college's principal will save students from the worst consequences.

Given the increased workload associated with BS programs, colleges require a substantial number of new faculty. Despite this, in some colleges BS programs were initiated with only one regular faculty member, for instance, BS Chemistry at Government Degree College Tank and AD Political Science at Ammakhel College Tank. The recent directive to discontinue these programs, rather than addressing the underlying issue of understaffing, has exacerbated the problem. In addition to faculty shortages, college faculty members are overburdened with administrative responsibilities like controller of examination, coordinator, quality enhancement officer/focal person, etc., that divert their attention and energy away from teaching. To effectively fulfil these administrative duties, dedicated officers should be assigned to liaise with universities and the higher education department.

The catalyst of change (BS program) in the higher education encounters some structural barrier. To address these barriers/challenges, a holistic approach involving all stakeholders is required to meet the immediate and long-term demands of the colleges. A bottom-up

approach, from colleges to regional/central directorates and secretariats, can facilitate the successful implementation of the BS policy. Decentralized decision-making and the provision of necessary resources are essential for the program's success. For instance, the centralized decision-making to start a new BS program at college overlooks the local dynamic and needs. Central authorities approve or disapprove proposals without providing reasons for (dis)approval or directives to address the deficiencies. Decisions to launch or terminate BS programs are apparently influenced by individual(s) preferences. For instance, in Fall 2023, during the peak of the admissions process, all Associate Degree (AD) programs were terminated in non-BS colleges. Simultaneously, colleges were mandated to submit proposals for launching Bachelor's Degree program(s). Despite verbal assurances of providing faculty and resources for the new BS program from the higher education department, these verbal promises were not fulfilled. Adding to the instability, a recent directive has ordered the closure of all BS programs with one or fewer regular faculty members. These rapid and inconsistent changes underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive BS program policy that considers financial, human, and other essential resources required for program sustainability.

In conclusion, while the BS program offers numerous benefits, its implementation requires careful consideration of local dynamics, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement to ensure its success and sustainability.

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## Global Challenges

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday joined 48 world leaders virtually, to outline their expectations for this month's Summit of the Future in New York, underscoring "effective" international cooperation to address global challenges, including the developing nation's rising debt burdens.

"The Summit of the Future represents a great opportunity. We must not lose it!" the Pakistani leader told the virtual live event as part of a global call to action to support the once-in-a-generation UN summit, which begins on 22 September at UN Headquarters.

Over 130 Heads of State and Government are expected to attend the landmark event, which will be held just ahead of the annual high-level debate in the UN General Assembly, which opens on Sept 24.

The Summit brings together countries from around the world, marking a critical opportunity for far-reaching agreements on international collaboration for a safer, more sustainable and more equitable world.

At Thursday's live event, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was joined by the President of Namibia, Nangolo Mbumba, and the Chancellor of Germany, Olaf Scholz, as co-facilitators of the preparatory process.

During the two-day Summit, member states are expected to conclude negotiations ahead of adopting the Pact for the Future, which aims to chart a path toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. It will include a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations.

The SDGs are an internationally agreed set of targets to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

In a video call from Islamabad, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, called for collective efforts to deal with acute world problems, saying, "Today, in times of unprecedented global challenges and escalating conflicts, we are at risk of permanently damaging the notion of 'we'."

The prime minister added, "A collective 'we' requires a degree of equality and justice. The plight of the people of Gaza is a mockery of this 'we.'"

"This 'we' becomes marred amidst rising debt burdens for the poor, increasing poverty, growing inequality, intolerance, terrorist violence, illegal foreign occupation, and a skewed approach to climate adaptation."

In this regard, prime minister stressed the need for significant reform of international financial institutions to achieve SDGs, saying it required enhanced concessional financing, increased Official Development Assistance (ODA), and greater lending from Multilateral Development Banks.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awsat)

## Mighty-K2: An arduous challenge for climbers

**Tooba Khan**

Located on Pakistan-China border, K2 stands tall at 8,611 meters (28,251 feet) as the second-highest mountain in the world and a jewel in Pakistan's crown making it prominent among nations with mountain ranges.

Its sheer size, rugged terrain and unpredictable weather distinguish it from other peaks of the world making a formidable challenge for even the most experienced climbers.

First discovered in 1856 by the Great Trigonometric Survey of British India, led by Thomas Montgomery, the mountain was initially named "Montgomery's Peak" but later renamed as K2, with "K" standing for Karakoram and "2" indicating it as the second highest peak in the range.

As climbing season kicks off, hundreds of local and foreign climbers make their way to Gilgit-Baltistan to climb eight-thousand peaks, including K2 with many facing severe weather and sometimes unfortunate accidents that also claim their lives.

According to Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism Department, over 1,700 permits had been issued to foreign tourists till July 02 to climb peaks in the region with 175 permits issued to scale K2.

K2 is a majestic mountain that commands respect and awe. But, its rugged terrain and unpredictable weather make it a challenge for climbers. However, with proper preparation and experience, K2 can be a rewarding and life-changing experience for those who dare to conquer it.

"As the second-highest mountain on Earth, K2 boasts a notorious reputation as the 'Savage Mountain'. Its fatality rate is around 23 deaths per 100 successful summits. Its death zone is particularly perilous, and its unpredictable weather, constant rock fall and difficult climbing sections

contribute to its high mortality rate" remarked a senior Journalist Imtiaz Ali Taj.

He said after an increase in successful attempts, as of August 2023, an estimated more than 800 people have summited K2, with more than 100 deaths during attempted climbs.

"Climbing K2 is a serious undertaking that requires extensive mountaineering experience, physical endurance and mental toughness," Imtiaz stated. "The climb typically takes around 60 to 90 days, depending on the route and weather conditions. Climbers must navigate treacherous terrain including steep rock faces, icy slopes and exposed ridges."

The K2 was referred to as The Savage Mountain since 1953, when American climber and physicist George Bell, who would have nearly perished in a six-men fall on the mountain.

There are several routes to summit K2, each with its own unique challenges and risks. The most popular route is the Abruzzi Spur, also known as the Southeast Ridge. Other notable routes include the North Ridge, West Ridge, and South Face.

Guided or not, K2's upper slopes are one of the least hospitable places on earth. And for anyone who wants to escape the crowds, the mountain is also host to nearly a dozen existing but rarely attempted routes, many of which climb from the mountain's frighteningly remote Chinese side.

"K2 is a beast of mountains. It's unforgiving and demands respect. I've climbed it twice and both times it has been a humbling experience. The terrain is treacherous and the weather is unpredictable. But the sense of accomplishment when you reach the summit is unparalleled," narrated Kacho khurshed, a renowned climber from Baltistan region.

K2 is also known for its unpredictable and extreme weather conditions. Climbers must contend with frequent snowstorms, avalanches and temperatures as low as -60°C (-76°F). The

weather can change quickly, making it essential for climbers to be prepared and flexible.

No matter whatever the comments globally and locally, K2 offers great adventure opportunities despite its harsh and unpredictable weather in winter and earns distinction for Pakistan.

Local people also see it as a gift of Nature for them as besides making them prominent across the world, K2 also brings in revenue for them. But, the same time they are worried about its beauty and environment.

"K2 is our pride and joy. It's a source of inspiration for our community. We have seen many climbers coming and going and it is amazing to see how they push themselves to conquer this mountain," said Muhammad Iqbal a local resident of Gojal Hunza.

"The stunning natural beauty of K2 also contributes to Pakistan's global reputation as a destination for outdoor enthusiasts, further boosting tourism," Iqbal stated. "But we also worry about environmental impact and want to see sustainable tourism practices for climbers and our community."

"The economic benefits of K2 are substantial as it attracts adventurers and tourists from around the world, generating revenue through trekking and climbing fees and jobs for local people," Iqbal stated.

"K2 is a mighty and glamorous peak. It's strong and powerful and we must respect it," say the local people as they feel that increased traffic from guiding companies has heightened some of the ethical concerns that often accompany high-altitude climbing and labor especially when under-equipped and under-trained porters face accidents.

Therefore, it is urgently required to ensure safer expeditions as well as preservation of natural beauty and ecosystem of the area right from base camp to the top for our future generations to enjoy its beauty and wonders.

## Baluchistan needs Dialogue

Parliament is increasingly failing to engage in meaningful debates on critical national challenges, as seen with the Baluchistan crisis. This crisis led to the resignation of Sardar Akhtar Mengal, the head of the Baluchistan National Party, and prompted the opposition to hold a multiparty meeting outside parliament. The need for immediate and effective legislative discourse is urgent. Civilian institutions have become mere post boxes, issuing simple statements on major crises to fulfill their moral obligations. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired an apex committee meeting in Quetta to fulfill a moral duty, but the exact proceedings remain unclear, with media reports mentioning "important decisions" without providing details.

The ruling party in Baluchistan is either underestimating the crisis or lacks the courage to make national policy decisions. PM Shehbaz Sharif made a statement about raising the issue of missing persons, but the office has kept quiet. Despite the PPP's reconciliation initiative from 2008 to 2013, the 'Aghaz-i-Haqooq-i-Balochistan package' failing due to bureaucracy, establishment, and government, the party is ruling Baluchistan again. The PPP remains silent as it watches the situation unfold.

Civilian governments and mainstream political parties often avoid interference in security-related affairs to avoid the establishment's anger. They endorse the establishment's policies and add a little note to save public face. While these parties rely on the power of the elite, they cannot completely outsource all national interests to the security establishment. They cannot claim they were not involved in decision-making or were forced into compliance. History will judge them for their actions and silence.

Political parties can facilitate inclusion by initiating dialogue, even when powerful forces

attempt to subvert the process. The establishment's limitations cannot excuse political parties, as they cannot be excused for their narrow interests. If a party fails to initiate an inclusion process, it is referred to as a 'mafia', which does not qualify as legitimate political actors. The vacuum left by political parties is filled by highly motivated groups, drawing strength from ideology, identity, sociopolitical grievances, and economic deprivation. Rights-based movements have grown stronger in strategic areas, claiming to represent the people's will. Both the establishment and traditional parties are apprehensive about these movements, as they challenge the status quo and pose a threat to national security.

The loss of reason with one's own people is a significant weakness. People are increasingly using social media to communicate with authorities, but state institutions are more concerned about the power of social media than listening to the people's voice. This shift in power dynamics signifies a shift in power dynamics and concerns for rulers.

Baluchistan requires dialogue with power elites, intelligentsia, civil society, media, and the people of Punjab. However, ruling political parties and parliament are reluctant to take this initiative. Opposition parties should welcome a multiparty conference on Baluchistan, as their involvement will enrich the discourse. Think-tanks, civil society, and independent media can also contribute to the discussion. If state institutions, political parties, and parliament fail to initiate dialogue, rights movements can build consensus by organizing National Jirga's and conventions. Power elites may not embrace these gatherings, but they will become embedded in the community's collective memory, challenging established norms of national interest.

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# Malaysian Prime Minister to visit Pakistan in October to strengthen bilateral relations, says envoy



**Naveed Ahmed Khan**

ISLAMABAD: Malaysian High Commissioner Dato' Mohamad Azhar Mazlan announced that Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim is scheduled to visit Pakistan in the first week of October. This visit aims to enhance the longstanding and cordial relations between the two nations, which have historically enjoyed close ties since Pakistan was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Malaysia in 1957.

During a media briefing at the Malaysian Embassy attended by numerous journalists, the High Commissioner highlighted the significant role played by Pakistan's Justice Abdul Hamid in

drafting Malaysia's constitution as part of the Reid Commission. He noted that both countries share similar perspectives on various global issues and often coordinate their stances on matters of mutual concern at international forums, including the United Nations (UN), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and the D-8.

The upcoming visit by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will be the first by a Malaysian leader to Pakistan in five years, following former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's trip in March 2019. The High Commissioner indicated that several agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) are expected

to be signed during this visit, further solidifying the partnership between the two nations.

Notably, Malaysia and Pakistan have already established a Free Trade Agreement known as the Malaysia-Pakistan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (MPCEPA), along with various other agreements across diverse sectors.

During his stay in Islamabad, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will engage in discussions with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other senior Pakistani officials. The talks will focus on enhancing bilateral investment and trade, with both sides likely to address the pressing issue of Palestine, as both nations advocate for a

two-state solution to the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict.

The High Commissioner emphasized that the visit underscores the growing relationship between Malaysia and Pakistan, particularly in the realms of economic cooperation and trade. Bilateral trade has gained momentum over the past few years, reaching approximately US\$1.5 billion in 2023-24. Pakistan's primary exports to Malaysia include condensate oil, rice, potatoes, onions, corn, home textiles, seafood, and meat, while major imports from Malaysia include palm oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG), petroleum products, laptops, nonwoven wadding, and fiberboard.

Tourism between the two



nations has also seen significant growth, with Malaysia ranking among the top sources of tourists to Pakistan. Malaysian tourists are increasingly interested in exploring Paki-

stan's stunning landscapes and rich cultural heritage. Additionally, Pakistan has become a notable destination for religious tourism among Sikh communities and Malaysian Buddhists.

As the two nations prepare for the upcoming visit, the focus remains on strengthening their partnership and exploring new avenues for collaboration across various sectors.

# Royal Thai Embassy & World Food Programme host culinary event promoting sustainability

**Naveed Ahmed Khan**

ISLAMABAD: The Royal Thai Embassy, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), hosted a special event titled "From the Embassy's Garden to the Lunch Table: Let's Cook Thai Food!" The gathering took place at the Embassy and focused on the integration of traditional Thai cooking with modern sustainability practices. Kamolwan Sriposil, Charge d'Affaires at the Royal Thai Embassy, opened the event by expressing her gratitude to Miss Coco Ushiyama, Country Director of the World Food Programme, for her vision and commitment, which were pivotal in bringing the event to life.

"Today's event represents much more than a cooking demonstration; it serves as a window into the profound role of the garden in Thai daily life," Sriposil remarked.

In her address, Sriposil highlighted the longstanding Thai tradition of cultivating vegetables, herbs, and fruits at home. This practice not only provides families with fresh and nutritious ingredients but also allows them to sell surplus produce in local markets, thereby enhancing community income and resilience. "This tradi-



tion of self-reliance and sustainability has been the cornerstone of food security in Thai households," she noted, emphasizing its significance in a world increasingly challenged by food scarcity and climate change.

The event featured a cooking demonstration by Chef Haleem, who prepared two iconic Thai dishes: Thai Green Curry with chicken and Stir-fried minced beef with holy basil. Utilizing

fresh ingredients sourced from the Embassy's own garden, the dishes showcased the vibrant flavors characteristic of Thai cuisine. Following the demonstration, attendees enjoyed a lunch featuring these culinary delights, embodying the event's theme of "from the garden to the table." Sriposil extended her appreciation to the WFP team for their essential role in the event's success and expressed optimism that the initiative would inspire

steps toward a more sustainable future.

A notable highlight was Chef Haleem's signing of the Chef's Manifesto for SDG Zero Hunger, which Sriposil described as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility to achieve a hunger-free world. "Food is not just a necessity; it is a universal language, a source of joy, and a basic human right," she stated. The Charge d'Affaires concluded

by encouraging attendees to carry forward the message that food can unite us, nourish our bodies, and contribute to a more sustainable future. "Thank you all for being here. I look forward to the enriching discussions and collaborations that today will inspire," she said. The event not only celebrated the rich culinary traditions of Thailand but also underscored the importance of sustainability and community resilience



in addressing global food security challenges. **Photos Online by Sultan Bashir**

# 18.39 percent households undernourished with majority in urban areas of Pakistan: Report

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Head of Policy and Advocacy, The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Faiz Rasool on Friday said the increasing population of undernourished households is driving the nutritional and health crises in the country amid policy gaps and absence of proactive legislation in line with rapidly changing environment.

He was addressing a media debriefing session jointly organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and GAIN to explore critical aspects around communicating food security, healthy diet and food system and its impact on public health and sustaining the food systems.

Faiz Rasool said almost of the

country's population is persistently facing threat to their health due to poor access to healthy diet, whereas 18.5% of them were undernourished.

"Malnourishment and obesity as health risks are simultaneously existing in the country, as Pakistan is facing double burden of malnutrition resulting into aggravated disease burden due to unhealthy diet. Moreover, 6/10 of population diseases are related to food related problems and poor quality diet," he said.

Since, the country is facing nutrition and food safety challenges there is no nutrition policy in the country as there has been no focus of the quarters concerned on establishing such document, he added.

The GAIN official underscored that there are serious

policy gaps and no guidance available to address nutrition challenge in the National Food Security Policy approved in 2018.

Globally, he said 3.1 billion people almost 42% of the total world population are unable to afford healthy diet.

He pointed out that there were food authorities in all the four provinces of the country, whereas food safety was the most serious issue after nutrition in the country. "Food security policy lacks gender aspect to counter food safety challenges faced by women, whereas no youth the largest part of the country's population is addressed in the policy which is contributing in almost every sector," he said.

Faiz Rasool mentioned that food security is a provin-

cial subject after devolution, whereas the input of the provinces on National Food Security Policy is questionable.

"Our children will face 20% obesity alongwith malnutrition and stunting risks as 125,000 children are getting impacted from unsafe food," he said.

Pakistan's food system transformation pathway document has been prepared and submitted as per its global commitment under international conventions but no progress has been made so far, he added.

"Pakistan only country in the world having current Secretary Ministry of Food Security as 11th convener but in many regional countries only one convener has been serving throughout but we have repeatedly changed the focal persons



in the last three years. Countries like Africa have better progress in that regard due to consistent working of officials designated on this position," he said.

He also mentioned that the climate change and food security nexus is also missing in the Food Security Policy which the media should extensively high-

light as growing economic and ecological vulnerability due to environmental degradation is taking a heavy toll on the food security of the country.

Replying to media queries, he said the GAIN had held consultations with relevant departments at national and provincial consultations led by the Ministry

of Food Security.

"Media should move policy makers on critical legislation on pertinent issues like nutrition policy, whereas the entire scenario in all domains have transformed rapidly," Faiz Rasool said.

The National Food System Dashboard provides a complete data inventory, with Pakistan and Nigeria being the only countries offering subnational data, whereas efforts are underway to include district-level data as well.

The GAIN, he said has prepared SOPs for food safety sampling and collection for three federating units and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. For the Punjab Food Authority, GAIN developed modules for Nutrition Schools to guide small-scale producers on food safety, he said.

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
79,333.05	79,017.61	
Day's High	Day's Low	
80,016.73	79,262.72	
Index Value	Change	
12,649,814,568	+315.44	
Percentage	Time	
+0.4%	13 Sept, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,273.09	+32.12	
Percentage	Time	
+0.39%	13 Sept, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
41,456.42	+359.65	
Percentage	Time	
+0.88%	13 Sept, 1:34 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
36,581.76	-251.51	
Percentage	Time	
-0.68%	13 Sept, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	186.75	189.00
Bahrain Dinar	735.25	743.25
Canadian Dollar	206.60	209.00
China Yuan	38.25	38.65
Danish Krone	40.03	40.43
Euro	306.70	309.45
Hong Kong Dollar	35.68	36.03
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.93	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	901.85	911.35
Malaysian Ringgit	59.3	60.3
New Zealand \$	169.34	171.34
Norwegians Krone	26.14	26.44
Omani Riyal	722.40	730.90
Qatari Riyal	76.44	77.14
Saudi Riyal	74.19	74.74
Singapore Dollar	201.85	203.85
Swedish Korona	26.15	26.45
Swiss Franc	326.45	329.25
Thai Bhat	7.55	7.7
U.A.E Dirham	75.85	76.5
UK Pound Sterling	362.95	366.45
US Dollar	279.00	280.85

# Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer visits ICCI: Calls for end to irrational taxes, IPPs to revive economy

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeemur Rahman has said that the country is passing through a critical phase and we unitedly have to pull it out of this mess and turn it as per the dreams of its founders by frustrating the conspiracies of its enemies.

Addressing a hugely attended ceremony entitled 'Economic Problems of Pakistan and their Solutions', at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry he said that our country is blessed with unlimited resources, it enjoys the ability to bounce back but the only needed thing is serious, united and selfless efforts. He went on to say that economic and political stability are correlated, therefore politicians should sit together and chalk out a comprehensive framework for the economic wellbeing of the country. He dubbed the irrational taxes and IPPs as the mother causes of all the problems and demanded broadening of the tax net on a genuine basis and forensic audit of IPPs to get rid of them once and for all and put the economic wheel on the run. He asked that if the Reko Diq issue can be resolved, why can't the IPPs.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islam-



abad Chamber of Commerce and Industry by narrating the grim picture of the country's economy, emphasized that the government must take on board the business community and other stakeholders before taking decisions relating to the economy of the country. He said

that industries are being closed and unemployment is on the rise with every passing day, therefore all the political parties including the Jamaat-e-Islami have to formulate at least a ten years' roadmap for the survival of the economy. He further said that we have to promote

tourism, air linkages and connectivity with other countries for enhancing trade and business ties.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General United Business Group by encompassing the factors responsible for the economic difficulties of the country said that certain powers by monopolizing the power sector of the country have intentionally put our economy in intensive care to make us unable to develop and grow.

He said that how the economic wellbeing of the country will be possible if it will have to pay Rs.7600 billion for debt servicing out of the total revenue of Rs. 9300 billion, therefore it is imperative to get rid of this debt at the earliest possible time.

Kashif Chaudhry, President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan impressed upon the government to provide level playing field to the business community by saying that it is also incumbent upon the traders to perform their duties honestly by adhering to the golden principles of Islam.

Former President ICCI, Ejaz Abbasi, Deputy Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Mian Aslam, Emir of Islamabad Nasrullah Randhawa, Imtiaz Abbasi, Babar Chaudhary, Syed Imran Bukhari were also present on this occasion.

## Shield presentation

President Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kashif Anwar presenting the shield to Engr Sardar Ahmad SI (M) on the occasion of EMI Solution Industrial Seminar held at LCCI.



Photo: Online

## AI chief calls for clear roadmap and single-digit interest rates

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Muhammad Kamran Arbi, President of the Site Association of Industry (SAI), has criticized the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) recent 2% cut in the interest rate, arguing that a more substantial reduction to single digits is necessary, along with a long-term, sustainable monetary policy.

He stated that the recent cut did not meet expectations given the current economic conditions, and that only a significant rate reduction would provide businesses with a more stable environment for future planning.

While acknowledging the SBP's rate cut as a positive move, Arbi dismissed it as insufficient. "It's a baby step," he said, emphasizing that the SAI is calling for a reduction in interest rates to single digits.

Arbi also called for clearer communication from the government, noting, "When the interest rate is reduced



to single digits, businesses need a clear roadmap. This will enable businesspeople to plan without further uncertainty regarding future investments."

He pointed out that inflation has already dropped to single digits, resulting in a real effective interest rate of approximately 10-11%.

Arbi criticized the SBP for its slow response to changing economic conditions and urged for a more substantial and immediate rate cut, or at least a gradual reduction of 5 percentage points. According to Arbi, the SBP should prioritize quantitative easing to stimulate economic growth.

## SECP extends companies regularization scheme to provide continued relief to businesses

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) is pleased to extend the Companies Regularization Scheme by one month. The scheme will now be effective until October 15, 2024, providing defaulting companies with the opportunity to regularize their overdue filings without incurring late charges or penalties.

To further streamline the process and enhance efficiency, exclusively online filings will be accepted during the extension period. Companies can submit their overdue documents by simply paying the regular filing fees, thus benefiting from this opportunity to regularize their status with SECP at minimal cost. SECP encourages all defaulting companies to take full advantage of this extension and ensure compliance with relevant statutory requirements.

## LCCI partners with Rescue 1122 for comprehensive Life-Saving Training to Enhance Safety Awareness

**Tahir Amin Malik**

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry in collaboration with Rescue 1122, organized a training session as part of the Pak Life Saver Program aimed at significantly improving safety awareness and emergency preparedness. The session, which took place at the LCCI, was a comprehensive effort to equip participants with essential life-saving skills, ensuring they are better prepared to handle emergencies both within the workplace and in their daily lives.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar appreciated Rescue 1122 for taking this initiative in collaboration with the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The training was led by a team of experts from Rescue 1122 including Deeba Shehnaz Akhtar, Head of Community Safety & Information, who has an extensive background in community outreach and safety education. She provided valuable insights into the



importance of immediate response during emergencies and highlighted various strategies to minimize risks.

Deeba Shehnaz Akhtar stressed upon the critical role that strong partnerships between Rescue 1122 and the business community play in building an effective emergency response infrastructure. She said that in times of crisis, the first few minutes are crucial. Having a well-trained team that

can respond swiftly and effectively can save lives.

The LCCI is optimistic about the potential for further collaborations with Rescue 1122 and other organizations dedicated to promoting safety and wellness initiatives. By extending such training programs to its broader membership base, the Chamber aims to foster a culture of preparedness and resilience within the business community.

## Economy ready for growth, but political unrest impedes: Mian Zahid Hussain

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, the President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that it is encouraging that the IMF consider approving a loan of seven billion dollars for Pakistan this month.

He said the IMF's softening stance comes after two-billion-dollar loan guarantees, which may improve the overall economic situation.

Due to strict measures, Mian Zahid Hussain

said, the economy is ready to take off, but political stability is necessary.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that political instability is currently the biggest obstacle to economic development. Volatility is considered necessary for the survival of a political party that always prefers politics of protest and unrest.

He said that the people of Pakistan have made a big sacrifice to get a loan from the IMF. The cost of electricity has increased drastically, tax revenue has increased by a record forty percent, and other measures have also been taken.

Due to these measures, Pakistan's financial

condition has improved, and its global credit rating has increased.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that inflation has also reduced. Still, business activities will not resume until interest rates are reduced further, which is necessary to drive the economy and increase employment.

Investment growth is only possible once interest rates fall further. He said that assurances of financial help from various sources have been given, which is why the IMF is ready to help Pakistan.

The business leader said Pakistan's administrative structure has become an enormous

burden. The country is overcrowded with ministries and departments, many of which are dysfunctional and unnecessary.

Political recruitment has damaged many institutions, and pensions have become a problem. Limited resources, senseless expenditure, lack of financial planning, and the policy of making economic decisions on political grounds have shaken the foundations of the country, he underlined.

He said that due to the wastage of resources, health, education, and other facilities are not provided to the people as they have a right to, and the country has to run through borrowing.



He warned that if politically difficult decisions are not taken and time is wasted, a mini-budget will have to be introduced in a few months, and Pakistan will never be able to get out of the debt trap.

# Governor gives Arshad Nadeem Rs. 150mln cheque on behalf of President Zardari

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Friday awarded a cheque of Rs. 150 million to the Olympic gold medalist javelinist Arshad Nadeem on behalf of President Asif Ali Zardari during a solemn ceremony at the Governor's House here.

Hailing record-shattering feat of track and field athlete Arshad Nadeem, the governor said President Zardari had announced a reward of Rs. 150 million for the athlete during a meeting at the Presidency.

"President Asif Ali Zardari has acknowledged the feat of Arshad Nadeem and it is hoped that he will be able to shatter more records for the country," the governor said.

He said Arshad Nadeem brought smiles on the faces of the nation. Saleem Haider Khan said that prosperity and development of the country were the vision of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), adding that President Zardari was a blessing for the PPP as well as the



nation. He said only President Zardari could unite the nation in the current political situation.

# Moin Khan names ideal candidate for Pakistan captaincy

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain and wicketkeeper batter Moin Khan backed ace pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi as the ideal candidate for Pakistan captaincy.

Following a series of dismal performances across formats, the future of both Pakistan Test and white-ball captains, Shan Masood and Babar Azam, is under scrutiny.

Last week, it was reported that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) decided to call a high-profile meeting on September 22, dubbed "Connection Camp", to discuss the future of Pakistan cricket which includes the captaincy of the national men's teams.

PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi confirmed the aforementioned reports regarding the captaincy, stating that national selectors and coaches will decide on the appointment of the Paki-



stan men's team captain. "The decision regarding captaincy will be made after consultation with the coaches, mentors and selection committee," said Naqvi. "A workshop is scheduled for September 22, where everyone will be invited to give their suggestions, and

decisions will be made afterwards," he added.

Meanwhile, legendary wicketkeeper batter Moin Khan threw his weight behind Shaheen Shah Afridi, terming him an ideal candidate for Pakistan captaincy, especially for T20Is.

He also highlighted a dip in the pacer's performance after being removed from the captaincy.

"Shaheen Afridi has the ability to lead the team and is highly liked by the players. He is an excellent choice for captaincy in T20s. In white-ball cricket, I don't see anyone else suitable for the role. Removing him from the captaincy was unjust. He is one of the best T20 players, and I've noticed his performance has slightly declined since he was removed from the captaincy. How can you expect good performance if you don't give players confidence? They should be given some time as captain," stated Moin.

# Gary Kirsten reaches Faisalabad for Champions One-Day Cup

Sports Desk

FAISALABAD: Pakistan's white-ball head coach Gary Kirsten reached here for the Champions One-Day Cup, being held here at the Iqbal Stadium from September 12 to 29.

According to the details, Kirsten touched down here on Friday night and was accompanied by high-performance coach David Reid.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) also shared the footage of Gary Kirsten's arrival.

"Pakistan white-ball head coach Gary Kirsten and high-performance coach David Reid arrive in Faisalabad to witness the Champions One-Day Cup," wrote PCB in the caption.

In the video, Kirsten can be seen greeting Pakistan men's team's selectors Mohammad Yousuf and Asad Shafiq before joining them in watching the ongoing clash between



Mohammad Haris-led Stallions and Shaheen Afridi-led Lions. Details further suggested that Kirsten will witness every match of the Champions One-Day Cup as he is assigned to build a strong pool of players, who will go on to represent the national team in future including the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

During his visit to Pakistan, Kirsten will also attend a

high-profile meeting and workshop to discuss the future of the national cricket team as well as all-format captaincy.

The meeting, dubbed the "Connection Camp" is likely to be held on September 22 and will be presided by PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi, who will also attend the workshop.

In the Connection Camp, Kirsten will be accompanied by Pakistan red-ball coach Jason Gillespie and the heads of international, domestic, and high-performance departments while senior cricketers, coaches and PCB officials will also be in attendance.

Pakistan red-ball head coach Gillespie is scheduled to reach Pakistan on September 22.

In the first match of the Champions One-Day Cup, Kamran Ghulam's century propelled Markhors to a thumping 160-run victory over the Panthers.

# Babar, Tayyab steer Stallions to 336 against Lions

A Sports

FAISALABAD: A dominant third-wicket partnership between Babar Azam and Tayyab Tahir powered Stallions to a massive total against Lions in the second match of the Champions One-Day Cup at the Iqbal Stadium on Friday.

Stallions' captain Mohammad Haris' decision to bat first after winning the toss, bore fruits as his batters responded well by accumulating 336/5 in the allotted overs.

The Stallions, however, had a cautious start to their innings as they lost opening batter Yasir Khan (13) in the eighth over with just 35 runs on the board.



Star batter Babar Azam then joined Shan Masood in the middle and together they raised 39 runs for the second wicket until the latter was

cleaned up by Faisal Akram in the 16th over.

Masood fell narrowly short of his well-deserved half-century, scoring 41 off 53 deliveries with the help of six fours.

Babar Azam then joined forces with Tayyab Tahir and the duo batted sensibly to anchor the Stallions' innings.

Babar and Tayyab registered a brilliant 114-run partnership for the third wicket amid which both scored half-centuries.

Babar finally perished in the 35th over, attempting to pull Shaheen Afridi for a six, but ended up being caught at deep mid-wicket.

He remained the top-scorer for Stallions with a 79-ball 76, which featured nine fours.

Tayyab soon followed suit as he walked back in the 39th over after getting bowled by Aamir Jamal. He smashed seven fours and two sixes on his way to a 72-ball 74.

Skipper Mohammad Haris and experienced Hussain Talat then bolstered Stallions' total with a brisk 88-run partnership, which lasted with the former's dismissal in the 47th over.

Haris scored 55 off 36 deliveries with the help of four fours and as many sixes, while Talat remained unbeaten with a 33-ball 50, laced up with six fours and a six.

For the Lions, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Aamir Jamal bagged two wickets each while Faisal Akram made one scalp.

## Transparency of Punjab Games will be ensured, DG Sports Punjab



Tahir Amin Malik

Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal said that there will be no compromise on merit and discipline in the organization of Khailta Punjab Games and transparency will be ensured in every activity of the games. He said this while presiding over an important meeting at the National Hockey Stadium on Friday.

The meeting was convened to review the arrangements of forthcoming Khailta Punjab Games 2024. The schedule, arrangements of the matches and various other important features relating to Khailta Punjab Games were discussed in detail during the meeting. All sports officers gave briefings and suggestions about their respective disciplines in the meeting.

Director Admin Dr M Kaleem, Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Deputy Director Ata ur Rehman, Tariq Khanzada, all Divisional and District Sports Officers of the province participated in the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal said that Khailta Punjab Games will be the biggest sports event in the history of Punjab.

"There will be sports competitions from grass root level to division and provincial level and the Punjab sports clubs will compete for the first time in such a grand sports event".

Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal said that more than 5,000 players from sports clubs of Punjab will participate in Khailta Punjab Games.

He further said that several talented athletes will emerge from the platform of Khailta Punjab Games. "Prizes worth eight and a half crore rupees will be given to the players. After a long time, sports competitions are being held at grass root level in Punjab," he informed.

Later, the fatiha was also offered for the departed soul of father of Director

## SA women arrive in Lahore for three IT20 series



Sports Desk

LAHORE: The South Africa Women cricket team led by captain Laura Wolvaardt landed at the Allama Iqbal International Airport on Friday morning to play three IT20s against Pakistan women.

The South African women are due to play three IT20 matches at the Multan Cricket Stadium, Multan between 16 and 20 September, 2024.

The three IT20 series was part of the preparations for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 in the UAE between October 3 -20, 2024. The series will help SA women cricketers to acclimatize with the conditions in UAE.

The team will take part in training sessions on September 14 and 15, 2024.

Before the training session on September 15, team captains Laura Wolvaardt (South Africa) and Fatima Sana (Pakistan) will hold a pre-series media conference and display the trophy after the media interaction.

The SA women cricketers will for Multan by a chartered flight.

## Former captain thinks Rizwan's age "only criticism" for his captaincy



Legendary Pakistan wicketkeeper batter Moin Khan termed Mohammad Rizwan's age only obstacle for him to become the all-format Pakistan captain, stating he would be a short-term option.

In an interview with a cricket news platform, Moin said Pakistan can appoint an all-format captain but should be given ample tenure to lead the national team.

Moin Khan acknowledged Mohammad Rizwan's leadership skills but claimed the 32-year-old to be a short-term option. He instead called for grooming a youngster for the national team's leadership.

"A single captain can be appointed for all formats of cricket, but it's crucial for any player to perform across all formats to achieve this. Whoever becomes captain should have the responsibility for a long term. There is no doubt about Mohammad Rizwan's abilities; any criticism against him might be due to his age," said Moin Khan.

"It's also important to consider how long he can represent the team if given leadership. Mohammad Rizwan could be a great short-term captain, but you would need to groom a young cricketer to take over in the future. We often appoint captains but fail to prepare a suitable deputy," he added.

Moin Khan then backed ace pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi as the ideal candidate for Pakistan captaincy.

"Shaheen Afridi has the ability to lead the team and is highly liked by the players. He is an excellent choice for captaincy in T20s," Moin stated.

"In white-ball cricket, I don't see anyone else suitable for the role. Removing him from the captaincy was unjust. He is one of the best T20 players, and I've noticed his performance has slightly declined since he was removed from the captaincy. How can you expect good performance if you don't give players confidence? They should be given some time as captain," he added.

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a meeting with European delegation led by Ambassador Frans Van Daele, Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief along-with Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kionka at Parliament House on Friday.



Photo: PID

## Positive indicators validate govt's right economic direction: PM

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the positive indicators including the reduced policy rate and inflation, surged remittances and agricultural exports, and ongoing efforts to boost IT exports evidenced that the government's economic policies were heading in the right direction.

The prime minister, addressing the young parliamentarians of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, said the two percent policy rate reduction announced on

Thursday was a major relief for the industrialists, investors, agriculturalists, and exporters, and expressed the hope for further decrease.

The announcement by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to discuss the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to Pakistan on September 25 was also equally a good development, he added.

The prime minister said that the inflation had reduced to 9.6% from 32% last year, and remittances by expatriates and agricultural exports had witnessed a surge. The government was also striving



to promote IT (Information Technology) exports, he said and appreciated the role of Information Minister Attaullah Tarar in amplifying the government's performance.

But he said many more efforts were yet to be made with unity and a clear mind to regain the lost position.

He told the young parliamentarians including senators and members of the National Assembly (MNAs) that the incumbent government had made a pathway for the country to regain its stature in the comity of nations by rectifying past mistakes.

Prime Minister Shehbaz emphasised the role of youth, including parliamentarians, engineers, students, lawyers, bankers and agriculturalists in accomplishing that journey

by equipping themselves with modern education and skills, and also assured them of his fullest support in that regard.

He also appreciated the friendly countries, including Saudi Arabia, China and the United Arab Emirates for their support in paving the way for the IMF facility, and also lauded the efforts by the government's economic team, the army chief, and all those involved in the process.

The young parliamentarians presented suggestions with regard to governance and legislation, which the prime minister appreciated.

## Iran envoy to Pakistan congratulates Pakistan on hosting SCO meeting -statement

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam has extended his sincere congratulations to the government of Pakistan for successfully hosting the 23rd Meeting of Ministers of Trade and Commerce of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states.

In a statement issued on Friday Reza Amiri Moghadam also extended his warmest appreciations for the hospitality presented to the delegations.

Reza Amiri Moghadam said that the SCO is the largest regional organization in terms of area and population, covering 80% of Eurasia



land 40% of the world's population. With 20% of the world's

oil reserves, 44% of its gas reserves, and a GDP of \$24.2 trillion in 2023—about one fourth of the global GDP—it holds an important economic and commercial position globally.

Reza Amiri Moghadam said that this organization has 10 main members, two observer members, and 14 dialogue partners. With the capacities of the SCO members, it is expected that many more countries join this important pact in the near future. Activating all the capacities of the member countries in this organization is important, and it must be done through cooperation and collective synergy. "In this important meeting, I focus on one aspect of these capacities, namely, transportation infrastructure and trade corridors, which drive the development of cooperation among the members of this organization and, indeed, the world" Reza Amiri Moghadam said.

Reza Amiri Moghadam said that we all know that major powers are currently seeking to create corridors that maximize their interests. In this framework, it is essential that the SCO members, in the first phase, complete the existing corridors and, in next phases, work towards creating new ones. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the North-South Corridor, and the East-West Corridor are significant routes that can enhance synergy between members and other parts of the world.

## NPO Pakistan, APO Japan concludes successful international workshop on strategic marketing

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) Pakistan, in collaboration with the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Japan, hosted a 4-day international workshop on Strategic Marketing for Digital Transformation, which concluded here on Friday.

The workshop brought together experts and practitioners from across the region to share knowledge and best practices in digital marketing strategies. Participants had the opportunity to learn from renowned industry leaders, including Syed Ahmed, CEO of DPL Pvt Ltd, who shared his company's success story in adopting innovative marketing approaches.

The closing ceremony was attended by Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhary, CEO of NPO Pakistan, who expressed his gratitude to the participants, speakers, and collaborating organizations.

He emphasized the importance



of digital transformation in today's fast-paced business environment and encouraged participants to apply the learnings from the workshop to drive productivity and growth in their respective organizations.

The Government of Pakistan is undertaking various initiatives to

catalyze economic transformation, including the Mobile Cellular Policy, Broadband Policy, National IT Policy, and the Digital Pakistan Policy.

APO Japan's representative also acknowledged the success of the workshop and reaffirmed their commitment to supporting produc-

tivity growth in the region.

The workshop was a testament to NPO Pakistan's dedication to promoting productivity and competitiveness in the country, and its collaboration with international organizations to bring global best practices to Pakistan.

## Pakistan committed to strengthen ties with European Union: Ayaz

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday said that Pakistan highly valued its relationship with the European Union and was committed to strengthening that bond into a robust strategic partnership.

"Pakistan is a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-national country, where citizens enjoy fundamental rights as guaranteed by the Constitution," he said during a meeting with the EU delegation, led by Frans van Daele, Special Envoy of the European Union, at the Parliament House.

Dr Reena Kavinka, EU's Ambassador to Pakistan was also present in the meeting.

The speaker further highlighted that the Parliament had consistently undertaken initiatives to safeguard the rights and welfare of all Pakistanis. Ayaz Sadiq acknowledged the

significant role that minorities play in Pakistan's national development and prosperity.

He reiterated that the Parliament was committed to promoting religious harmony and had ensured full representation of minority communities in the legislative body.

"The international community should recognize the severe human rights violations occurring in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, and Gaza," he said, urging the global community to take action to halt the ongoing atrocities in the regions.

EU's Special Envoy Frans van Daele acknowledged Pakistan's importance on the global stage and expressed the European Union's desire to further strengthen ties with the country.

"The European Union is keen to enhance both bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Pakistan," he added.

## Judicial Commission of Pakistan 'finalises draft rules' for appointment of judges

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan has finalised the draft rules concerning the appointment of judges during its recent meeting, sources said on Friday. The new draft would be presented to the members in the next meeting on September 28.

"It was ensured that the draft rules should be fully compliant with the provisions of the Constitution," said the press release issued by the JCP registrar on Friday.

Proposals were made upon which a consensus was developed. Participants of the meeting suggested making necessary amendments and increasing the number of proformas to attend to the different categories.

It was decided to attend to the

same by modifying the draft rules. After the conclusion of the discussion the members proposed that Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and senior puisne judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah should amend the said draft rules in accordance with the consensus that had been arrived at and to present the same in the next meeting of the commission.

According to sources, the new draft under consideration would allow for three names to be reviewed for the appointment of judges to the SC. For high court judge nominations, the relevant chief justice, a senior judge, and a member of the provincial bar council would be involved. Similarly, three names would also be evaluated for the appointment of the high court chief justice.

## Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov called on Federal Minister



## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said that the promotion of business activities between Pakistan and Central Asian countries is welcoming step especially holding of Pak Business Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan will bring the investors of both countries more closer. There will be an opportunity to strengthen the existing relation and increase bilateral trade as well as mutual trust and harmony, Abdul Aleem Khan added.

These views were expressed by Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan while talking to the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan H. E. Khazar Farhadov who called on him

in the National Assembly Chamber, here today. Ambassador of Azerbaijan H. E. Khazar Farhadov and Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan exchanged views on the upcoming event of Pak Business Forum being held in Baku on September 16. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that Pakistan intends to increase its business activities to the countries of Central Asia for which there is sufficient scope in various sectors. He said that Pakistan is a big exporter of rice in which we have no competitor especially in Basmati. Ambassador of Azerbaijan H. E. Khazar Farhadov said in his conversation that Pakistan is a brotherly and Islamic neighboring country, our hearts beat together and In Sha Allah the Baku Business Forum will be beneficial for both the countries.

## UN chief slams killing of women & children, UNRWA staffers in Israeli bombing of Gaza school

UNITED NATIONS, SEP 13 (APP): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the continued lack of effective protection for Palestinian civilians in Gaza during the ongoing Israeli war in the enclave as "unconscionable".

In a statement released by his Spokesperson, the UN chief condemned the latest Israeli attack on a school serving as a shelter in Nuseirat on Wednesday, which killed six staffers from the UN Palestine refugee agency,

UNRWA, along with at least 12 others, including women and children.

"This incident raises the number of UNRWA staff killed in this conflict to 220," UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters at UN Headquarters in New York Thursday.

"The Israeli Defense Forces stated that they had targeted a command-and-control centre in the compound," he said. "This incident must be independently and thoroughly investigated to ensure accountability."