



Reaffirmed the commitment to support and empower not only sportsmen, but the entire wealth of Pakistani youth to achieve excellence towards a prosperous Pakistan

Chief of the Army Staff
General
Syed Asim Munir

President praises security forces for successful operation against Khawarij terrorists

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday commended the security forces for launching successful intelligence-based operation against Khawarij terrorists in North Waziristan. In a statement issued by the President House, the president praised the bravery of the forces for killing 3 terrorists in the operation. He vowed to continue operations against the Khawarij until the complete elimination of terrorism. The whole nation is united against the menace of the terrorism, President Zardari said.

Ongoing genocide in Gaza must end & Israel should be held accountable for its war crimes: FO

ISLAMABAD: The 7th session of Pakistan-Türkiye Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) was held in Islamabad last week. Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi led the Pakistan side while the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, Nuh Yilmaz, led the Turkish side. The talks encompassed all aspects of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Türkiye. The two sides will strengthen high level bilateral engagement and fully operationalize existing agreements; and upgrade the Pakistan-Türkiye Strategic Economic Framework (SEF). They will also enhance cooperation in trade and investment, energy, security and defence, information technology, culture and tourism, education, and consular matters.

Yesterday marked a tragic milestone in the ongoing war on the people of Gaza. Israeli occupation forces have massacred 40000 people, majority of them women and children. The ongoing genocide in Gaza must end and Israel should be held accountable for its war crimes and crimes against humanity. Pakistan strongly condemns the illegal storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque by hundreds of extremist settlers led by office bearers of the Israeli occupation authorities. Desecration of one of Islam's holiest sites and obstruction to the rights of worshippers have deeply hurt the sentiments of Muslims worldwide. This act is a violation of Geneva conventions and blatant disregard of multiple UNSC resolutions regarding the historical city of Jerusalem. We share the concerns of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation about the peril posed by the Israeli occupation's policies aimed at altering the Arab and Islamic character of the occupied city of Jerusalem. Pakistan calls on the international community, especially the United Nations Security Council, to take immediate action to end these serious and repeated transgressions against the sanctity of holy sites in Jerusalem; protect the Islamic character of Al-Aqsa; and to ensure the freedom of worship of the Palestinian people. Pakistan strongly condemns the killing of four Kashmiri youth by Indian troops in the Doda district of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). SABAH



ISLAMABAD: PM Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Rightsizing of Government Size. APP

Cabinet Committee proposes curtailing 150,000 vacant govt posts

PM hails Punjab government's historic relief for electricity consumers

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Institutional Reforms Friday recommended for curtailing 150,000 vacant positions, banning contingency recruitment, and outsourcing non-core services like cleaning, janitorial work, which will gradually phase out many positions in grades 1 to 16. In a meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, for reducing public sector size and expenses, the committee, chaired by the Federal Finance Minister, presented its recommendations for right-sizing in the federal government departments. The Ministry of Finance was asked to oversee the cash balances of other federal ministries. The committee provided a detailed briefing on recommended reforms for five federal ministries: the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, the Ministry of State and Frontier Regions, Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, the Ministry of Industry and Production, and the Ministry of National Health Services. The committee proposed merging the Ministry of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan with the Ministry of State and Frontier Regions (SAFRON). The proposal involves closing 28 institutions across these five ministries, transferring the Privatization Ministry and some other ministries to federal units, and merging 12 institutions within these ministries.

Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister directed that these proposed reforms should be approved by the Federal Cabinet and that a comprehensive plan for their implementation be presented. He emphasized that curtailing government expenditure was his top priority. The goal of the government's institutional reforms was to lessen the burden on the national treasury and enhance the quality of services provided to the public, he said. The PM directed that institutions failing to demonstrate adequate public service performance and burdening the national exchequer should be either terminated immediately or privatized without delay. The prime minister vowed to personally oversee the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), an organization supporting small and medium enterprises, and directed that SMEDA be brought under the Prime Minister's Office. Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecom Shaza Fatima, Minister of State for Finance Ali Perwaiz Malik, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jahanzeb Khan, Prime Minister's Coordinator for National Health Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, Prime Minister's Coordinator Bilal Azhar Kayani and relevant

senior government, officials participated the meeting. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday welcomed the historic package for the electricity consumers announced by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif under the leadership of PML-N President and former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. "The decision to reduce electricity rates by Rs 14 per unit for consumers who use up to 500 units per month is a notable example of a people-centric initiative by Nawaz Sharif and the Punjab Chief Minister," the prime minister said in a statement issued by the PM Office. He said under the guidance of Nawaz Sharif, public relief had remained the government's top priority since day one of assuming his office. Recently, he said the federal government had announced relief for the electricity consumers using up to 200 units per month by cutting the size of its annual development budget by Rs 50 billion. He highlighted that under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, the government was taking steps to make the lives of the people easier. After economic stabilization, the country is heading in the right direction, he said adding that public relief and reduction in inflation were the top priorities of the government. He assured that the government was working for the long-term solution of reduction in electricity prices and all possible efforts were being made in this regard.

COAS Syed Asim Munir terms Arshad Nadeem's achievement as national pride



RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir hosted a ceremony in Rawalpindi on Friday to honour Olympian Arshad Nadeem's historic achievement. Speaking on the occasion, the Army Chief termed Arshad Nadeem's achievement as a national pride and highlighted that he has been honoured by the complete nation befitting his achievement. General Syed Asim Munir appreciated Arshad Nadeem's remarkable achievement of winning Pakistan's first-ever gold medal in a singles' event and setting a new Olympic record, attributing it to his commitment, perseverance, and passion for excellence. He highlighted Arshad's inspirational journey from humble beginnings to achieving greatness, emphasizing the importance of hard work and determination. The Army Chief reaffirmed the commitment to support and empower not only sportsmen, but the entire wealth of Pakistani youth to achieve excellence towards a prosperous Pakistan. He highlighted the need for youth engagement, development and entertainment as essential cardinal of a healthy and prosperous society. Arshad Nadeem expressed gratitude and emphasized the immense potential of Pakistani youth, stressing the importance of hard work, positivity, and perseverance in overcoming challenges and achieving success. The event was attended by sports teams and legendary Olympians including 1984 Olympic and National Hockey Teams, National Cricket Team, Street Football Team, Army Polo Team, Visually Impaired Cricket and Women Goal Ball Teams, Medal Winners of Common Wealth, SAF and Asian Games and participants of Paris Olympics 2024. Notable legends included Jehangir Khan, Isalsh Ud Din, Shahbaz Senior, Sohail Abbas, Muhammad Asif and Aisam-ul-Haq. Besides, Arshad Nadeem's close relatives, associates and coaches also attended the event. PR

NA body expresses concern expressed grave on overbilling, IPPs performance

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Energy (Power Division) while expressing grave concerns on overbilling and performance of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) on Friday sought detailed briefing from IPPs in the next meeting. The Committee which met with Muhammad Idrees in the Chair discussed overbilling and unannounced load-shedding in Karachi. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Energy (Power Division) briefed the Committee regarding overbilling and unannounced load-shedding of electricity in Karachi. He informed the Committee that the means of generation of electricity is not same in every region. The generation of electricity in Karachi is through thermal resources which is one of the expensive forms of power generation. Under the government uniform tariff policy everyone in the country pays the same price for electricity in spite of the fact that the generation cost in the region is high. However, the government provides differential

payments to K-Electric in form of subsidy just to provide relief to the consumer. Similarly, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), K-Electric informed the Committee that K-Electric has been facing significant financial losses due to increase in the number of defaulters. K-Electric is facing severe financial constraints that are impacting the ability to provide reliable and affordable energy services. He further informed the Committee that 2000 MW has been added to the National Grid since the company has been privatised. Similarly, the losses of K-Electric have been reduced from 40% to 15% since privatisation. The Chief Executive Officer, Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) while discussing the issue of overbilling informed the Committee that there is no overbilling in HESCO jurisdiction. However, in case of any individual mistake regarding overbilling, the issue is investigated and bills are corrected as per procedure in vogue. He further apprised the Committee that 91.8% complaints received in respect of over-billing has been resolved successfully. INP

Harassment of women, not acceptable under any circumstances, says Attaullah Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday said that harassment of women was not acceptable in any form or under any circumstances. In statement, he strongly condemned the incident of assaulting a woman during the meeting of National Assembly Standing Committee on Energy. The minister said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf should take action against its MNA Iqbal Afridi. "Already in our society women face difficulties," he said adding it was a manifestation of PTI fascism that was coming to fore. He said Iqbal Afridi's party membership should be suspended in order to ensure justice.



PNS Hunain visits Turkish Ports of Golcuk, Aksaz

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Naval Ship PNS Hunain visited Turkish Ports of Golcuk and Aksaz. On arrival, the ship was received by the high officials of the Pakistani Embassy and the Turkish Navy. During stay in Golcuk, the Commanding Officer held meetings with the Fleet Commander of the Turkish Navy and the Commander of the Golcuk Naval Base. During the stay in Aksaz, the commander of the second destroyer squadron of the Turkish Navy along with the commanding officer of the Turkish Navy ship TCG GELIBOLU visited PNS Hunain.



PNS Hunain and Turkish Coast Guard ship GELIBOLU also conducted a joint exercise. It was aimed at enhancing mutual cooperation and joint operations capability between the two navies. PR

PTI to face punishment on May 9 mayhem: Rana



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Friday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), will have to face punishment on May 9 mayhem. The PTI founder was well aware of the planning made for harming the national institutions on May 9, he said while talking to a private television channel. After court trial, he said the PTI would face action for sabotaging peace in the country. Commenting on discipline and accountability in the armed institution, he said Pakistan Army had best self-accountability system. He added that the Armed forces unprecedented accountability system would further strengthen the security institutions. APP

Security forces kill three terrorists in KP's North Waziristan: ISPR

Military's media wing says three "Kharjis were sent to hell" after intense exchange of gunfire

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed three terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) area of Razmak, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday. "On 16 August 2024, security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in the general area of Razmak, District North Waziristan, on the reported presence of Khawarij," the army's media wing said in a statement. "During the conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between the troops and khawarij, as a result of which, three Khawarij of Fitna al Khawarij were sent to hell, while one Kharji got injured." Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the terrorists, who were actively



involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as the targeted killings of inno-

cent civilians, it added. The statement further said that the process of sanitisation in the area is underway to eliminate any other terrorists found in the locale as security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of "khawarij" and terrorism from the country. A day earlier, seven terrorists were killed and five others wounded in an IBO conducted in the KP district of Kurram. In another action carried out last week by the security forces in South Waziristan, four soldiers embraced martyrdom while six terrorists were killed during the exchange of gunfire. Pakistan has experienced a spike in terrorism since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021. Most terror incidents were reported in provinces bordering the

neighbouring country — Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. According to the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) report, during the second quarter of the current year, the country witnessed 380 violence-linked fatalities and 220 injuries among civilians, security personnel, and outlaws. The report stated that these casualties resulted from 240 incidents involving terror attacks and counter-terrorism operations. Against this backdrop, the federal cabinet in June this year approved Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, a reinvigorated national counter-terrorism campaign following the Central Apex Committee's recommendations under the National Action Plan to root out terrorism. PR

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An IMF-guided budget

DR KARIM KHAN

Amid its preparation for its 24th IMF programme, the Pakistan government presented an IMF-guided budget for FY2024-25 in June. The crux of the budget is to keep the primary balance in surplus along with curtailing the power sector's circular debt. To cope with the power-sector crisis, the government has significantly raised tariff rates for electricity along with raising the petroleum development levy (PDL). Similarly, on the directives of the IMF, the government has substantially changed income tax slabs with a view to raising domestic revenue. Both measures are likely to significantly affect the lives of ordinary people, especially the salaried class.

Pakistan's power sector is facing a severe financial crisis with its circular debt currently at Rs2.73 trillion (as of April 30, 2024). In the final review of the 23rd standby arrangement (SBA), the IMF targeted to contain circular debt to Rs2.31 trillion by the end of the outgoing fiscal year (June 2025). Keeping in view this condition, the government has decided to pass on the additional burden of more than Rs700 billion to electricity consumers during the current fiscal year. Accordingly, the government has significantly increased power tariffs from July 1, ranging from Rs7 to Rs12, depending upon the use. On average, the increase for protected consumers stands at 46 per cent, compared to an average increase of 23.13 per cent for non-protected consumers, though protected consumers have been granted a one-time three months' exception from the revised tariffs.

This will increase the electricity bill of protected consumers with 200 consumption units to Rs4,836 and non-protected consumers with 200 consumption units to Rs9,030 after the incorporation of GST, FCAs, and other taxes. Likewise, the electricity bill for consumption units of 300, 500, and 700 will jump to approximately Rs15,051, Rs29,880, Rs44,268, respectively, excluding the fixed capacity charges. Similar would be the case for agricultural, industrial, commercial, and other consumers. In the Finance Bill 2024, the government raised the PDL to Rs80 per litre on petroleum products to collect Rs1.28 trillion, up from the Rs960 billion target for the outgoing fiscal year. Similar price hikes are expected in the case of gas products. These measures are likely to have severe implications for inflation in the country, as power prices have a cumulative impact of up to 30 per cent on inflation in Pakistan. The most seriously impacted would be the prices of daily consumption products, affecting the living standards of a majority of the population, 40 per cent of which are below the poverty line and are currently faced with an inflation rate of 24.5 per cent.

As far as keeping the primary balance in surplus, the government has approved new income tax slabs in the Finance Bill 2024, which will significantly increase the effective rate of taxation across the board. The upper slabs for income from salaried and income from non-salaried are taxed at 35 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively. This is added by a wide-spread imposition of general sales tax (GST) (18-25 per cent), federal excise duty (FED), and customs duties (CD). Overall, the cumulative incidence of indirect taxes ranges from 21 per cent to 23 per cent, depending upon income decile, with the highest range applicable to the lowest income decile. If we incorporate the total incidence of all indirect taxes, the effective rates for upper slabs reach 40.38 per cent and 47.37 per cent for salaried and non-salaried classes, respectively. Likewise, the effective tax rate for the lowest decile of income is 19.98 per cent even though there is no direct tax on this category. The average effective tax rates for the other nine income deciles are 33.1 per cent and 39.8 per cent for salaried and non-salaried classes, respectively. So, taxpayers are being overburdened amid a cumulative federal spending of less than 5.0 per cent of the GDP on health and education, which matter much to ordinary taxpayers. The minimum wage in Pakistan has been raised to Rs37,000, but in reality a majority of unskilled labourers in the informal sector are earning less than this amount. The population in the lowest income decile is liable to 19.98 per cent incidence of indirect taxes and paying an electricity bill of more than Rs2,000 if they are protected and consuming less than 100 units of electricity. So, the lowest income decile group is paying more than 25 per cent of their earnings in taxes and electricity bills.

Is this sustainable in a country where 40 per cent of the population is still living below the poverty line? I would say no, and Pakistan has to initiate structural reforms to come out of the vicious circle of persistent macroeconomic imbalance and low growth trajectory. Yes, we need more revenue, but it must be augmented by measures like removing preferential tax credits and exemptions, enhancing tax base and registration by simplifying the mechanism, introducing agricultural income tax, harmonizing the sales tax regime, etc. For instance, tax expenditure, which includes the revenue foregone due to various exemptions and concessions in tax laws, amounts to around Rs3.9 trillion for the outgoing fiscal year (2023-24), amounting around 54 per cent of the tax revenue. The exemptions are mostly awarded to the elite section of society. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its National Human Development Reports (NHDR), 2020 estimates that around Rs.2.6 trillion are spent each year on the privileges and benefits enjoyed by the powerful interest groups in Pakistan. Second, raising power tariffs is not the only solution to circular debt; other aspects such as renegotiating contracts with IPPs vis-a-vis fixed capacity charges, reducing generation cost, removing transmission and distribution losses, and competitive practices in the energy market are the alternatives that would provide durable solutions to the problem of circular debt. Third, why do we keep injecting money in inefficient SOEs even when their annual losses reach around Rs.2 trillion?

The writer is an associate professor at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad.

Proposal by Belarus to enhance cooperation in the field of HEALTH and PHARMACEUTICALS in Pakistan

By Ms Karina Milinkevich

Holding Belpharmprom kindly invites Pakistani partners are interested in exploring the possibility of jointly implementing investment proposals. In addition, the Belarusian company is interested in the issue of localization of Pakistani medicines at the production facilities of companies belonging to the Holding Belpharmprom. Current investment proposals (posted on the information portal «Investor Road Map» are the following:

1. Construction of a new pharmaceutical products production facility (OJSC «Ekzon»). https://map.investinbelarus.by/en/inv_estbase/offers/38451/.
2. Creation of a center with a radiation sterilization system complex (UE «FreBor»). https://map.investinbelarus.by/en/inv_estbase/offers/38462/.
3. Construction of a plant for the production of self-destructive disposable syringes (UE «FreBor»). https://map.investinbelarus.by/en/inv_estbase/offers/38433/.

Belarusian organization Holding Belpharmprom is improve the management system for the pharmaceutical industry of the Republic of Belarus.

Holding includes 8 subsidiary companies: 6 pharmaceutical manufacturers, 1 scientific organization and 1 producer of medical devices.

forms of ownership and subordination, engaged in pharmaceutical and medical activities, cooperate with the Holding on mutually beneficial

Holding.

The share of companies of Holding in the total volume of exports of Belarusian medicines is more than 80%, and the share of Holding in the pharmaceutical production of the Republic of Belarus is more than 60%.

Currently, 47 production sites of the companies of Holding have national Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certificates, 4 sites are certified for compliance with GMP PIC/S standards and 5 sites are in the process of preparatory work for obtaining GMP certificates of the European Union, 35 sites are certified for compliance with the requirements of the Good Manufacturing Practice of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). At present pharmaceutical companies of Holding have about 800 types of medicines of various pharmacotherapeutic groups in their product portfolios.

The companies' products of the Holding are supplied to about 30 countries of the world.

Belpharmprom Holding express their readiness to organize meetings and negotiations with interested organizations, including visiting member organizations of the Holding.

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At the same time, 20 Belarusian companies and institutes of various

terms. About 7,000 highly qualified specialists work in the companies of

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

History of Pakistan



However, in the Punjab, cotton picking is exclusively a woman's job, and women may keep the money thus earned for their own purposes.

In wealthy peasant and landowner households and in urban middle-class families, the practice of keeping women in seclusion (purdah) is still common; when women leave their houses, they typically cover their heads. Among the rural poor, women have duties on the farm as well as in the house and do not customarily observe purdah. Houses of those who practice purdah have a men's section (mard nah) at the front of the house, so that visitors do not disturb the women, who are secluded in the women's section (zan nah) in the rear. Women's subordinate status in Pakistan also is evident in the practice of "honour killings," in which a woman may be killed by a male relative if she is thought to have brought dishonour on the family or clan. Among the wealthiest Pakistanis,

Western education and modes of living have eliminated purdah, but, in general, even among that group, attitudes toward women in society and the family often have been viewed by outsiders as antiquated. Change has occurred most rapidly among the urban middle-income group, inspired by increasing access to the West as well as by the entry of women into the workforce and into government service. An increasing number of middle-class women have stopped observing purdah, and the education of women has been encouraged. Some women have gained distinction in the professions; some of Pakistan's leading politicians, journalists, and teachers have been women, and a woman has served as prime minister and as speaker of parliament. In traditional parts of Pakistan, social organization revolves around kinship rather than around the caste system that is used in India. The baradari (bar dar; patrilineage, literally "brotherhood") is the most important social institution. Endogamy is

widely practiced, often to a degree that would be considered inappropriate in Western society; the preferred marriage for a man within many Pakistani communities is with his father's brother's daughter, and among many other groups marriages are invariably within the baradari. The lineage elders constitute a council that adjudicates disputes within the lineage and acts on behalf of the lineage with the outside world—for example, in determining political allegiances. In contemporary Pakistan, the question of class distinction based on historic patterns of social interaction has become blurred by the tendency to pretend that one has lineage to a nobler ancestor. However, irrespective of the questionable authenticity of a claim to a particular title, the classification of social status persists. Pakistani clothing styles are similar in many ways to those found in India. The shalwar-kamiz combination—a long knee-length shirt (kamiz, camise) over loose-fitting pants

(shalwar)—is the most common traditional form of attire. As a more formal overgarment, men wear a knee-length coat known as a sherwani; women frequently wear a light shawl called a dupatta. Among conservative Muslim communities, women sometimes wear the burqa, a full-length garment that may or may not cover the face. In earlier generations, the fez hat was popular among Muslim men, but more often the woolen, boat-shaped Karakul hat (popularized by Mohammed Ali Jinnah) is associated with Pakistan; however, many other hat styles are worn, especially in tribal areas. Western clothes are popular among the urban young, and combinations of Western and Pakistani styles can be seen in the streets.

Pakistani cuisine also has affinities with that of India. Curry dishes are common, as are a variety of vegetables, including potatoes, eggplant, and okra.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Suki Waterhouse reveals hidden truths of her past in revealing new album

Suki Waterhouse opens up about creative freedom in *Memoir Of A Sparklemuffin*

Suki Waterhouse is set to make waves with her upcoming album, *Memoir Of A Sparklemuffin*, slated for release on September 13.

The 32-year-old singer is ready to dive deep into the 'dark underbelly' of her past relationships and heartbreaks, offering an unfiltered look at her emotional journey.

This 18-track project marks a significant departure from her earlier work, as she addresses personal experiences she previously couldn't share publicly.

In a recent interview, she opened up about the album's semi-autobiographical nature, revealing that it explores themes she'd never discussed before.



The album was completed just five days before the birth of her daughter

with partner Robert Pattinson who she began dating in 2018.

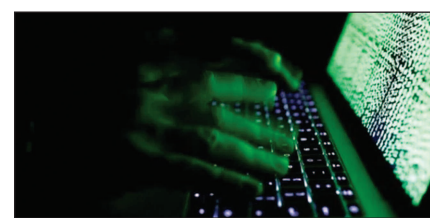
She's doing it with a level of honesty and openness that wasn't present in her earlier work.

In an exclusive interview with *DIY Magazine*, Waterhouse shared that she approached this album from a different mental space, free from the "hang-ups" that surrounded her first record. The singer finds writing autobiographical songs "very appealing," admitted there are still some topics she isn't ready to fully tackle.

One standout track, *Lawsuit*, explores complex and dark themes that she feels might be too sensitive for public discussion.

Tech

'Second trial of firewall with DPI capability' completed in Pakistan



Pakistan completed a second trial run of firewall to block and filter unwanted content on Thursday, according to telecom sources, amid criticism over the internet slowdown in the country. The firewall was installed on internet service providers (ISPs) possessing deep packet inspection (DPI) capability, the sources said adding that the firewall has been installed in view of national security concerns. The telco sources also confirmed that mobile signals and internet services slowed down due to the installation of a new firewall. They claimed that all social media services would return to normal speed in two to three

days after the conclusion of the firewall's trial period. The first trial run was said to be carried out in July which resulted in the slowing down of social media platforms.

The federal government had allocated more than Rs30 billion in the development budget for the acquisition and installation of this filtering system. The allocation was made to the Ministry of Information Technology; however, the execution of this project is being done from another power centre.

However, the adverse impacts after installing the firewall drew criticism from local netizens and digital rights organisations who expressed fear about the future of internet-based businesses in Pakistan. As internet users in Pakistan continue to reel under prevailing access and speed issues, the Wireless and Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan (WISPAP) has blamed the phenomenon on increased security and surveillance whose adverse repercussions might lead to severe economic repercussions.

Pakistan 'confirms' three cases of monkeypox

Health authorities on Friday confirmed that three people have been diagnosed with the monkeypox (Mpox) virus in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the health department in KP, all three patients — including one reported on Thursday — were diagnosed with the virus after recently returning from an Arab country. The confirmation of the first Mpox case in Pakistan this year came days after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the virus a global health emergency of public concern. While Pakistan has had cases of Mpox previously, it is yet to be confirmed which variant was detected in the patients, Reuters reported. Earlier, it was reported that airport surveillance in the country was tightened after the country confirmed its first case of monkeypox in KP's Peshawar and the Border Health Services (BHS)

and provincial authorities have also been put on high alert. Authorities have issued instructions to establish isolation wards in designated hospitals, stocking antiviral medications and ensuring the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers and all healthcare facilities and points of entry. Following the detection, additional samples have also been collected from individuals in close contact with the patient. The Health Ministry has also directed intensified monitoring at all entry points to prevent further cases from entering the country. The country, on Thursday, confirmed its first monkeypox case this year after a resident of Dir, who currently resides in Mardan, tested positive after he returned to Pakistan from a Middle Eastern country on August 3, an official from the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHS,R&C) told the pub-

lication. "Provincial health authorities are now engaged in contact tracing," the official added. The case was confirmed just a day after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the disease a global health emergency of public concern. The case marks the 11th instance of Mpox in Pakistan over the past two years and the first in 2024. Last year, a patient co-infected with HIV and Mpox passed away at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad. In the past year, Pakistan had 10 confirmed Mpox cases, all linked to travellers from the Middle East and other regions. The recurrence of cases among travellers highlights the critical need for rigorous border screening and monitoring. During a special NCOC session, officials noted that around 15 African countries are currently reporting Mpox cases, with 2,030 confirmed infections.



Health

دہلی میں شہر کی طرف

اسلام آباد

حکمر موسمیات کی ملک بھر میں 20 اگست تک موسلا دھار بارشوں کی پیش گوئی

دوران تیز ہواؤں اور گرج چمک کے ساتھ وقفے وقفے سے بارشیں بعض مقامات پر موسلا دھار بارش کا امکان ہے جبکہ جمعہ سے 20 اگست کے دوران شہر میں گرج چمک اور تیز ہواؤں کے ساتھ وقفے وقفے سے بارشیں اور بعض مقامات پر موسلا دھار بارش متوقع ہے۔ جمعہ سے 20 اگست کے دوران اسلام آباد اور پنجاب کے بیشتر مقامات پر تیز ہواؤں اور گرج چمک کے ساتھ وقفے وقفے سے بارش کا امکان ظاہر کیا گیا ہے

ہفتہ 17 اگست 2024ء



لاہور، مسلم لیگ ان کے صدر میاں نواز شریف و ذریعہ اہلی پنجاب مریم نواز کے ہمراہ پریس کانفرنس کر رہے ہیں

غزہ، شہید فلسطینیوں کی تعداد 40 ہزار سے تجاوز کر گئی، اسرائیلی شدت پسندوں نے کئی گھر جلا دیے

مرنے والوں میں 16500 سے اوپر گیارہ ہزار سے زائد خواتین بھی شامل، فلسطینی صدر کا فلسطینی قیادت کے ہمراہ غزہ پہنچ جانے کا اعلان

دعا کیے گئے کہ وہ غزہ میں اسرائیلی شدت پسندوں نے گزشتہ شب مغربی کنارے پر فلسطینیوں کے گھروں پر حملے کیے۔ اسرائیلی میڈیا کے مطابق اسرائیلی شدت پسندوں نے کئی فلسطینیوں کے گھر کو آگ لگا دی جس کے نتیجے میں ایک فلسطینی شہید اور ایک زخمی ہو گیا، غیر ملکی میڈیا رپورٹس کے مطابق اسرائیلی حکام واقعہ کی تحقیقات کر رہے ہیں 92,401 زخمی ہو چکے ہیں، مرنے والوں میں 16500 سے اوپر گیارہ ہزار سے زائد خواتین بھی شامل ہیں جبکہ غزہ، 2.3 ملین افراد میں سے تقریباً 85 فیصد گھر ہو چکے ہیں، جبکہ مغربی کنارے کے بچپ میں پناہ گزینوں پر اسرائیلی ڈرون حملے میں دو فلسطینی شہید اور متعدد زخمی ہوئے جبکہ زخمی شدہ روتو پاس گورنری میں اسرائیلی فوج کے حملے میں پانچ افراد شہید ہوئے۔ سات اکتوبر 2023 کو حماس کی جانب سے کیے گئے حملوں کے دوران اسرائیلی میں 1,139 افراد ہلاک ہوئے تھے جبکہ 200 سے زائد کو بریغمال بنایا گیا تھا۔

500 تک صارفین کیلئے 14 روپے فی یونٹ ریلیف، ملک میں آئی ایم ایف کو کون لایا؟ نواز شریف

جنبل میں بیٹھ کر ہائیں کر کے ان کی آئی ایم ایف کو دہلا رہا ہے مریم نواز اور شہباز شریف کو کہتا ہوں کہ یہ بھگتی کا طوفان ختم کریں، حکومت نے اگست اور ستمبر کے بجلی بلوں میں ریلیف دینے کا فیصلہ کیا ہے مریم نواز کے ہمراہ گفتگو

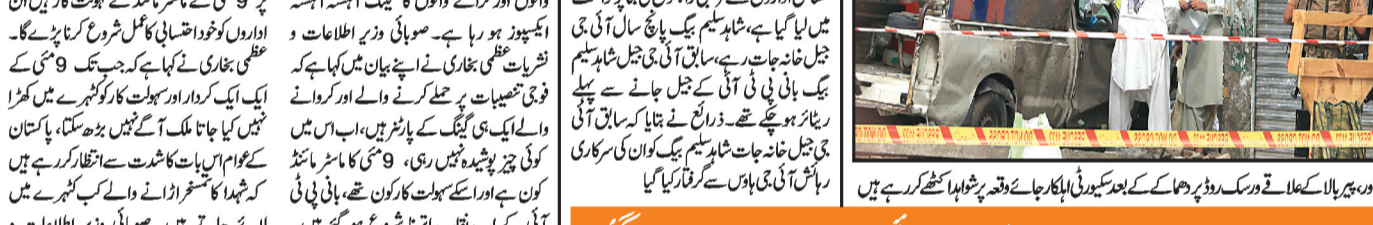
لاہور (بیورو رپورٹ) صدر مسلم لیگ ان میاں نواز شریف نے 500 یونٹ تک بجلی کی قیمتیں متبادل کرنے والوں کیلئے 14 روپے کی ریلیف قرار دے دی ہے، 2017 میں بھگتی کا طوفان ہوا تھا اور بجلی کی قیمتیں 2013 میں ہم سے 100 روپے کو کم کر دی گئی تھیں نواز شریف نے کہا کہ میں آج بھی کہتا ہوں کہ مجھے کیوں نکالا؟ ان کی یہ بات مذاق لگتی ہے، مجھے نکالنے کی کوئی مناسب وجہ تو بتاتے، مجھے اے لے نکالا کہ

غیر ملکی حکومتیں پاکستان کے اندرونی معاملات میں مداخلت سے باز رہیں، دفتر خارجہ

آف شور مرنٹ کے حوالے سے امریکی حکومت کی جانب سے کئی مداخلت فرہم نہیں کی گئی امریکہ کی اس طرح کی مداخلتیں پاکستان کے اندرونی معاملات میں مداخلت سے باز رہیں۔ ترجمان دفتر خارجہ نے ہفتہ وار بریفنگ میں کہا کہ آف شور مرنٹ کے حوالے سے امریکی حکومت کی جانب سے کوئی معلومات فراہم نہیں کی گئی، آف شور مرنٹ کے معاملے پر پاکستان امریکہ کی جانب سے معلومات فراہم کرنے کا منتظر ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ بنگلہ دیش کے لوگوں میں ایسے مسائل حل کرنے کی صلاحیت موجود ہے، پاکستان مشرق وسطیٰ میں بننے والی صورتحال پر توجہ نہیں دے رہا ہے۔ متنازعہ زمینوں کا کہنا تھا کہ ایران کو پناہ دہا کر کے پاکستان کے اندرونی معاملات میں مداخلت سے باز رہیں۔ ترجمان دفتر خارجہ نے کہا کہ امریکہ کی جانب سے معلومات فراہم کرنے کا منتظر ہے۔

وزیر اعظم کا دستور میں پھینے سیاحوں کو ریسکیو کرنے کا حکم

اسلام آباد (دُعا فکڑوسی) وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف نے دستور میں سیلابی ریلے میں سیاحوں کو ریسکیو کرنے کا حکم دے دیا ہے۔



اسلام آباد، وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف قبضہ چتر کے شیبہ کی ترقی کے حوالے سے اجلاس کی صدارت کر رہے ہیں

9 مئی کرنے، کر انیوالا لینگ ایکسپوز ہو رہا ہے، عظمیٰ بخاری

لاہور (بیورو رپورٹ) وزیر اطلاعات پنجاب عظمیٰ بخاری نے کہا ہے کہ 9 مئی کو کر انیوالا لینگ ایکسپوز ہو رہا ہے۔ صوبائی وزیر اطلاعات و شہر ترقی عظمیٰ بخاری نے اپنے بیان میں کہا ہے کہ فوجی تھیمات پر حملے کرنے والے اور کر انیوالا لینگ ایکسپوز ہو رہا ہے، اب اس میں کوئی چیز پوشیدہ نہیں رہی، 9 مئی کا ماسٹر پلان کوئی چیز پوشیدہ نہیں رہی، بانی بی بی آئی کے اب نقاب اترنا شروع ہو گئے ہیں۔ انہوں نے کہا ہے کہ گسٹ شو اور احسان فراہم کرنے کے لیے بانی بی بی آئی کو تیار کرنا ہے۔

گندھ تر فوری دن پیش کش گڈ سٹم سے منسلک 10 میگاواٹ بجلی کی فراہمی شروع

گوار (بیورو رپورٹ) گوار تھ فوری ڈون کو گڈ سٹم سے منسلک کرنے کے لیے 10 میگاواٹ بجلی کی فراہمی شروع کر دی گئی ہے۔

سندھ ہائی کورٹ کا لاپتہ شہریوں کی بازیابی کیلئے کارروائی کا حکم

لاہور (بیورو رپورٹ) سندھ ہائی کورٹ نے لاپتہ شہریوں کی بازیابی کیلئے سندھ ہائی کورٹ کی کارروائی کا حکم دیا ہے۔

پاکستان سے سعودیہ، قطر، برطانیہ، لاطینیامیشیا

لاہور (بیورو رپورٹ) پاکستان کے مختلف اہل پیشہ سے سعودیہ، قطر، برطانیہ اور لاطینیامیشیا مہلک کرنے کی کوششیں ناکام بنا دی گئیں۔

خیبر پختونخوا میں بی بی آئی کی وکٹیں گرنے شروع، عدلیاں

اسلام آباد (صاف رپورٹ) خیبر پختونخوا میں بی بی آئی کی وکٹیں گرنے شروع ہو گئیں۔ اسلام آباد سپریم کورٹ میں میڈیا سے گفتگو کرتے ہوئے رینما حکمران لیگ، ادیب چوہدری کا کہنا تھا کہ کئی سالوں میں بی بی آئی کی وکٹیں گرنے لگی ہیں۔

بگلا دیش، طلباء نے شیخ مجیب کی برسی منانے سے روک دیا، میوزیم بند

کھینڈ کے ماحول کے احتجاج کو روکنے کیلئے نکلے ہیں کیونکہ برسی کے دوران ترک بحریہ کے ساتھ دہلی میں شیخ مجیب کی برسی منانے سے روک دیا گیا ہے۔

نئے لائسنس لینے والے دیکھا ہاری نرسریاں ہیں، چیف جسٹس

لاہور (بیورو رپورٹ) چیف جسٹس نے نئے لائسنس لینے والے دیکھا ہاری نرسریاں ہیں کی اطلاع دی ہے۔

مسئلہ کشمیر حل کرنے کیلئے ہمیں اپنی خارجہ پالیسی پر نظر ثانی کرنا ہوگی، پیر مظہر سعید

لاہور (بیورو رپورٹ) پیر مظہر سعید نے کہا ہے کہ کشمیر مسئلہ کو حل کرنے کے لیے ہمیں اپنی خارجہ پالیسی پر نظر ثانی کرنا ہوگی۔

اسلام آباد، پاکستان کے 77 ویں آزادی کے موقع پر پوسٹل ٹیکسٹ کیلئے کارروائی کا آغاز

اسلام آباد، پاکستان کے 77 ویں آزادی کے موقع پر پوسٹل ٹیکسٹ کیلئے کارروائی کا آغاز کیا گیا ہے۔

اسلام آباد، پاکستان کے 77 ویں آزادی کے موقع پر پوسٹل ٹیکسٹ کیلئے کارروائی کا آغاز

اسلام آباد، پاکستان کے 77 ویں آزادی کے موقع پر پوسٹل ٹیکسٹ کیلئے کارروائی کا آغاز کیا گیا ہے۔

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Revival of economy govt's topmost priority; Rana Mashhood

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that the revival of the economy was the priority of the government and efforts were underway to address this challenge.

Talking to the media here on Friday, Rana said that PMYP in collaboration with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) was equipping young individuals with both high-tech and conventional skills to empower them for future opportunities.

He informed that as many as 1.5 million youngsters would be trained to get employment abroad stating, "Our goal is to ensure that every young Pakistani has the skills necessary to succeed in today's competitive landscape. By focusing on both high-tech and traditional skill development, we aim to enhance employment prospects and foster economic growth."

Referring to the recent maiden visit of Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt Patricia Scotland to Pakistan, he said that the mutual interest between Pakistan and the Commonwealth will help promote cooperation in various fields of youth development programmes.

Muhammad Nawaz Sharif declares Rs14 per unit relief for Punjab's electricity consumers



ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has said that Punjab government will provide relief of fourteen rupees per unit to consumers using up to 500 units of electricity in August and September bills.

Talking to media along with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in Lahore on Friday, he said forty-five billion rupees have been allocated to provide relief to consumers in this regard.

Nawaz Sharif said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz are focused on providing facilities to the oppressed segments of society.

He said Punjab government has also allocated seven hundred billion rupees for a solar program aimed at providing relief to middle class. SABA



KARACHI: Secretary U&B Noor Ahmad Samoo, CEO Tech Valley Umar Farooq, and the vice-chancellor of the public sector university sign an MOU for allocating 1000 scholarships in Google Career Certificates. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman HEC Prof. Tariq Rafi, and others witnessed the ceremony at CM House. APP

UN chief urges immediate 'Polio pause' in war-hit Gaza as Palestinians agonize

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Friday called for warring parties in Gaza to lay down their arms so that humanitarian workers can safely vaccinate more than half a million children against polio.

"I am appealing to all parties to provide concrete assurances right away guaranteeing humanitarian pauses for the campaign," he said, speaking to reporters at UN Headquarters in New York.

"Let's be clear: The ultimate vaccine for polio is peace and an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. But in any case, a Polio Pause is a must."

The UN chief described Gaza as being in "a humanitarian freefall" because "just when it seems the situation could not get worse for Palestinians in Gaza, the suffering grows — and the world watches."

Poliovirus was recently detected in sewage samples in two locations, Khan Younis and Deir Al-Balah, meaning that the disease — which can cause paralysis — is circulating in the enclave and putting thousands of children at risk.

"Polio does not care about dividing lines — and polio does not wait," he said.

Starting at the end of the month, the UN is set to launch a two-phase campaign to vaccinate more than 640,000 children in Gaza under the

"I am appealing to all parties to provide concrete assurances right away guaranteeing humanitarian pauses for the campaign," he said, speaking to reporters at UN Headquarters in New York

age of 10.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has already approved the release of 1.6 million doses of the polio vaccine and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is coordinating delivery efforts and the cold chain equipment needed for storage.

Meanwhile, medical teams from the UN Palestine refugee agency, UNRWA — the largest primary healthcare provider in Gaza — are ready to administer the vaccines and assist with logistics.

Guterres outlined the grave challenges these efforts face.

He said Gaza's health, water and sanitation systems "have been decimated", most hospitals and primary care facilities are not functional, and people are constantly forced to

run to seek safety.

Furthermore, routine immunizations have been severely disrupted due to the conflict, thus increasing the spread of measles, hepatitis A and other preventable diseases.

"We know how an effective polio vaccination campaign must be administered," he said. "Given the wholesale devastation in Gaza, at least 95 per cent vaccination coverage will be needed during each round of the two-round campaign to prevent polio's spread and reduce its emergence."

The campaign will involve 708 teams at hospitals and primary healthcare centres, he said, again noting that many are barely functioning, and 316 community outreach teams throughout Gaza.

It requires effective transport routes for the vaccines and cold chain equipment, the entry of polio experts into Gaza and fuel so that health teams can carry out their work.

Reliable internet and phone services for communications outreach, and an increase in the amount of cash allowed into Gaza to pay health workers, are also needed. "Above all, a successful polio vaccination campaign needs safety," the UN chief said. "Safety for health workers to do their jobs. Safety for children and families to get to the health facilities. And safety for those health facilities to be protected from bombardment." APP

Pakistan, Russia relations on a positive trajectory

ISLAMABAD: The bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Russian Federation are forging ahead on an upward trajectory, with both nations actively exploring multifaceted cooperation opportunities in sectors such as trade, energy, and diplomacy," said Sehar Kamran, Member of National Assembly, on Friday.



"Whether in trade, energy, or diplomatic engagements, the relationship between Pakistan and Russia is strengthening across all dimensions. Both countries possess vast untapped potential for collaboration. Russia is a major energy exporter, and Pakistan can benefit from its oil and gas resources. Similarly, Pakistan can provide regional connectivity and trade corridors to Russia," she said, talking to media.

Sehar Kamran, who has represented Pakistan at numerous international forums in Russia, including BRICS, SCO Women Congress, IPU Assembly, and others in recent years, noted that the past two decades have seen a significant enhancement in Pak-Russian diplomatic ties, driven by consistent high-level interactions.

She referred to a congratulatory letter from the Russian Ambassador in Islamabad, Albert Khorev, on Independence Day, which read: "The Russian Federation attaches great importance to its relations with Pakistan, and I am confident that their steadfast and consistent development serves the best interests of both our peoples. I appreciate your important and constructive role in our bilateral engagements."

"It underscores our strong friendship... It was truly heartening to see the colors of the Pakistani flag illuminated in Moscow. This reflects the deepening bilateral ties and the strong bond of friendship between our two nations," she said in her reciprocal letter to the envoy.

On her X timeline, Sehar Kamran also responded to a congratulatory video message by the Russian ambassador on Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, in which she reaffirmed her commitment to continuous efforts for stronger bilateral relations, emphasizing the potential for deeper collaboration in various fields. Ambassador Albert Khorev said in his message, "Russia and Pakistan have already been friends throughout the years, and I am sure that we will see our already robust and fruitful relations reach new heights and help both our countries thrive. Pakistan is home to incredibly talented, hardworking, and open-hearted people, and I am confident that they are the nation's greatest asset."

The PPP parliamentarian, also the recipient of the Russian State Award in recognition of her efforts to promote bilateral relations, mentioned last year's visit of former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to Russia and high-level interactions, which instilled new impetus into bilateral ties.

Calling it a stepping stone in bilateral ties, she mentioned the shipment of Russian crude oil to Pakistan and said that Pakistan was also outlining a process to open barter trade with neighboring countries of Russia, Iran, and Afghanistan. APP

Malaysia seeks high-tech industrial cooperation with Pakistan," Syafik Firdaus

ISLAMABAD: Speaking at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Syafik Firdaus Hasbullah, Deputy Head of Mission for Malaysia, called for increased cooperation between Pakistan and Malaysia in defense and security, science and technology, renewable energy, and climate change besides education, culture, and people to people contact.

He noted that Malaysian exports to Pakistan had mainly focused on the agricultural sector, textiles, and chemical products, with less emphasis on high-tech industry cooperation.

While identifying the core areas of cooperation between the two countries, he stressed the need for improving the quality of products to meet the competitive demands. Hasbullah added that the Malaysian government was prepared to assist Pakistan in improving the quality of its goods, including providing training and guidance to Pakistani businessmen through the Malaysian Technological Cooperation Program (MTCP).

He specifically mentioned that since the establishment of MTCP in 1980, more than 700 people from Pakistan have benefitted from MTCP courses which include Islamic tourism, anti-corruption, counterterrorism, palm oil industry,

Islamic finance, technical training, and the halal industry, he added.

During his presentation, he highlighted the progress in the Pakistan-Malaysia bilateral relationship since its inception in 1957, emphasizing cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, education, health, and science and technology. Hasbullah also expressed the view that the current bilateral trade volume of around 1.78 billion dollars does not reflect the strong bond between the two countries and its people, and therefore, both countries need to work on high tech industrial cooperation between the two countries, he added.

"Being a sectoral dialogue partner of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Pakistan has significant opportunities to collaborate with Malaysia, and other members of the organization," he emphasized. He noted that following the Free Trade Agreement, Malaysian palm oil exports to Pakistan surged, alongside imports from Pakistan of agricultural products, textiles, apparel, footwear, fresh or frozen seafood, chemicals, and other manufactured goods, he said. The event drew a large gathering, including foreign diplomats, government officials, academics, journalists, and students. DNA

All religious communities enjoying complete freedom in Pakistan: Governor Sindh

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori on Friday said that all religious communities in Pakistan were enjoying full freedom to practice their faith. However, the nation is currently facing numerous challenges.

He expressed these views while addressing the International Interfaith Peace Conference held at the Governor's House.

The conference was titled "Respect for Humanity, Violence-Free Society, Inter-faith and Intra-faith Harmony, and the Paigham-e-Pakistan."

The event was attended by the Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Pakistan, Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad, leaders from various religions, and other distinguished guests.

Governor Sindh stressed the need to foster interfaith and intra-faith harmony. He further stated that societal attitudes must change to achieve this goal.

Governor Kamran Khan Tessori congratulated the organizers on the successful conduct of the conference, calling it a commendable effort deserving of high praise. APP

Ayaz Sadiq, Punjab Governor discuss matters of mutual interest

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Governor of Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan Friday discussed parliamentary affairs and other matters of mutual interest.

During the meeting, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq extended his best wishes to Governor Saleem Haider, according to a news release.

The Speaker said that the National Assembly was committed to addressing the country's challenges and promoting the welfare of the people through effective legislation.

He also underscored the importance of fostering harmony and communication between the provinces and the federal government, stating that such coordination is vital for the nation's development and prosperity.

Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider, expressed his gratitude to the Speaker for his



well-wishes and commended him for his impartial and efficient conduct of the Assembly's proceedings.

He acknowledged the significance of effective legislation in steering the country towards progress and praised the Parliament's efforts in passing laws aimed at public welfare. APP

Korean ambassador stresses boosting trade with Pakistan

SIALKOT: Ambassador Park Ki Jun of the Republic of Korea has called on Sialkot exporters to seize opportunities in Korea's international trade markets to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and Korea.

He made these remarks during a meeting with exporters at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Friday. The meeting was attended by Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President of SCCI; Wahub Jahangir, Senior Vice President (SVP) of SCCI; Yeonjeong Yoo, Assistant Public Diplomacy Officer; and members of the Sialkot business community.

In his address, Ambassador Park highlighted Korea's strong interest in deepening trade and economic ties with Pakistan, emphasizing the potential of Pakistan as a significant market for business. He proposed further promoting bilateral trade through the exchange of trade delegations and expressed his commitment to strengthening trade relations between the two countries. Ambassador Park also stressed the importance of enhancing people-to-people contacts between Korean and Pakistani business communities. He underscored that economic cooperation between Korea and Pakistan is crucial for boosting trade ties and noted the cordial relationship enjoyed by both nations.

The ambassador praised Sialkot for its role as a key export hub in Pakistan and recognised its

contributions to the national economy and infrastructure development. He expressed enthusiasm for exploring new opportunities for collaboration between South Korea and Sialkot, promising full support in facilitating business matchmaking for delegates visiting South Korea. Ambassador Park lauded the unique export culture of Sialkot and the self-help-driven socio-economic development achieved by its exporters. He also showed interest in the SCCI documentary "Sialkot, the City of Progressive People," which was screened during the meeting. In his remarks, President Abdul Ghafoor Malik described Ambassador Park's visit as a testament to the enduring relationship between Pakistan and Korea. He highlighted that 2023 marks the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, emphasizing the milestone as a commitment to future growth and cooperation.

President Malik noted that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Korea currently stands at USD 1.77 billion and expressed optimism about increasing this figure. He suggested that exchanging trade delegations could create new business opportunities and collaborations.

Malik also mentioned plans for a Sialkot delegation to visit South Korea later this year and requested support for visa processing and business matchmaking events. APP

Tajikistan Embassy hosts Pakistan Roadshow for tourism opportunities



ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Tajikistan in Islamabad hosted the event entitled "Tajikistan — Pakistan Roadshow" to present tourism opportunities here on Friday.

The event was attended by Tajikistan's Ambassador, Yusuf Sharifzoda, management of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, representatives of travel agencies of

Tajikistan, and 150 representatives of the tourism sector of Pakistan, a news release said.

The management of almost seventy travel companies and tour operators, airlines, local media, television and radio, as well as the employees of diplomatic missions of Central Asian countries were also present. Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of

Turkmenistan to Pakistan and Dean of Diplomatic Corps, specially attended the event.

The Tajik delegation presented the tourism potential of their country to the participants of the event. Moreover, ten memorandums of cooperation were inked with Pakistani tourism companies, which were simultaneously invited to the

Travel Market in Tajikistan, scheduled for late September 2024.

The General Director of Somon Travel LLC Umedjon Saidzoda said that those present were able to learn about the tourist attractions and opportunities in Tajikistan. He said that future of tourism in Tajikistan is bright. Saidzoda further said they are proud of their country's success in the international arena.

He said that from August 8 through August 15, representatives of several travel agencies of Tajikistan visited Pakistan, as well as held business meetings with central and regional public and private structures of the tourism sector in the country.

The meetings focused on issues of tourism development, development of joint projects, arranging of mutual info tours for travel companies, bloggers, media representatives, conducting joint tours in the region, as well as organizing courses on hospitality and provision of tourism services.

In conclusion, all participants were presented with mementos, brochures and catalogs about tourist places and attractions of Tajikistan. APP