



Entire nation stands united with its forces in the war against terrorism

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

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Provinces should follow Center, Punjab to ensure substantive relief to masses: Tarar



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Monday brushed aside the undue criticism about relief initiative of Federal and Punjab governments in power bills, and called upon other provinces to follow suit for ensuring instant relief to the masses during summer season.

Talking to the media, he said it was the foremost priority of the government to provide substantive relief to the masses, reduce price of the electricity and bring down the inflation in the country. "Provision of the relief to the people by the federal and Punjab governments during the summer season is a good move which should be welcomed by all," he added.

He said the federal government had already given upto Rs 5 per unit relief to all the protected and non-protected consumers in three months' electricity bills (June to August) with a generous allocation of a subsidy of 50 billion rupees.

Tarar pointed out that all those consumers who used upto 200 units of the electricity per month, had already received the relief across the country.

Likewise, the Punjab government allocated Rs 45 billion from its own funds to give subsidy to those who were using 200 units to 500 units per month. Cumulatively, the relief initiatives of both the governments did provide the much-needed relief to the masses, he said, adding now it was up to other provincial governments to take identical steps to ensure relief for the masses.

He said these relief steps ought to be fully appreciated and called for discarding criticism to work together for collective welfare and betterment of people.

He said the federal government had taken optimum measures to pass on substantial relief to the masses in the given circumstances and available resources. Similarly, it was prerogative of the Punjab government to take relief initiative for its residents, he added.

The minister said the government was fully committed to improving the living standards of people, citing the recent significant reduction in the petroleum prices on the eve of August 14 on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He said advertisements have been published in the newspapers to privatize the electricity distribution companies while a crackdown against the power theft was already underway. A Task Force has been formed to find out a long-term solution for reducing the electricity prices, he added.

Substantive steps and measures had been taken to contain the inflation, he said, highlighting its marked reduction from 23 per cent to 11 per cent. He expressed the confidence that the government's pragmatic approach and people-friendly policies would further curb inflationary trend in the country. APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding the review of ongoing projects of Information Technology, digitization and steps to increase IT exports.

PM views completion of IT Park Islamabad as milestone to achieve \$25 bn export mark

PM Shehbaz orders 50% Public cargo shift to Gwadar Port

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the completion of Information Technology Park project in Islamabad would help boost country's exports in this sector and prove as significant milestone in achieving \$25 billion IT exports target. The prime minister, while chairing a meeting to review the ongoing projects of Information Technology, digitization and steps to increase IT exports, termed the progress on IT project in Islamabad as satisfactory. He further directed for taking steps to reduce its completion time-frame after consultation with the Korean experts, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State for IT Shazia Fatima Khawaja, Deputy Chairman Planning Jehanzaib Khan, PM's Coordinators Malik Mukhtar Bharath, Rana Ahsan Afzal and relevant senior officials.

The meeting was apprised that work on the IT park project was in full swing and the Korean company had reset its completion date to February 2025 from earlier June 2025. The Capital Development Authority's (CDA) teams were regularly visiting and monitoring the project site. The meeting was further

briefed over the digital smart cities and the commencement of its pilot project from Islamabad, which would enable the residents of the city to get easy access to 150 government's services through City Super Application.

Through this mobile application, the governmental and administrative services including CDA, Islamabad Police, health and educational services would be made available.

The prime minister said that the citizens should be encouraged to use mobile application for availing of the government's services. The meeting was also apprised of the IT sector performance over the past five months. Under the government's steps, IT exports saw a growth of 30 percent when compared with the figures in the last year.

A total of 300,000 students had been registered to get training in IT skills programmes while four new incubation centers had been set up. Under the government's steps, the manufacturing of mobile phones in the country saw a surge by 30 percent whereas the number of its users had increased by further 800,000. Under the prime minister's vision, all the relevant institutions and departments were collectively working on different projects to take Pakistan's IT exports to \$25 billion mark. The meeting was briefed over investment in IT projects and the phased wise increase in IT exports. With government's

investment of \$77 million in IT sector, an increase in IT exports upto \$25 billion was expected. About \$13 billion foreign reserves from government's steps in IT exports, \$10 billion from country's digital transformation and \$2 billion foreign reserves in telecom sector were expected, the meeting was told.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday explicitly instructed the concerned authorities to bring 50 percent of all public sector cargo inland via sea through Gwadar port. Shehbaz issued these directives while chairing a review meeting on Chinese investment in Islamabad, where he was briefed on the Chinese experts' delegation visit to Pakistan from July 30 to August 6, 2024.

The forum was told that the Chinese delegation met with representatives from various ministries, who offered suggestions to enhance cooperation in their respective fields. The visit resulted in significant progress in cooperation and investment across trade, energy, agriculture, information technology, communication, and infrastructure. The forum was informed that the Chinese delegation engaged with top leaders of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry during their visit. It was briefed that Chinese experts would be enlisted for technology transfer, removing non-trade barriers, and boosting the country's exports.

Three soldiers martyred in gun battle with terrorists along Pak-Afghan border

Five terrorists were killed while trying to infiltrate Pakistan via Afghan border in KP's Bajaur, says ISPR



RAWALPINDI: Three soldiers embraced martyrdom in a gun battle with terrorists who were trying to infiltrate Pakistan via Afghanistan border near Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) district Bajaur, the Inter-Security Public Relation (ISPR) said on Monday. A statement issued by the military's media wing said that the security forces noticed the movement of a group of terrorists trying to breach the Pak-Afghan border on the night between August 18 and 19.

"Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. Resultantly, five khwarij of Fitna al Khwarij were sent to hell, while four khwarij got injured," the ISPR said. It said that the Pakistani soldiers fought gallantly and embraced martyrdom.

The soldiers, who embraced martyrdom were identified as Sepoy Waqar Khan, 25, Lance Naik Umer Hayat, 35, and Naik Inayat Khan, 36.

The ISPR stated that Pakistan has been consistently asking the interim government in Afghanistan to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. "Interim Afghan government is expected to fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan," it said, adding that the security forces of Pakistan remain committed to secure its borders and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

On Friday, three terrorists were killed by the security forces during an intelligence-based operation in KP's area of Razmak, the ISPR said.

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

Finance Minister reiterates the commitment to facilitate investors

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has reiterated the commitment to facilitate investors and ensure a stable and conducive business environment in the country.

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb was speaking during a virtual meeting with President of Mashreq Bank Ahmed Abdelaal on Monday. Minister of State for Finance Ali Parvez Malik was also present on the occasion.

The Minister appreciated Mashreq Bank's interest in Pakistan's financial landscape and expressed Pakistan's keen interest to re-engage with Mashreq Bank.

He underscored the significant potential for investment in Pakistan's IT and agriculture sectors, calling for increased investment from both local and international investors to drive economic growth.

The Minister provided an overview of the economic outlook of the country and mentioned the recent improvements in the macroeconomic indicators and stability of the currency and financial markets.

He also mentioned the economic policies and initiatives of the government to stabilize the macroeconomic environment and enhance investor's confidence through broadening the tax base, improving the ease of doing business, digitalization of FBR and reforms.

The President of Mashreq Bank, appreciated the policies and initiatives of the government and expressed Mashreq Bank's interest in deepening its engagement with Pakistan in financial sector.

Noting that Pakistan is one of the most strategic markets for investment opportunities, he discussed the potential areas for investment including infrastructure, energy, technology, agriculture, and Small and Medium Enterprises. SABAH

PTI doing its utmost to weaken Pakistan: Musadik Malik



ISLAMABAD: Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik on Monday said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was acting on an anti-state agenda.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that

the party has been involved in efforts to weaken the country through various tactics, including the events of May 9 and a targeted social media campaign.

He further claimed that PTI has been engaging in lobbying against Pakistan, even hiring lobbyists in foreign countries to serve their agenda. He also mentioned the "cipher controversy," alleging that it was used as a tool to destabilize the country.

"The aim of these maneuvers is to illegitimately seize power," Malik said. He said that those who have sought to weaken Pakistan economically and politically have been rejected by the people of the country. APP

Iraq lauds Pakistan's counter-terrorism sacrifices



RAWALPINDI: Secretary of Defence of Iraq Lieutenant General Ahmed Dawood Salman called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi. Matters of bilateral interests including, emerging security environment and enhancement of security and defence cooperation between the two countries were discussed during the meeting.

The visiting dignitary commended the professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged the sacrifices rendered by people and Armed Forces of Pakistan in the war against terrorism. PR

Shaza, British High Commissioner discuss matters of mutual interest

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shazia Fatima Khawaja and British High Commissioner to Pakistan Ms. Jane Marriott called on Monday discussed matters of mutual interest, IT and Telecommunication, digitalization and cybersecurity.

According to news release the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in IT and Telecom sector.

Shazia Fatima apprised the British High Commissioner about Smart Islamabad project. She said the present government is taking steps for digitalization in the country. She said women empowerment is included in



priorities, adding Ministry of IT is committed for ending digital gender divide in the country. British High Commissioner Jane Marriott said UK wanted to boost cooperation with Pakistan in the field of IT and Telecommunication.

The meeting was also attended by Director General International Coordination Syed Jawwad Ali Sherazi. APP

Romina for mobilizing resources to introduce Urban Environmental Initiatives, AE sources in rural areas

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khursheed Alam on Monday stated that she was mobilizing resources for ongoing projects by engaging bilateral and multilateral donors as well as major banks to introduce Urban Environmental Initiatives and alternate energy sources in rural areas of Pakistan. She made these remarks during a meeting with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) delegation here at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, a news release said.

In view of proactive communication and coordination, the PM's aide emphasized on setting up a dashboard that would also be linked with



PM office, to review the progress and address the challenges to ensure fast tracking the projects & achieve objectives.

To battle against air pollution, the Ministry is kicking off Montreal Protocol Project nationwide in collaboration with UNDP that would fix out ozone and Hydro Chloro floro carbon (HCFC). This project is funded by Multilateral Fund Secretariat with budget worth \$594,748 and would be completed in 2027.

The meeting also discussed the GLOF-II project which was focusing on 10 districts of Gilgit-Baltistan and 08 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with budget worth \$37 million being funded by Green Climate Fund (GCF). This project is aimed to reduce flood risks and 696,000 community members are direct beneficiaries of the project.

To combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gases emissions, the ministry is also initiating a fresh project

"Promotion and Application of Sustainable Biomass Energy Technologies (PASBET) in the country with cost US\$ 28,724,726. This project will be completed in 2028.

To promote environmental sustainability and building climate resilience at both national and sub-national levels the ministry is working on its flagship "Climate Resilience Program". This climate promise initiative aims to enhance cooperation and resilience among local and regional stakeholders to address climate change threats and risks.

The meeting also discussed "Global Shield Against Climate Risks" Project that was aimed to increase protection for vulnerable people by providing and facilitating substantially more and better pre-arranged finance against disasters.

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Pakistan at the UN

DR TAIMUR SHAMIL

The United Nations is the platform where nations around the world gather to deliberate and work on possible solutions to the most pressing global issues related to security and cooperation for world peace. On the one hand, the UN has shown effectiveness and influence in resolving key issues, while on the other hand, it has faced multiple challenges and criticism. Pakistan's position at the UN has been steady and effective in many ways, and the country has significantly contributed in maintaining peace around the world through the UN platforms. However, with shifting global scenarios, and the emergence of a multipolar world order, Pakistan essentially needs to revamp and reconfigure its position to enhance its standing and influence at the UN. The UN is a construct of various bodies and mechanisms which come together to provide platforms to the member states. Over the years, it has evolved into an influential body. This change is directly proportional to the various political transformations that have taken place

Pakistan's position at the UN has been steady and effective in many ways

in the regions around the globe. New players have emerged at the UN who were possibly not as effective earlier as they are now. Middle Eastern states like the UAE, Qatar, Oman, and other countries like Turkiye, have created substantial diplomatic space for themselves. China, Russia and India are also navigating new ways through which they can enhance their prestige at the global stage. In this backdrop, Pakistan finds itself in an environment that is both challenging and promising. In order to enhance its global standing at the UN and to keep pace with the global and regional competition, Pakistan needs to focus on a few key areas. The first is to enhance its diplomatic engagement. Strengthening bilateral relations is at the heart of multilateralism. Relations can be strengthened in various ways – economic, financial and diplomatic. The most innovative and effective way to enhance the diplomatic clout is through active participation in UN committees and bodies. UN committees are forums where significant issues are discussed by inviting key members and likeminded states. Arranging an event at the UN is one thing, but to make it effective is a different ball game altogether. Pakistan must focus on spearheading effective events that can reassert its foreign policy agenda at the UN. Effectiveness must be measured through the endorsements Pakistan garners through likeminded states and diplomatic alliances. Often it is observed that financial restraints are given as an apology for not being able to arrange effective events. That might be partially true, but innovative and out-of-the-box thinking coupled with proactive diplomacy can deliver efficient results. It's not only money, as generally perceived, but homework, prior arrangements and a well-thought-out plan that bring the desired results. The UAE, Qatar and Turkiye along with the UK must be taken as case studies for committee-oriented effectiveness. Moreover, Pakistan must devise its own unique and inimitable UN strategy. Second is leveraging regional issues. In the last two decades, Pakistan has played an effective role in regional peace and security. Pakistan, along with Qatar, played a significant role in bringing the Afghan Taliban and the US to the talks table. This helped the US in ending its longest and costliest war in Afghanistan. This crucial diplomatic role played by Pakistan must be reaffirmed by bringing it at UN events. Pakistan must champion regional stability and security at the UN and the regional level. The country's strategic location and diplomatic maneuvering has helped key stakeholders in the region to address a complex issue like Afghanistan. Moreover, Pakistan must bring up the issue of terrorism originating from Afghanistan. It is crucial to realize that countries don't grow alone but that regions grow, and it is time for the global and regional community to assist Pakistan in addressing the issue of terrorism in Afghanistan. The UN has a diverse landscape. It has evolved over the years. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and the civil society play a key role in managing this environment. Therefore, it is important that multiple stakeholders should be reached to foster Pakistan's case at the UN. Additionally, multilateralism is the key. It is a game of consistency, coordination and hard work. An annual speech at the UN will not bring results, unless there is prior hard work done to support it. Diplomacy at the UN requires consistent effort to communicate with a relevant and consistent communication strategy. Pakistan must identify key issues that can resonate with the global community and share global and regional issues. Lastly, the power of storytelling in the digital age is crucial for states to garner global audience and alliances. Pakistan must utilize the UN's platforms to project its stories of resilience, counterterrorism, efforts regarding climate change, and how young people are driving positive change in areas like technology and science. Projecting Pakistan's image at the UN is not just about managing public perception but also about growing its influence globally through effective diplomacy and proactive engagement.

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Shaukat Javed

A gold medal – and a scramble for glory

Arshad Nadeem's feat in the Paris Olympics was winning a gold medal for Pakistan and setting an Olympic record in javelin throw with the longest throw by any male javelin thrower in the current season. After this marvelous success, a host of stakeholders are now vying for credit for this achievement. Videos are being made and chits are being handed over to him to give credit to certain individuals and organizations. The facts are far from what is being shown and told to the public. Arshad Nadeem's journey started from the local games where he excelled and for which he was trained and escorted by his teacher Abdul Rasheed Saqi. He was spotted and recruited by Wapda in 2015 in grade 11. As described by former chairman Wapda Lt-Gen (r) Muzammal, "Wapda sports board, having seen his potential, groomed him to win [a] bronze medal in [the] Asian junior athletics championship 2016 in Vietnam; he again won a bronze medal at the Asian Games 2018 in Jakarta, Indonesia. A year later he set a new national record [at the] Pakistan National Games at Peshawar. "During [the] Tokyo Olympics 2020, Arshad became [the] first Pakistani track and field athlete to qualify for the Olympics where he ranked fifth and was elevated to pay grade 18 by his department." During this period, his coach was Fiaz Husain Bokhari who worked hard to improve his distance from 60 to 80 meters. The government of Pakistan at that time awarded Arshad Rs2.5 million as a reward. In the beginning of 2022, Arshad was trained in South Africa under the supervision of an internationally acclaimed coach Terseus Liebenberg. The training was arranged by the Athletic Federation of Pakistan (AFP). Later in the same year he won two successive gold medals at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and at the Konya Islamic Solidarity Games, setting new records for both the games. He became the first South Asian athlete to breach the 90-meter mark. At this juncture, Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) secured an elite athlete scholarship for him of \$2500 per quarter from the International Olympic Committee (IOC). He also earned a cash reward of Rs5 mil-

lion from the government of Pakistan along with the president's award of Pride of Performance. In late 2022, Arshad developed an elbow and knee injury but was treated at Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital by the AFP. Arshad continued his success journey by winning a silver medal at the 2023 World Athletics Championship in Budapest. This was Pakistan's first ever medal at such a competition. Later in the same year, he again developed a knee injury during the Pakistan National Games at Quetta. The next target was the Paris Summer Olympics 2024 and by now it was amply clear that Arshad had the potential to win the first ever gold medal for Pakistan in the field and track events. His parent department Wapda, Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), AFP and POA all started paying more attention towards his treatment and training needs. Salman Iqbal Butt was appointed as his coach; he approached Dr Ali Sher Bajwa in the UK for his treatment. Dr Bajwa treated Arshad with special exercises, minimally invasive and stem cell techniques and supervised his rehabilitation sessions. He performed all these jobs voluntarily and remained available till the Paris Olympics. His coach remained attached to him with a mission to achieve glory. Arshad was trained for months at Lahore in a training camp preparing for the big event, while the PSB started funding his participation in major international events to improve his confidence and skills. For an athlete of Arshad's stature, all the above-stated measures were peanuts from international standards. Athletes of his standing receive years of training from acclaimed coaches on scientific lines, paying attention to their physical fitness, diet, mental strength and training equipment. Their financial needs are also kept in view. Arshad's archrival Neeraj Chopra from India, who was enrolled in the Indian army and now holds the rank of sub-major, received substantial financial support from the Indian government and corporates making his impressive net worth of around \$4.5 million as compared to Arshad Nadeem's modest net worth of less than Rs3 crores before the Paris Olympics. Pakistan lacks proper infrastructure and equipment also. As a member of the organizing committee of the Pakistan National Games Quetta in 2023, I discovered that we did not have electronic time keeping and distance measuring equipment for field and track events and were using obsolete manual watches and tapes. Reportedly, this equipment was hired at the time of the SAF Games in Islamabad in 2004 and later it was not procured by the concerned authorities. And so Arshad's victory at the Paris Olympics was primarily his unwavering determination and resilience in overcoming such adversities and with the support of his coach and doctor who groomed him, trained him, and kept him physically and mentally fit. There are many other problems faced by Pakistan sports. Painfully, the POA and AFP have not been on good terms from the time when three Pakistani medal winners' athletes at the South Asian Federation (SAF) Games Nepal in 2019 tested positive in dope tests and their medals had to be returned. The AFP's refusal to participate in an enquiry proceeding initiated by the POA in this regard resulted in its suspension and disaffiliation. This tussle has immensely harmed athletes of field and track events. It is time fences are mended, and normalcy restored. Another misconception is the prevailing perception that the POA is responsible for the declining standards of sports in the country when in fact, the POA is not responsible for the development and promotion of sports. The POA represents the IOC and is responsible for the preservation and promotion of Olympic movement in Pakistan. It doesn't take funds from the government of Pakistan and is not answerable to it. The job of the POA is to coordinate between Pakistan and the IOC. It helps Pakistan's teams and athletes to participate in international sports events. It also arranges IOC scholarships for Pakistani athletes, umpires and other officials for the improvement of their standards and skills. The POA gets the international games allocated to Pakistan and then it is the responsibility of the government and the PSB to develop infrastructure for holding them in a befitting manner. The POA got the SAF Games allocated in Pakistan for a third time in 2019 but due to lack of interest on the part of the government, no tangible progress for holding these games is in sight. In the past also, Pakistan declined to hold the Asian Games in 1970 and the Islamic Solidarity Games in 1997 when these were allocated to it. The development and promotion of sports in the country is primarily the job of federal and provincial sports boards as is mentioned in the PSB's mandate: "to make public sports conscious and encourage their participation in national and international competitions and to encourage promote and undertake all such measures as would assist in the development of sports in Pakistan". Apart from the federal and provincial sports boards, sports development and promotion is also the responsibility of the respective sports federations of various disciplines. Unfortunately, due to the paucity of funds and lack of popularity of some sports, the necessary sponsorship is not available. The government's grants to these federations through sports boards are so meagre that even a national level competition cannot be arranged. The Pakistan Cricket Board is the only sports organization that is self-sufficient in this regard and doesn't require any financial assistance from the government. The basic ingredient for the development of sports is its promotion at the grassroots and elite level. To develop Olympic-class athletes, there must be a large pool of healthy nationally competitive athletes competing for the slots at the university and high school levels. Elite level excellence requires specialized training and preparation. There are great advances in techniques, equipment, coaching, sports sciences and facilities that are made possible by the amount of funding the government is willing to invest in sports. Multinationals and the corporate sector can be involved to fulfill their corporate social responsibility. A strategy to generate private-sector funding, especially of sports industry for major events, federations' leagues and tournaments, and a plan to monetize key assets including broadcasting rights, branding events and merchandising is required to be framed. Pakistan has an abundance of sports talent but instead of a fragmented approach to its development a holistic and strategic approach needs to be adopted. For now, it's time to enjoy Arshad Nadeem's much-needed victory rather than throwing javelins at each other.

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Today in History

Pakistan

Organized under the banner of the All-India Muslim League. Branches of the party were opened even in the remote corners of the subcontinent.

Literature in the form of pamphlets, books, magazines and newspapers was produced to explain the Pakistan demand and

distributed widely. The support gained by the All-India Muslim League and its demand for Pakistan was tested after the failure

of the Simla Conference, convened by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in 1945.

To be continued....

Beyonce and Jay-Z's new york night out: Queen Bey wows in green

Beyoncé's chic green trousers and headscarf steal in spotlight



Beyoncé and Jay-Z made a stylish statement during a rare date night in New York City this past Sunday. The pop superstar turned heads in a retro-inspired ensemble featuring groovy green trousers and a silk headscarf by Pucci. The look was completed with a matching green striped bag and an oversized blazer draped over a form-fitting black vest top. Beyoncé's platinum blonde hair was elegantly styled in a long plait, and she accessorized with sleek black sunglasses. Jay-Z, complemented his wife's chic look with a sporty twist, opting for a blue and black tracksuit paired with white trainers. The couple dined at Lucille, enjoying a sophis-

ticated evening out while showcasing their fashion-forward styles. Beyoncé and Jay-Z enjoyed a rare and glamorous date night in New York City on Sunday, following a busy evening for the music mogul. The superstar couple, who tied the knot in 2008, made a grand entrance into the alfresco restaurant Lucille with a full security entourage in tow. Earlier in the evening, he had been immersed in the excitement surrounding his 40/40 Club pop-up at Fanatics Fest. The event marks a prelude to his plans to relaunch the iconic 40/40 Club at a new New York City location, with aspirations to integrate sports gambling into the venue.

First super blue moon of 2024 to occur in Pakistan



KARACHI: Skywatchers who love feasting their eyes on celestial beauty at night have a breathtaking heavenly event coming up today (August 19), when a super blue moon will brighten the sky in Pakistan for the first time this year. The fascinating sight comes just one year after a Sturgeon moon lit up the skies on August 1 and a super blue moon enthralled the world with its awe-inspiring sight on August 30 last year. According to the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) on Sunday, the blue moon would take place in

Pakistan today at 11:26pm — the first supermoon to take place this year. The next three supermoons will occur on September 18, October 17 and November 15, it added. While sailing in its orbit when the moon comes closest to Earth, i.e. 363,300 kilometres, it shines 30% more brightly and appears 14% bigger. This is when it is called a supermoon. A supermoon is not an official astronomical term. However, a 'supermoon' is a full moon that occurs when the moon's orbit brings it closer to Earth. A Blue Moon is one of the rarest celestial phenomena, being a full moon, blue moon and a super moon. It does not literally mean that the moon will turn blue but it has to do with the frequency of a full moon. So we know why the term 'once in a blue moon' is used as an idiom to describe a rare but nonetheless recurring event. There are two types of blue moons, both involving the occurrence of full moons multiple times in a month or a calendar season.

Bilawal inaugurates latest CyberKnife facility at JPMC

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Monday inaugurated two different departments of over one hundred beds each and the latest cancer fighting technology CyberKnife S7-FIM at Jinnah Hospital, Karachi. CyberKnife is a robotic technology that uses high cancer-killing doses of radiation in a precise, painless and non-invasive manner, according to the JPMC based in Sindh's capital city. The two departments launched today by the PPP chief include a 120-bed Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences, and a 110-bed Department of Neurology and Stroke Unit. Addressing a ceremony at the Jinnah hospital, Bilawal said that the CyberKnife is the most expensive machine in the world and the provincial government is providing these facilities to people free of charge.

PPP chief asks Sindh CM to take PM Shehbaz to JPMC's CyberKnife facility whenever he visits Karachi

"People talk about the Sindh government that it does not do anything. But, the Sindh government's work speaks for itself," he said, adding that the National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease (NICVD), National Institute of Child Health (NICHD) and JPMC are the best examples of the government's performance. "All these three hospitals are an example of good governance of the provincial government while in

other provinces even a CT scan facility is not available to the public free of charge." The CyberKnife facility is available only at the JPMC in the entire country, he added. It is pertinent to mention that the CyberKnife system was set up at the JPMC for the first time in December 2012. The PPP leader also directed Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to continue serving the people with the best healthcare facilities. Bilawal, who served as the foreign minister in the last government, also directed the Sindh chief executive to take Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to visit the hospital whenever he trips to the city. The PPP leader said that he would tell the premier that the PPP-led government is ready to assist the Punjab government in the health sector.



Health

Govt to unveil 5-year plan to address economic crisis: Ahsan



LAHORE: Federal Minister For Planning & Development Ahsan Iqbal has said continuation of economic policies and political stability is imperative for national growth and we need to focus next five years. Addressing 2nd National School Of Public Policy Conference on Food Security in Lahore today, he said youth empowerment and the role of women in the national economy are vital for the progress of the country. Ahsan Iqbal said that food security is the biggest challenge being faced by the country. He termed country's overpopulation as a main problem regarding food security.

He said that due to climate change, Pakistan is facing various challenges.

The Minister said that Pakistan is blessed with multiple resources and there is a dire need to utilize these resources amicably and effectively. Ahsan Iqbal said that we have to adopt modern technology.

He informed that Pakistan will be sending 1,000 agricultural scientists to china in the coming months, who will learn modern cultivation techniques.

Gilani condoles demise of Hammad Raza with his family

MULTAN: Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Monday condoled the death of Makhdoomzada Syed Hammad Raza s/o late Makhdoom Syed Jaffar Raza with his family.

The Chairman Senate along with custodian of the shrine of Hazrat Musa Pak Shaheed, Makhdoom Abu Al-Hassan Gilani went to their residence and expressed condolences with family members and offered Fatiha on the demise of Makhdoom Syed Hammad Raza.

Yousaf Raza Gilani extended his condolences and prayed for the elevation of the deceased's ranks.

He while expressing sympathies with the bereaved family stated that social services of Makhdoom Syed Hammad Raza would always be remembered.

Members of the deceased's family, including Makhdoomzada Syed Hussain Abbas, Makhdoom Syed Qasim Shah, Syed Saif Gillani, Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah, Makhdoom Syed Amir Abbas, Deewan Naqi, along with other notables, social and political personalities, were also present on the occasion. INP



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh addressing during one-day conference titled 'COLMAB 24' on Logistics, Maritime Affairs and Blue Economy.

President Zardari says entire nation honors its martyrs & will forever remember their sacrifices

PM Shehbaz says the entire nation stands united with it forces in the war against terrorism



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday expressed profound sorrow over the martyrdom of three soldiers of Pakistan army in Bajaur during their fight against terrorists and paid tribute to their sacrifice in defending the country.

A press release from the President House stated that the president praised the martyrs as the nation's pride and expressed deep gratitude for their supreme sacrifice. He highlighted that the security forces successfully

thwarted the terrorists' infiltration attempt, defeating them decisively.

President Asif Ali Zardari affirmed that the entire nation salutes the Pakistan Army's spirit of patriotism and sacrifice.

The president stated that the entire nation honors its martyrs and will forever remember their sacrifices. He prayed for the departed souls to rest in peace and for their families to find strength and solace during this difficult time. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has appreciated security forces for conducting successful operation in Bajaur

and killing five Khwarji terrorists.

He paid tribute to the soldiers of Pakistan Army, Naik Inayat Khan, Lance Naik Umar Hayat and Sepoy Waqar Khan, who lost their lives while bravely fighting the Khwarji terrorists.

The Prime Minister prayed for the departed souls and the bereaved families. The Prime Minister said the entire nation stands united with it forces in the war against terrorism.

Meanwhile Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has paid tribute to the security forces for eliminating 5 terrorists of Fitna Al Khawarij on the Pak-Afghan border. He praised the security forces for their timely action in foiling the nefarious plans of the terrorists. Interior Minister paid homage to the 3 brave soldiers, Naik Inayat Khan, Lance Naik Umar Hayat, and Sepoy Waqar Khan, who embraced martyrdom during the exchange of fire.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the martyrs have made the invaluable sacrifice by laying their precious lives for the sake of the country. He further said that the security forces are determined to eliminate the terrorists of Fitna Al Khawarij. He saluted the brave soldiers who achieved the highest rank of martyrdom while thwarting the terrorist attack.

Senate body on S&T deliberates on PHA (Amendment) Bill, 2023'

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Science and Technology on Monday deliberated on the Private Member's Bill titled "Pakistan Halal Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023."

The meeting was chaired by Senator Kamil Ali Agha. Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwardhy, the bill's mover, explained that the bill aims to strengthen the Pakistan Halal Authority (PHA) by providing guidelines for the enforcement of Halal standards.

Officials from the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) informed the committee that the proposed amendments are part of the Pakistan Halal Authority (PHA) Act. During the meeting, Senator Kamil Ali Agha inquired about the current staffing and recruitment criteria at PHA. Officials revealed that a total of 100 posts are sanctioned, but PHA is currently operating with only 38 officials, including six inspectors. The process of filling the remaining sanctioned posts is underway. The committee recommended that relevant experience, along with a diploma in Halal certification, should be required for the posts of inspectors.

PHA has registered 16 local Halal certification bodies, one foreign certification body, and several slaughterhouses, primarily in Punjab.

The committee was also briefed on the role and performance of the National Institute of Electronics (NIE). Acting Director General Zavar Hussain apprised the committee that NIE's major role is in design and development, including the preparation of prototypes in vital areas of electronics. NIE has developed several prototypes, including processor chips, an electric vehicle kit for small cars, and various other devices. NIE offers testing, capacity evaluation, and calibration services for electronic devices to both government and private institutions at minimal cost. The committee appreciated NIE's contributions and recommended that the institute shift its focus toward the commercialization of its inventions to benefit the masses. Additionally, the committee suggested that NIE revise its service fees to help the institution become self-sufficient.

The economic potential of cannabis was also discussed. Chairman of PCSIR, Dr. Syed Hussain Abidi, informed the committee that medicinal cannabis has a \$30 billion market worldwide and is in high demand. PCSIR has successfully developed various cannabis products, including hemp cinnamon tea, hemp ginger tea, hemp jams, hemp cookies, and hemp curative oil and shampoo. Cannabis has applications in textiles, food, and the construction industry, with a market potential of \$4 to \$5 billion.

Given its economic significance, Pakistan has established the Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority (CCRA). The Board of Governors for CCRA has been finalized, with the Secretary of the Defence Division serving as chairperson and the Chief Secretaries of each province as members. The committee recommended that two Senators also be included in the Board. The committee also discussed the performance of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program under the Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF).

Senator Kamil Ali Agha, expressed concern that PSF has utilized only 10% of its allocated funds for the STEM project. Dr. Saqib Nasir, Project Director of STEM, informed the committee that 50 labs have been established in public schools for Rs. 50 million under the STEM project. APP

Pakistan earns \$297 mn from IT services' export during July 2024

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$297 million by providing different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the first month of the current fiscal year 2024-25. This shows a growth of 32.46 per cent as compared with the US \$ 224.950 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding month of the last fiscal year 2023-24, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the month under review, the computer services grew by 23.09 per cent as it surged from US \$187.470 million last year to US \$230.750 million during July 2024.

Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 24.53 per cent, from US \$62.780 million to US \$77.262 million this year while the export of hardware consultancy services also surged by 189.32 per cent, from US \$0.067 million to US \$0.677 million. The export of repair and maintenance services

however decreased by 6.06 per cent from US \$0.033 million to US \$0.031 million whereas the export and imports of computer software services also dipped by 13.36 per cent, from \$57.982 million to \$50.234 million.

In addition, the exports of other computer services witnessed a growth of 52.65 per cent from US \$67.178 million to US \$102.546 million. Meanwhile, the export of information services during the month under review decreased by 80.39 per cent declining from US \$1.020 million to US \$0.200 million.

Among the information services, the exports of news agency services decreased by 89.03 per cent, from US \$0.939 million to US \$0.103 million whereas the exports of other information services rose by 19.75 per cent, from US \$0.081 million to US \$0.097 million. The export of telecommunication services increased by 83.79 per cent as these went up from US \$36.460 million to US \$67.010 million, the data revealed. DNA

SC stays IHC's proceeding in audio leaks case

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday served notices to respondents in an appeal of federal government against the order of IHC related to the alleged audio leaks of Najam us Saqib and Bushra Bibi. The top court also suspended the order of IHC dated June 25, and stopped its proceeding into the matter till further orders.

A two-judge bench comprising Justice Amin ul Din Khan and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan heard the case. The apex court, in its order regarding the hearing, said that the Additional Attorney General has stated that the proceedings of the IHC have not been finalized. The high court has exceeded the jurisdiction of Article 199, the principles have been laid down in two decisions of the Supreme Court that the high court cannot take suo-moto notices by itself. It said that the court was told that the five questions decided in the hearing of the high court on May 31, were not the case of the petitioners. It was also told that the high court could not investigate. The Additional Attorney General Aamir Rehman told the court during the hearing that in the order of the IHC of May 29, the authorities were stopped from phone tapping and CDR. Due to the order the institutions are unable to do counter intelligence and caught terrorists. APP

Islamabad to get modern 100-Bed International Hospital

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Monday laid the foundation stone for a state-of-the-art 100-bed international hospital in Islamabad, a collaborative project between the National Police Foundation (NPF) and a Turkish company, set to revolutionize healthcare for policemen and public.

Mohsin Naqvi in his address emphasized the significance of this project, stating, "This hospital will provide advanced health facilities to policemen and the public, showcasing our commitment to their welfare."

The hospital, valued at an estimated 5 billion rupees, is being entirely funded and constructed by the Turkish company. Naqvi said that the project not only marks a significant step in improving health facilities in the region but is also seen as a major breakthrough for the NPF, which has been revitalized under the leadership of Sabir Ahmed, MD NPF. Minister Naqvi highlighted that the proceeds



from this and other NPF projects are being channeled into the welfare of police officers and the families of martyrs. He emphasized the government's dedication to supporting these initiatives across Pakistan, including recent efforts in Hyderabad and the ongoing reconstruction of the National Police Academy. This new hospital is expected to significantly enhance healthcare services for the police force and the general public, setting a new standard for healthcare infrastructure in the region.

Functional Committee recommends devolution of MoI&P, Power Division

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Functional Committee on Devolution has unanimously recommended the devolution of the Federal Ministry of Industries and Production and the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division). Further recommendations on the distribution of responsibilities to the provinces or the Council of Common Interests (CCI) will be made subsequently. Senator Zarqa Suharwardhy chaired the meeting of the Functional Committee on Devolution held at Parliament House on Monday. Senators Zamir Hussain Ghumro, Poonjo Bheek, and Fawzia Arshad, along with senior officials from relevant departments attended the meeting. The committee during the briefing on the performance of the Ministry of Industries and Production over the last two financial years noted that the ministry had become a provincial subject. However, the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Industries and Production suggested that the Ministry of Law and Justice could provide a more informed opinion on this matter. Senator Zarqa questioned the rationale behind investing in steel mills.

She inquired why national steel mills were closed while private mills were operational and selling steel. She also asked why 2,200 employees were hired if the mills were closed, to which the ministry responded that laying off 50 percent of the workforce requires labor court approval. The issue of privatizing steel mills was also discussed. It was noted that a Chinese company had withdrawn its interest in acquiring the steel mills, leading to their removal from the privatization list.

The chairperson expressed concern over the steel mill's gas bill, which amounts to Rs 44 crore. She highlighted the disparity between the general public's gas shortages and the provision of gas to non-operational mills. Officials responded that gas supply to the steel mill had been discontinued. Secretary of Industries and Production clarified that subsidies are provided to farmers, not to factories and industries. The committee requested a report on the fertilizer factory's sales and exports, specifically the quantity of urea sold and exported by the ten

major fertilizer companies.

The non-developmental budget for the Ministry of Industries and Production stands at 62 billion rupees. Senator Zarqa Taimur questioned the benefits to Pakistan and the allocation of 25 billion rupees in urea subsidies. The Secretary explained that the subsidy is intended to address gas shortages, despite domestic consumers facing gas shortages. The committee requested detailed information on the companies and individuals receiving subsidies.

The committee unanimously agreed to abolish the Ministry of Industries and Production and devolve its responsibilities to the provinces.

The committee also reviewed the performance of the Ministry of Petroleum over the past two financial years. Senator Zamir Hussain Ghumro expressed concerns about the creation of 70 new companies, stating this was beyond government authority. The committee has requested details on the boards of these companies. Senator Ghumro also indicated that if issues persist, the Prime Minister may be called to address them. He noted

that the Petroleum Division is managed by the Council of Common Interests and that all institutions listed in Federal Legislative List 2 fall under its administration.

Concerns were raised about the Board of SNGPL. The chairperson asked about Sendak Company's operations and earnings. Petroleum Division officials reported that a joint venture contract, which had expired, was renewed in 2021. They also mentioned that over \$350 million had been received by Pakistan, with over \$250 million paid to Chinese partners. The committee resolved to devolve the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division).

A representative from the Power Division requested an in-camera meeting to discuss the details and implications of devolving the ministry. Additionally, the committee observed that the Secretary of Inter-Provincial Coordination should brief on the achievements in sports. The chairperson criticized the lack of promotion and support for sports since Arshad Nadeem's victory, noting that only selfies and financial rewards had been provided. INP

Polish envoy meets Commerce minister to discuss trade opportunities

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Poland to Pakistan, Maciej Pisarski on Monday called on the Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, in his office to discuss new opportunities for enhancing trade between the two countries. The meeting highlighted the growing economic ties between Poland and Pakistan, with both sides expressing optimism about future collaborations, said a press release issued here. Ambassador Pisarski congratulated Minister Kamal on the successful organization of FoodAg 2024, a major international food and agriculture expo held recently in Karachi.

The event saw the participation of over 800 foreign delegates and generated significant business activity. "The successful holding of FoodAg 2024 is a positive signal regarding Pakistan's economic and trade growth," said Pisarski, underscoring the importance of such events in showcasing Pakistan's potential on the global stage.

The Ambassador also noted that several Polish companies operating in Pakistan are not only profitable but are also looking to expand their networks within the country. "We are expecting more business delegations to visit Pakistan under the umbrella of the Polish government in the near future," he added, indicating Poland's growing interest in Pakistan as a trade partner. Minister Kamal expressed his appreciation for the Ambassador's encouraging words and emphasized the vast potential for trade enhancement between the two nations.

He highlighted key sectors such as agriculture,



coal, and textiles as areas where Poland and Pakistan could deepen their cooperation. "The geopolitical situation in the region is prompting industries to seek new destinations, and Pakistan can be an attractive option, particularly in the textile and food industries," Kamal stated.

He further elaborated on the high quality of Pakistani agricultural products, citing the example of Pakistani apples. "Pakistan produces some of the best apples in the world. Nestlé, for instance, not only uses our apple pulp but also exports it from Pakistan," he remarked.

The Minister also pointed to the burgeoning potential in olive production, with large-scale cultivation underway in regions such as Balochistan and Potohar. He emphasized that value-added products from olives could become a significant export item for Pakistan in the near future. APP