



"Alhamdulillah, the promise of giving relief to people in electricity bills has also been fulfilled"

Chief Minister Punjab  
**Maryam Nawaz**

## Omani dignitaries acknowledge the sacrifices rendered by people & Armed Forces of Pakistan in war against terrorism

CJCS General Sahir Shamshad Mirza holds meetings with Omani leadership



RAWALPINDI: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), who is on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman, called on His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq bin Taimur Al-Said, Dy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, General Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Namami, the Minister of the Royal Office, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis Al-Raisi, the Chief of Staff Sultan Armed Forces (COS-SAF), Services Chiefs and Chairman of Strategic and Defense Academy. According to the statement issued by the ISPR, during separately-held meetings, both sides discussed military cooperation including training, security, counter-terrorism, defence industry and regional security environment; and acknowledged the commonality of views to expand military to military relationship and forge deeper strategic ties. The Omani dignitaries acknowledged the sacrifices rendered by people and Armed Forces of Pakistan in the war against terrorism. PR

## Tarar emphasises role of media in curbing Islamophobia

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Attallah Tarar on Thursday said that Islamophobia has become a menace at global level and highlighted the role of media in curbing the menace. He was addressing a gathering at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) on the launching ceremony of the book titled "Do Muslims Scare You? A guide for Journalists" authored by Osama Bin Javaid, a journalist and member of Aljazeera Media Institute, currently visiting NUML. Rector NUML Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani (Retd), on this occasion, emphasized the role of media in curbing Islamophobia as it is creating hatred against Muslims and destroying the social fabric of international community. The Minister said that it is need of the hour to control the rising tide of Islamophobia and the media can play key role in this regard. He commended the role of Aljazeera TV for playing a pivotal role in creating awareness about Islamophobia at global level. Tarar opined that western media is biased and will never show the facts, in a time like this having the only Muslim channel is a blessing and government of Pakistan is willing to support Aljazeera news network and MoU could be signed in future to better serve the cause. DNA



QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a session of the Apex Committee of the National Action Plan.

## PM, COAS reaffirm their resolve to prevent inimical forces from disrupting the hard-earned peace & development of Balochistan at any cost

Apex Committee of NAP unequivocally condemns the cowardly terrorist attacks targeting innocent Pakistanis

### VOM Report

QUETTA: A meeting of the Apex Committee of the National Action Plan was convened in Quetta. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and attended by Deputy PM/Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Ishaq Dar, General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Federal Ministers of Planning, Interior, Commerce, Information & EAD, Chief Minister of Balochistan, key Provincial Ministers, Provincial Secretaries, Commander Balochistan Corps and senior civil, Police, intelligence & military officials. While addressing the participants of the meeting, the Prime Minister commended the sacrifices and contributions of the people of Balochistan towards national progress and development, and resolved that enemies of Pakistan, bent on creating unrest in Balochistan, would be defeated with full force and national support, InshaAllah. The Prime Minister further said

that the entire nation was grieved by the recent tragic incident occurred in Balochistan. Khwarji who shed the blood of innocent people would not be spared, he said. The Prime Minister stated that Balochistan was an important and beautiful province of Pakistan, and all obstacles in its path to development and prosperity would be removed. The Prime Minister said that the sacrifices of those who laid down their lives for the motherland and the innocent civilians would not go to waste. The Prime Minister made it clear that dialogues could only be possible with those who respect the constitution of Pakistan and salute the National flag. The participants offered Feteiha for the Shuhada of recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan, expressing solidarity with the victims' families, and praising the bravery of security forces for their timely response in preventing further loss of innocent lives. The committee unequivocally condemned the cowardly terrorist attacks targeting innocent Pakistanis and resolved to intensify counter-terrorism efforts in the

province, leveraging multi-domain resources to eradicate terrorism. A comprehensive review of the security situation in Balochistan and ongoing operations against terrorists was conducted, and the committee decided to further solidify intelligence sharing and coordination among Security Forces and law enforcement agencies. The forum also agreed to enhance the capacity of the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), Police, Levies, and associated departments. The Prime Minister and Army Chief reaffirmed their resolve to prevent inimical forces from disrupting the hard-earned peace and development of Balochistan at any cost.

The Committee vowed to bring the planners, instigators, facilitators, and perpetrators of the cowardly attacks to justice, ensuring the protection of citizens' lives and properties at all costs. At the end of the meeting, the Prime Minister also distributed cheques among the families of those who were martyred in the recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan.

## Govt committed to bolster energy sector, key role of PQEPC to meet energy demands: Minister



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has said that the government is committed to bolster the energy sector and the Port Qasim Electric Power Company (PQEPC) has key role in meeting Pakistan's energy demands. This was stated by him while speaking during a meeting with a delegation from PQEPC led by Mr. Yang Tianyu, President of Power China Resources which called on Thursday. Minister for Energy (Power Division), Mr. Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, Secretary of Power Division, and senior officials from the Finance Division also attended the meeting.

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb emphasized the significance of collaborative efforts between Pakistani and Chinese companies in advancing sustainable and efficient energy solutions. The meeting focused on various matters related to the power sector including the payments to the energy producers and possible ways to resolve the issues hindering timely payments. Matters related to the technical and financial feasibility of converting these projects to run on domestic coal, thereby reducing reliance on imported fuel were also discussed.

The Chinese side was informed that the government was taking a number of steps to facilitate this transition including the launch of a railway line to ensure smooth and effective transformation of local coal. The Finance Minister also briefed the delegation on the structural reforms being undertaken by the government, particularly in the energy sector, and the ongoing privatization of power supply companies and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). He assured the delegation of the government's steadfast commitment to providing all necessary support and taking swift action to overcome any challenges impeding the operation of these power plants.

President PQEPC Mr. Yang Tianyu appreciated the efforts of government in implementing energy sector reforms and thanked the government for its continued support in reviving the operations of the Port Qasim coal projects. The Finance Minister reaffirmed the government's full commitment to honoring all obligations, particularly in government-to-government projects, and maintaining the sanctity of contracts in both letter and spirit. He expressed confidence that, through mutual understanding and cooperation, both sides could develop sustainable solutions to the core issues facing the power sector, ensuring its long-term viability. INP

## PNS HUNAIN visits Oman, participates in bilateral exercise



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) HUNAIN, during maiden voyage from Romania to Pakistan visited Salalah, Oman and participated in a bilateral exercise with the Ship of Royal Omani Navy. Upon arrival at Salalah port, the Pakistan Navy ship was warmly welcomed by Officers of the Royal Navy of Oman. During stay at port, various bilateral activities and exchange visits were conducted to share professional knowledge and experience. Upon completion of the port call, PNS HUNAIN conducted a sea exercise with the Royal Navy of Oman Ship ROUV SADH to enhance interoperability between the two

Navies, a Pakistan Navy news release on Thursday said. Pakistan and Oman are maritime neighbours and frequent visits of dignitaries, port calls by ships, joint exercises and coordinated patrols are regular features. The visit of PNS HUNAIN will further strengthen bilateral relations between the two navies. PNS HUNAIN is the 3rd of the 4 PN YARMOOK class ships being constructed at DAMEN Naval Shipyard Romania. The induction ceremony will be held on 6 September at the Naval Dockyard. The President of Pakistan will grace the occasion as the Chief Guest. PR

## Minister promises to deliver lower electricity rates, timely relief within a year

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Leghari has assured that the government is dedicated to lowering electricity tariffs over the next year, following notable advancements in resolving the power sector's critical issues on priority.

Talking to a private news channel, minister of power said that the government will leave no stone unturned in achieving this goal and that consumers will start seeing the benefits within the next year. He emphasized that the government's goal is to make electricity affordable and accessible to all, and that they are working diligently to achieve this objective within the stipulated time frame.

In a significant move towards reducing Pakistan's reliance on imported coal and mitigating the impact of volatile global fuel prices, Minister Leghari announced the formation of a committee tasked with facilitating the transition of three Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to Thar coal. This strategic shift is expected to yield substantial benefits, including a reduction in electricity costs, decreased dependence on foreign fuel sources, and a boost to the local economy, he added. By leveraging the country's indigenous Thar coal reserves, the government aims to create a more sustainable and self-sufficient energy mix, ultimately leading to lower tariffs for consumers and a more stable power supply, he mentioned.

## IDEAS has become a great meeting place for defence exhibitors, Jam Kamal

### VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan has performed the soft launch of IDEAS 2024 to be held in Karachi in November this year. Addressing the launching ceremony in Islamabad this evening, Minister Commerce said Pakistan's defence industry is not only meeting the requirements of the armed forces of the country but also has the potential to export its products on competitive basis through reasonable armed trade.

Jam Kamal said IDEAS has become a great meeting place for defence exhibitors, high-level defence delegations, analysts and trade visitors from all over the world.

He said IDEAS provide excellent opportunity to develop better understanding, relationships, networking of defence industry, and seeking affordable solutions to meet the challenges being faced by the defence industry. Earlier speaking on the occasion, Director General Defence Export Promotion Organization Major General Asad Nawaz Khan said IDEAS is a shared vision for global peace, stability and harmony amongst the comity of nations. He said Pakistan today offers enormous opportunities and has the potential to emerge as a



global platform for defence and research, scientific growth, manufacturing and to undertake joint ventures for strengthening our defence capabilities and exports. "It is indeed a matter of great pleasure to see the IDEAS gaining prominence with every passing year, over a span of twenty-four years", Federal Minister for Trade and Commerce Mr Jam Kamal Khan stated during Soft Launch Ceremony for International Defence Exhibition and Seminar IDEAS-2024. The 12th edition of the IDEAS Defense Exhibition will take place in Karachi from November 19 to 22, proudly managed by Badar Expo Solutions.

## CEO NDRMF stressing importance of collaboration and innovation for climate resilience

Our goal is to equip communities to adapt and thrive amid climate challenges, Aamir

### VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer Mr. Bilal Anwar, CEO of National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), delivered a keynote address, emphasizing the critical importance of collaboration and innovation in enhancing climate resilience and adaptation strategies.

Bilal Anwar said, "A coordinated and holistic approach towards climate change, resilience and Adaptation is the only viable way to understand and assess how adversely and profoundly climate change affects people, communities and economy. It is also essential to understand that it is an issue that affects everyone but disproportionately affect certain groups more than others. Hence, a nexus approach will allow to address these interconnected issues and challenges in



an effective and holistic manner. This event provides a perfect opportunity to build coordination and partnerships for a better future for people of Pakistan." Mr. Aamir Muhammad, Country Director, Action Against Hunger Pakistan Mission remarked, "This event will provide a critical



opportunity to assess the impact of climate change on our communities and highlight the urgent need for adaptive strategies. Addressing the gaps in our current approaches and developing effective solutions is essential. Our goal is to empower communities with the

necessary tools and knowledge to adapt and thrive amidst climate challenges." Action Against Hunger launched several crucial research studies aimed at addressing climate resilience and improving humanitarian response in Pakistan.

The research studies that were launched included:

Research Study to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Climate Resilience Initiatives in Sindh and Balochistan.

Research Study on the Impact of the Agriculture Sector on Climate Change in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

Piloting of Management of Small and Nutritionally At-Risk Infants Under 6 Months and Their Mothers in Healthcare Settings of Balochistan.

Rapid Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (RAPID SMART) Sindh Survey.

The event brought together a diverse group of experts, policymakers, humanitarians and community leaders to discuss how Pakistan can better adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. The key feature of the event was a panel discussion on "Cross-Sector Collaboration

for Climate Resilience and Effective Humanitarian Response." The distinguished panelists included Mr. Idrees Mahsud, Member - Disaster Risk Reduction, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Mr. Asif Sherazi, Country Director - Islamic Relief Pakistan, Ms. Farrah Naz, Country Director - Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Ms. Humera Qasim Khan - Climate Change and Environmental Specialist and Ms. Nabeela Umar - Secretary Environment Climate change & Coastal Development Department, Government of Sindh and the panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Sabeen Farooq. Additionally, the event included insightful presentation by experts on the Impacts of Climate Change on the Effectiveness of Integrated Humanitarian Assistance in Vulnerable Districts of Sindh and Balochistan.

Continued on Page 4

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Hassan Baig

# Fault lines in economic security

The national security paradigm revolves around economic security. A country is strong only if its economy is strong. It is beyond doubt that economic security makes a nation's defence impregnable. Pakistan faces enormous economic challenges today, which need the immediate attention of policymakers. The government needs to revisit its economic policies and initiatives, as economic security fault lines may lead to sovereign default and compel the government to partially compromise on its national security structure. But the real task is to identify the economic fault lines to plug the holes and correct the course. Political instability is the first fault line disturbing economic security. The first step to achieving economic stability is ensuring political stability. This needs the attention of all those who matter, especially the government to correct course, as we are badly suffering from our internal strife and stresses and shocks. Here lies the role of the powerful quarters too, predominantly in the realm of our institutional framework. Political stability will contribute a lot towards achieving our economic security, as emphasized by the IMF as well, for sustainable growth. Personal egos need to be set aside for the ultimate goal of the country's prosperity. The grand dialogue at the national level to uphold the constitution may provide solutions to these issues. National leaders must rise above their biases to break the logjam for the prime objective of achieving unity at the national level. Economic security can be ensured with the right planning, which is the first step to correct course. Proper planning is key to progress. Here lies the fault line that needs to be corrected. Lack of planning or no planning at all is the first thing to consider, where policymakers have to think twice to either get the planning right or identify priority areas. The planning division lacks the vision to

draft the right choices for economic growth and development owing to multiple factors, especially the lack of experts and professionals. Government functionaries are in a rut of the old bureaucratic reshuffle and are incapable and incapacitated to plan or execute required priorities. It needs a complete overhaul through the induction of fresh faces consisting of professionals capable of making decisions through the right priorities and planning for economic growth and development. No country can progress without industrialization, especially the heavy industrial sector. Industrial clusters are essential for progress. Slackness on the part of the government to industrialize the country is another area that could provide economic security. Again, the right priorities that could provide a strong base required to strengthen the economy are missing. The total exports of around \$30 billion are a matter of serious concern for a country of 250 million people, standing at the fifth position on the list of the world's most populous countries. The lack of industrialization is one of the basic reasons for poverty here although we were capable of progressing and developing had proper planning been done and investment has been made by our policymakers. Now, another fault line has emerged so far as industrialization is concerned, and that is the rise in the cost of production, making our industry uncompetitive. The industry is now shifting to other countries, or industrialists are shutting down industrial units to save themselves from losses. This is the real disaster. A large amount of debt is another handicap that is restricting the country from economic progress. Pakistan is suffering from a sharp economic downside, as it is a heavily indebted country with almost Rs70 trillion in internal and external debt; at least \$135 billion is external debt. It is a crisis, as we are now forced to take loans to repay the existing loans. The country is in a severe debt trap, and there seems to be no strategy on how to retire this huge amount of

debt. It is worrying that a debt management cell that works under the Ministry of Finance is doing nothing but keeping a tab on the amount of loans Pakistan has received so far. The economic affairs division is always in search of new loans and is strategizing how to get more loans. There seems to be no plan to get rid of these loans. This is another fault line that is disturbing our economic and national security preferences. The security situation in the country is complex, as the resurgence of terrorist activities has created more problems. Terrorism has marred and destroyed the fabric of society. The tense security situation does not allow anyone to invest in the country. This is the reason FDI continues to slide down, as security has become a major concern for investors. The security apparatus needs to be activated at the highest level, as we did after the gruesome incident of the APS attack a decade ago to root out terrorism from the country. Terrorism in all its forms and designs is abhorrent and needs to be crushed with all our might. The state needs to be vigilant, and terrorist groups must be wiped out from our soil to save this country from total collapse. The state policy in this regard needs to be revisited if we are serious about improving economic security. There is no doubt that terrorism and its offshoot terrorist groups can put national security at risk. The population bomb is another critical area of concern for policymakers, which is disturbing all our planning and economic progress. Such a large population with limited resources is a cause of panic, as Pakistan is suffering from high unemployment and slack in the economy. The youth bulge could have proven to be an asset had we taught them technical skills. This, unfortunately, is missing in this case. Now young people are wandering, behaving with increasing waywardness with no hopes. They also try to get out of this country, but foreign visas are not that easy to get, especially for Pakistanis,

owing to multiple obvious reasons. They are trying to get into e-commerce, but again internet issues are a hurdle to their supply of services to foreign companies which want fast service delivery. Population growth needs to be checked at all costs for which a solid policy is required on a war footing. Crime is also quite high, and it is on the rise due to an ever-increasing population. Illiteracy is another cause of backwardness, as the country is still at the 61 per cent literacy rate without almost 26 million children out of school. Literacy needs to be enhanced if we are to get into high growth, especially technical education needs to be imparted in young people to make them useful citizens. Skill development is the need of the hour so that the new generation can grab good earning opportunities, especially expatriates who could better earn to enhance remittances from abroad to bolster growth by contributing to foreign remittances. This is one area where policymakers should be serious and make solid plans to educate people for the better future of Pakistan. Other countries like Vietnam, Bangladesh and India are earning much of their foreign remittances through their skilled workforce, which is missing in the case of Pakistan. Lastly, relations with neighbours; cooperation at various economic forums; and alliances must be activated and enhanced. We rarely bother about or cater to our regional economic forums and bilateral cooperation. This needs the special attention of our policymakers. Our lack of cooperation with regional players is disrupting our economic security and for that matter national security too, as we see a lot of terrorism and its source are our neighbours. Here lies our economic security fault line, which has the potential to disturb our national security goals. This needs a correction as well.

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

## Sindh's education dilemma

ASGHAR SOOMRO

The Planning Commission's District Education Performance Index Report 2023 highlights serious shortcomings in the delivery of the public education system in Pakistan, which has now largely been reduced to serving the children of poor parents who cannot afford private schools nor can force the concerned authorities to behave well. Like all previous education surveys and research studies, this report also confirms that the ship of education is sinking, despite various ongoing reforms and legislations declaring education as a fundamental right. The report notes some progress in expanding educational opportunities, but they appear insufficient given that the number of out-of-school children has gone up from approximately 22 million to 25.6 million over the past decade. Of these, 79 per cent have never attended school. Even more alarming is the performance of those enrolled kids, as the report indicates that 77 per cent of children aged 10 cannot read age-appropriate text. Isn't this a clear indication of a collapsed education system? Shouldn't some heads roll? Will the report compel the country's rulers to take public education seriously beyond rhetoric and cosmetic efforts such as education emergencies or reforms? I doubt it — because they have received similar wake-up calls repeatedly, but their commitment has been limited to lip service. Otherwise, instead of being placed in the 'low' category, we would have been ranked as a 'high' performer in education. This is indeed an indictment of the rulers' continuous lack of seriousness about education. Unfortunately, my home province Sindh continues to make headlines in the ongoing saga of education failures; the report in question reveals that the province lags behind the national

### Number of out-of-school children has gone up from approximately 22 million to 25.6 million over the past decade

average score (Sindh 51.5 vs national 53.4). Moreover, not a single district from Sindh could make it into the top ten districts in Pakistan — not even one from Karachi. Isn't that deeply concerning? If this is the state of education in a metropolitan city, then what can be expected in more remote and far-flung areas? Another intriguing thing is that, despite Sindh being ahead of all other provinces in the domain of public financing, this hasn't translated into better results. Ideally, beyond prognosis, the report should have probed the possible causes in detail as to why increased funding hasn't led to improvements.

The seriousness — or lack of — of Sindh's leaders is evident from the state of education in their home districts. Let's take a closer look at the situation in Larkana, Shaheed Benazirabad, Jamshoro and Umerkot. These districts are particularly significant because much of the PPP's leadership and key figures in provincial government hail from these districts. Larkana, the headquarters of the party, disappointingly scores low at 52.7 (out of 100). Shaheed Benazirabad, the home district of the president of Pakistan, fares even worse with a score of 50.2. Jamshoro, the home district of Sindh's three-time chief minister, scores 53.9, and Umerkot, the home district of the current provincial education minister, also demonstrates poor performance with a score of 49.

If this is the situation in the districts of the party and government leaders, then it is not surprising to witness the poor status of education in other districts where the heads of district administration are often posted on recommendations from local MNAs and MPAs. Due to the prevailing governance style, only local political leaders are served at the cost of public service. This poor performance is not limited to the education sector; it pervades other departments as well. A similar situation prevails in other provinces, with only slight variations. The impact of such a poorly performing education system on a country's politics, economics and society is grave and needs to be discussed at length.

First, the quality of democracy will further deteriorate, as the ability of uneducated or semi-literate voters to choose the right leaders based on an understanding of performance and competence will remain limited, as we currently witness all around us. Additionally, with a large proportion of the population uneducated, the promotion of diversity, tolerance of differences and the ability to express and understand arguments will continue to be at the lowest level. Second, this will have a serious impact on the economic productivity of people since they will lack the knowledge, skills and behaviour needed to participate in the domestic and global economy. As a result, social problems like poverty, unemployment and inequality will worsen.

Therefore, our rulers must look beyond their short-term interests and consider the long-term interests of the country.

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## History of Pakistan

## Today in History

Thus, although Pakistan commenced its independent existence as a democratic entity with a parliamentary system, the representative aspects of the political system were muted by the role of the Quaid-e Azam. In effect, Jinnah — not India's Mountbatten — perpetuated the viceregal tradition that had been central to Britain's colonial rule. Unlike India, where

Gandhi opted to remain outside government and where India's prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the parliament administered to the country, in Pakistan the parliament and members of the governing cabinet were cast in a subordinate role. Liaquat Ali Khan, first prime minister of Pakistan. When Jinnah died, a power vacuum

was created that his successors in the Muslim League had great difficulty filling. Khwaja Nazimuddin, the chief minister of East Bengal, was called on to take up the office of governor-general. Known for his mild manner, it was assumed Nazimuddin would not interfere with the parliamentary process and would permit the prime minister to govern the country. Prime Min-

ister Liaquat Ali Khan, however, lacked the necessary constituency in the regions that formed Pakistan. Nor did he possess Jinnah's strength of personality. Liaquat therefore was hard put to cope with entrenched and vested interests, particularly in regions where local leaders dominated.

To be continued....

## Kylie Jenner ditches lip filler for more natural appearance

Kylie Jenner fights back tears over online criticism of her appearance

Kylie Jenner shared a makeup-free photo on Instagram, revealing a more natural look after reducing her lip filler. The 27-year-old mom of two posted a barefaced picture with her hair tied back, showcasing smaller lips and visible freckles.

This marks a departure from her usual glamorous appearance, as she's chosen a more natural route despite her success being tied to her looks.

The Kylie Cosmetics mogul has been getting lip fillers since her teenage years, initially due to insecurity sparked by a comment that her thin lips were "unkissable". Jenner has been open about her cosmetic procedures, including dissolv-



ing her lip filler in 2018, only to get re-injected later. She also revealed in 2023 that she had a breast augmentation before her daughter Stormi's birth, after previously denying it. Recently, the Instagram mogul has aimed for a more natural look, but faced harsh online criticism for her minimal makeup appearance at a Paris Fashion Week event. On Hulu's The Kardashians, she tearfully discussed the exhausting experience of having her appearance constantly scrutinised, with critics saying she's "ruined her face". She shared with her sisters that she's been on a journey to dissolve half of her lip filler over the past year.

## Showbiz

## Tech

## Seven suns spotted in Chinese sky stun onlookers worldwide

A video that captured a rare yet mesmerising celestial phenomenon which recently graced the skies of China caught the attention of skygazers around the world, leaving them baffled. Recently, a woman, named Wang, recorded a video of the sky from a hospital in China's Chengdu area, which showed more than one sun descending over the country's horizon. The video took social media by storm, leaving netizens speechless at the sight of seven suns in the sky. However, the breathtaking spectacle turned out to be an optical illusion produced by the glass window through which the video was filmed. The video — filmed from the 11th floor of the hospital — revealed the sun duplicated with varying levels of intensity. Wang said viewers also offered theories about how the phenomenon occurred, the Daily Mail reported citing Jam Press. "This happened because of a magnetic field glitch that made parallel universes visibly manifest," one person wrote on the Chinese social media platform Weibo.



Others argued on Reddit that the fragmented suns were a sign of "immense pollution" in China and another person wrote: "The truth about global warming has finally been revealed." However, one commenter correctly addressed the mystery behind the video, writing: "This is caused by the reflection/refraction in glass in a multi-pane window. Light from the sun bounces between layers causing the distinct visual separation of the reflections." Except for the brightest sun in the centre, which is the real one, the others are part of the optical illusion. Despite the scientific explanation, some people preferred to believe that the spectacle fell under the story of Hou Yi, who is portrayed as the "god of archery" in Chinese mythology, sent from the Heavens to help humans.

## New biomedical device offers hope for patients with chronic pain

Pain is a necessary biological signal, but a variety of conditions can cause those signals to go awry. For people with chronic pain, the root is often faulty signals emerging deep within the brain, giving false alarms about a wound that has since healed, a limb that has since been amputated, or other intricate, hard-to-explain scenarios.

Patients with this kind of life-altering pain are constantly looking for new treatment options; now a new device from the University of Utah may represent a practical long-sought solution.

Researchers at the university's John and Marcia Price College of Engineering and Spencer Fox Eccles School of Medicine have published promising findings about an experimental therapy that has given many participants relief after a single treatment session. They are now recruiting participants for a final round of trials.

At the core of this research is Diadem, a new biomedical device that uses ultrasound to non-invasively stimulate deep brain regions, potentially disrupting the faulty signals that lead to chronic pain.

The findings from a recent clinical trial are published in the journal Pain.

This study constitutes a translation of two previous studies, published in Nature Communications Engineering and IEEE Transactions on Biomedical Engineering, which describe the unique features and characteristics of the device and demonstrate its efficacy.

The study was conducted by Jan Kubanek, a professor in Price's Department of Biomedical Engineering, and Thomas Riis, a postdoctoral researcher in his lab. They collaborated with Akiko Okifuji, professor of Anesthesiology in the

School of Medicine, as well as Daniel Feldman, graduate student in the departments of Biomedical Engineering and Psychiatry, and laboratory technician Adam Losser.

The randomized sham-controlled study recruited 20 participants with chronic pain, who each experienced two 40-minute sessions with Diadem, receiving either real or sham ultrasound stimulation. Patients described their pain a day and a week after their sessions, with 60% of the experimental group receiving real treatment reporting a clinical meaningful reduction in symptoms at both points.

"The rapid onset of the pain symptom improvements as well as their sustained nature are intriguing, and open doors for applying these non-invasive treatments to the many patients who are resistant to current treatments," Kubanek added.

## Health





## Privatization of loss making SOEs govt's top priority, says Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said that the privatization of loss-making State Owned Entities (SOEs) was the priority so this important issue should be dealt immediately according to the rules and regulations. He said that the process of privatization was putting positive impact on the country's economy and the rating of "Moody's" was a clear proof of it, said a press release received here on Thursday. The minister was presiding over the 223rd meeting of Privatization Commission Board in which various issues and aspects of privatization including PIA Roosevelt Hotel were discussed in detail. Aleem Khan said there is no doubt that privatization will reduce the burden on the national exchequer that's why more SOEs are being listed for privatization. He asked for timely preparation of documents which is of utmost importance and where it is necessary the process of secrecy related to the transactions of privatization should be ensured by all means. He directed that the formalities of privatization be completed in a phased and transparent manner for which the Privatization Commission Board will resolve the issues with mutual consultation keeping in view the wider national interest. Federal Secretary Privatization briefed the PC Board meeting on the technical issues of privatization while Board Members Pir Saad Ehsanuddin, Rasool Bakhsh, Parvez Afzal Khan, Naheed Memon, Khurram Shehzad, Javed Bashir Sheikh and Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan tabled different proposals regarding Privatization and expressed their views and suggestions regarding different issues. The minister observed that in the light of the recommendations of the Privatization Commission Board, final decision would be taken by the Cabinet Committee. The meeting also approved the proceedings of the previous meeting of the PC Board.

## Saudi ministry issues health advisory for Hajj 2025

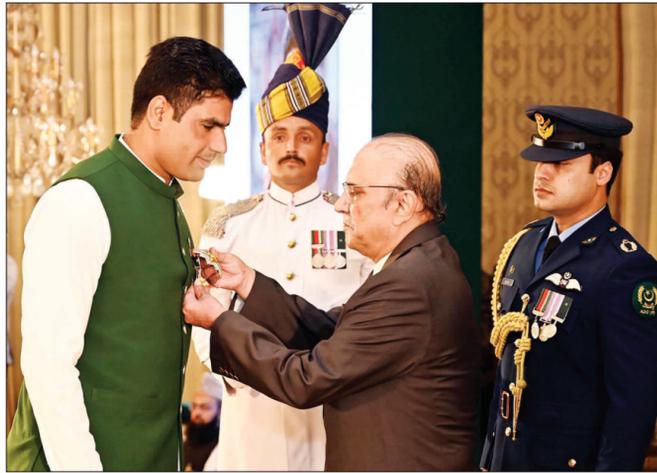
ISLAMABAD: The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has issued a health advisory for Hajj 2025, outlining strict requirements for prospective pilgrims, with particular emphasis on the exclusion of individuals suffering from complex medical conditions. According to spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt for the Ministry of Religious Affairs, individuals with severe illnesses will not be permitted to undertake the Hajj pilgrimage. He said this measure is in response to the anticipated extreme weather conditions during the Hajj season, and it is to ensure the safety and well-being of all pilgrims. The spokesperson further clarified that those suffering from serious kidney, heart, lung, liver diseases and cancer would not be allowed to participate in Hajj. Additionally, he said individuals diagnosed with dementia or contagious diseases such as tuberculosis, whooping cough, and other similar illnesses will also be barred from the pilgrimage. He informed that the advisory also specifies that children under 12 years of age and pregnant women will not be permitted to perform Hajj. Furthermore, Umar said it is mandatory for all pilgrims to be vaccinated against meningitis, COVID-19, seasonal influenza, and polio, as part of the health protocols set forth by the Saudi authorities. APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan presided 223rd meeting of Privatization Commission Board.

## President Zardari confers Hilal-i-Imtiaz upon Arshad Nadeem

Announces Rs 100 mln reward for the Olympic Gold Medalist



### VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferred the award of Hilal-i-Imtiaz upon Mr Arshad Nadeem for the Olympic Gold Medalist in recognition of his outstanding performance in Men's Javelin Throw in the Paris Olympics 2024. The President also announced

a Rs 100 million reward from his side for the athlete.

The award was conferred during a special investiture ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday. Later, the athlete also met with the President. Arshad Nadeem's Coach, Salman Iqbal Butt, Secretary Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, Nadeem Irshad Kayani, Director General Pakistan Sports Board,

Muhammad Yasir Pirzada, and senior government officials also attended the meeting. While congratulating Arshad Nadeem, President Asif Ali Zardari stated that Arshad Nadeem had made the country proud by setting the Olympic record with a throw of 92.97 meters. He appreciated his remarkable achievement, sheer hard work, and dedication that not only elevated Pakistan but also inspired countless young athletes across the country.

President Asif Ali Zardari said that Pakistan needed to promote other sports, especially the Singles. He remarked that children of sportsmen should be granted scholarships, saying that he would ask the Sindh Government to contribute Rs 250 million to Pakistan Sports Board's Endowment Fund for the welfare of athletes.

The President said that Arshad Nadeem's exemplary triumph encouraged our youngsters to break barriers and make their mark in the field of sports at the international level. He expressed the hope that the athlete would continue to win laurels for the country in future. Arshad Nadeem thanked the President for conferring Hilal-i-Imtiaz and resolved to break the world record for the Javelin throw event. He also thanked his family and the nation for their prayers and wishes.

The President also appreciated the contributions of the athlete's coach, Salman Iqbal Butt, for his guidance and contributions to Arshad's success.

## Milan university students' delegation meets Romina

ISLAMABAD: A four-member delegation of students from Italy's Milan University called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam to discuss the pressing issue of climate change and its impacts on Pakistan.

During the meeting held here on Thursday in the climate change and environmental delegation ministry, the students' delegation was also apprised of the various socio-economic impacts of climate change and the government's policy measures for building the country's climate resilience, a news release said. On the occasion, the PM's climate aide welcomed the students' delegation and said, "As we all know, climate change is one of the most critical challenges facing our world today, and its effects are increasingly evident in Pakistan."

Romina Khurshid Alam told the students that ranked among the world's top ten climate-vulnerable country, Pakistan had been experiencing a rise in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, particularly unprecedented floods, intense monsoon rains, intense devastating heatwaves, rapid glacial melting and consequent glacial lake outburst floods. The recent heatwave in June 2024 saw temperatures soar to record highs, impacting public health and agriculture, she highlighted. She further said, "Floods, which are becoming more intense and frequent, displace thousands of families, damage infrastructure, and disrupt livelihoods, especially in rural areas." "For resource-poor the country, managing these fallouts of climate change has become a grave challenge because of the frequency and magnitude at which they are occurring and inadequate financial and technical resources," the PM's climate aide said. Talking about impacts on agriculture sector, Romina Khurshid Alam told the students that climate change was also affecting crop yields and food security. "Unpredictable weather patterns and extreme temperatures are harming crops and reducing productivity to an extent that crop failures and fall in productivity of different crops had become new normal in the country, with significant implications for food prices and rural economies," Ms Alam explained.

Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns were also disrupting local ecosystems, badly affecting biodiversity. Such changes in weather patterns caused due to climate change, included shifts in bio-diversity and the health of key habitats such as mangroves and wetland, which provide environmental protection and livelihoods for the resource-dependent community. The present government was implementing various adaptation strategies, including flood management projects, improved water resource management, and early warning systems. There are also initiatives to promote climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable land use practices. Sharing details about the government's coping strategy, she said that for addressing these climate risks and for building climate resilience of the people, their livelihoods, ecosystems and public infrastructure, the present government was implementing various adaptation strategies, including flood management projects, improved water resource management, and enhancing network of early warning systems across the country for improved and more reliable weather and disaster forecast. There were also initiatives to promote climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable land use practices to enhance the agriculture sector's climate resilience. She apprised of the climate change and environmental coordination ministry's various measures to secure funding for implementing various adaptation and resilience-building measures plans. DNA

## Relief to people in electricity bills is Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's vision; CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE: "Alhamdulillah, the promise of giving relief to people in electricity bills has also been fulfilled," said Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif while chairing 14th meeting of the provincial cabinet to discuss and decide on important agenda items. Earlier, the cabinet approved a relief in electricity bills for the residents of Punjab and Islamabad, and paid a rich tribute to Madam Chief Minister for giving this much-needed relief to the people. The Provincial Ministers said, "Madam Chief Minister has taken a historic step keeping in view economic difficulties of the people." They also paid tributes to PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for his vision of giving relief worth Rs 46 billion to people in electricity bills, and thanked Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif for supporting the Provincial Government in providing this relief to people. Madam Chief Minister said, "Household consumers of Punjab and Islamabad consuming

electricity from 200 to 500 units are being given a relief of Rs 14 per unit of electricity in August and September bills." She added, "This is a huge relief in electricity bills, which has never been given before." She noted, "With this relief, 02 million electricity bills have reached consumers so far for payment. On every bill, it is written that the original bill was this and after the relief from Punjab government, it has been reduced so much." She highlighted, "More than 1.5 lakh consumers of Islamabad are also being given relief in their electricity bills." Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "Relief in electricity bills is an urgent measure, solar panel project is being launched for sustainable relief." She added, "Electricity relief is not a favor to the people, it is their right." Madam Chief Minister said, "It is our responsibility to solve problems of every citizen of Punjab, We are with them and will continue to support them."

## Pakistan, Iraq vow to strengthen trade relations

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan-Iraq Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) here on Thursday held its inaugural meeting with Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Pakistan.

Chaired by Sehar Kamran, MNA and Convener of Pakistan-Iraq PFG, the meeting was also attended by group members, Mehtab Akber Rashidi, Shehla Raza and Muhammad Moein Aamer Pirzada MNAs.

While welcoming the Ambassador of Iraq, Sehar Kamran said that Pakistan and Iraq were intertwined in eternal bonds of religion, brotherhood and culture. She said that the bonds of brotherhood could further be cemented through Parliamentary Friendship Group. The Ambassador underscored the necessity of regular high level engagements between Pakistan and Iraq, expressing optimism that exchange of visits will contribute to the diversification and enhancement of bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. The Ambassador of Iraq underscored that Pakistan and Iraq had great opportunity in terms of bilateral cooperation in fields of energy, petroleum, trade and business. He also said that Iraq valued high its ties with Pakistan and was looking forward for more cooperation in term of trade and business. APP

## Gilani calls for enhanced collaboration & investment between Pakistan & Japan

Says the current bilateral trade volume stands at \$1.27 biln, falling short of its potential

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that Pakistan places significant importance to its relationship with Japan and we are eager to expand cooperation in areas of mutual benefit.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani expressed these views in a meeting with Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan at the Parliament House on Thursday. The Chairman Senate recognized Japan as a key development partner and said that both the countries enjoy cordial and friendly relations based on mutual respect and shared objectives of regional development. During the meeting, crucial aspects of the Pakistan-Japan relationship were discussed with an aim to further explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration. The meeting underscored Pakistan's commitment to enhancing its partnership with Japan across various domains.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani during the meeting gave special acknowledgment to Japan's support following the devastating floods in Pakistan in 2022. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani quoted Former Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's visit to Japan from July 1-4, 2023, and his meetings with Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi and Prime Minister highlight the robust bilateral engagement. He highlighted the significance of high-level diplomatic ties and said their interactions provide further direction and momentum to deepen ties in diverse sectors. Chairman Senate said that the current bilateral trade volume stands at \$1.27 billion, falling short of its potential. Both the countries are encouraged to work together to boost bilateral trade. Pakistan also highly values Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) development initiatives and seeks to establish visible flagship projects, he observed. He said that Japan



remains a key investment partner, and Pakistan welcomes increased Japanese investment.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has called on Japan to take an active role in the international effort to address the repatriation of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan. Gilani urged Japan, as a key international player, to support and contribute to the initiatives aimed at facilitating safe repatriation of refugees.

Gilani said that two nations have established various bilateral mechanisms for discussion, and informed the Ambassador of Japan that the Senate of Pakistan has established a Pak-Japan Friendship Group which will provide a suitable forum and should be regularly utilized to review and advance the relationship, emphasizing that regular parliamentary exchanges are deemed crucial for strengthening bilateral relations. Such visits enhance mutual understanding and promote people-to-people connections. Chairman Senate lauded that encouraging progress has been made in exporting Pakistani manpower to Japan through Memoranda of Cooperation on the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and Specified Skilled Workers (SSW) Programs signed in 2019. He said that the 25,000-strong Pakistani diaspora in Japan plays a significant role, contributing to sectors such as used automobiles, carpet trade, and Halal food. This community remains a vital asset to the Japanese economy. SABAH

## Pakistan has no plans to engage in any talks with the TTP: FO Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch

Says the third death anniversary of the iconic Kashmiri leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, to be observed on 1 September 2024

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office has confirmed that invitations have been extended to all heads of government of SCO member countries including the Prime Minister of India for the forthcoming meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that we have also received some confirmations. She said this meeting is scheduled to take place in Islamabad on the 15th to 16th of October. Responding to a question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan does not have trade relations with India.

She said Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory. She said the United Nations Security Council resolutions clearly state that the final disposition of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute shall be made in accordance with the will of the people through a UN supervised plebiscite.

In this backdrop, she said that any other process cannot serve as a substitute to the grant of the right of self-



determination to the Kashmiri people.

Responding to a question, the Spokesperson said Pakistan has no plans to engage in any talks with the TTP. She said the presence of terror groups including the TTP in Afghanistan is confirmed by multiple international reports including the United Nations. She said we expect the Afghan authorities to take robust action against these terror groups and prevent their activities that endanger Pakistan's security.

When asked about China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), FO Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch

that has contributed positively and transparently to Pakistan's national development. She said the corridor project enjoys support and popularity in all provinces and across the political divide in Pakistan.

She clarified that Pakistan's total public debt relating to CPEC projects is a small percentage of its total debt. Moreover, she said, the public debt obtained from China has longer maturity periods with low interest rates.

The Spokesperson reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to provide full security to all Chinese nationals, projects and institutions.

She said that Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi is in Cameroon today where he is leading the Pakistan delegation at the 50th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM). At the CFM, the Foreign Secretary will share Pakistan's perspective on the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the dire humanitarian situation there; Israel's adventurism in the region that is threatening peace in the Middle East; and the right to self-determination of the peo-

ple of Jammu & Kashmir. He will also underline the imperatives of solidarity and unity of the Ummah; rising Islamophobia and xenophobia in various parts of the world; issues of climate change, terrorism and other contemporary global challenges. She said that the eighth session of the Pakistan-Oman Bilateral Political Consultations was held in Muscat, Oman earlier this week. The talks were co-chaired by Additional Foreign Secretary (Middle East), Ambassador Shehryar Akbar Khan and Ambassador Sheikh Ahmad bin Hashil bin Rashid Al Maskari, the Chief of GCC and Regional Neighborhood Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

She said that the two sides comprehensively reviewed all aspects of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Oman including political relations, trade and investment, security and defence, culture, health and consular matters. Pakistan-Oman cooperation at multilateral fora and regional and global matters of mutual concern was also discussed.

## CEO NDRMF stressing importance...

Continued from Page 1

These presentations highlighted the challenges faced in delivering humanitarian aid effectively amid changing climate conditions and discussed the gaps and strategies for improvement. Participants engaged with experts, explored case studies, and contributed to a comprehensive roadmap for future action. In addition, the experts also highlighted the challenges faced by agriculture sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the wake of climate change. The province has witnessed various disasters in the recent past and even in 2024 ongoing

monsoon have damaged agriculture. The experts reflected on long term solutions for adaptive agriculture strategies in KPK. During the event, findings regarding malnutrition in Sindh especially for infants and mothers were highlighted and a few innovative practices to improve the maternal and newborn nutrition were shared with the participants.

The insights gained from the event will play a pivotal role in shaping policies and programs aimed at strengthening Pakistan's resilience to climate change. Through addressing gaps and leveraging innovative solutions, this collaborative effort seeks to build a more adaptive and resilient future for the country.