

THE REGIONAL TIMES

Uniting People Every Day



Sindh CM Engus World Bank In Bold Keenjhar Lake Expansion Talks



Jennifer Lopez to witness 'ugliest' fate after Ben Affleck divorce

Heartland

Pakistani women are very talented: PPP MNA Dr. Nafisa Shah



Money

Zafar Moti is Sad! PSE 100-index down by 70.01 points to close at 80,212.79



NATIONAL

Yasmin Rashid Urges Judiciary To Address Unabated Oppression Against PTI



SPORTS

'Babar is a world class player', says Australia's leading power-hitting coach



Bilawal Lambasts PML-N Government's Strategy In Budget 2024-25

QUETTA: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhatto-Zardari has once again criticised its key ally in the Centre, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), for what he said not taking his part's input in the preparation of the Budget 2024-25.

"The opposition should be engaged in matters related to budget and economy. The government's strategy regarding the budget was very weak," said Bilawal addressing a press conference flanked by Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti at the CM House in Quetta on Friday.

"The overall economic situation in the country has attracted criticism from various quarters," the PPP chief said adding that the allies of the ruling coalition would have been approached, had there been a consultation process in place.

Bilawal's criticism comes after the tax-heavy budget cruised through the National Assembly following its endorsement by the ruling alliance, including



the PPP. On June 30, President Asif Ali Zardari green-lighted the Finance Bill 2024, which went into effect on July 1, which marks the beginning of the next fiscal year.

The federal government presented the tax-loaded Rs18.877 trillion budget for fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) two weeks ago, drawing sharp criticism from opposition parties, which termed it "economic terrorism" against the people.

"The PPP sticks to what it says. We are not forcing that all our recommendations should be accepted," Bilawal said adding that the PPP-led government would bring everything to the lower and upper houses of parliament after creating consensus in its 2008-13 stint in power in the Centre.

Responding to a question on election rigging, he said that the PPP witnessed rigging in every election, adding that free and fair elections would benefit the PPP eventually.

The PPP's political rivals are destined to wail and wince whether they win the elections or lose them.

He also said that the party would send its representatives to the All Parties Conference (APC) being convened by the federal government to evolve consensus on the newly launched Operation Azm-e-Istehkam. The PPP will put forward its stance regarding the situation in Balochistan, said Bilawal.—RT

Military's Bold Response To Azm-e-Istehkam Operation Criticism

RAWALPINDI: The top military brass on Friday denounced the undue criticism against the newly launched anti-terrorism operation, Azm-e-Istehkam (Resolve for Stability), stating that the "vision" was being misrepresented deliberately for "vested interests".

The statement came after the 26th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir in the chair, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

It said the forum undertook a comprehensive review of the internal and external security situation of the country and had a detailed discussion on various aspects of "Azm-e-Istehkam".

The military's media wing said the new operation



is aimed at harnessing the national counter-terrorism efforts in a synchronised manner to dismantle the nexus of terrorism and illegal spectrum in the country for enduring stability and economic prosperity.

"Forum noted with concern the unwarranted criticism by some quarters and deliberate misrepresentation of the vision, only for furthering their vested interests," said the ISPR.

"The forum affirmed that military leadership is cognizant of the full spectrum of

the challenges and resolved to shoulder its constitutionally mandated responsibilities with the support of the resilient people of Pakistan," it added.

The military vowed to combat "digital terrorism" conspirators abetted by foreign cohorts.

"Forum underscored that onslaught of politically motivated digital terrorism, unleashed by conspirators, duly abetted by their foreign cohorts against state institutions is meant to induce dependency in the nation and sow discord through peddling of blatant lies, fake news and propaganda," the military's media wing said.

It said that the armed forces and the nation are fully aware of all such machinations and stand united and committed to defeating the "notorious designs of the enemies".

Moreover, the military top brass also deliberated upon the regional security situation, especially Afghanistan, and reaffirmed its commitment to regional peace and security.

They expressed solidarity with the people of Kashmir and Palestine and condemned serious human rights violations, war crimes and genocide being perpetrated in Kashmir and Gaza.

The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of martyrs of the armed forces, Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and the citizens of Pakistan who have laid their lives for peace and stability in the country.

It also renewed the resolve to continue full support of ongoing efforts in uplifting socioeconomic growth and wholeheartedly assisting the government in curbing all illegal activities that hamper investors' confidence, economic stability and growth.

Expressing satisfaction with the army's commitment to national security, COAS Gen Munir stressed upon maintaining high standards of professionalism and operational preparedness.

In his concluding remarks, the army chief stated that the Pakistan Army has always been fully prepared to thwart all internal and external challenges and play its due role in the stability and prosperity of the country, regardless of the challenges posed, the military's media wing added.—RT/Agency

Imran Affirms PTI's Participation In APC Despite Reservations On Operation Azm-e-Istehkam

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan said Friday that his party would participate in the all-parties conference (APC) in which the government is expected to take political parties into confidence over Operation Azm-e-Istehkam.

"My party will participate in the all-parties conference and hear what the government has to say," the PTI founder told reporters as he appeared in a case at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, where he is imprisoned.

The PTI founder, while noting that his party has reservations over the new anti-terrorism action, said it would "only lead to further instability" in the country.

With terrorism on the rise, the government has launched a reinvigorated and re-emerged national counter-terrorism drive, which would be intelligence-based operations' focused Khan's comments came after media reported that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to organise an APC "to gain political parties' confidence" in newly announced Operation Azm-e-



Istehkam.

PM Shehbaz will hold consultations to decide on the date of the APC, the sources said, adding that the date would be announced later.

The federal cabinet last week approved the launching of the counter-terrorism operation following the National Action Plan's Central Apex Committee's recommendations to turn up the heat on militants targeting Pakistan.

However, opposition parties including the PTI, Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam Fazl (JUI-F), Awami National Party (ANP), and others have voiced concerns over the military operation, demanding that parliament must be taken into confidence before taking any such decision.

Imran Threatens Hunger Strike, Escalating Protest Against Government: Ali Muhammad Khan



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Muhammad Khan has said that the PTI founder may go on hunger strike after consulting his colleagues.

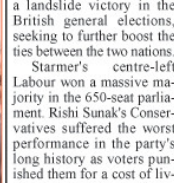
Talking to the media, Ali Muhammad Khan said that the trial of the PTI founder in the Al-Qadri Trust case was held in Adiala Jail.

He said that the founder of PTI had said that if the cruelty against him does not stop, he will observe a hunger strike in the jail.

The PTI leader further questioned why is there no political solution to these issues.

The PTI founder said that he would not bow. PTI founder while giving a message to the workers about the

Pakistan Pushes For Enhanced Relations With UK Following Keir Starmer's Election Triumph



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Friday congratulated UK Prime Minister-elect Keir Starmer after his party won a landslide victory in the British general elections, seeking to further boost the ties between the two nations.

Starmer's centre-left Labour won a massive majority in the 650-seat parliament. Rishi Sunak's Conservatives suffered the worst performance in the party's long history as voters punished them for a cost of living crisis, failing public services, and a series of scandals.

Taking to X, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif felicitated his British counterpart Keir Starmer on the landslide victory of the Labour Party in the general elections.

"Looking forward to working closely with the new UK government, under Sir Starmer's wise and able leadership, to further strengthen and broaden the Pakistan-U.K. partnership," he added.

He noted that Pakistan and the UK share deep-rooted and broad-based ties founded in shared history and people-to-people contacts.



"I am confident that under his stewardship our relationship will be further strengthened and we can work together for global peace, prosperity and development," he added.

The election result has upended British politics. Labour won more than 410 seats, an increase of over 210, while the Conservatives, the western world's most successful party, lost about 250 lawmakers, including a record number of senior ministers and former Prime Minister Liz Truss.

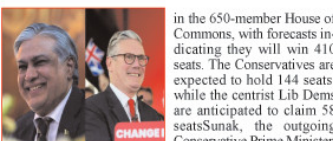
A glum Sunak conceded defeat and will meet King Charles later to formally resign before Starmer is appointed in his place. "Today power will change hands in a peaceful and orderly manner, with goodwill on all sides," 2019 drubbing.—RT/Agency

Dar Extends Congratulations To Starmer On Labour Party's Triumph In UK Elections

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar has congratulated Keir Starmer, the leader of the UK's Labour Party, on the party's historic victory in the parliamentary election.

In a statement posted on his X timeline, Dar extended "heartfelt felicitations" to Starmer, expressing confidence that the "deep-rooted and broad-based ties" between Pakistan and the UK, founded on shared history and people-to-people contacts, will be further strengthened under Starmer's leadership. DPM Dar expressed optimism that the two countries will work together to promote global peace, prosperity and development.

Earlier today, the Labour Party under the leadership of Keir Starmer emerged victorious in the United Kingdom's general election, end-



in the 650-member House of Commons, with forecasts indicating they will win 410 seats. The Conservatives are expected to hold 144 seats, while the centrist Lib Dems are anticipated to claim 58 seats. Sunak, the outgoing Conservative Prime Minister, has gracefully acknowledged the electorate's verdict, conceding defeat to Starmer's Labour Party. This paves the way for a smooth transition of power, with Starmer set to assume the role of prime minister within 24 hours.

In his victory speech, Starmer pledged a vision of "national rejuvenation" with a focus on putting the country's interests above partisan concerns. The Labour leader expressed delight as his party is poised to secure a considerable majority in Parliament, paving the way for significant changes under his leadership.—RT/Agency

ATC Withdraws Arrest Warrants Against KP CM Gandapur Amid Controversy



ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in the federal capital withdrew arrest warrants of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur issued in the case pertaining to violent protests and violation of Section 144.

Gandapur had filed a petition seeking suspension of the arrest warrant in the case registered against him at the I-9 Police Station in the federal capital.

The KP CM surrendered before the court, saying that he could not attend the hearings earlier due to official engagements.

On July 2, the court issued non-bailable arrest warrants against Gandapur and other PTI leaders, warning that they would be declared proclaimed offenders if they continued to remain absent.

Gandapur had filed a plea seeking exemption from attending the hearing, saying that he was out of the city. However, Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra had termed the reason as invalid. Gandapur's counsel had then requested the court for another opportunity, assuring his client would appear in the next hearing.—RT/Agency

Electricity Tariff Hiked By Rs3.33 Per Unit, Sending Shockwaves Through Consumers



ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Friday notified an additional fuel cost adjustment (FCA) of Rs3.33 per unit for electricity consumed in May, media reported.

According to an order issued by the regulator, Nepra "reviewed and assessed a National Average Uniform increase of Rs3.3287/kWh in the applicable tariff for XWDIS-COs on account of variations in the fuel charges for the month of May 2024".

The "adjustment of Rs3.3287/kWh shall be applicable to all consumer categories except electric vehicle charging stations (EVCs) and lifeline consumers. The said adjustment shall be shown separately in the consumers' bills based on units billed in May 2024, and it will reflect in the billing month of July 2024. Nepra's notification stated.

Meanwhile, the regulatory authority also notified a tariff reduction of Rs1.67 per unit for K-Electric

consumers on account of fuel cost adjustment (FCA) for April 2024.

"The authority after discussing and incorporating adjustments decided to allow the negative FCA for the month of April 2024, to be passed on to consumers in their monthly bills of July 2024", a separate notification stated.

The "negative adjustment shall be applicable to all the consumer categories except lifeline consumers, domestic consumers consuming up to 300 units, EV Charging Stations and Agriculture Consumers of K-Electric".

It added that negative monthly FCA is also applicable to the domestic consumers having Time of Use (TOU) meters irrespective of their consumption level.

"The adjustment shall be shown separately in the consumers' bills on the basis of units billed to the consumers in the month of April 2024", it concluded.

A day earlier, the federal cabinet has approved an increase of Rs5.72 per unit in the basic electricity tariff through circulation.

NEPRA made this decision for the fiscal year 2024-2025, with the implementation set to begin on July 1, 2024. The average basic electricity tariff was approved to be raised from Rs 29.78 to Rs 35.50 per unit.—RT/Agency

THE HEARTLAND



HYDERABAD: Members and leaders of Human Rights Youth Organization are holding a protest demonstration at the Hyderabad Press Club against prolonged electricity load shedding and over billing of electricity bills.-RT

SACM Dr. Lal Chand Ukrani calls on MPA Adi Faryal Talpur

By Muhammad Bachal

UMERKOT: Dr. Lal Chand Ukrani, President of the Pakistan People's Party Minority Wing Sindh, recently convened a significant meeting with Adi Faryal Talpur, Central President of the PPP Ladies Wing. The discussion focused extensively on issues concerning the minority community across the province.



During the cordial meeting, Dr. Lal Chand Ukrani conveyed his heartfelt appreciation to Adi Faryal Talpur for entrusting him with the role of Special Assistant to the Chief Minister. As a gesture of gratitude, he presented her with a bouquet, symbolizing camaraderie and mutual respect.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, reaffirming the party's dedication to minorities throughout Pakistan's history. "Only the Pakistan People's Party has consistently championed the rights of minorities and women," he remarked proudly.

LUMHS VC Dr Ikramuddin inaugurates digital examination center

By Munawar Chandio



JAMSHORO: A state-of-the-art computerized examination center sponsored by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan was inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Ikramuddin Ujjan at Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences Jamshoro.

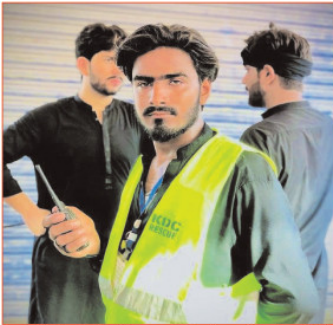
The center is designed to cater to a wide range of academic and professional examination needs, ensuring a seamless, secure, and efficient testing environment. The Vice Chancellor extended his deepest gratitude to the Higher Education Commission for their generous funding and unwavering support in making this project a reality.

Their investment in this initiative underscores their commitment to advancing educational standards and providing the necessary resources for technological advancement in examination processes. He added that the examination center contains 04 Labs, each lab equipped with high-performance computers with cutting-edge software and hardware to facilitate a range of testing formats.

Advanced security measures are implemented, including bio-

Khairpur Disaster Cell volunteer electrocuted

By Naeem Shaikh



KHAIRPUR: The Khairpur community mourns the untimely demise of Muhammad Ali Lashari, a dedicated volunteer of the Khairpur Disaster Cell (KDC), who tragically lost his life due to an electric shock. Muhammad Ali, a young resident of the Bhurgari neighborhood, met with the fatal accident while performing his duties.

The news of his passing has deeply saddened resi-

Khairpur woman stripped naked by her in-laws demands justice

By Naeem Shaikh



KHAIRPUR: In a distressing press conference held at the residence of social activist Shahnaz Shaikh, a woman named Saima Shaikh from Mir Ali Bazaar, Khairpur, has spoken out against the harrowing abuse she endured at the hands of her in-laws. Accompanied by her brother, Saima detailed her ordeal on Friday.

Saima recounted that she was married to Aslam Shaikh, also known as Nadeem Shaikh, a resident of Hyderabad, in 2017. Unbeknownst to her at the time, Aslam was already married. The situation escalated when Saima discovered her husband was attempting to issue B forms for her children in the name of another woman.

Education Dept accused of misappropriating Rs 3.1 million of contingency funds in Jhudo

By Shahid Majeed

JHUDO: An alleged corruption of 3.1 million rupees has been revealed in the Education Department of Jhudo. Civil society has demanded an inquiry from higher authorities. In the primary section of the Education Department of Jhudo, an amount of 3,187,110 rupees was withdrawn for the purposes of staff uniforms, stationery purchases, furniture repairs, and other purposes under the contingency of four schools. This money was neither spent on the schools nor did the school administration have any information regarding this.

The contingency of the four schools in Jhudo, which includes Government Girls Primary School Jhudo, Government Boys Primary School Main Jhudo, Government Boys Primary School Naukot, and Government Boys Primary School Ganj Bakhs, was involved.

NOTICE

This is to inform though this notice that the former Assistant Director (Additional charge of Deputy Director) Master Plan Amir Khan Pathan was suspended for violating code of conduct and irregularities under office order No DD/A&F/ESS/SD/A48/2024 on 30.5.2024 and the enquiry has been initiated against him. All the officers, builders and developers are informed that concerned man should not be consulted for any matter and he will be responsible of his own deed.

From Secretary Selwan Development Authority, Jamshoro



HYDERABAD: Resident of Hali road, Nauman Khan is addressing a press conference, at the Hyderabad press club for the provision of justice.-RT

Pakistani women are very talented: PPP MNA Dr. Nafisa Shah

By Naz Solangi



KUMB: Under the auspices of the social organization Goth Seenghar Foundation, World Small Business Day was celebrated. A ceremony was held in the lecture hall of Khairpur Medical College, with MNA Dr. Nafisa Shah as the chief guest. The event saw significant participation from officials of various institutions, bank representatives, doctors, political and social figures, and businesswomen. On this occasion, the head of the organization, Nazir Ujjan, expressed gratitude to all the guests and presented a sou-

SSP Sujawal Dr. Abdul Khaliq Pirzado convenes a special meeting to review measures for Muharram

By Kamran Hidayat



SUJAWAL: As the sacred month of Muharram-ul-Haram 1446 AH approaches, SSP Sujawal, Dr. Abdul Khaliq Pirzado, orchestrated a pivotal gathering at the district office. Representatives from diverse religious communities convened under the SSP's leadership to strategize and ensure peace and security during this solemn period.

Manchar Rehabilitation Movement demands historic lake's restoration

By Qaimudin Memon



SEHWAN SHARIF: The Manchar Rehabilitation Movement has staged a protest outside the Selwan Press Club, demanding the restoration of Manchar Lake to protect the residents of Taluka Selwan from potential floods. Leaders Imam Ali Detho, Manzoor Ahmed Jamali and Kamaluddin Khakheli held a press conference, stating that due to the Sindh Government's negligence, the condition of Manchar Lake is worsening. They highlighted that since the great flood of 1942, there have been seven significant floods in the area, occurring roughly every 12 years. Currently, the area between Sehwan and Bhan Syedabad has become "Manchar's Kacho," a 182-square-kilometer stretch that experiences recurring floods. The devastating floods of 2022 caused extensive damage, displacing homes, destroying millions of acres of crops and resulting in significant property losses. The government's assistance has been minimal, providing only Rs 300,000 to build a single row for the affected families, a scheme that is now in its third year. The leaders expressed their disappointment over the lack of comprehensive government support. After the last flood, the Manchar Rehabilitation Movement organized a high-level conference in Sehwan, involving water experts, relevant government officials, civil society members and World Bank representatives. The conference aimed to provide useful recommendations for aiding flood victims and restoring Manchar Lake. The leaders urged the Sindh Government to strengthen



NAUNDERO: Activists and leaders of the PPP Peoples Party are holding a protest rally to mark 5th July, 1977 as a Black Day, in Naundero.-RT

NATIONAL



Maryam Initiates Inquiry Into Illegal Housing Schemes During First LDA Visit

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Friday sought list of illegal housing societies being established in Lahore.

The chief minister visited Lahore Development Authority (LDA) headquarter on Friday where she was warmly welcomed by DG LDA Tahir Farooq.

The CM also chaired a meeting regarding the ongoing projects of LDA. Senior Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb, Special Assistant to Chief Minister Zeshan Malik, Chief Secretary, Principal Secretary to CM and other officials also attended the meeting.

DG LDA Tahir Farooq gave a detailed briefing to CM and said that the LDA would collect more revenue in the ongoing fiscal year. The online



service is being started to pass the residential maps of the citizens.

It was also decided in the meeting to establish the Punjab Development Authority in the province.

The beautification and remodeling of M.M. Alam road was also approved in the meeting.

It was also decided that a tram service would be started in Liberty, Main Market, Mimi Market and Hali Road areas for the people of Lahore.

A signal-free corridor was also approved in the meeting from Karim Block to Motorway. The chief minister also directed the officials to ensure early completion of sports complex in Minar-e-Pakistan and China Scheme.—RT/Agency

NOC Suspended For PTI's Public Gathering In Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chief Commissioner on Friday suspended the no-objection certificate (NOC) issued to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for public gathering just a day before the scheduled meeting, media reported.

The decision was made during a meeting chaired by the Islamabad Chief Commissioner, wherein security agencies expressed their reservations about the potential risks associated with the rally.

During the meeting, the participants reviewed the applications related to the rally and the Deputy Commissioner's prior permission.

The Chief Commissioner, after reviewing the requests and security concerns, decided to suspend the NOC for the meeting.

According to the authorities, the decision to suspend the NOC was made to ensure the maintenance of law and order in the city. The authorities have emphasised that the safety of the citizens is their top priority, and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that peace and tranquility are maintained in the city.

Earlier, the district administration of the federal capital granted permission to the PTI to hold a public gathering on July 6 near Tarnol Chowk.

After the NOC was issued, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) disposed of the application for the issuance of NOC for a meeting. Justice Babar Sattar of the Islamabad High Court heard the petition seeking permission for the PTI's meeting in the federal capital.—RT/Agency

Yasmin Rashid Urges Judiciary To Address Unabated Oppression Against PTI

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former provincial minister Dr. Yasmin Rashid has demanded the judiciary to take notice of oppression against the PTI party.

PTI leader Yasmin Rashid handed a letter to journalists outside the anti-terrorism court, demanding notice of the courts against injustice to PTI.

She asserted that democracy was being strangled and people were being silenced. She added that the public's affection and support for Imran Khan would not be suppressed by cruelty and the tyranny would destroy Pakistan.

The PTI leader commended the determination and courage of party leaders, saying, there was no example of the oppression found in the history that PTI workers faced.

Yasmin Rashid acclaimed the victory in the February 8 polls, saying, the public



made it clear in the election that Imran Khan was their leader.

The PTI leader stressed, Imran Khan was their leader and would stand behind him for real freedom.

She criticised the incumbent government elected by forged Form-47 for suppressing dissent and democracy.

She insisted that every political party would face the consequences of democracy suppression and would be the price.

Peaceful protest was the beauty of democracy and it shouldn't be hindered, she added.

She criticised the government for the newly passed budget, stating, the government was forcing people to accept an IMF-directed budget.

She also demanded the government to return the Feb 8 polls so the legitimate government (PTI) could run the country as the public hadn't accepted the government of Form-47.—RT/Agency

PHDEC Hosts Successful Webinar On Post-Harvest Techniques for Peaches

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Company (PHDEC) hosted a successful webinar titled "Post-Harvest Techniques for Peaches Ensuring Freshness from Orchard to Market" to address the critical issue of post-harvest losses in the peach sector.

Post-harvest losses for fruits and vegetables in Pakistan can reach up to 35%. Peaches, grown mainly in Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab over approximately 15,000 hectares, produce around

150,000 tons annually. Due to their perishable nature, peaches are vulnerable to significant losses if not properly handled, stored, and transported.

The webinar featured a presentation by Dr. Muhammad Zahid Rashid from the Horticulture Research Institute, AARI Faisalabad, who shared advanced harvest and post-harvest management techniques. Dr. Rashid emphasized the importance of modern technologies and best practices to minimize losses and improve peach

quality. The event saw active participation from growers, exporters, processors, R&D experts, and other stakeholders. They appreciated the initiative and expressed keen interest in implementing the knowledge gained to enhance Pakistan's peach industry.

PHDEC remains committed to supporting the horticulture sector through continued education, workshops, and pilot projects aimed at improving post-harvest techniques.—RT

PHDEC remains committed to supporting the horticulture sector through continued education, workshops, and pilot projects aimed at improving post-harvest techniques.—RT

Salaried Class Protests Unfair Taxation Policies

ISLAMABAD: The employees of a private company staged a protest against the recently announced 'tax filled' budget 2024-25 which further burdened the inflation hit salary class citizens of Pakistan, media reported on Friday.

More than hundreds of private company employees participated in the protest staged at Islamabad's Blue area.

The president of the private company stated that people are not able to bear the tax recently imposed by the government on the salaried class.

He highlighted that the government should have revised the tax policy as the inflation-hit citizens already considering leaving the country.

The protesters appealed to the government to withdraw the taxes imposed in the recently announced budget 2024-25.

Last Month, Finance Minister and other government officials failed to answer the tough questions asked by the journalists during the post-budget press briefing session here in Islamabad.

During the post-budget briefing session, a Pakistani reporter lambasted the Pakistani government's fiscal policies and their impact on the common citizen.—RT/Agency

During the post-budget briefing session, a Pakistani reporter lambasted the Pakistani government's fiscal policies and their impact on the common citizen.—RT/Agency

Energy Minister Urges Urgent Overhaul Of Power System

ISLAMABAD: Energy Minister Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari informed the Upper House on Friday that Pakistan's entire electricity system is outdated and requires a complete overhaul.

Addressing a calling attention notice from Senator Falak Naz regarding excessive and unannounced load shedding in Upper and Lower Chitral, which has been causing significant problems for residents, Leghari assured that the electricity system would be fully restored within two weeks.

He explained that the Golan Gol Hydropower Project, which generates 108 megawatts of electricity, had ceased power generation due to technical issues.

The alternative solution was to supply electricity from the national grid through PESCO, but the line



managed by WAPDA also experienced faults, exacerbating the problem. However, teams are working on an urgent basis to restore electricity in Chitral.

The minister apologized for the inefficiency of employees and emphasized that without a complete overhaul, no substantial improvements could be expected in the system. "Our actions are

yielding good results, and we are working diligently to restore electricity for the people of Chitral," he stated.

Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani assured Senator Naz that the issue would be addressed when the Ministry briefs the Committee of the Whole of the Senate on the power crisis.—RT/Agency

METRO KARACHI

Khalid Fatmi's book "Namurad Karachi" launched at Arts Council



KARACHI: Today, the Arts Council of Karachi hosted the book launch of "Namurad Karachi" authored by Khaled Fatmi. The ceremony highlighted the city's rich history spanning six decades, encapsulated in the book's 400 pages.

Speakers emphasized the cultural and literary contributions of Karachi, once renowned for its social values and aesthetics, now grappling with environmental challenges and societal changes. They underscored the need to revive Karachi's lost morals and values.

Khaled Fatmi, discussing the essence of his work, portrayed the historical neighborhoods of Meethadar, Kharaad, Bunder Road, and Zainab Market, tracing Karachi's transformation over time.

The event was graced by President of the Arts Council of Karachi, Mohammad Ahmed Shah, alongside notable figures, including Parveen Rao, Waqar Azeem Fatmi, Khadim Soomro, Kashif Raza, Akeel Abbas Jafri, Akhlaq Ahmed, and other luminaries from literature, arts, and history.—RT

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Government Bars Suspension Of Social Media Apps During Muharram



ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Friday disallowed suspension social media applications and switching off mobile phone signals during Muharram "to maintain peace."

The Punjab government has a day ago requested the centre to suspend social media apps Facebook, TikTok, X (Twitter) and WhatsApp from Muharram 6 to 11 after receiving information of subversive activities from across the border.

According to sources, the federal government has

turned down the request and directed the authorities concerned to make foolproof security arrangements during Muharram. However, it allowed to turn off mobile phone signals only in those places where processions and gatherings are held.

The Punjab government has recommended to the ban social media to control spread of hate material and misinformation to avoid sectarian violence.—RT/Agency

Punjab Introduces Key Performance Indicators To Evaluate Performance Of Police Officers



LAHORE: The Punjab government has introduced a Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the performance of police officers across the province, media reported on Friday.

The performance-based evaluation system is based on 33 key performance indicators (KPIs) that will be used to evaluate the performance of police officials.

According to the system, officials will be awarded marks for achieving specific targets, such as: Three points for resolving cases promptly, three points for reducing crime rates, four points for preventing kite flying and

for foiling terrorist plots and making arrests in high-value operations.

On the other hand, officials will be penalised for underperformance, including: three points deducted for failing to resolve cases within a specified timeframe and three points deducted for failing to reduce crime rates.

The performance-based evaluation system will also lead to the transfer of officers who fail to perform well for three consecutive months. Meanwhile, station house officers (SHOs) and In-charge investigation has been briefed on the new numbering system.—RT/Agency

Saeed Ghani Calls For National Black Day Observance Every July 5

By Rahib Gaho

KARACHI: Sindh Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani has urged for the annual observance of a national black day on July 5th to commemorate the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in 1977.

Speaking at a PPP Karachi Division event at the Peoples' Secretariat, Ghani emphasized the lasting impact of the July 5 military intervention on Pakistan's political landscape.

He highlighted that the nation continues to suffer from the consequences of that day, citing issues of extremism and societal challenges that



emerged post-1977. Ghani praised Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto for his efforts in revitalizing the nation after the 1971 war and lamented the hardships faced by PPP members during subsequent martial law regimes. He condemned the suppression of democratic values and demanded bipartisan recognition of July 5th as a day of reflection and remembrance across Pakistan.

PPP Sindh General Secretary Waqar Mehdi echoed Ghani's sentiments, reaffirming the party's stance on observing July 5th annually as a black day and attributing the overthrow to international influences.

Punjab Seeks Deployment Of Pakistan Army And Rangers To Aid Police For Muharram Security

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Friday requested the deployment of the Pakistan Army and Rangers to assist the provincial police in establishing "peace and order" during the month of Muharram.

A statement issued by the Punjab Home Department's spokesperson said the provincial government had sought the services of 150 contingents of the military and Rangers following the requirements of different districts.

It added that a letter was written in line with the police's request for cooperation in maintaining security and the services of 60 army contingents and 81 Rangers contingents were sought.

"Law enforcement agencies will render their services for the peaceful observance of Muharram," the statement said.

Akin to Punjab, a security plan has also been formulated in Rawalpindi, under which over 7,500 police personnel and two contingents of the military and Rangers will be on standby to deal with any emergency.

Consequently, traffic plans have also been chalked up to help ensure a smooth flow of vehicles in the cities.

Each year, law enforcement agencies develop comprehensive security plans to prevent untoward incidents during the Islamic month, especially when mourning processions are held on the 9th and 10th of Muharram across the country.

In the past, militants have targeted Muharram processions several times, including a bomb blast that killed more than 40 people attending the main Ashura procession on Karachi's M. Jinnah Road in December 2009.—RT/Agency

EDITORIAL



Founders: Late Kazi Saeed Akbar, Late Kazi Jawad Akbar, Editor-in-Chief and Publisher: Kazi Sajjad Akbar

Saturday, July 06, 2024

Enough Is Enough!

The recent suspension of the no-objection certificate (NOC) for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s public gathering in Islamabad raises serious concerns about the state of democratic freedoms in our country. Such actions, reminiscent of repressive measures from our colonial past, only serve to fuel public discontent and bolster support for the PTI. History has repeatedly shown that attempts to stifle political dissent through administrative hurdles often backfire, leading to increased popular sympathy and mobilization.

The decision to suspend the NOC, purportedly due to security concerns, underscores a worrying trend where legitimate political activities are curtailed under the guise of maintaining law and order. While ensuring public safety is crucial, it should not come at the expense of fundamental

democratic rights, including the right to peaceful assembly and expression.

The PTI's determination to proceed with the public gathering despite the suspension demon-



strates a commitment to democratic principles and the rule of law. By standing firm against government attempts to suppress their activities, the PTI reaffirms its role as a major political entity entitled to equal treatment under the law.

It is imperative that the judiciary, as the guardian of constitutional rights, intervenes to rectify this unjustifiable infringement on democratic norms. The Islamabad High Court's earlier involvement in granting permission for the PTI's

gathering is a step in the right direction, but ongoing vigilance is necessary to ensure that such incidents do not become precedents for future encroachments on political freedoms.

In today's era, where transparency and accountability are paramount, the government must uphold the principles of democracy by allowing every political party, including the PTI, to conduct their activities freely and without undue interference. The public's faith in democratic institutions hinges on their ability to protect and promote these freedoms consistently. Citizens committed to democratic ideals, we must demand fairness and equity in the treatment of all political entities. Let us hope that the courts swiftly address this injustice, ensuring that such incidents do not tarnish our nation's commitment to democracy and pluralism.

THE HEARTLAND



MS Dr. Shehla Gul Shah holds an awards ceremony at DHQ Hospital TMK

By Abdul Sattar

TANDO MUHAMMAD KHAN: At the District Headquarters Hospital in Tando Muhammad Khan, Medical Superintendent Dr. Shehla Gul Shah awarded doctors, nurses, paramedical staff and workers for their exceptional performance throughout the year. This recognition, including awards, shields and certificates, boosted their morale and spread joy among the staff. During the award ceremony, District Health Officer Dr. Sadiq Khawaja, Assistant Commissioner Naem Ahmed Soomro, Indus Hospital Vice Chancellor Dr. Iqbal Memon, and other speakers praised Dr. Shehla Gul Shah for her courageous leadership in re-



claiming hospital quarters and land from illegal encroachment, enforcing legal notices to end the illegal occupation. Additionally, Dr. Shah took significant steps to combat electricity theft, removing illegal connections and taking action against the thieves, setting a precedent for others. The speakers expressed confidence that with Dr. Shehla Gul Shah's leadership for another two to three years, the district hospital would continue to improve. The event was well-attended by Dr. Muhammad Ali Memon, Dr. Ambreen, Umar Memon, members of civil society, journalists, and local citizens.

MNA Khalid Ahmed Lund and his sons get bail in journalist Nasrullah Gadani's murder case

By Shad Mahar



GHOTKI: MNA Mir Khalid Ahmed Lund, accused in the murder case of journalist Nasrullah Gadani, appeared in the Ghotki court accompanied by his sons. The court granted them interim bail until July 11 amidst charges related to terrorism in Ghotki. Alongside Khalid Ahmed Lund, Shahbaz Lund and Noor Muhammad Lund also received approval for bail from the district court. During the proceedings, Lund expressed optimism

about receiving justice, maintaining his innocence regarding the allegations surrounding Nasrullah Gadani's murder. He affirmed his dedication to political service and expressed confidence in the ongoing police investigation to uncover the truth behind the journalist's tragic death. The court session underscored the gravity of the charges against the Lunds, highlighting the legal complexities and the pursuit of justice in a case that has garnered significant public attention.

CSSP holds a seminar on environmental challenges in MPK

By MY Chandio



MIRPURKHAS: The Civil Society Support Program (CSSP) convened a significant seminar at Sindh Banquet Mirpurkhas, focusing on the escalating environmental and climate challenges facing the region. The event drew together a diverse group of participants, including experts on climate change, local officials, and concerned citizens, to discuss pressing issues and potential solutions. Speakers at the seminar underscored the urgent need for proactive measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change, emphasizing the importance of community involvement and governmental support. Discussions highlighted the vulnerabilities of Mirpurkhas to environmental degradation, citing examples of water scarcity, pollution, and deforestation.

Major Abdul Rauf Ghori, civil society leaders Mohamud Bakhsh Kapri and Gohram Baloch, and advocate Nusrat Miyano were among the prominent figures who addressed the audience, stressing collective responsibility in addressing environmental concerns. Their insights and recommendations resonated with attendees, which included doctors, women activists, and representatives from various sectors. The seminar concluded with a call to action, urging stakeholders to collaborate on sustainable initiatives and advocate for policies that promote environmental stewardship. CSSP reaffirmed its commitment to facilitating dialogue and fostering practical solutions to safeguard Mirpurkhas's natural resources for future generations.

All Pakistan Hydroelectric Workers Union rallies in Tando Allahyar

By Afaque Khanzada

TANDO ALLAHYAR: In Tando Allahyar, a protest rally was organized by the All Pakistan Hydroelectric Workers Union to commemorate Martyrs' Day. The rally, led by Khalid Qaimkhan, proceeded through various streets of the city and reached the Tando Allahyar Press Club. Participants held placards and banners, speaking to the media. Khalid Mehmod Qaimkhan, Amir Soomro, Ali Qaimkhan, Khalid Sehto and others de-

mandated that the children of martyrs be given permanent employment by various distribution companies. They called for the regularization of contract and daily wage workers and the provision of contracts to part-time employees. They stressed that the stepmotherly treatment of the families of employees who die in accidents should cease, and urgent measures should be taken to prevent such accidents. They also called for performance allowances to be given to HESCO employees and officers, addressing the severe

shortage of staff in HESCO. Currently, one person is doing the work of five employees, and new recruitments are necessary to fill this gap. Additionally, they demanded timely payment of TA bills, overtime, medical, and marriage grants, along with other facilities. Given the current economic challenges, they emphasized that everyone is already struggling, and the high electricity bills are adding to their woes. Therefore, they urged for the reduction of electricity rates to provide relief to the public.

Sanghar journalist Imam Bakhsh Mangrio appeals for help in land dispute



By Khadim Khaskheli

SANGHAR: Near Sanghar in the village of Bashirabad, members of the Khari community have surrounded the house of senior journalist Imam Bakhsh Mangrio and blocked the path to his home, effectively trapping him and his children inside. Despite repeatedly informing the Sanghar Police, they have not arrived on the scene, raising fears for their safety. In a video statement sent from his besieged home, Imam Bakhsh Mangrio explained that he had legally purchased the land from Maqsood Khari and had been living there with his family. However, a faction of the Khari community now wants to forcibly evict him. When he refused to vacate, they appealed to the leader of their community, Khalifo Waryam Faqir, who then ordered

Mangrio to leave. Upon his refusal, he was threatened and his access to the village shrine was restricted. Mangrio shared his ordeal on social media, and in retaliation, the Khari community blocked the entrance to his home to pressure him into leaving. He named Khalifo Waryam Faqir Khaskheli, Albelo Mangrio and Rafiq Khari as responsible if any harm comes to him or his family. He condemned this act as outright thuggery and highlighted the Sanghar police's incompetence and corruption, accusing them of ignoring the situation in exchange for bribes. The journalist community has called on the SSP of Sanghar to take action against the Khari community members challenging the rule of law and to hold the SHO of Sanghar accountable for his failure to address the situation.

MPK residents protest for repair of faulty transformer

By MY Chandio

MIRPURKHAS: Residents of Model Town have intensified their protest near the Khipro Bus Stand on Sindh Road for the third consecutive day, demanding immediate action from WAPDA to repair a faulty transformer that has left their area without electricity for the past two weeks. Despite paying 80% of their utility bills, the community contends that their grievances have gone unanswered.

Voicing frustration, protesters called upon higher authorities to prioritize the repair of their transformer and restore regular electricity supply without further delay. The ongoing outage has severely impacted daily life and essential services in Model Town, prompting residents to take to the streets in a bid to expedite resolution. Prominent among the demonstrators are local leaders and concerned citizens who have pledged to continue their protest until their demands are met. They emphasized the critical need for reliable electricity to support livelihoods and ensure community well-being. The protest underscores mounting public dissatisfaction with utility services and highlights the urgency for infrastructure maintenance to mitigate disruptions in Model Town and similar neighborhoods. As tensions persist, residents remain steadfast in their resolve to seek accountability and prompt action from WAPDA authorities.

AC Pithoro reviews arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram

By M Ismail Khilji

PITHORO: Assistant Commissioner Sanjay Kumar led a comprehensive meeting at his office to assess preparations for the upcoming observance of Muharram-ul-Haram. The session primarily focused on enhancing security measures, ensuring cleanliness, and efficient management throughout the sacred period. Emphasizing seamless coordination among all departments, Assistant Commissioner Sanjay Kumar directed concerted efforts to streamline arrangements, aiming to mitigate any potential challenges that mourners may encounter during Muharram. Representatives from various sectors, includ-



ing caretakers of Imambarahs and leaders of the Shia community, participated actively in the discussion. The meeting underscored the importance of collaborative action to uphold peace, facilitate smooth procession routes, and maintain sanitary conditions during the solemn commemoration. Assistant Commissioner Sanjay Kumar expressed confidence in the collective commitment of all stakeholders to ensure a safe, respectful and orderly observance of Muharram-ul-Haram in Pithoro.

1 criminal killed, 1 injured in Tando Adam shootout

By Mumtaz Ali

TANDO ADAM: A police encounter in the jurisdiction of City Police Station led to the death of one criminal, identified as Junaid Mastoi, while another, Aijaz Khoso, sustained severe injuries. The incident occurred during a routine patrol at the bypass, where law enforcement officials confronted a group of robbers. During the exchange of fire, two criminals

were struck. Unfortunately, Junaid Mastoi succumbed to his injuries on the spot, while Aijaz Khoso, critically wounded, was rushed to Taluka Hospital. Due to the severity of his condition, Aijaz Khoso was subsequently transferred to a hospital in Hyderabad for further treatment. Police recovered two TT pistols and ammunition from the scene of the shootout, underscoring the intensity of the confrontation. Three

other criminals managed to evade capture and fled the scene. Authorities have launched an extensive manhunt to apprehend the absconding suspects. The encounter highlights the ongoing efforts of law enforcement agencies in Tando Adam to combat criminal activities and maintain public safety. The investigation into the incident remains active as authorities continue their pursuit of the escaped criminals.

SPORTS



'Babar is a world class player,' says Australia's leading power-hitting coach



LAHORE: Australia's leading power-hitting coach Shannon Young declared Pakistan skipper Babar Azam, who has been under fire for the team's performance in the recently-concluded T20 World Cup, as a "world class player".

"He is well, he is a world class player," said Young while speaking about Babar's strike rate amid the ongoing criticism which the young skipper is facing.

The coach said that Australians are very rarely critical of their world class players.

"We back them in and we say they've been world class players, they're gonna be world class players again. I think sometimes the passion tips over that these guys carry so much expectation

Border-Gavaskar Trophy sees six times surge in ticket sales from India

Basking in the victory of T20 World Cup 2024, the Indian nation seems to be eager to watch more of their team playing electrifying international clashes as ticket sales from India for the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy series increased by record six times.

Cricket Australia, in a press release, confirmed record-breaking surge in the ticket sales.

"The excitement surrounding the fierce rivalry between India and Australia has led to a record-breaking six times increase in the number of tickets bought by fans in India compared to last season," the Australian cricket said.



General Manager of Events & Operations at Cricket Australia Joel Morrison expressed his delight, stating: "We are thrilled to see so many Indian fans planning to travel to Australia for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series. They can expect a very warm welcome here."

Adding a unique touch to the experience, Cricket Australia is introducing Indian Fan Zones for the first time in a Test series in Australia, the CA said adding the specially designed zones aim to create a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere for Indian supporters, fostering a sense of community and celebration among fans at all venues during the series.

perence packages for the Boxing Day Test," it maintained.

The Border-Gavaskar Trophy will commence with the first Test from November 22 to 26 at Perth Stadium in Perth, Australia.

The second Test will kick off from December 6 to 10 at Adelaide Oval, featuring a thrilling day-night format under the stadium's lights. Then the third test will take place in The Gabba, Brisbane, from December 14 to 18 during the day. The series reaches a crescendo with the traditional Boxing Day Test, scheduled for December 26 to 30 at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground in Melbourne, the CA stated. The series will culminate with the fifth Test from January 3 to 7 at the Sydney Cricket Ground in Sydney, promising an intense finish to what is expected to be a gripping contest.—Agency

Pakistan suffer defeat in Asian Team Snooker Championship final



KARACHI: Pakistan lost to Thailand in the final of the ACBS Asian 15 Red Men's Team Snooker Championship 2024 in Riyadh on Friday.

Thailand won the final 3-0 with scores of 61-4, 75-53 and 90-26 as they overpowered their opponents throughout the game.

In the first single match, Pakistan's Asjad Iqbal lost without giving a proper fight. However, in the second single encounter, Awas Munir showed resilience but ended up making a foul during colour potting after which the Thai opponent cleared the frame and won the match.

The situation remained the same in the doubles frame and Pakistan managed to secure a silver medal after a defeat in the final.

Earlier in the semi-final against Hong Kong, Pakistan's team comprising Iqbal and Munir, came from behind in the semi-final after Brian Lara captained the side against Inzamam-ul-Haq's men. Pakistan lost the first frame to Hong Kong 3-1 against Hong Kong.

In the first singles match, Iqbal was defeated 47-72. Munir won his frame 80-44 to level the match at 1-1.

In the doubles frame, Pakistan played a 99-clearance break to secure victory. Iqbal defeated Nansen Wan 28-82 in his second singles match and bagged a win. Meanwhile, in the quarters, Pakistan defeated India (2) with a score of 3-0. Pakistan's winning scores were 63-55, 75-22, and 70-06. The India (2) team comprised Sarav Kothari and Hussain Khan.

It is worth mentioning that Munir won the Asian 6-Red Snooker Championship in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Tuesday (July 2) after beating Hong Kong's cueist Nansen Wan.

Munir secured a 6-3 victory over his opponent. The game was tied at 2-2 and Munir won three sets straight and made his second 50 in the eighth frame. Nansen made a comeback.—Agency

Pakistan to host England for Test series in October



LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board today announced the full match schedule for the Pakistan Men's Test Series against England in October 2024.

The tour begins with the First Test in Multan from October 7-11, before moving to Karachi for the Second Test from October 15-19. The Third Test will be in Rawalpindi from October 24-28.

The three-match series forms part of the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25. It will be the second time England Men have played Test series in Pakistan in under two years, with England having won the last series 3-0 in December 2022.

Richard Gould, ECB Chief Executive Officer, said: "We're really excited to be returning to Pakistan for this three-match Men's Test tour in October.

"Our last Men's Test tour of Pakistan produced some memorable matches and I'm sure fans can look forward to more exciting cricket across this forthcoming series."

It is worth mentioning here that the three-match home Test series against England is part of the Pakistan men's cricket team's busy home international season 2024-25.

Besides England, Pakistan will host Bangladesh for a two-match Test series in August, followed by a three-match series against West Indies in January next year while they will play two away Tests against South Africa in December-January.

The nine Tests against Bangladesh, England, South Africa and the West Indies will be part of the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25. To date, Pakistan has played five Tests in two series against Sri Lanka and Australia, winning two and losing three. This has placed them in fifth position on the points table with 22 points.

India leads the table with 74 points after three series, followed by Australia (90 points from four series), New Zealand (36 points from three series), and Sri Lanka (24 points from two series). With each of the top nine Test-playing nations scheduled to play six series (three home and three away) in the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 cycle, strong performances in the upcoming four series could put Pakistan in contention for a place in the final, scheduled for Lord's in June 2025.—Agency

Top teams set to tour Pakistan as PCB announces bumper schedule for 2024-25 season

LAHORE: Pakistan cricket fans will find enough cricket this year at home ground to quench their thirst as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Friday announced details of men's 2024-25 home international cricket season.

The cricket board said the national team will complete in three Test series on home soil and participate in the first ODI tri-series in 21 years in the lead up to the eight-team ICC Champions Trophy 2025 on the home turf.



The international season will culminate with the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 final, proposed for March 9. Meanwhile, Pakistan will host England for three Tests - one in Rawalpindi (August 21-25) and other in Karachi (August 30-September 3).

The international season will culminate with the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 final, proposed for March 9. Meanwhile, Pakistan will host England for three Tests - one in Rawalpindi (October 24-28), Rawalpindi (October 24-28). Whereas, the West Indies will visit here for two Tests - in Karachi (January 16-20) and Multan (January 24-28). Additionally, New Zealand and South Africa will participate in an ODI tri-series in Multan from February 8 to 14.

Bangladesh last played a Test in Pakistan in February 2020, while England swept the three-Test series in December 2022. The 2025 series will also mark the West Indies' first Test tour to Pakistan since November 2006 when Brian Lara captained the side against Inzamam-ul-Haq's men. Pakistan last hosted the West Indies for a Test series in October 2016 in the United Arab Emirates.

Apart from the home international fixtures, the men's team will tour Australia, Zimbabwe and South Africa from November 4 to January 7, playing two Tests, nine ODIs and nine T20Is.—Agency

Euro 2024: Spain's Pedri accuses Germany star of 'disrespect' ahead of quarter-final

SPAIN: Spanish midfielder Pedri accused Germany's star, Antonio Rudiger, of disrespecting opponents ahead of the high-voltage Euro 2024 clash between the two sides which is set to be played at the Stuttgart Arena on Friday.

Rudiger, who plays for Real Madrid, often uses distractions during matches as he has been often seen pinching his opponents' nipples and while Pedri lauded the German defender, he also stated that such actions show a "lack of respect".

"He is a powerful and very good central defender. The pinching thing seemed like a lack of respect to me because it hurts and it's annoying," Pedri told Marca.

Pedri also talked about his Barcelona teammate Ilkay Gundogan saying that he is one of the best midfielders in the world. The German midfielder made some comments last season when the Catalans had lost matches which wasn't appreciated by fans and some teammates.

However, Pedri believed that it is important to talk about issues rather than staying silent.



ger also emphasised the importance of the clash between Germany and Spain saying that it will be between the two best teams in the tournament.

"It's a big and important game, a classic, I'm just looking forward to it," Rudiger told Kicker. "For me, the two best teams in the tournament so far will face each other. I see a game on an equal footing. We have to be ready for the fight."

"We have to have the courage to go forward, because they are also vulnerable. They press high, you can get past that. But in order to do that, we have to have good possession of the ball and be calm in pressure situations. And we can't make any mistakes."—Agency

World Championship of Legends: Australia record one-sided win against South Africa



BIRMINGHAM: Australia bowlers were at the top. Xavier Doherty and Nathan Coulter-Nile bagged three each, Brett Lee picked two while Daniel Christian got one wicket.

Earlier in the first innings, an all-round batting display by Australian batters helped them put 230 in 20 overs.

Australia started with a blast as they scored 85 in the first seven overs before losing Aaron Finch for 49 runs. Shaun Marsh too missed his half-century by just one run as he lost his wicket to JP Duminy.

Ben Dunk continued the charge as he scored a 21-Kallis (6), Richard Levi (0), all five 47-run innings with Ashwell Prince (9) all five fours and three sixes.—Agency

Face of the Day



Name: Ali Raza
Location: Karachi
About me: I love taking selfies!

Please email us your photo for our Model Watch and Kids' Corner section at regionaltimes10@gmail.com

ENTERTAINMENT

Jennifer Lopez to witness 'ugliest' fate after Ben Affleck divorce



Jennifer Lopez has seemingly fallen victim to bad luck in marriages.

For those unversed, the 54-year-old has been divorced for three times and reportedly she is headed towards her fourth one as Ben Affleck marriage is strained.

But heartbroken will not be the only loss that she goes through if her long-time love Ben Affleck decides to step back from his marital vows.

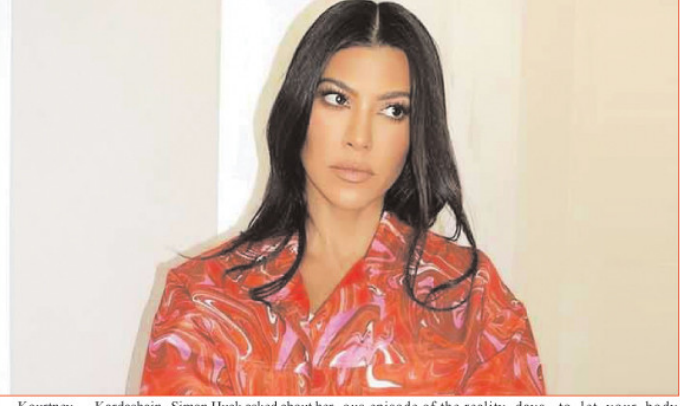
As per the latest findings of Closer Magazine, an insider spilled the beans, "Aside from the heartache and emotional ups and downs of their current situation, the fact that there is pre-nup and all the logistics that entails have been weighing heavily on Jen."

Well-wishers of Get on The Floor crooner have also advised her to make amends with Ben at any cost or she will suffer a great downfall.

"She's been warned this could potentially become one of Hollywood's ugliest divorces, which would be her worst nightmare," they added.

It is pertinent to mention here that Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez sparked split rumours in May 2024, and have been sighted without their marriage rings several times since then.

Kourtney Kardashian discloses her favorite postpartum snack



Kourtney Kardashian Barker revealed her favourite postpartum snack.

In a recent episode of The Kardashians, the 45 year old Lemme co-founder, shared that she was constantly craving Ritz Bits.

Kourtney was shooting a promotional video for her gummy vitamin Lemme in the episode, when her long-time friend and PR guru Simon Huck asked about her post-pregnancy craving.

She replied, "Like a naughty thing I was craving was Ritz Bits. I had to eat like a pack of them a day."

For those unversed, Kourtney welcomed her fourth child, a son named Rocky Thirteen in November 2023 with her husband Travis Barker.

Moreover, in a previous episode of the reality TV show, the mother of four revealed that she stayed home straight 40 days after Rocky's birth.

The reality star went on to say, "I'm really into attachment parenting. I really don't separate from him. I love being at home right now, like my time is dedicated to taking care of my baby and bonding with him."

THE HEARTLAND



Tajpur man shot dead in Machhi community land dispute

By Irfan Khushk

TANDO JAM: Near Tando Jam, in Union Council Tajpur, three murders have occurred within forty-five days, causing fear in the area. In the village of Dhani Bux Machhi, Khan Machhi shot and killed Ayaz alias Kaz Machhi and fled. The family mourned over the body, and the police arrived at the scene, took the body into custody, and transferred it to Matiari Hospital for postmortem. The family protested on Matiari Highway. Speaking to the media, the father of the deceased Ayaz Machhi said that the notable of our village had made several unsuccessful attempts to force us to leave the village. We had complained to the local



elders about this, but no action was taken, and instead, Khan Machhi became our enemy. Last night Khan Machhi fired at our homes. In the morning, when our boys were going to work, Khan Machhi and his brothers Abdul Razaq alias Goro and Abdul Shakoor fired, stopped them, and conducted raids in various villages to catch the other criminals. We want justice for the innocent murder of our young man and demand that the killers be hanged. As of the last update, one of Ayaz Machhi's killers, Abdul Khan Machhi and his brothers Abdul Razaq alias Goro and Abdul Shakoor have been arrested by the police. The police have also conducted raids in various villages to catch the other criminals.

CIA Police in Umerkot arrest a gutka supplier



By Muhammad Bahal

UMERKOT: In a decisive move against illegal substance trafficking, CIA Police Umerkot, under the leadership of CIA Incharge Khalil Kumbhar, conducted a coordinated operation near Bachhaband Stop, Pithoro. The operation culminated in the interception of a Corolla car carrying a substantial quantity of gutka, resulting in the arrest of two suspects, Jalal Samejo and Manzoor Samejo. During the operation, law enforcement authorities seized five packets of Safina gutka, totaling 27,500 units, from the vehicle. A case has been registered against the apprehended individuals, marking a significant step in the ongoing efforts to combat drug-related activities in Umerkot district. CIA Incharge Khalil Kumbhar reiterated the agency's unwavering commitment to curbing the menace of drug trafficking, emphasizing that perpetrators who endanger the younger generation through such illicit activities will face stringent legal repercussions. The operation underscores the proactive stance of Umerkot's law enforcement in safeguarding public health and ensuring community safety.

JSQM along with Thul's civil society protests for abducted Behram Khoso's recovery

By Khair Muhammad Golo

THUL: A fervent protest erupted today led by civil society members and JSQM leaders including Mamu Shumro, Waseem Qureshi, Liaquat Sarki, Sarwan Sindh, Gul Muneer Khoso, Sattar Memon, Akhtar Jafari, Basit Sarki, Waheed Sindh, Manzoor Bhatti, Saraj Sarki, and others. The demonstrators took to the streets, brandishing banners and placards across various city markets to decry the sluggish police response in retrieving the abducted teacher, Behram Khan Khoso. Traffic disruptions ensued as the protest intensified, drawing attention to the alleged inadequacies in the police efforts. The protest's focal point was the immediate recovery of Behram Khan Khoso, whose plight gained attention after a distressing video circulated purportedly showing his mistreatment by kidnappers. Despite police assurances, attempts to locate him have so far proven futile. The demonstrators warned that if any harm befalls Khoso due to delayed action, the responsibility would squarely rest on SSP Jacobabad, echoing threats made by the kidnappers. The protest concluded with a unified demand from authorities for swift action to ensure the safe return of Behram Khan Khoso, emphasizing the community's resolve against impunity and in favor of justice.

locate him have so far proven futile. The demonstrators warned that if any harm befalls Khoso due to delayed action, the responsibility would squarely rest on SSP Jacobabad, echoing threats made by the kidnappers. The protest concluded with a unified demand from authorities for swift action to ensure the safe return of Behram Khan Khoso, emphasizing the community's resolve against impunity and in favor of justice.

Woman faints at BISP Centre in Kunri

By MM Faisal

KUNRI: Tensions flared at the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Center in Kunri as deserving women staged a sit-in protest, disrupting the distribution of stipends. The protest escalated into chaos, leading to road blockages and a woman fainting due to the stressful conditions. Deserving women, anxiously awaiting their stipends for three days, expressed frustration at the BISP Center, which has become a focal point of distress. The situation deteriorated as protesters blocked the main road to Mirpurkhas, demanding immediate resolution to their plight. Police intervention added to the tension, exacerbating the already fraught atmosphere. Issues including overcrowding, inadequate facilities, and malfunctioning equipment further exacerbated the women's plight, causing distress for those



who had traveled long distances. Amidst these challenges, one woman collapsed due to the overwhelming conditions. In response to the tumultuous scene, authorities cited technical difficulties with location identification, delaying stipend disbursement. The administration assured that once these issues are resolved, stipends will promptly resume. Consequently, the New Mirch Mandi Center has been relocated to Qazi Sultan School to manage the chaotic situation effectively.

Tando Jam Police arrest a drug dealer



By Irfan Khushk

TANDO JAM: In a proactive operation following a confidential tip-off, Tando Jam Police apprehended drug dealer Sikandar, also known as Sukho Magsi, near the New Bypass Road, Garhi Mehro Magsi Link Road. The arrest yielded a significant seizure of 1 kg 865 grams of hashish from Sikandar's possession. Preliminary investigations indicate that Sikandar alias Sukho was actively involved in drug trafficking within Tando Jam and its environs. Further scrutiny into his background revealed prior involvement in similar criminal activities and ongoing police pursuits related to narcotics and business interference. Tando Jam Police have filed a case against Sikandar under the Narcotics Act, marking a decisive step in combating drug-related offenses in the region. Investigations are currently underway to unearth additional details regarding Sikandar's network and activities.

MS CMC Hospital Dr. Niaz Dahar orders to facilitate patients

By Saleem Soomro

LARKANA: Dr. Niaz Dahar, the newly appointed Medical Superintendent (MS) of Chandka Medical Hospital (CMC) in Larkana, undertook a comprehensive inspection of various hospital departments to assess patient care and facilities. During his visit, Dr. Dahar engaged closely with doctors, hospital staff, patients, and their attendants, emphasizing the importance of delivering optimal medical services. Dr. Dahar issued clear directives to hospital personnel, instructing them to ensure that all patients receive prompt and adequate medical attention. He stressed the implementation of stringent measures against any lapses in patient care, underscoring his commitment to upholding high standards of healthcare provision at CMC Hospital. Accompanying Dr. Dahar during his rounds were esteemed colleagues including former MS Dr. Gulzar Tunio, Dr. Amjad Bijarani, Dr. Rabel Noonari, Dr. Mukhtiar Dhamrah, Dr. Naseer, Ismail Khoso, and other key personnel. Their collective efforts underscored a unified approach towards enhancing patient welfare and operational efficiency within the hospital. Dr. Dahar's proactive leadership and focused directives aim to instill confidence among patients and their families while ensuring that CMC Hospital remains at the forefront of healthcare delivery in Larkana.

Dr. Dahar issued clear directives to hospital personnel, instructing them to ensure that all patients receive prompt and adequate medical attention. He stressed the implementation of stringent measures against any lapses in patient care, underscoring his commitment to upholding high standards of healthcare provision at CMC Hospital. Accompanying Dr. Dahar during his rounds were esteemed colleagues including former MS Dr. Gulzar Tunio, Dr. Amjad Bijarani, Dr. Rabel Noonari, Dr. Mukhtiar Dhamrah, Dr. Naseer, Ismail Khoso, and other key personnel. Their collective efforts underscored a unified approach towards enhancing patient welfare and operational efficiency within the hospital. Dr. Dahar's proactive leadership and focused directives aim to instill confidence among patients and their families while ensuring that CMC Hospital remains at the forefront of healthcare delivery in Larkana.

Badin Police arrest nine during ongoing operations

By Raja Zafar Iqbal

BADIN: On the orders of SSP Tando Muhammad Khan, Abid Ali Gadani Baloch Sahib (Additional Charge District Badin), actions are being taken against undercover and advertised suspects and drug dealers throughout the district. According to the details, SHO Matli Police Station Inspector Gulam Mustafa Aqlani along with the staff have raided the country liquor box and recovered 90 liters of country liquor. 2200 Gutka

with the staff arrested Gutka seller accused Ashgar Ali Machhi during a patrol operation, recovering 210 Safina sachets from his possession. Additionally, accused Ashgar Rind has been arrested. SHO Police Station Gulab Laghari has arrested drug dealer accused Hero Kolhi along with 20 liters of country liquor during another operation. Bashir Ahmed Khakhali, the accused drug dealer, has been arrested and 20 liters of country liquor have been recovered from country liquor. 2200 Gutka

MNA Khalid Ahmed Lund's associates accused of kidnapping Rahu community woman

By Yousif Rind

NAWAB WALI MUHAMMAD: Political and social organizations, including STP, SUP, and JSQM, joined by family members of abducted woman Sana Rahu, staged a vehement protest demanding her immediate recovery. Sana Rahu, a resident of village Hashim Rahu, allegedly went missing nine months ago, prompting widespread concern and agitation. Leaders such as Amjad Rahu, Dado Mahar, MB Dahri, Qurban Mahar, Fida Hussain Kori, Irfan Rahu, and Ghulam Shabbir Sangrahl led a rally from National Highway to the press club, decrying the perceived inaction of Qazi Ahmed police in securing Sana Rahu's release. They



accused Nasr Ali Lund and Zamir Hussain, associates of Sardar Mir Khalid Lund of Ghotki, of imprisoning her, alleging police reluctance to act due to political influence. The family's anguish was palpable as they demanded Sana Rahu's appearance in court, fearing for her safety amid suspicions she may have been harmed. Threatening further action, they declared plans to block National Highway in Qazi Ahmed on July 25th if Sana Rahu is not swiftly returned. The protest underscored escalating tensions and frustrations over perceived law enforcement lapses and the urgency of resolving Sana Rahu's abduction case.

13-year-old Larkana girl ends her life

By Saleem Soomro

LARKANA: A heart-wrenching incident unfolded in village Buthi, District Kambar-Shahdadkot, as 13-year-old Kainat, daughter of Nadir Magsi, tragically ended her life on Friday by consuming poison. The young girl's decision, believed to be prompted by a domestic issue, has left the community in shock and mourning. Following the tragic act, Kainat was swiftly rushed to a hospital in Larkana. Despite the efforts of medical professionals, her condition deteriorated rapidly, and she succumbed to the poison's effects, confirming her untimely death. Authorities are investigating the circumstances leading to Kainat's decision and providing support to her grieving family during this difficult time. The loss of such a young life underscores the critical need for societal vigilance and intervention in addressing mental health challenges and preventing similar tragedies in the future.

Kingri man kills his stepbrother and his 4-year-old daughter

By AQ Khilji

PIR JO GOTH: A longstanding dispute between the families of Azizullah Kharos and Jamal Kharos in village Qaisar Bindi, Kingri, erupted into a tragic and violent confrontation. During the early morning hours, armed assailants, reportedly led by a stepbrother, launched a deadly attack on the household of Bilawal Kharos. The assailants indiscriminately opened fire, resulting in the fatal shooting of Bilawal Kharos, who was

asleep at the time, and his 4-year-old daughter, Farhana Kharos. Bilawal's wife, Soorat Khatoon, sustained severe injuries during the assault. The attackers fled the scene, continuing to fire shots as they escaped. Local law enforcement swiftly responded to the incident, rushing Soorat Khatoon to Pir Jo Goth Hospital for emergency medical treatment. She was later transferred to Khairpur Hospital for further care. Meanwhile, the bodies of Bilawal Kharos and Farhana Kharos were handed over to their grief-stricken relatives, sparking profound mourning within the community. Despite the gravity of the incident, authorities have yet to file a formal case or take decisive action to quell the escalating conflict. The deteriorating law and order situation, compounded by unresolved tribal disputes, has left residents in Kingri grappling with fear and uncertainty. Some community members are now contemplating relocation in search of safety and security amidst ongoing tensions.

BISP beneficiaries demand relief in Tando Adam

By Mumtaz Ali

TANDO ADAM: In Tando Adam, BISP beneficiaries continue to face deductions from their payments, leading to protests by the affected women. The camps set up for this purpose, located at Government Sir Syed High School and Jamia Millia High School, are reportedly lacking basic facilities. Many women have fainted due to the poor conditions. Affected women, including Samina Jamal, Hooran, Ameerzadi, and Shaakeela, spoke to journalists, expressing their grievances. They reported that there are no adequate facilities at the camps, and despite the intense heat, they have to wait for up to five hours to receive their stipends. Many times, their cards are returned



without being checked, with the excuse of network issues. The women complained about the lack of drinking water, no tents for them to sit under and male constables being appointed instead of female police officers. Pregnant women are particularly vulnerable, with many fainting from the heat and exhaustion. They suggested that instead of these poorly managed camps, the stipends should be distributed at shops where there is some dignity in the process, even if there is a small deduction. The women also pointed out that those who are asked to deductions of Rs 1000-1500 face no network issues and receive their money quickly. They demanded that stipends be distributed at shops, the network issues be resolved and proper facilities be provided at the camps to ensure a dignified and efficient distribution process.

Utility Stores Employees Arrested for Extortion Attempt

SUKKUR: In a startling development, police in Sukkur apprehended two Utility Stores employees for attempting to extort money from their Zonal Manager, Qaiser Saeed. Following swift action through alleged involvement with local criminals known as Katcha dacots. Reports indicate that four individuals, including Moazzam Ali, Izhar Ali, and Liaquat Ali, all employees of Utility Stores, were implicated in demanding Rs4 million as ransom from their superior. The scheme involved leveraging the threat of Katcha dacots to intimidate the Zonal Manager into compliance. Following swift action by law enforcement, two of the accused have been arrested and are currently on physical remand. Authorities continue their efforts to locate and apprehend the remaining suspects involved in the extortion plot, including another Utility

Stores staff member and an alleged dacot. The incident highlights growing concerns over criminal activities involving Katcha dacots in Sindh, particularly concerning incidents of kidnapping for ransom that have seen an uptick in recent times. Police efforts to dismantle such networks remain ongoing as they strive to ensure public safety and uphold the rule of law in the region.—RT

18-year-old girl electrocuted in Larkana

By Saleem Soomro

LARKANA: A devastating incident occurred in Naudero, where 18-year-old Sitara Shaikh, daughter of Abdul Sattar Shaikh from the Gerag Shah neighborhood, tragically lost her life due to electrocution. The incident occurred while she was attempting to fix a wire of a fan into an electric board, resulting in immediate loss of consciousness. In a rush of panic and concern, Sitara's family swiftly transported her to the emergency department of CMC Hospital in Larkana. Despite the best efforts of medical staff, doctors confirmed her untimely death upon arrival. Following necessary procedures, Sitara Shaikh's body was respectfully handed over to her grieving family by hospital authorities. The entire community is deeply saddened by this unfortunate loss, and condolences pour in for the Shaikh family during this difficult time. The incident serves as a poignant reminder of the critical importance of electrical safety measures and vigilance in households. Authorities are expected to conduct an investigation into the circumstances surrounding Sitara Shaikh's tragic accident to prevent similar incidents in the future.

METRO KARACHI



Sindh CM Engages World Bank In Bold Keenjhar Lake Expansion Talks

By Rahib Gaho

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah met with a World Bank delegation led by Country Director Najib Benhaime to discuss increasing the storage capacity of Keenjhar Lake to manage Karachi's growing water demand. The project, estimated to cost around \$300 million, includes improving the KB Feeder Lower Canal System, extending Keenjhar Lake, and developing social and environmental plans.



Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro provided details on the Keenjhar Lake expansion and KB Feeder improvement projects. Additionally, a detailed feasibility study for modernizing the right bank canals of Sukkur Barrage will be conducted under the Sindh Water and Agriculture Transformation Project (SWAT) at an estimated cost of \$200 million.

water, sanitation, and hygiene. Reduced Learning Poverty: Enhance access to quality schools and foundational learning. Minister Education Sardar Shah highlighted efforts to increase equitable access to education, particularly for marginalized groups. Inclusive Job Opportunities: Increase fiscal space for sustainable macro-fiscal management and enhance productivity and private investment in exports, including the agricultural value chain. The CM and World Bank team agreed to review progress on these projects in their next meeting.

Petroleum Dealers Call Off Nationwide Strike, Avert National Crisis

KARACHI: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) announced the immediate cessation of the nationwide petrol pump strike on Friday.



At a press conference in Karachi, PPDA Chairman Abdul Sami Khan, accompanied by other officials, disclosed the decision to halt the strike. "We have decided to end the strike immediately due to the plight of tourists stranded in northern areas. While our one-day strike was successful, it has adversely affected daily commuters," Khan stated.

He elaborated that tourists in Malakand, Swat, and Hazara regions were a primary consideration in ending the strike. "The decision to strike was not taken lightly, especially against the taxes introduced in the federal budget resulting in the closure of some petrol stations across many cities and major highways. However, most petrol pumps in major cities like Lahore and Karachi remained operational. Despite several petrol pumps in Karachi being closed on Friday morning, others continued to function as usual, notably along Rashid Minhas Road, University Road, and Shahrah-e-Faisal. Conversely, a majority of fuel stations in Lahore did not participate in the strike. The Petroleum Division and the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) issued directives to ensure continuous operation of petrol pumps.—RT/Agency

FPCCI Demands Immediate Cancellation Of Exploitative IPP Contracts

KARACHI: Acting President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, has urged the federal government to cancel all agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and procure electricity from cheaper, cost-effective sources without capacity charges.

Mr. Magoon highlighted that exorbitant electricity tariffs have led to widespread industrial closures and massive job losses. Despite an installed generation capacity of over 40,000 MW, the peak demand and transmission capacity is only 25,000 MW, resulting in significant excess generation capacity. He noted that PKR 2 trillion in capacity payments to 40 companies is paralyzing the national economy, with IPPs receiving payments even when no electricity is generated. Capacity charges make up two-thirds of the total electricity cost, while fuel costs are only one-third. Studies show that IPPs have been enjoying returns exceeding 73% in dollar terms, which is unusually high by international standards. Problematic contracts since the 1994 Power Policy have led to escalating circular debt, reaching PKR 2.64 trillion in February 2024. Mr. Magoon pointed out that guarantees indexed to the US dollar increase returns for IPPs with any depreciation of the Pakistani rupee, adding a financial burden on the government and public. Initial return on equity for IPPs was set at 18% and later reduced to 12% in the 2002 Power Policy, still high compared to global norms. Cost comparisons reveal that many IPPs were funded through inflated invoicing on capital goods, leading to perpetual returns on ghost equity. The tariff for coal-based plants in Pakistan is 9 cents per kWh, compared to 5.6 cents in Bangladesh. Imported coal-based plants have the highest capacity charge of PKR 60.48 per kWh. Mr. Magoon stressed that misreporting and overbilling by IPPs are common, with actual oil consumption and operational costs overstated. The recent surge in electricity rates could trigger civil unrest and discontent among the business community. FPCCI demands a comprehensive review of IPP agreements, price re-evaluation, and improved oversight to prevent over-invoicing. The federal government must devise a strategy to ensure affordable electricity prices for the industry in the national interest.—RT

UAE Aviation Team Praises Pakistani Airports For Impeccable Security Measures



KARACHI: A delegation from the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has expressed satisfaction with the security arrangements at Karachi and Islamabad airports. Led by Senior Director Mr. Abdullah Al Kaabi, the UAE-GCAA team conducted a thorough aviation security assessment at both airports, which was hosted by PCAA. The assessment covered critical areas such as passenger and baggage screening, cargo handling, and catering security. Additionally, the team reviewed operations of airlines flying directly to the UAE, ground handling agents, regulated cargo entities, and catering services.—RT

PSX CEO Resigns, Shocking Financial Markets

KARACHI: Mr. Farrukh H. Khan has resigned from his position as Chief Executive Officer of Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited (PSX) as of July 4, 2024. Mr. Khan stated that it was a great honor to serve as CEO and expressed his gratitude to all market participants, including domestic shareholders, PSBA, and the media. He also thanked PSX's Board, Chairperson, SECP, and the Chinese Consortium for their consistent support and guidance throughout his tenure.

An emergent meeting of PSX's Board was convened today at 3:00 PM (PST) to consider Mr. Khan's resignation. The Board, with utmost respect for Mr. Khan's decision to pursue other opportunities, accepted his resignation and acknowledged his significant contributions to the progress of PSX and Pakistan's capital markets. The current high performance of the stock exchange is a testament to the strong partnership between the Chairperson and Mr. Khan, who have worked together to elevate PSX's results over the past few years.—RT

KATI President Urges Axing IPP Contracts To Save Economy From Collapse

KARACHI: Johar Qandhari, President of the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), has called for the cancellation of contracts with Independent Power Producers (IPPs), citing significant economic harm. Qandhari emphasized that the government's agreements with IPPs, which guarantee payments in dollars, are severely damaging the economy. "The government is buying electricity from these IPPs in dollars and selling it in rupees," Qandhari stated. "Their profits are soaring due to the rupee's devaluation." He pointed out that last financial year, the government paid 1,800 billion rupees to these IPPs, with over 2,100 billion rupees due this financial year.

Qandhari criticized the contracts, noting that some IPPs have not generated any electricity yet receive billions in payments. He described this as a burden on the public exchequer and an oppression of the poor. He also raised concerns about capacity charges imposed on people for unused electricity, calling such agreements unprecedented worldwide. He urged the government to cancel all existing contracts with IPPs and negotiate new ones, stipulating payments in local currency based solely on the amount of electricity purchased. Qandhari emphasized that the current terms, leading to electricity rates exceeding 55 rupees per unit, have caused an economic crisis, inflated production costs, and hindered the competitiveness of Pakistani products in the global market. Qandhari has appealed to the Prime Minister and the Federal Minister of Energy to urgently address this issue to avert further economic instability.—RT

UAE Delegation Lands In Karachi To Propel Pakistani Dates Onto The Global Stage



KARACHI: A delegation from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has arrived in Karachi to introduce Pakistani dates to the world. The delegation met with the Consul-General of the UAE in Karachi, H.E. Bakheet Ateeq Al-Rumaihi, to discuss ways to increase agricultural production and industrial output in Pakistan. Pakistan ranks fifth in global date production but exports only three percent of its yield. Al-Rumaihi stressed the need to increase Pakistan's exports to boost its economy, highlighting the exceptional quality of Pakistani dates that deserve global recognition.—RT

Business Titans Descend On NUST For Groundbreaking Visit

KARACHI: The University Advancement Office (UAO) at NUST recently welcomed a delegation from Karachi, comprising members of the business community and philanthropists. During their visit, the delegation met with Pro-Rector RIC, Dr. Rizwan Riaz, who briefed them on the advancement initiatives at NUST. The delegation was given a comprehensive tour of the innovation ecosystem at the institution, including visits to various startups at the National Science & Technology Park (NSTP). They also explored potential avenues for collaboration at the School of Interdisciplinary Engineering & Sciences (SINES).



Key attendees included Ms. Arooba Gillani (Director Advancement), Mr. Emad Ahsan (Director NSTP), and Dr. Syed Irtiza Ali Shah (Principal SINES). Members of the delegation are steadfast supporters of the NUST Endowment for Educational Development (NEED) Initiative, which aims to provide financial support for deserving scholars enrolled at NUST, enabling them to pursue their educational aspirations without financial constraints.—RT

SSGC Disconnects Gas Supply To PSML Due To Unpaid Bills

KARACHI: Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has taken the decision to disconnect gas supply to Pakistan Steel Mills Limited (PSML) after repeated notices and failed payments. PSML began defaulting on its gas bills partially from November 2008 and completely ceased payments after March 2015. Despite multiple termination notices served by SSGC in July and August 2015 for continuous defaults, the situation persisted.

SSGC had previously waived disconnection notices to maintain PSML's Coke Oven Batteries and support potential operational revival plans. However, due to ongoing financial irregularities and delayed payments averaging Rs. 100 million per month, SSGC faced significant financial strain. Efforts by the Federal Government and related ministries to revive PSML, including through various privatization proposals, did not materialize. A recent decision from PSML, communicated after an ECC meeting, indicated a cessation of payments beyond June 30, 2024, prompting SSGC to issue a final disconnection notice. Despite years of support and extensions, including partial payments by PSML since February 2020, outstanding dues have accumulated to Rs. 97.697 billion as of June 30, 2024, including significant late payment charges. SSGC, while expressing regret over the necessity of disconnection, emphasized its long-standing efforts to facilitate PSML's operations amid financial challenges, ultimately compelled by the lack of viable payment solutions and withdrawal of federal support. The discontinuation of gas supply, effective July 4, 2024, marks a critical juncture in the ongoing financial and operational challenges facing PSML, amidst broader efforts to resolve outstanding liabilities and ensure sustainable operations.—RT/Agency

Murad Commands Provincial Narcotics Wing Reinforcement To Crush Drug Epidemic



KARACHI: The Sindh government has decided to further strengthen the Excise & Narcotics Control Department to protect the new generation, especially children, from the dangers of drugs. This decision was made during a meeting chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at the CM House. Senior Minister for Information and Excise & Narcotics, Sharjeel Memon, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary of Excise & Taxation Saleem Rajput, DG Narcotics Control Usman Siddiqui, and others attended the meeting. Minister Sharjeel Memon briefed the CM on efforts to control drug peddling in Hyderabad and strict measures taken in Karachi to prevent drug penetration into educational institutions and slum areas. CM Shah highlighted the serious threat of synthetic drugs in schools and called for a coordinated effort between the police, ANF, and the Excise & Narcotics Department to eradicate this issue. The senior minister announced the establishment of Excise & Narcotics checkpoints in Sindh's bordering areas with other provinces, including the revival of the checkpoint at Hub, which was abolished in 2007, to control drug smuggling into Sindh.

CM Shah stated that the Excise & Narcotics Control Department has 47 police stations, including six in Karachi, 11 in Hyderabad, eight in Sukkur, 10 in Larkana, five in Mirpurkhas, and seven in Shaheed Benazirabad. The department also has checkpoints, three each in Karachi and Larkana, and two each in Hyderabad, Sukkur, and Shaheed Benazirabad divisions. Murad Ali Shah directed the Minister of Excise & Narcotics to further strengthen the Narcotics police with necessary equipment, vehicles, and gadgets to ensure they operate at full capacity.—RT

Chairman Tariq Aziz Baloch Reviews Extensive Muharram Preparations In Gadap Town



KARACHI: Chairman Tariq Aziz Baloch of Gadap Town Municipal Corporation presided over a crucial meeting today to oversee preparations for the upcoming month of Muharram-ul-Haram. The session, held at the municipal office, saw the participation of key officials including Superintendent Engineer M&E Noor Ali Jamali, AEE M&E Wasim Arain, and several others. Chairman Baloch emphasized the importance of providing optimal facilities for the mourners of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) and stressed the need to enhance security measures across the town. Detailed discussions were held regarding security arrangements along the routes of mourning processions and at majalis venues. Present at the meeting were Town Municipal Commissioner Ahmed Yar, Parliamentary Leader of Council Mir Abbas Talpur, Finance Officer Ifthikhar Ahmed, and other senior officials.



KARACHI: Prominent businessman Danish Aman hosted a lovely lunch in honor of Dr. Muhammad Anjad Saqib, Founder & Chairman of Akhswat Foundation, to discuss the formation of a council of patrons in Karachi. A group photo taken on the occasion shows Zubair Chhaya (Patron-in-Chief of KATI), Zahid Hameed (CSR Head of KATI), Danish Aman, Emran Asad Khan of Bank Alfalah, Sohail Janjua, Commander (R) Ali Haider, Atif Ashraf, Rashid Zahoor, and other distinguished guests.—RT

A man cannot be comfortable without his own approval.

—Mark Twain

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SATURDAY JULY 06 2024

Government Anticipates Imran's Firm Commitment To Azm-e-Istehkam Agenda During APC

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attallah Tarar has confirmed media reports that the federal government is planning to hold an all-parties conference (APC) to evolve a broader consensus on the newly launched Operation Azm-e-Istehkam and also 'welcomed' the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder's statement signalling to attend the key huddle.



The minister's confirmation comes a day after media citing sources reported that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had decided to convene an APC "to gain political parties' confidence as the opposition parties have voiced concerns over the new operation and demanded the government to take parliament into confidence before launching any counterterror-

ism drive. "Certainly, consultation is underway with the allies [...] to summon the APC regarding [Operation] Azm-e-Istehkam," the information minister said while addressing the press conference in Islamabad on Friday. The federal cabinet last week approved the launch of the counter-terrorism opera-

tion following the National Action Plan's Central Apex Committee's recommendations to root out militance from the country. The country experienced a 12% reduction in overall violence, with 380 fatalities recorded compared to 432 in the first quarter of this year, according to the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) Annual Security Report.

During the second quarter of the current year, Pakistan witnessed 380 violence-linked fatalities and 220 injuries among civilians, security personnel, and outlaws, resulting from as many as 240 incidents of terror attacks and counter-terror operations.

Earlier today as he appeared in a case at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, the incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan said that his party would participate in the APC in which the government is expected to take po-

litical parties into confidence over the latest counter-terrorist operation. "My party will participate in the all-parties conference and hear what the government has to say," he noted.

Referring to the PTI founder's statement on APC, Tarar hoped that Khan would stand by his statement to attend the government-hosted huddle.

The information minister said that all political parties should be taken on board over the new operation as it concerned the entire country. "Progress is being made and consultation is underway," Tarar said of the government's efforts to muster consensus on the APC, adding the government would share further details if contact is made with any political party.—RT/Agency

PM Shehbaz Pushes Tax System Digitization To Curb Billions In Evasion

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has emphasised the government's priority of digitising the taxation system to prevent tax evasion worth billions of rupees. He directed the relevant authorities on Friday to immediately create a dashboard to monitor the ongoing digitisation and implementation of the reforms.



Chairing a meeting to review the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) reforms process, the prime minister instructed that taxable non-filers be brought into the tax net; discretionary powers of customs appraisers be revoked, and sought an implementation report from the FBR chairman within 24 hours.

During the briefing on FBR's digitisation, it was revealed that 4.5 million taxable individuals who were not part of the tax net had been identified. Additionally, over 300,000 more individuals filed their tax returns within a few weeks as a result of the government's measures.

The meeting also disclosed that refunds for 4,000 companies had been halted in the last two weeks following

the detection of under-invoicing and forged sales tax returns.

PM Shehbaz stated that both tax evaders and the officers and staff facilitating them would be punished, and assured that those fulfilling their tax responsibilities on time would be acknowledged.

He also requested a comprehensive report on the magnitude of tax evasion and measures for its prevention.

The prime minister vowed to introduce a taxation system of international standards in the country and called for engaging well-respected professionals and experts to formulate tax policy. He sought a comprehensive strategy for FBR's digitisation and reforms, along with set targets for the next meeting.

He further announced plans to install state-of-the-art scanners at airports to ensure transparency and prevent corruption in the system.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb and Ahmad Khan Cheema, Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, FBR chairman, Pakistan Business Council CEO Ehsan Malik, and Karandaz CEO Waqasul Hassan while Dr Shamsah Akhtar, Naveed Andrabi, Asif Pir, and Ali Malik joined the meeting via video link.—RT/Agency

Government Has Splurged Rs9 Billion On Print Media Ads, Rs6 Billion On TV, Reveals Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attallah Tarar shared that the country's newspapers received advertisements worth Rs9 billion while news channels were allocated Rs6 billion in government advertisements.



Responding to Senator Sarmad Ali Khan's query regarding the criteria for news channels and newspapers, the minister emphasised that the newspapers were facing a financial crisis, prompting the current government to provide special attention and support.

Tarar explained that, according to the 1997 Services Manual, advertisements are distributed to news and media outlets. He added that a new advertisement policy was introduced in 2021 and amended in 2022.

"There is no specific criteria to gauge the eligibility of electronic media for advertisements. However, our rates committee allocates advertisements based on the ratings of news channels," he said.

The minister confirmed that no advertisements for any news channel had been halted by the current government. He further clarified that the main criterion for advertisements is to effectively

convey the intended message to the maximum audience, with the rating system for news channels aiding in this goal. Additionally, the Audit Bureau of Circulation verifies the circulation figures of newspapers and issues advertisements to the most widely circulated ones, he added.

Tarar mentioned that 10% duty on imported paper used for newspapers was initially imposed but later waived off in Budget 2024-25, with no new taxes imposed due to the prevailing financial crisis.

He urged the House to improve and make the current advertisement policy more effective under the guidance of the mover of the question and the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS). Earlier, the minister praised the prime minister for successfully concluding his visit to Astana for the Leaders' Forum under the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), where he advocated for the rights of innocent Palestinians.

"The Prime Minister vehemently argued the case of Palestine, demanding that Israel be held accountable for the genocide of innocent Palestinians, with two million people displaced," he said. Pakistan, he added, maintains a clear stance that a free Palestine should be recognised within its present 1967 boundaries with Al Quds as its capital, and a ceasefire should be implemented as the only viable solution.—RT/Agency

Dar Guarantees Transparent Auction Of SEOs



ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in Senate Ishaq Dar on Friday assured that the privatisation process will be taken forward in a transparent manner and due process will be followed. He however emphasised there should not be any politics on this matter.

Dar proposed formation of a special committee to ascertain why the privatisation of the Pakistan Steel Mills could not occur, which resulted in the loss of hundreds of billions of rupees from the national kitty.

The Senate also passed The State Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) Amendment Bill, 2024.

It was moved by Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar. The Law Minister said the bill was aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the Boards of Directors of State-Owned Enterprises.

The Senate was also informed that the federal government was encouraging the use of electric vehicles for protecting the environment and reducing dependence on expensive imported fuel.

Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar told the House during Question Hour that thirty electric buses have been imported from China in this regard. He said that buses had been stationed at the Jinnah Convention Center in Islamabad where state of the art charging were made available.

The Law Minister told the House that NADRA centers would be established in each Union Council in the next two and a half years.

He said the NADRA had prepared a comprehensive phased wise plan in this regard and 1150 Union Councils will have NADRA centers in ten months.—RT/Agency

Government Retreats From Imposing Advance Turnover Tax On Petroleum Dealers

ISLAMABAD: The federal government withdrew the advance tax imposed on petroleum dealers after successful talks with their association, media reported.

According to a notification, 0.5 percent additional withholding tax on petrol pumps has been abolished.

The government had imposed a 0.5 percent withholding tax per litre on petrol pumps in the budget 2024-25, in addition to the 12.5 percent withholding tax that petrol pumps were already paying on their margins.

Earlier in the day, the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association announced the end of their strike and the reopening of petrol pumps across the country.

The association leader, Abdul Sami Khan said that they would go on strike

again, if their demands are not met. Abdul Sami Khan said that there is no groupism among petroleum dealers.

He said that the government's decision to impose a tax of Rs 1 million petrol pump is not acceptable.

"Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb assured us that our issues will be resolved, but our demands have not been met yet," he added.

Abdul Sami Khan said, with the ending of the strike, fuel pumps will be reopened across Pakistan.

It is pertinent to mention here that Karachi faced fuel shortage as the stock of petroleum products has run out due to the strike of the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association.

As per details, the fuel stations in Karachi and elsewhere were not transparent. He demanded that the right to vote be restored to the people and fresh elections be held under a transparent system.

Fazl also referred to US Congress's recent resolution, saying that it has raised questions about the legitimacy of the polls. He questioned the passage of such resolution, asking whether this was a diplomatic failure.—RT/Agency

According to sources, the supply of petroleum products from Pakistan State Oil (PSO) and other oil marketing companies' terminals is ongoing. Meanwhile, the Oil Tanker Owners Association has distanced itself from the petroleum dealers' strike.

Railways, airports, power plants are being supplied fuel, said Oil Tanker Owners Association President Shams Shahwani. On Thursday, Pakistan State Oil (PSO) announced that the supply of petroleum products will be ensured across the country.

PSO confirmed that its supply chain is fully operational, guaranteeing that petrol pumps would remain stocked despite the strike.—RT/Agency

Fazalur Rehman and Shahid Khaqan Slam Budget As 'IMF-Dictated'

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister and chief Awaam Pakistan—a newly formed political party—Shahid Khaqan Abbasi called on Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman, media reported.



The JUI-F spokesperson said that both the leaders Pakistan's political situation. "The leaders expressed concern over the increasing inflation and lawlessness," the spokesperson added.

The JUI-F spokesperson said that Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman also expressed reservations about the February 8 polls as 'unacceptable'.

He said that both the leaders were of the view that budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 is not for the people, but is 'based on International Monetary Fund

(IMF) instructions. The JUI-F spokesperson also reiterated that the party would not accept 'fake' general elections 2024. Earlier, Maulana Fazlur Rehman demanded new general elections in Pakistan, rejecting the February 8 polls as 'unacceptable'.

Addressing a press conference, Fazlur Rehman claimed that the government has 'no powers' to address their concerns and that the elections held on February 8

were not transparent. He demanded that the right to vote be restored to the people and fresh elections be held under a transparent system.

Fazl also referred to US Congress's recent resolution, saying that it has raised questions about the legitimacy of the polls. He questioned the passage of such resolution, asking whether this was a diplomatic failure.—RT/Agency

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Cabinet Body Greenlights Six-Month Extension In Refinery Policy 2023

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Energy, which met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday, approved the extension of six months in the Refinery Policy 2023 regarding the upgradation of the existing refineries.



The committee directed the Ministry of Petroleum to take into confidence the oil refineries established in the country and prepare a comprehensive plan for their upgradation on a priority basis.

The committee was also presented with a detailed report on the circular debt of the power sector from July 2023 to May 2024.

The report stated that the volume of the power sector's circular debt was Rs 2,655 billion till May 2024.

The committee also approved the Standardized Security Package Document under the Power Policy 2015 for small water projects of the private sector. This initiative

is aimed at promoting private investment in the electricity sector and quickly resolving the tariff and other issues. The prime minister directed to resolve complaints regarding the electricity supply of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. He constituted a committee to prepare a plan of action to ensure the uninterrupted supply of electricity in Gilgit-Baltistan. The committee also approved setting up a support unit with two-year tenure to increase the efficiency of electricity distribution companies, prevent

electricity theft and timely collection of bills. After the Federal Cabinet's approval, the first support unit would be established for the Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO). The committee also approved an incentive package for recovery of unpaid and overdue electricity bills. Under the package, rewards would be given to the personnel of law enforcement agencies and officials of DISCOs for the recovery of unpaid and overdue electricity bills.—RT/Agency

Federal Government Challenges IHC Ruling In Bushra Bibi Audio Scandal, Sparking Controversy

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has challenged the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) order in the Bushra Bibi audio leak case.



The federal government has filed a petition in the Supreme Court against IHC's order.

The plea contended that summoning heads of state institutions and seeking reports from them was equivalent to fact-finding, which was against the court's jurisdiction.

It argued that Najam Saqib's petition was against the parliamentary committee's summons, and that matter had been resolved.

The federal government's plea also mentioned that the IHC was proceeding against points of inadmissible application. It was added that the IHC had no right to take suo moto notice.

IHC's Babar Sattar remarked during the hearing of Bushra Bibi audio leak case: "There is no law regarding phone tapping in the country and what is currently taking place is illegal."

The court ordered the telecommunication companies to refrain from recording phone calls for surveillance purposes. Meanwhile, the IHC also

issued a contempt of court notice to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) chairman and its members, directing them to submit a response within six weeks.

The court remarked, "The court is of the view that the PTA apparently misinterpreted the surveillance system in the report."

The IHC also directed the PM office to submit a report on the legal framework of the surveillance system within six weeks, seeking clarity on whether the surveillance was being carried out under the law and the constitution.

It is pertinent to note the alleged audio leak case involves a call conversation between former prime minister Imran Khan's spouse Bushra Bibi, and Najam Saqib, the son of retired chief justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar, on party ticket.—RT/Agency

ECP Clarifies Controversial Reports On Forms 45 In Lahore's Constituencies

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday clarified that the Forms 45 of Lahore's constituencies had already been uploaded on the Commission's website. The news about absence of Forms-45 from some constituencies of Lahore on the Commission's website was tantamount to misleading the public, said Spokesperson of the ECP in a statement issued here. As far as Forms-45 of PP-159 Lahore were concerned, all its Form 45 and Form 46 had already been uploaded on the Commission's website. The Spokesperson said misleading information was being circulated. Now, as cases of various constituencies were being heard in the election tribunals, it was inappropriate to comment on it, the statement further said.—RT/Agency

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