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Pakistan Pushes For Power And Peace At SCO Summit

ISLAMABAD: At the high-stakes Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, Pakistan has urged member states to prioritise collective efforts for regional security and stability amid a rapidly changing global landscape.

"We are at a historic moment of transition where sweeping transformations are reshaping the global, social, political, economic, and security landscape," he said in his keynote address at the 23rd meeting of the SCO Council of the Heads of Governments (CHG).

The SCO moot — the highest-profile event hosted by the country in years — is being held at the Jinnah Convention Centre in Islamabad, with leaders from 10 countries in attendance, including arch-rival India.

Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyan Jaishankar's participation at the event is a major highlight, marking the first such visit by an Indian PM in almost a decade amid frosty relations between the two nuclear powers.

Commenting on the

diplomatic reverberations of the SCO summit, former ambassador Maleeha Lodhi said that Islamabad had significantly bolstered its international standing.

"By holding this summit, Pakistan's diplomatic position has strengthened globally. This is an important diplomatic moment for Pakistan as important leaders are attending the summit," said Lodhi while speaking to media.

Presiding over the meeting, PM Shehbaz said: "From the esteemed platform of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, a beacon of multilateralism, I stand in the belief that we possess not only the potential but the will to forge a future that is more prosperous and secure for our people."

"A future, that is inclusive, and reflective of the shared aspirations of all member states," the premier said while addressing the meeting.

The premier said that Afghanistan, by virtue of its contiguity with the region, presents an invaluable oppor-



tunity for trade and transit, benefiting all SCO member states.

"A stable Afghanistan, is not only desirable, but essential, to fully realising these opportunities," he added.

It may be noted that the neighbouring nation is part of the regional bloc. It holds the position of an observer state but has been inactive since 2021, when the Taliban took over.

The premier called on the international community to step forward, with urgent humanitarian support for Afghanistan, while also urging its interim Taliban government to embrace political inclusivity to ensure that Afghan soil is not misused

for terrorism against its neighbours by any entity.

PM Shehbaz highlighted the challenges of poverty in his address, saying that it was not just an economic issue but a moral imperative that demanded the collective attention of the regional states.

"With millions living in poverty within the SCO region, closer cooperation on poverty alleviation is critical," he added.

PM Shehbaz underscored that Pakistan, as the permanent chair of the SCO Special Working Group on Poverty, has facilitated, several seminars, and webinars aimed at sharing of knowledge, and best practices.

He reaffirmed the coun-

try's commitment to providing the required impetus to the collective efforts to address the root causes of poverty and uplift the quality of life for our people.

Speaking about another global issue, PM Shehbaz said that climate change is an existential crisis that transcends borders and its impacts are felt universally but more acutely by nations like Pakistan.

He went on to say that the country is on the frontline of climate-induced disasters.

"It is imperative that we prioritise environmental cooperation within the SCO to build resilience and secure a sustainable future for the generations to come," the premier added.

Moreover, the prime minister maintained that Pakistan welcomes the recent SCO agreement on environmental protection and calls upon all member states to actively engage in both regional and global environmental efforts.

He said that the government has developed a "one of its kind" proactive, technology-driven, disaster manage-

ment system.

"We look forward to organising, simulation exercises with SCO partners, to bolster, disaster preparedness, across the region," PM Shehbaz added.

Emphasising the importance of connectivity, the premier urged the establishment of a robust SCO connectivity framework to boost regional trade and advance the vision of a connected Eurasia.

He also called for the expansion of flagship projects like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) to enhance integration and cooperation, across the region.

"Let us not look at such projects, through the narrow, political prism and invest in our collective connectivity capacities, which are crucial to advancing the shared vision of an economically integrated region. Let us work together for a well-integrated and prosperous region that benefits all Member states," he added.

Moreover, the premier stressed that unilateral coercive measures and protectionist policies run contrary to the principles of international law as they "stifle economic growth, hinder technological advancements and exacerbate inequality".

PM Shehbaz Sharif called on the SCO leaders to encourage private sectors in their respective countries to cultivate an environment that is conducive to business and investment within the region.

He said that the growing consensus, among member states on the use of mutual currencies for settlements is a promising development.

The premier added that Pakistan firmly believes that a stronger and more effective SCO is essential to achieving sustainable development in our region.

"We wholeheartedly endorse, the ongoing reforms, aimed at modernising the organisation, enhancing the resources and capabilities of the SCO Secretariat and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure," he said.

PM Shehbaz reminded

India's Jaishankar Praises Pakistan's 'Warm Welcome' During SCO Talks

ISLAMABAD: Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyan Jaishankar on Wednesday thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar and the government for the "hospitality and courtesies" during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit hosted by Islamabad.

Jaishankar, who attended the SCO moot held in Islamabad, was the first foreign minister of the neighbouring nation to visit Pakistan in nearly a decade.

Hours after the conclusion of the two-day regional huddle, Jaishankar wrote on his X handle: "Departing from Islamabad. Thank PM @CMShehbaz, DPM & FM @MishaqDar50 and the Government of Pakistan for the hospitality and courtesies."

Reacting to his X post, FM Dar thanked his Indian counterpart Jaishankar for his "kind message and participation" in the 23rd meeting of the SCO-CHG meeting.

"Pakistan was honoured to host SCO Member States in Islamabad," he added.

Meanwhile, sources told media that FM Dar and his



Indian counterpart Jaishankar had a brief exchange during the lunch hosted for the leaders attending the SCO summit.

The sources, however, said the details of the discussions between the top officials cannot be revealed at this time.

Speaking about the Indian FM visit to Pakistan in nearly 10 years, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar termed it an "ice breaker".

"Neither us nor them requested for a bilateral meeting... but I believe his arrival here is an ice breaker," AFP quoted the information minister as saying.

"Yesterday, when all the leaders were being welcomed and there were handshakes, I think positive images were sent out globally."

Indian FM Jaishankar and PM Shehbaz greeted each other with a handshake and sombre expressions at the start of an official dinner for the visiting leaders of the SCO bloc on Tuesday.

Relations between India and Pakistan have been particularly sour since 2019, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi revoked the limited autonomy of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Jaishankar, in another X post, said that a productive meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government concluded in Islamabad today.

"Signed eight outcome documents. India made a positive and constructive contribution to the deliberations."—RT/Agency

JUI-F And PPP Leaders Hold High-Stakes Meeting With Sharif Brothers Over Controversial Constitutional Amendment



LAHORE: The bigwigs of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) are holding a detailed discussion on the proposed 26th constitutional amendment, media reported.

The meeting is being held at the Jati Umra, the Sharif brothers' residence in Lahore, attended by President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PML-N President Nawaz Sharif, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and others.

During the meeting, three different drafts of the constitutional amendments—each presented by three parties—PPP's Khurshid Shah, who heads the parliament's special committee on the constitutional amendment, also presented the recommendations.

The federal government is intending to present the constitutional amendments in the National Assembly on Thursday for which the lower house session has already been called. PM Shehbaz will also hold a lunch-eve for coalition parties ahead of the National Assembly sitting.

Earlier on Tuesday, the JUI-F and PPP reached an agreement on constitutional amendments following their meeting in Karachi. This was disclosed by JUI-F Maulana Fazlur Rehman and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while addressing a joint presser. Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that his party and PPP agreed on the draft of constitutional amendments, hailing Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for the consensus.—RT/Agency

SCO Showdown: US Admits Nations Have The Right To Form Alliances

WASHINGTON: The United States (US) has said that it respects every nation's sovereign right to form alliances and associations of its own choosing.

Responding to a question about the ongoing Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Islamabad, State Department's spokesperson Matthew Miller said that the US encourages every country to ensure that its participation in multilateral fora upholds and respects international law and reaffirms the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of all nations.

Pakistan is hosting a two-day meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the SCO in the federal capital that will conclude this evening.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will preside over the high-level meeting, for which the South Asian nation has made stringent arrangements to ensure the event proceeds smoothly.

The prime ministers and high-ranking officials from the SCO member states, including Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and



The First Vice President of Iran will attend today's moot.

To another question about Pakistan's demand to the UN Security Council to investigate theft and illicit sale of nuclear materials in India, the spokesperson said: "We are aware of Pakistan's request to the UN Security Council."

"We are committed to tracking, developing and implementing effective policy responses to proliferation threats and we will continue to work with our partners to shape the international security environment," the spokesperson added.

Pakistan on October 11 called on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to thoroughly investigate the "recurring" incidents of theft and illicit sale of nuclear and other radioactive materials in neighbouring India.

The move came after a recent Indian media report said that police had arrested three smugglers in the western Gopalganj district of Bihar with a rare Californium stone which is highly radioactive and fetches a high price in the international market.

"The Security Council should be deeply concerned about the recurring incidents of theft and illicit sale of nuclear and other radioactive materials in our Eastern neighbour," permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN Ambassador Munir Akram told a committee established by the 15-member Council pursuant to its resolution 1540 that requires UN member states to take specific steps to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).—RT/Agency

-Can you believe this nonsense?

Government To Shell Out Rs 72bn To Five IPPs

ISLAMABAD: The federal government decided to pay a total of Rs 72 billion as a final settlement to five Independent Power Producers (IPPs) as it terminated the agreements with them, media reported citing sources.

Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif announced to terminate the agreements with five IPPs in the first phase on October 10. According to sources, the government will pay Hubco Rs 36.5 billion and Roush Power to the Roush Power.

Similarly, the Lalpur Power will be paid Rs 12.8 billion, Atlas Power Rs 15.5 billion and Sapphire Power will be paid Rs 6 billion by the federal government.

According to the sources, the settlement does not include late payment charges. The agreements with the five IPPs will be deemed officially terminated with effect from October 1.

Earlier chairing the fed-



eral cabinet meeting in Islamabad, PM Shehbaz said the termination was done after the mutual consent of the owners of the IPPs.

The Prime Minister informed the Cabinet that only the outstanding amounts owed to these IPPs will be paid, without any interest.

He said that termination of these contracts will save power consumers about sixty billion rupees and provide a benefit of around four hundred and eleven billion rupees to the national exchequer.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said it was the outcome of the strenuous collective efforts

of the entire government team. He also recognized the inputs and support of the allied parties in this regard.

He especially mentioned that Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, who took personal interest in the whole matter.

The Prime Minister described the development as a beginning of a journey which he said will be converted into progress and prosperity of the people.

PM Shehbaz Sharif also mentioned the relief provided by both the Federal and Punjab governments to the power consumers during the months of summer.—RT/Agency

Dar Hails SCO Summit As A Major Win For Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has highlighted the significance of hosting the SCO summit, calling it a great honour for Pakistan. During a joint press conference with the secretary general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Islamabad, Dar expressed gratitude to all member countries that participated. He praised their positive contribution to the

FBR Boss Demands Slash In Income And Corporate Tax Rates

ISLAMABAD: Chairman FBR Rashid Mahmood Langrial on Wednesday said that the income tax and corporate tax rates required to be fixed and slashed, media reported.

"It is wrong to collect tax for the whole year and paying it for debt servicing," FBR chief said.

Rashid Langrial said that there are such government officers, traders and industrialists, who doesn't evade a single rupee of the payable tax.

He said 95 people in the country are poor, but they are paying tax in the form of sales tax.

FBR chief said there are five percent wealthy people thus the tax being imposed over them. "There are some people in this five percent who didn't pay their taxes," FBR chairman added.

It is to be mentioned here that the government has extended the deadline for filing income tax returns for the tax



year 2024 again until October 31, providing an opportunity for those who did not file their returns before October 14.

The previous deadline was October 14, but banks in Islamabad and Rawalpindi were closed for three days, causing issues for taxpayers who completed their returns.

Federal Board of Revenue Chairman Rashid Mahmood Langrial confirmed to

THE HEARTLAND



HYDERABAD: People are reciting the Holy Quran in memory of those killed in the 2007 PPP rally carnage, during an event organized by Town Chairman Bilal Mustafa Shaikh to mark the anniversary of the Karsaz tragedy.-RT

Sindh Minister Jam Khan Shoro Orders For Heightened Security For Karsaz Martyrs' Death Anniversary



By GM Chandio

HYDERABAD: Provincial Minister Jam Khan Shoro held a press conference regarding the PPP's rally on October 18. He recalled the tragic bombing during Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's welcome procession on October 18, 2007, in Karachi, which resulted in the deaths of several party workers. Shoro emphasized that the PPP honors its mar-



HYDERABAD: Residents of Jamshoro's Pathan Goth are holding a protest at the Hyderabad Press Club against police high-handedness.-RT

Sindh Minister Shaheena Sher Ali's Surprise Visit Shakes Up JIMS Hospital

JACOBABAD: Provincial Minister Shaheena Sher Ali, along with MPAs Nida Khuhro and Jacobabad's Sher Muhammad Mugheri, paid a surprise visit to JIMS Hospital Jacobabad. During the visit, patients voiced numerous complaints against the hospital administration, particularly regarding a lack of medication. Patients expressed their grievances to the provincial minister, stating that they were not receiving necessary medicines and that the hospital staff was pressuring them to obtain medications from outside. They noted that while JIMS once provided better facilities, it has now deteriorated significantly. In response, the provincial minister inquired about the medication situation from

Fury In Thul: JSQM Protests Against Male Staff Appointments At Girls' High School



By Khair Muhammad Golo

THUL: In Thul, the JSQM has continued its protest against the male staff at the Government Girls' Higher Secondary School for the fifth consecutive day. Demonstrators gathered outside the school and marched to Rahbar Chowk, blocking the road and chanting slogans. During the protest, leaders including Mama Shaman Soomro, Comrade Liaquat Sarki, Wasim Qureshi, Akhtar Jaffari, Bashir Lashari, Gulmir Burro, Daddu Qureshi, and others spoke to the media, stating that the appointment of male staff instead of female staff at the school is unacceptable and causing significant distress. They demanded that the entire staff, including the principal, be female. They warned that their protest would continue until their demands are met.

Sassui Sounds Alarms Over Sindh's Water Crisis, Warns Of Grave Consequences



By Khuda Bux Brohi

THATTA: Former Senator and Pakistan People's Party leader Sassui Palijo has issued a stark warning regarding the decisions made in the recent Central Development Working Party (CDWP) meeting, calling it a matter of "life and death" for the people of Sindh. Speaking at a press conference at the Thatta Press Club, Palijo voiced strong concerns about the controversial Kalabagh Dam and condemned the construction of the Cholistan Canal, labeling it as direct terrorism against Sindh. Palijo criticized policymakers, questioning whether they truly understood or respected the constitution, accusing them of repeatedly violating it. She vowed that the people of Sindh would never accept such unjust decisions. Highlighting the acute water crisis affecting districts like Thatta, the Sujawal, Badin, and Tando Muhammad Khan, she stressed that Sindh is disproportionately affected by climate change, with far fewer water resources compared to other provinces. She emphasized that access to clean drinking water and land is essential not only for the survival of the people but also for political relevance in the region. Palijo raised questions about the composition of the Council of Common Interests (CCI), which she argued was unfairly dominated by Punjab. She criticized the irrigation authority for overstepping its mandate and

DC Badin Holds Emergency Meeting With Brick Kiln Owners After Flood Of Public Complaints



By Raja Zafar Iqbal

BADIN: Deputy Commissioner Yasir Bhatti addressed rising brick prices during a meeting with brick kiln owners at Darbar Hall. He announced plans to collect data on all brick kilns in Badin district, including registration of the kilns and their workers with the Sindh Employees Social Security Institute (SESSI) for free medical services. The data will cover the number of workers, environmental impacts, fuel used, and production costs, with a price for bricks set to be fixed next week. Assistant

Health Festival By Population Welfare Dept Draws Crowds, Sparks Awareness



By Saleem Soomro

LARKANA: A health festival was organized by the Population, Welfare Department at Village Larkana, inaugurated by Assistant Commissioner Kainat Shaikh, along with District Population and Welfare Officer Karim Bux Bhutto and other officials. The festival featured participation from renowned doctors, including Dr. Mehtab Mirani, Dr. Afroz Dhamrah, Dr. Kulsom, Dr. Asiya Khokhar, Dr. Farman, and District Manager of Marie Stopes, Abdul Basit Burriro. Various stalls were set up by the Health Department, PPHI, Marie Stopes, Livestock, and other organizations. During the event, over 3,000 patients received free medical check-ups, with 236 individuals being informed about family planning and provided treatment. In a media briefing, Assistant Commissioner Kainat Shaikh emphasized that implementing family planning leads to better health for mothers and children and contributes to a happy married life. She noted the importance of conducting such health festivals to raise awareness about family planning and other health issues, advocating for similar initiatives in the future to educate the community further.

Nationalists Condemn Brutal Torture During Karachi Peace March

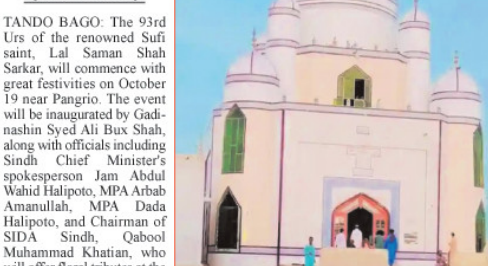


By Sajjad Chang

HINGORJA: In Hingorja, nationalist activists staged a protest demanding the arrest of the perpetrators behind the violence at the Karachi Peace March and the murder of Dr. Shah Nawaz Kumbhar. Led by Karam Samtio, Mujib Bhehar, Qalb Haidari Solangi, Zahoor Dayo, and Hakeem Mangi, the protest took place outside the press club. Activists spoke to the media, claiming that Dr. Kumbhar was killed by police in a fake encounter and called for a judicial inquiry into his death. They also demanded action against those responsible for the violence at the Karachi Peace March. In another incident, crime in Hingorja has escalated. Unknown thieves broke into two shops at the Hingorja Stop Market, stealing hundreds of thousands of rupees. The previous night, thieves targeted the shop of journalist and trader Aftab Memon, making off with four hundred thousand rupees and valuable goods. The same night, they also robbed the shop of grocer Nazir Memon. Police arrived to gather details from the affected shopkeepers. In response, Aftab Bhanbhro, Nazir Ahmed Memon, and other residents protested against the rising crime, accusing the police of failing to maintain order. They warned that unless criminals are apprehended and the stolen goods recovered, a complete shutdown strike would be organized in the city.

Mystic Reverence: 93rd Urs Of Saman Shah Sarkar To Commence On Oct 19th

By Sher Ali Khawaja



TANDO BAGO: The 93rd Urs of the renowned Sufi saint, Lal Saman Shah Sarkar, will commence with great festivities on October 19 near Pangrio. The event will be inaugurated by Gadinashin Syed Ali Bux Shah, along with officials including Sindh Chief Minister's spokesperson Jam Abdul Wahid Halipot, MPA Arbab Amanullah, MPA Dada Halipot, and Chairman of SIDA Sindh, Qabool Muhammad Khatian, who will offer floral tributes at the shrine. Preparations for the festivities are complete, with sweet shops lining the main roads of Pangrio. Malkani Sharif, and Tando Bago. As in previous years, the festival will feature musical performances by renowned Sindhi artists and competitions including horse racing, showcasing the rich culture of

Sindh. Thousands of devotees from across Sindh and the country are expected to attend. However, there are concerns about the lack of basic facilities, such as clean drinking water and accommodations for visitors. Police have set up posts along roads from Badin district to ensure safety and manage the influx of pilgrims, though there are reports of them collecting fees under various pretexts from attendees. The festival is anticipated to draw significant crowds, with many people expected to bring offerings to the shrine, contributing to the vibrant atmosphere of the Urs.



HYDERABAD: Mir Mehbob Talpur, a resident of Latifabad, addresses the media for the provision of justice during a press conference at the Hyderabad Press Club.-RT



HYDERABAD: Activists and leaders of Jeay Sindh Mahaz (JSM) are holding a protest at the Hyderabad Press Club, demanding justice for the killing of Dr. Shah Nawaz Kumbhar.-RT

REGIONAL TIMES NATIONAL



CENTRAL PUNJAB

Top Management Course Delegation Visits RPO Office In Gujranwala

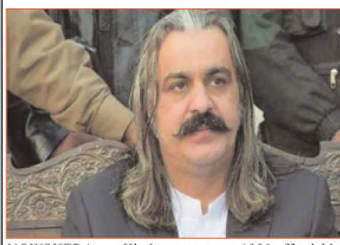
By Dr. Mirza MB Qamar



GUJRANWALA: National Institute of Management 41st Mid-Career Management Course Islamabad delegation visited Regional Police Office Gujranwala. The RPO gave a detailed briefing to the participating delegation about the working of the entire Gujranwala region. Gujranwala Region Police is utilizing all resources to further improve service delivery. The delegation of National Institute of Management 41st Mid-Career Management Course Islamabad visited the Regional Police Office Gujranwala, on arrival at the office they were welcomed by the police officers. Later the RPO took the participating delegation to Gujranwala Region, Gujarat, Stalkot, Mandi Bahauddin. Briefed in detail about the working of Hafizabad and Narowal, which the participants showed keen interest. He was told that the police is using modern technology to

maintain law and order and control the crime situation. Gujranwala Region Police is using all resources to improve service delivery. An integrated system has been created to control crime, which is yielding substantial results. Due to which dozens of gangs involved in theft, robbery and robbery have also been arrested. While answering the questions of the officers included in the delegation, the RPO said that according to smart and community policing, the Punjab Police is busy day and night for the protection of life and property of the people and rule of law. Furthermore, RPO Tayyab Hafeez Cheema, while briefing the participants of the delegation, said that the projects started with the use of information technology, such as the establishment of police service centers, women enclaves and Gujranwala, said that women in any other institutions. Women can come to Enclave for related issues. It is where women's lack of share in property, harassment and violence at work, getting driving license and women can enroll in driving classes, among other important issues are addressed. In Gujranwala Police, a Pink Wells Police Squad has been established on Ladies Police Officer, whose aim is to provide immediate protection to women.

Gandapur Unveils Ambitious Affordable Housing Plan For Nowshera



NOWSHERA: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has visited Jalozi in Nowshera district and inaugurated a low-cost housing scheme under the Naya Pakistan Housing Programme. According to sources in KP Assembly, the scheme spans 150 kanals and has an estimated cost of Rs3,300 million, aiming to construct 1320 affordable apartments, each with 780 square feet. Additionally, the CM opened a sports complex in Jalozi Scheme, costing Rs170 million, featuring squash and tennis courts, basketball court and a 500-metre jogging track.—RT/Agency

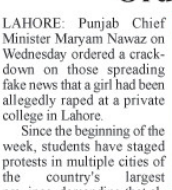
President Pushes For Stronger Economic Ties With Turkmenistan Amid Trade Talks



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday underlined the importance of increasing economic cooperation and business relations between Pakistan and Turkmenistan for the mutual benefit of the two countries. He also called for greater linkages between the stock exchanges of the two brotherly countries to improve economic cooperation. The president expressed these views while talking to Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers/Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, who along with Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan Atajan Movlamov, called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. Welcoming the delegation, the president

said that Pakistan attached great importance to its ties with Turkmenistan, which were based on common values, religion and culture. He called for working together for the shared prosperity and stability in the region and the betterment of the people of Pakistan and Turkmenistan. The president also affirmed Pakistan's commitment to the early completion of the TAPI Gas pipeline project, adding that the project would greatly help in the economic development of the two countries. Rashid Meredov thanked the president for participation in the International Forum on the 300th birth anniversary celebrations of Magtymguly Faragi in Ashgabat, saying that it was a great gesture of respect for the Turkmen people.—RT/Agency

CM Maryam Targets 'Fake' Lahore College Rape Scandal, Orders Swift Action



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday ordered a crackdown on those spreading fake news that a girl had been allegedly raped at a private college in Lahore. Since the beginning of the week, students have staged protests in multiple cities of the country's largest province, demanding that alleged culprits of the claimed crime be brought to justice. While the protests caused injuries to students and police alike, the authorities had firmly stated that no girl had been raped, while the girl's family had also ruled out the sexual assault. During a press conference, the provincial chief executive said that a crackdown should be launched "regardless of whether they belong to the PTI [Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf] or Chaudhry Pervez Elahi's Q-League". She also blamed the former ruling party for spreading fake news and spreading

siege, and anarchy. "I know very well who is behind this incident and will not leave anyone who was involved in this," she stressed. A high-level committee, formed by the Punjab government, has also stated in its report that the girl had not been raped and that she sustained injuries at her home. The police registered a first information report (FIR) at the Defence A Police Station against the spread of misinformation and unverified news on social media. She said that the authorities were still looking for the victim to date and added that the girl whose name was being taken as an alleged rape victim was undergoing treatment in the hospital since October 2 and the accused guard was on vacation. CM Maryam added that the incident was reported on October 10, but the girl was not present at her college on the said day.—RT/Agency

Massive Drug Haul: ANF Seizes 212 Kilos In Dramatic Nationwide Raids



RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover 212 kg drugs worth over Rs 25 million and arrested 11 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that 141.6 kg hashish was recovered from an area near a university in Shikarpur, Sukkur and an accused was arrested. 100 grams hashish and 35 intoxicated tablets were recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near a university in Islamabad. The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—RT/Agency

Punjab Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman Reviews Anti-Polio Campaign Preparations

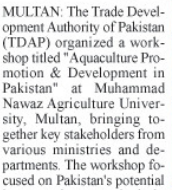


By Dr. Mirza MB Qamar

GUJRANWALA: Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman chaired a meeting focused on enhancing the anti-polio campaign through digitization of micro plans. He emphasized using GIS-based maps to monitor the campaign and announced that the digitized plans would be implemented starting from Lahore in the next round. During a video link review of the

anti-polio campaign, he stressed the importance of scientific approaches for the complete elimination of polio, including preparing action plans to address missed children. Special teams will also be formed to administer vaccine drops at transit points. The Secretary of Primary Health Division Syed Naveed Haider Shirazi, Deputy Commissioner Naveed Ahmed, and health officials, along with representatives from international organizations

TDAP Champions Aquaculture Growth With Workshop On Shrimp Farming In Punjab

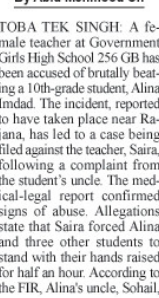


MULTAN: The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) organized a workshop titled "Aquaculture Promotion & Development in Pakistan" at Muhammad Nawaz Agriculture University, Multan, bringing together key stakeholders from various ministries and departments. The workshop focused on Pakistan's potential in aquaculture, particularly shrimp farming, and recent advancements in freshwater fisheries exports. Prominent speakers at the event included Dr. Asif Raza (Dean, Veterinary & Animal Science Department), Dr. Anser Mahmood Chatta (Director General Wildlife & Fisheries South Punjab), Mr. Farhan Khan (Assistant Fisheries Development Commissioner, Ministry of Maritime Affairs), Dr. Mubarak Ahmed (Consultant Agro & Food Division, TDAP), and Mr. Junaid Watto (CEO, Fisheries Development Board). Dr. Asif Raza opened the event by discussing how Punjab is leveraging new regulations to boost freshwater fisheries and shrimp farming. Dr. Mubarak Ahmed shared a significant milestone, noting that Pakistan is preparing for its first-ever

freshwater fisheries exports, with the Central Asian market offering immediate opportunities. He highlighted that TDAP is targeting \$1 billion in fisheries exports, building on the \$406 million achieved by June 2024. Dr. Anser Mahmood Chatta emphasized the vast potential for shrimp farming in Punjab, explaining how saline groundwater in the region can be used for shrimp cultivation. He spotlighted the 130-acre shrimp farming project in Muzaffargarh, initiated by CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz, which has already seen an \$8 million investment in shrimp seed ready for harvest. Mr. Athar Hussain Khokhar, TDAP Director General, speaking via Zoom, discussed the global shrimp market and the importance of expanding Pakistan's aquaculture exports, which currently stand at \$70 million compared to India's \$8 billion. He expressed optimism about upcoming exports from Punjab to China, Russia, and Central Asia, facilitated by the National Logistic Cell (NLC). The workshop also focused on skills development, with plans for internships and training programs in shrimp farming. Mr. Farhan Khan of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs stressed the importance of interdepartmental collaboration to remove regulatory barriers and streamline export logistics. The event concluded on a positive note, with discussions highlighting the promising future of Pakistan's aquaculture industry, which is expected to boost exports, create jobs, and position the country as a key player in the global seafood market.—RT

Toba Tek Singh Teacher Accused Of Savage Assault On Helpless Student

By Abid Mehmood Ch



TOBA TEK SINGH: A female teacher at Government Girls High School 256 GB has been accused of brutally beating a 10th-grade student, Alina Imdad. The incident, reported to have taken place near Rajpura, has led to a case being filed against the teacher, Saira, following a complaint from the student's uncle. The medical-legal report confirmed signs of abuse. Allegations state that Saira forced Alina and three other students to stand with their hands raised for half an hour. According to the FIR, Alina's uncle, Sohail,

described Saira's violent behavior as a routine, causing Alina to develop an inferiority complex and cease attending school after being unjustly beaten for not cleaning. In response to inquiries, Vice Principal Sarwat Bibi stated that the school administration is investigating the matter but noted that the affected family is determined to pursue legal for immediate intervention from the Punjab government against teacher Saira.

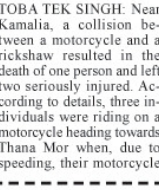
Ayaz Hails Pakistan's Key Role In Regional Power Play Through SCO

By Abid Mehmood Ch

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended heartfelt congratulations to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and all other stakeholders for the successful organization of the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. The prestigious event, attended by heads of governments and senior officials from member states, showcases Pakistan's growing stature on the international stage. In a statement, Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the significance of the SCO in strengthening cooperation and collective action across key areas, including sustainable development, regional connectivity, economic integration, climate action, and poverty alleviation. "The outcomes of this summit will undoubtedly contribute to a safer, more prosperous future for the region and the world," he noted. The Speaker also expressed his appreciation for the tireless efforts of all those involved in making the event a resounding success. "Their dedication, hard work, and commitment to excellence have brought immense pride to Pakistan. Alhamdulillah, their efforts have paid off, and it is truly a proud moment for the nation.—RT/Agency

Tragic Road Crash Claims Life, Leaves Two Clinging To Survival

By Abid Mehmood Ch



TOBA TEK SINGH: Near Kamalia, a collision between a motorcycle and a rickshaw resulted in the death of one person and left two seriously injured. According to details, three individuals were riding on a motorcycle heading towards Thana Mor when, due to speeding, their motorcycle

collided with a rickshaw ahead of them on Chichawati Road. As a result, 20-year-old Rana Mehran, 30-year-old Muhammad Waseem were severely injured. They were immediately taken to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Kamalia by the rescue team. Due to their critical condition, two of them were transferred to District Headquarters Hospital Toba Tek Singh. However, 20-year-old Rana Mehran succumbed to his injuries on the way. After completing the necessary formalities, the police handed over the deceased's body to his family. One of the injured individuals is reported to be in critical condition at the hospital, two of them were

METRO KARACHI

Woman Busted For Elaborate Kidnapping Plot Using Marriage As Bait

KARACHI: Police have arrested a woman accused of orchestrating kidnappings by luring victims into a marriage trap in Sindh's Katcha area. According to SSP AVCC Aneel Haider, the suspect, Tania Rano, wife of gang member Badeel Shar, was working with dacoits to lure unsuspecting citizens. Tania allegedly com-

municated with her victims via video calls, promising marriage and convincing them to meet her, before delivering them to the gang's base in Katcha and Ghotki. She had been provided with a SIM card through a courier service to facilitate these operations. Initially working with one gang, Tania later col-

Cabinet Shakeup: Bilal Yasin Ousted As Punjab's Food Minister

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has made significant changes to the provincial cabinet, reallocating the portfolio of the Provincial Minister for Food. Bilal Yasin has been relieved of his duties as Food Minister and assigned the portfolio of Housing and Public Health Engineering. A new minister for Price Control and Commodity Management will also be appointed. Additionally, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has assigned Special Assistant Rashid Iqbal Nasrullah to oversee the Zakat and Ushr department. A notification regarding Rashid Iqbal Nasrullah's appointment has been issued from the Chief Secretary's office.—RT/Agency

Police Clamp Down On Spread Of Shocking Unverified Reports In Lahore Rape Case

By Abid Mehmood Ch

LAHORE: Soon after a high-level committee, formed by the Punjab government, published its preliminary findings concerning the alleged rape of a first-year female student at a private college in the city, the police registered a first information report (FIR) at the Defence A Police Station citing the spread of misinformation and unverified news on social media. The case has been registered by the police under section 20 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, which deals with "offences against dignity of a natural person", while other charges include section 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 500 (punishment for defamation), 501 (printing or engraving matter

known to be defamatory); and 505 (statements conducive to public mischief). The development comes after social media was flooded with public outcry over the alleged rape incident, with the matter going viral across various platforms with photographs of some female students also being widely shared. The matter surfaced on the internet after students of a private college took to streets on Monday to protest against the alleged rape. The demonstration turned violent after dozens of the protesters were injured in violent clashes with protesters and law enforcers. The protests also continued on Tuesday and Wednesday in difference of the province. According to the FIR, the news of the alleged rape of the student went viral on social media. It added that various students were asked to confirm the incident, while the concerned girl and her parents completely denied its occurrence. The FIR further stated that the girl's parents said that their daughter fell in the house on October 2 and suffered deep injury. The girl's treatment was done at the Lahore General Hospital and Intefaq Hospital till October 11 with 15 days of bed rest recommended to her. "After the injury, the daughter neither went to college nor elsewhere," read the FIR, adding that the family's reputation was damaged following the spread of misinformation.—RT/Agency

EDITORIAL

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

Thursday, October 17, 2024



The weaponization of social media

The recent uproar over the alleged rape incident at a private college in Lahore has brought to light the enormous influence of social media—both its power to inform and its potential to mislead. In today's digital age, information travels at lightning speed, often without verification, leading to a dangerous mix of truth, misinformation, and speculation.

Last week, social media was ablaze with reports of an alleged rape on a Lahore campus. The news went viral, sparking protests and demands for justice. However, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has now debunked these allegations, calling the incident

a "fabricated story" meant to incite unrest and tarnish the government's image. She further accused political rivals of exploiting the situation for their own agenda. The father of the alleged victim also denied any assault, clarifying that his daughter's injuries were the result of an accident at home, not a crime.

The incident serves as a grim reminder of how social media can be weaponized. While it can spread awareness and rally people to

just causes, it can also become a breeding ground for rumors, leading to panic, unrest, and the unfair targeting of individuals. In this case, a family's privacy was invaded, and the community was stirred by unsubstantiated claims.

It is hoped that restraint and common sense will prevail, allowing authorities to address legitimate concerns without the noise of misinformation. While social media remains a vital tool for connectivity and advocacy, its users must exercise responsibility and verify facts before sharing. Only through careful discernment can we ensure that such platforms serve to inform rather than deceive.



THE HEARTLAND



HYDERABAD: Members and leaders of the civil society are holding a protest at the Hyderabad Press Club against the alleged rape of a first-year female student by a security guard.-RT

Family's Protest Forces Kumb Police To Rescue Abducted Man



By Naz Solangi

KUMB: In the village of Muhammad Arab Solangi near Khairpur, retired soldier Muharram Solangi was abducted by armed men. The victim's mother, Ms. Hooran Solangi, protested at the police station, stating that her son had been kidnapped by armed men Munawar alias Mano Waseem and Asif Waseem since yesterday.

Upon receiving this information, the Khairpur police, along with a team, rescued the abducted Muharram Solangi from a locked room at the village's outhouse, where he was found bound with ropes. However, the police failed to make any arrests. Abducted Muharram Solangi stated that he had been tortured by his captors since yesterday, and they had deprived him of water, resulting in visible injuries from sticks and cigarette burns on his body, with blood flowing from his face.

The Station House Officer (SHO) of Kumb mentioned that the victim had been abducted from the jurisdiction of Kotdiji police station, and an FIR would be registered there.

Tariq Anwar Siyal Rallies PPP Leaders For Upcoming Power-Packed Event

By Saleem Soomro



LARKANA: A meeting was held at Anwarabad Siyal House, organized by Tariq Anwar Siyal, President of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Taluka Baqrani, to discuss preparations for the upcoming rally on October 18 in Hyderabad. The meeting saw participation from key party members, including General Secretary Abdul Rehman Jatoi and Information Secretary Jan Muhammad Brohi. During the meeting, Tariq Anwar Siyal emphasized the importance of strong participation from the Baqrani Taluka in the rally, led by former Provincial Home Minister and MPA Sohail Anwar

Siyal. He urged party workers to prepare in advance for the event. Siyal reaffirmed the party's commitment to respond to directives from PPP leadership, including President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, indicating a unified front for the upcoming rally.

JSQM Leader Sanan Khan Qureshi Mobilizes For Massive Paigham-e-Sindh March

By GM Chandio

HYDERABAD: JSQM Chairman Sanan Khan Qureshi paid a visit to Hyderabad to review arrangements for the Paigham-e-Sindh March to be taken out in Umerkot on the 27th October. The JSQM Chairman chaired a meeting of the party leaders and workers which was attended by Deedar Sham, Momin Samo and others. Addressing on the occasion, Sanan Khan Qureshi said that the rally will be taken out in Umerkot to present the real image of Sindh which is the land of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (RA), Hazrat Sachal Sarmast (RA), Makhdoom Bilawal (RA), Sufi Shah Inayat Shaheed (RA), and Sain GM Syed. He also rejected the proposed construction of dams and other projects on the River Indus. He expressed concern over the water shortage and other problems which are being faced by the people of Sindh. He also condemned the misuse of Sindh's resources and vowed to continue service for



the rights of the people of Sindh. On the occasion, Rasheed Detho, Soomro Khan Jamali, Babu Jan, Ramzan Khaskheli, Advocate Nawab Burdi, Faisal Mastoi, Azad Kunbhar, Rashid Detho, Soomro Khan Jamali, Babu Jan, Ramzan Khaskheli, Advocate Nawab Burdi, Faisal Mastoi, Azad Kunbhar, others were also present.

Insaf Students Federation Erupts In Protest Over College Assault Incident



By Abdul Sattar

TANDO MUHAMMAD KHAN: A protest rally was held in Tando Muhammad Khan led by Mustafa Khan, Shoaib Shaukat, and Kabir Kolachi from the Insaf Students Federation in response to the alleged assault on student Kinza Saleem at a private college in Lahore, as well as police brutality against students. The protest march started from the Aftab Nizamani, Insaf House and Saleem Nizamani, reached Matli Ibrahim Zaur, Rafiq Chowranghi. Speakers Zaur, and others

ADC-I Muhammad Ibrahim Almani Leads Crucial DC&IC Meeting



By Afaque Khanzada

TANDO ALLAHYAR: The Population Welfare Department of the Government of Sindh, in collaboration with RIZ Consulting, held a meeting of the District Coordination and Implementation Committee (DC&IC) for Tando Allahyar on October 16, 2024. The meeting was chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner-I, Muhammad Ibrahim Almani. Representatives from the Population Welfare Department (PWD), Department of Health (DOH), PPHI, RMNCH, and

development partners attended the meeting. The primary purpose of the meeting was to inform the DC&IC members about the rollout and scale-up plan for the DMPA-SC self-injection program, as well as to clarify the committee's role in effectively implementing this program in the district. Key discussions included the objectives and strategies for the rollout, guidelines for self-injection, strengthening coordination mechanisms in the district, and developing a comprehensive action plan for implementation at the district level. DMPA-SC is a simple and effective contraceptive method that empowers women in making reproductive health decisions, ensuring safe intervals and healthy timing. The chairperson and committee members expressed their commitment to support the implementation of self-injection and agreed to hold regular meetings every three months to review the progress of DMPA-SC in the district, and developing a comprehensive action plan for implementation at the district level.

Syed Mehmood Alam Shah Slams Cracker Attack Near Nisar Khuhro's Home

By Syed Daim Shah

GHARO: Syed Mehmood Alam Shah, the Information Secretary of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in District Thatta, strongly condemned the cracker attack on the residence of PPP Sindh President Nisar Khuhro in Larkana. In a statement, he described the attack

as a cowardly act and an open act of terrorism that will not be tolerated under any circumstances. He stated that enemies of Sindh are plotting to divide the Sindh nation, but the PPP will never allow such conspiracies to succeed. Nisar Khuhro emphasized that cowardly actions by miscreants cannot intimidate or frighten the leadership of the PPP. He reiterated that the PPP will continue its struggle for the rights of the Sindh people and democracy at all costs. Furthermore, he called for the immediate identification and arrest of the miscreants responsible for the attack on Nisar Khuhro's residence.

Strict Road Restrictions And Anti-Cheating Measures Enforced In Shaheed Benazirabad

By Samad Ayaz Dahri

NAWABSHAH: Commissioner of Shaheed Benazirabad Division, Syed Muhammad Sajjad Hyder, has issued a notification imposing restrictions under Section 144 to prevent tractors without tires from traveling on newly constructed roads in Shaheed Benazirabad. This measure aims to protect

public roads from damage. SHOs have been authorized to take action against violators under Section 188 of the PPC. This decision follows recommendations from Deputy Commissioners of the Allama Iqbal Open University's Sanghar and Naushehro Feroze to safeguard roads built and repaired at a cost of billions of rupees for public convenience. Additionally, in a separate notification, Commissioner Hyder has enforced Section 144 in all examination centers in Taluka Moro during the final exams of the Allama Iqbal Open University's Spring Semester to prevent cheating. Police have been empowered to stop unauthorized individuals from entering the examination venues.

SPORTS



Shahzeb Khan Strikes Gold: Pakistan's Hero Triumphs At Asia Open Taekwondo



INDONESIA: Pakistan's Shahzeb Khan won the gold medal by defeating Calamba of the Philippines in the final of the -54kg weight category at the Asia Open Khyroggi Taekwondo Championship. In the first round, Calamba scored 11 points and Shahzeb managed six. In the second round, Shahzeb played brilliantly and won by 10-3 and then won the third round 18-0 to win Pakistan's first gold medal in the event. Earlier, Shahzeb qualified for the final by defeating Hidayat Tomakaka of Indonesia 12-14, 16-14 and 22-0 in the semi-final.

Sajid Khan's Rampage: England Crumbles To Pakistan's Spin Wizard

MULTAN: Pakistan bounced back in the game as four English wickets fell in a span of a few overs including robust opener Ben Duckett leading England to finish the second day's play of the second Test against Pakistan at 239/6 at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.



Pakistan's Sajid Khan got his team back in the game as he grabbed the all-important wickets of century Dockett, Harry Brook and Joe Root. Earlier, he had dismissed Ollie Pope. The visiting side were pretty much leading the game from the top with Duckett's smashing hundred to lead England's robust reply to Pakistan's first-innings 366. Duckett reached his fourth Test hundred on 129 balls - his slowest-ever

hundred comparing to his ton on 88 balls vs India, 105 balls vs Pakistan and 106 balls vs Ireland.

Root was with Duckett, cheering him on but failed to replicate his partner's score and was dismissed by Sajid Khan after scoring 34 off 54 balls, leaving England at 211/3. Within the next couple of overs, Pakistan's bowlers found their rhythm and dismissed Duckett at

bowler Sajid Khan had broken the stumps before he could collect the ball. Sajid appeared to have redeemed himself in the next over when his lbw appeal against Crawley was upheld.

Pakistan's joy was short-lived, however, as Crawley, convinced by Duckett, reviewed the decision, which was reversed after replays confirmed the ball would have narrowly missed the stumps. Crawley could not make the most of the reprieves, though, and fell to Noman Ali.

After the caught-behind against Crawley had been turned down, left-arm spinner Noman cajoled his captain Shan Masood to review the decision and replays confirmed an edge.—Agency

Messi Matches Ronaldo: Argentina Thrashes Bolivia 6-0



Argentine football legend Lionel Messi equalled Portuguese football star Cristiano Ronaldo's record for most international hat-tricks as he scored his 10th such hat-trick.

Messi, 36, achieved the latest feat as his national team thrashed Bolivia 6-0 in South American qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup in front of a home crowd at the Monumental stadium, which helped score two more goals.

In only his second international appearance since recovering from an injury sustained at the Copa America in July, the Inter Miami star capped a tally to 112 goals for his country.—Agency

England Shake-Up: Ex-Chelsea Boss Tuchel To Lead National Football Team

Former Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel has agreed to take on the role of England manager. He will become the third non-British permanent coach to lead the England men's team. The German coach will officially succeed Gareth Southgate, who resigned after England's defeat to Spain in the Euro 2024 final.



According to BBC, Thomas Tuchel will take charge after Lee Carsley's interim spell, which concludes with England's last two Nations League matches in November

against Greece and the Republic of Ireland. Thomas Tuchel's official unveiling is expected on Wednesday at Wembley.

Thomas previously managed Chelsea from 2021 to 2022, winning the Champions League, FIFA Club World Cup, and UEFA Super Cup.

club failed to secure the Bundesliga title last season. England's main objective under Thomas will be to secure qualification for the 2026 World Cup, hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The Football Association (FA) had also approached Pep Guardiola in the summer, but the Manchester City manager declined.

Thomas's appointment adds to his impressive resume, which includes stints at Paris Saint-Germain and Borussia Dortmund, where he won multiple domestic titles.—Agency

Cricket Showdown: ECB Warns India Pullout Could Shatter Champions Trophy



ENGLAND: As the Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI) is yet to decide on sending a team to Pakistan for the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy 2025, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Chair Richard Thompson said: "It would not be in cricket's interests for India not to be playing [in the event]".

Pakistan is scheduled to host the prestigious ICC tournament in February next year, however, India's participation remains uncertain as the BCCI seeks the New Delhi's approval to visit the country.

India has not travelled to Pakistan since 2008 and both the historical rivals have not had any bilateral series since 2012-13.

Urging both South Asian nations to reach a decision amicably, Thompson said that BCCI Chairman Jay Shah is going to have a big role to play in this situation. "There's geopolitics, and then there's cricketing geopolitics. I think they'll find a way. They have to find a way."

Thompson and ECB Chief Executive Richard Gould are currently in Pakistan where they interacted with British journalists in Multan during the ongoing second Test between Pakistan and England. The ECB senior leadership's statement came ahead

Men's Ashes 2025-26 Unveiled: Epic Opening Clash Set For Perth

PERTH: Cricket Australia has officially unveiled the dates for the highly anticipated 2025-26 Men's Ashes series, set to kick off at Perth Stadium from November 21-25, 2025. The announcement was made on Wednesday at an event held at Scarborough Beach, Perth, with support from the Western Australian Government.



The iconic five-match series will begin with the "West Test" in Perth, followed by a day-night Test at the Gabba in Brisbane (December 4-8) and the traditional Christmas Test at Adelaide Oval (December 17-21). The famous Boxing Day Test at Melbourne's MCG (December 26-30) and the New Year's Test at Sydney's SCG (January 4-8) will maintain their usual timeslots, providing a classic Ashes summer experience for cricket fans.

This announcement aligns with Australian Cricket's seven-year scheduling plan, designed to offer more certainty for fans and enhance partnerships with governments and tourism departments. By releasing the Ashes dates early, Cricket Australia aims to help international and interstate fans plan their trips in advance.

Joel Morrison, CA Executive General Manager for Events and Operations, expressed excitement about the series. "There is already enormous excitement surrounding the 2025-26 Ashes series and we are pleased to announce the dates for the five Men's Tests to enable fans across the world to lock in their travel plans for this summer."

with our recently released seven-year international schedule and we are grateful for the support state and territory governments are providing to enhance and grow our major events.

Morrison highlighted the support from state and territory governments, emphasizing the significance of the Ashes in the global sporting calendar. "The history and excitement of the Ashes make it one of the world's most iconic sporting events and we're delighted this fierce and electrifying rivalry will extend over two summers in 2025 - commencing with the five Men's Tests to enable fans across the world to lock in their travel plans for this summer, which includes the historic MCG day-night Test, and culminates in the Men's Ashes next summer.—Agency

Explosive Video: Haris Rauf's Heated Clash With Kamran Ghulam Resurfaces



LAHORE: Pakistan's batter Kamran Ghulam made an outstanding debut, scoring a brilliant century against England on the first day of the second Test in Multan. The 29-year-old hit 118 off 224 balls, which included 11 fours and one six, guiding Pakistan to a solid 259-5 by stumps. Ghulam's impressive performance came after Pakistan faced early trouble, losing two wickets for just 19 runs.

Ghulam, who replaced the out-of-form Babar Azam in the line-up, formed a crucial 149-run partnership with Saim Ayub (77) for the third wicket. He also built a 65-run stand with Mohammad Rizwan (37*), helping Pakistan recover and finish the day in a strong position. Ghulam reached his century after 280 minutes at the crease, hitting a boundary off Joe Root, becoming the 12th

Pakistani batter to score a century on Test debut. This achievement comes after Ghulam's long wait for a place in the national team, following his record-breaking performance in the 2020 domestic season, where he amassed 1,249 runs. However, as Ghulam's name trended on social media, an old controversial video from the Pakistan Super League (PSL) resurfaced. In 2022, fast bowler Haris Rauf slapped Ghulam on the field after the latter dropped a catch during a Lahore Qalandars match. Though the incident drew attention, the two players quickly made peace, with Rauf hugging Ghulam later in the match.

Despite this past controversy, Ghulam's Test debut has now overshadowed the incident, with his century hitting a boundary off Joe Root, becoming the 12th

REGIONAL TIMES ENTERTAINMENT

Truth Exposed: Inside Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce's 'Break-Up Contract'



Taylor Swift reportedly missed Travis Kelce's games due to security concerns. In the wake of Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce's breakup rumours, an insider shared with Life & Style that the duo is still going "strong."

They also explained that the songstress's absence from the footballer's games was not due to a so-called "breakup contract," but because of Taylor's security concerns. "Taylor was rehearsing for the next leg of her tour, plus there was some concern over security at stadiums," the source confided. "It was by no means a reflection of where they are with their romance, which is still totally rock solid," the insider also confirmed before signing off from the chat. For those unversed, rumours started to crop up about whether everything was okay between them, when Taylor Swift, a regular visitor to Travis Kelce's games, did not attend a few NFL matches in the last month. However, after a few days the songstress showed up for her bean, and lately the couple was spotted enjoying a double date with Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds, another power couple of Hollywood.

Ageless and Bradless Jolie: Angelina's Secrets to Defying Time Unveiled



Angelina Jolie has reportedly had some work done to face ahead of the promotions of Maria. Sources say the cosmetic procedures also come as she faces stress from her legal battle with her ex-husband, Brad Pitt. The tipster told Life & Style that the "stress over her court battle [with Brad Pitt] was taking a toll" on her beauty. Pressure from these issues has led the signs of aging on the Oscar winner, insiders said. So, to block them, Angelina has taken a key step. "She's such a beauty and looks great at 49 for the most part," the bird chirped. "But clearly, she's had a ton of new work done in time for all the publicity for Maria," the snitch revealed. On the other hand, another alleged stressor Angelina is going through is the poor reception of her upcoming directorial film Without Blood. "Angelina is a little annoyed that she's having to juggle the solid success of Maria, which has firmly put her in the Oscar race and back into business with Netflix, and her passion project, Without Blood," the mole squealed to In Touch. Her alleged disappointment stemmed from her high expectations for the movie. "A movie Angelina thought could change the world when she first initiated it, but which now is stained by apathetic reviews and a weak audience response at its film festival debut."

Kids' Corner



Name: Muhammad Ibrahim Location: Gujranwala About me: I love my parents up to the Moon and back! Please email us your photo for our Model Watch and Kids' Corner section at regionaltimes10@gmail.com

THE HEARTLAND



JSQM Unleashes Protests Over Police Crackdown During Karachi Peace March

By Gada Hussain Bhanbhro

NARO: The JSQM organized a protest in Naro against the police baton charge and arrests of Sindh women and elders during the Karachi Peace March. JSQM President Advocate Sajjad Panhiar, along with Azad Sanjish Meghwar, Shaikat Panhiar, and others, condemned the police actions as intolerable. They expressed strong opposition to the brutality, stating that such acts are an affront to



under the guise of religious and criticized the violence extremism.

Outrage In Badin: Teachers Rise Up Against Massive Corruption By District Accounts Officials

By Raja Zafar Iqbal

BADIN: Teachers staged a protest against corruption at the Treasury Office in Badin, led by GSTA Taluk Badin President Kashif Qadir Memon. They rallied from DC Chowk to demand strict legal action against corrupt officials who are allegedly extorting bribes from teachers. Protesters accused Treasury Office officers, including the district officer and auditor, of harassing teachers and forcing them to pay bribes. They called for an anti-corruption inquiry, severe



punishments for the corrupt, and an end to the harassing and bribery afflicting teachers.

IRC Hosts Urgent Awareness Seminar For World Food Day

By Shad Mahar

GHOTKI: A seminar was organized by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) at the Khangar Government Boys Secondary School in observance of World Food Day. The event saw significant participation from teachers, students, local citizens, and individuals from various



backgrounds. IRC leaders, including training expert Zahid Ahmed, communication officer Faraz Ahmed Marri, and district coordinator Zulfiqar Ali, provided awareness on food access and its importance as a fundamental human right for a better life and future. Students also participated in a quiz competition, and speeches were given to raise awareness about food issues. Leaders emphasized that today is celebrated globally as World Food Day, and the seminar aimed to highlight food as a basic human right, urging that everyone men, women, and children should have access to quality food and avoid substandard products.

SSP Saddam Hussain Khaskheli Delivers Compensation To Widow Of Fallen Policeman

By Hashim Brohi

JACOBABAD: SSP Jacobabad, Captain (Retd) Saddam Hussain Khaskheli, presented a compensation cheque of 10 million rupees to the widow of martyred

officers, and we are responsible for the welfare of the martyr's children and will take care of their needs. Rasoool Bux Brohi was killed in a police encounter on March 9, 2024, within the A Section Thul jurisdiction.

Journalists Unite: Intensive Workshop Held In Kotri

By Shaikh Sindhi

KOTRI: A workshop for journalists was conducted in Kotri, featuring senior journalist and former General Secretary of the PFUI, Nasir Zaidi. He was accompanied by Syed Abdul Haad. Journalists from the Jamshoro district participated, including leaders from various press clubs such as Zulfiqar Solangi (Sehwan National Press Club), Muzaffar Khokhar (Bhan Press Club),

and Abbas Palari (Nooriabad Press Club) among others. Nasir Zaidi discussed the decline of print media, stating it lacks the influence it had until the 1990s. He highlighted that editorials play a crucial role in empowering print media. Referring to the murder of Dr. Shah Nawaz, he emphasized that it raised awareness about extrajudicial killings across the country. Zaidi urged journalists to remain truthful in their reporting, noting the sacrifices made by Sindh's journalists for democracy and press freedom. He recalled being imprisoned during Zia's martial law but remained committed to the cause. He criticized the current state of journalism, contrasting it with the past when editors maintained ownership of news and ensured thorough verification before publication. At the workshop, press club president Dhani Bux Barjo presented guests with ajraks and caps.

Khairpur's Civil Society Rallies For Peace At Major Conference

By M Iqbal Soomro

THARI MIRWAH: A peace conference was organized by the Civil Society of Khairpur at the police headquarters, with SSP Khairpur Dr. Samiullah Soomro as the chief guest. He was awarded the Peace Award 2024 in recognition of his and his team's outstanding performance. The conference featured a well-

come ceremony and peace tableau presented by school children, which was well-received by participants. A documentary showcasing Dr. Soomro's performance was also screened. During the event, commendations were given to DSPs, SHO's and other police officials for their exemplary work during the Jagirani Solangi incident, along with awards and Ajraks. SSP Dr. Sami-

Poda Pakistan's Plight Takes Center Stage On Int'l Day Of Rural Women's Rights In Khairpur

By Naeem Shaikh



KHAIRPUR: On the International Day of Rural Women's Rights, October 15, representatives from Poda Pakistan, including Madam Hira Aman and Madam Samina Zohaib, highlighted the ongoing struggles of rural women in Khairpur. They emphasized that despite advancements in developed countries, women in Sindh are still denied basic rights, including education and the right to identity cards and inheritance. The organization aims to raise awareness among rural women about their rights and has conducted seminars in UC Gondro and UC Bagro. They urged the district administration and the Sindh government to take effective measures to ensure these rights are upheld.

Shock In Kandhkot: Young Man Gunned Down In Deadly Ambush

By Adnan Bhathi

KANDHKOT: In a tragic incident within the jurisdiction of A-Section police station, an unknown assailant shot and killed a local villager, identified as Azhar Mahar. Following the shooting, the perpetrators fled the scene, while police have been unable to apprehend the assailants. As of the latest updates, no formal report of the incident has been filed at the police station.

Tragedy In Badah: Another Young Life Lost To Malaria Outbreak

By Ibrahim Farooqui

BADAH: In Badah and its surrounding areas, malaria and gastroenteritis have led to the deaths of four children in just two days. 17-year-old Ali Raza, a resident of Zakaria Colony, succumbed to a severe fever caused by malaria. His death has brought devastation to his family, with his mother experiencing fainting spells. Local politicians and community members have stated that the negligence of the health department is resulting in the loss of innocent children's lives. They have urged the administration to send medical teams door-to-door to control this outbreak and alleviate the public's distress.

Soaring Poultry Prices Hit Hard As Residents Cry Foul Over Rising Costs

TALHAR: Chicken meat prices have surged in Talhar and surrounding areas, with local authorities seemingly unable to intervene. In the city, chicken is being sold for up to 720 rupees, while in other towns of District Badin, it reaches 660 rupees. Chicken vendors cite that there is only one supplier for chicken in Talhar, contributing to the high prices. Residents express frustration, noting that although chicken sales are currently low, prices remain steep. They have appealed to the district administration of Badin and the local authorities to take action to lower chicken prices and penalize vendors selling at inflated rates.—RT

SAU Students Shine At Prestigious International Parasitology Conference In Lahore

By Irfan Ali Khushk

TANDO JAM: The Students from Sindh Agricultural University (SAU) Tando Jam, who are currently interning at the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Lahore, participated in the 3rd International Parasitology Conference titled "Paracon-24: Tackling Food Security Challenges." The event was organized in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Pakistan Parasitology Department. International delegates and experts from Iran, China, Scotland, and Tunisia attended the conference, providing an excellent platform for knowledge exchange. The students from Sindh Agricultural University had the opportunity to meet foreign professors and delegates, which fostered academic and research collaborations in the field of parasitology. The students enthusiastically participated in all the sessions and represented their university with great interest. The Vice Chancellor of Sindh Agricultural University, Dr. Fateh Marri, appreciated the participation of his students, calling the experience a valuable opportunity for them to enhance their academic skills, connect with international experts, and explore new research opportunities to address key issues in agriculture and food safety.

Mir Irfan Khan Talpur Honors The Brave Martyrs Of Karsaz Tragedy

By Shahid Majeed

JHUDO: A general workers' meeting of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Jhudo was held. The meeting paid tribute to the sacrifices and struggle of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and the party's workers for the restoration of democracy. He added that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also works tirelessly for 16 hours to uphold the rule of law, and everyone should act as a support for him in working for

democracy. PPP Jhudo's President, Mir Irfan Khan Talpur, stated that they salute all martyrs of democracy, highlighting the pride in Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's struggle against dictators and for the restoration of democracy. He emphasized that the party's workers are an asset, affirming their commitment to stand by their leaders, as both leaders and workers have sacrificed for the party.

Thousands Gather In Sakrand For Annual Urs Of Hazrat Yousif Faqir (RA)

By Khadim Hussain Shaikh

KADHAN: A vibrant celebration took place at the historical site of Sheikhani Ghaari in Kadhan. The event included seminar and traditional poetry sessions, attracting a large number of attendees to the annual Urs of Hazrat Yousif Faqir (RA). The event was hosted by Dr. Navaz Ali Lund, Faqir Khadim Hussain Lund, and Faqir Malik Ashtar, with prominent writers, poets, and singers in attendance. They emphasized the significance of the area, noting that it has long suffered from a lack of drinking water due to the depletion of the Indus River's resources. Speakers expressed concerns about the potential construction of new canals that could deprive the Kotri Barrage area of river water, making the region uninhabitable. The gathering was chaired by Anb Gopang, with special guest Tanveer Abro and others including district vice chairman Fida Hussain Mandhro and various local dignitaries.

Taxi Stand Tensions At Shadi Pali Railway Station Demand Urgent Action

By Muhammad Bachal

UMERKOT: A taxi stand has been reestablished at Shadi Pali railway station, based on an application from local resident Sunjay Kumar. Following checks by authorities, the local police ordered its dismantling due to its illegal status. Mama Javed, claiming to own the adjacent property, insisted he could park his taxi there, leading to taxi drivers occupying the local square. Reports suggest Javed does not own any property; the shops and cabin he occupies are on government land. Authorities plan to vacate the area and take legal action against Javed for encroachment. In response, Javed claimed ownership under his parents' names, but locals are calling for verification of his claims.

Bloody Ambush: Four Policemen Injured In Deadly IED Blast In Buner

BUNER: Four policemen, including the in-charge of the police post, were injured on Wednesday when an improvised explosive device (IED) went off near a police van in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Buner district, a police official said. Speaking to media, the spokesperson to the Buner district police officer, Israr Ahmad, said, "A police vehicle was on its routine patrol in the Nawagai area, and when it reached the Kankai Chowk, an IED exploded." The police official said that the in-charge of the police post at Ambela, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASP), Shahid Zada, Constable Noor Mohammad, who was the driver, Constable

Ifrikhar Ali, and Constable Altaf Ahmad were injured in the attack. "The injured policemen have been shifted to a hospital in the area and their condition is stable," he said. Ahmad added that following the attack, police began a search operation in the area and the District Police Officer (DPO), Shah Hassan, himself was leading the operation to find the perpetrator who attempted to kill the police personnel. The incident is the latest in a string of attacks on police officials and checkpoints, particularly in KP and Balochistan. In another incident in Buner in September, unidentified suspects torched a government primary school and detonated an IED as a police team returned from the burnt school in Meragai. No casualties were reported in that incident. Meanwhile, an attack took place on Monday where five militants wearing burqas and suicide vests were killed as four police officials embraced martyrdom in an attempt to foil a gun and bomb attack on Iqbal Shaheed Police Lines in Bannu. Pakistan has lately seen a rise in terrorism incidents, particularly in KP and Balochistan. Attacks have escalated after the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) broke a fragile ceasefire agreement with the government in 2022 and vowed to target security forces.—RT/Agency

Heartbreaking Tragedy: Four Family Members Killed As Vehicle Overturns In Vehari

VEHARI: At least four members of a family lost their lives after a vehicle overturned in Vehari, media reported on Wednesday. As per details, the incident occurred near Ladan area of Vehari where vehicle overturned when the driver slept while driving. The rescue officials stated that the incident reportedly claimed life of four family members who were on their way back from Lahore. In January this year, two individuals died, 10 others injured after a bus full of passengers overturned on National Highway due to dense fog. The rescue officials reported that a bus carrying passengers was overturned on the national highway due to heavy fog and low visibility near Kot Khalfia, leaving two dead and multiple passengers injured.—RT/Agency

Non-Bailable Arrest Warrants Issued For Key Figures In Explosive May 9 Incident

PESHAWAR: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Peshawar has issued non-bailable arrest warrants for three individuals accused of involvement in the May 9 protest case, media reported. As per details, the accused are Abdul Rehman, Abdul Jabbar Baghi, and Latif Ali, who failed to appear in court, will now be arrested and presented before the court. The May 9 protests in Peshawar were marked by violence and destruction of private and public property, resulting in the loss of one life. The case has been adjourned until October 19, and Provincial Minister Meena Khan Afridi is also named in the case. Earlier, the Anti-Terrorism Court acquitted all 18 accused, including PTI workers, in the May 9 riots case due to lack of evidence. The defendants were accused of protesting in Landi Kotal on May 9, blocking the Torkham Road, damaging property, and damaging an Anti-Narcotics Force vehicle. However, the court found no evidence against them and acquitted all 18 defendants. The verdict was announced by Judge Muhammad Iqbal of the Special Anti-Terrorism Court.—RT/Agency

METRO KARACHI



Competitions Vital For Youth Talent: Nasir Shah

KARACHI: Sindh Provincial Minister for Energy, Development, and Planning, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, emphasized that highlighting the talents of the youth and providing them with employment opportunities are among the top priorities of the Sindh government. He shared these remarks as the chief guest at the first All Karachi Inter-University Speech Competition, held at the NUML University Karachi Campus in North Nazimabad.



The event saw participation from 38 students representing over 20 universities across the city. Minister Nasir Shah noted that competitive events play a vital role in bringing out the hidden potential of young people, who represent the future leaders and innovators of Pakistan.

"After hearing the speeches of these students, I am convinced that our youth possess immense talent and potential. Institutions that support and showcase this talent deserve full backing from

the government," he said. "The future of Pakistan is in capable hands, and positive activities in educational institutions can significantly uplift society."

He also highlighted the government's commitment to facilitating educational activities for the youth, including a plan to solarize the NUML University building to ensure an uninterrupted power supply for students.

Shah further urged the youth to reject the negative propaganda spread by anti-state elements about Pakistan and emphasized that under the govern-

ment's pro-people policies, the country is regaining confidence among both foreign and domestic investors.

Brigadier (Retd.) Ali Haider Kazmi, Regional Director of NUML University, praised the institution's efforts in promoting leadership skills and positive activities among the youth, calling the event an important step in that direction. Also in attendance were PP District Central Information Secretary Asad Hanif, and prominent academics including Dr. Shehla, Dr. Sabir, Dr. Hasan Ahmed, and Dr. Fazal Hussain.—RT

Pursue Knowledge, Not Just Grades: Dr. Ishrat Hussain Inspires Students At SMIU

KARACHI: Dr. Ishrat Hussain, former Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan and Advisor to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms, emphasized the importance of competition, knowledge, and hard work over favoritism and grade-chasing. Speaking at Sindh Madrasah Islami University (SMIU) during a lecture titled "My Experiences and Encounters," he urged students to focus on acquiring skills and knowledge, assuring that jobs will come to them rather than the other way around.



Addressing students at the Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto Auditorium as part of SMIU's "Popular Lecture Series," Dr. Hussain shared insights from his career and academic journey, recalling his experiences at the University of Sindh. He credited his teachers for their commitment to their students' success and stressed the need for educational reforms in Pakistan.

Praising past intellectuals like Alikhan I. Kazi and Dr. Nabi Bux Khan Baloch, he lamented the absence of such figures in today's academic landscape, calling for the revival of inspiring role models for the younger generation. He also reflected on his time as a deputy commissioner in Shikarpur, where he initiated a college

for girls, empowering many women in the area to pursue higher education.

Dr. Hussain highlighted his diverse professional background, from teaching at the University of Sindh to serving in civil service and international organizations. He encouraged the youth to explore different career paths and to view "brain drain" positively, as returning home with international expertise can contribute to national progress.

He further emphasized

the significance of learning local languages, sharing his own experiences in East Pakistan, where his fluency in Bengali enabled him to connect with the people.

Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai, Vice-Chancellor of SMIU, praised Dr. Hussain for his contributions to Pakistan's development. The lecture, attended by faculty, students, and dignitaries, concluded with a question-and-answer session and a presentation of souvenirs.—RT

Sindh Revolutionizes Education With New Matric And Intermediate Grading System

KARACHI: In a bid to modernize the education system, the Sindh government has announced a new grading policy for matriculation and intermediate exams, marking the first province in Pakistan to make this shift. According to a notification by Muhammad Abbas Baloch, Secretary of Boards and Universities, students will now receive grades rather than traditional marks or positions, effective from 2025.

Under the new system, the top three positions will be eliminated, and grades will be awarded based on percentage scores. For example, an A++ grade will be given to students scoring 95% or above, while those between 90% and 94% will receive an A+.

The move, formulated by the Inter-Board Coordination Committee (IBCC), is aimed at standardizing assessments across the board. The grading scale includes B++ (80-84%) for "Very Good," B+ (75-79%) for "Good," B (70-74%) for "Fair," and C (60-69%) for "Above Average."

While Sindh leads the way, other provinces like Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan have yet to adopt similar systems. Educationist Syed Abidi from Lahore praised the initiative, stating that it provides a more comprehensive evaluation of student performance and prepares them for future academic challenges.

Abidi also highlighted that the new system aligns

with the grade point average (GPA) approach used in universities, which will help students transition smoothly into higher education. However, he cautioned that adjustments in curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment techniques will be crucial for the system's success, particularly in rural areas where students may face challenges in adapting to the change.

The new policy is seen as a step toward fostering critical thinking and inquiry-based learning, with the potential to revolutionize how students prepare for exams. However, its long-term impact on education, especially in under-resourced areas, remains to be seen.—RT/Agency

Pakistan Set To Boost EV-Bike Exports: Sharjeel



KARACHI: Sindh's Senior Minister, Sharjeel Memon, called for a focus on national development and progress, urging the public to disregard negative propaganda. Speaking at the launch of E-Turbo's electric motorcycle (e-bike), Memon congratulated the company and expressed confidence that Pakistan would soon export these e-bikes to international markets.

Memon highlighted the success of previous electric vehicle (EV) initiatives, including the launch of e-buses in Sindh, and re-

vealed plans for introducing EV-taxis next. He also mentioned that a Chinese transport company had been approached to manufacture EV-buses in Pakistan.

Stressing the importance of sustainable energy, the minister emphasized that electric vehicles are a cost-effective and environmentally friendly solution. He urged the public to support the green energy transition, noting that it would not only reduce diesel costs but also mitigate environmental pollution.—RT

KCCI President Calls For FBR To Delay Affidavit Rule For Sales Tax Returns

KARACHI: Muhammad Jawed Bilwani, President of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI), has recommended that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) defer the requirement for taxpayers to submit an affidavit with their Sales Tax Returns. He argued that while taxpayers must affirm the accuracy of their information, they could still face penalties for vendors' wrongdoings.

In a statement, Bilwani noted the confusion surrounding the current purchasing process, urging the FBR to clarify which

vendors are trustworthy or establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) for purchases. He recalled that FBR officials previously advised businesses to check vendor compliance on their website, a practice now complicated by the affidavit requirement, which could be used against businesses in cases of vendor tax evasion.

Bilwani also expressed concerns over the FBR's increased audits, which he believes contradicts the Finance Minister's promise of an IT and AI-driven, streamlined audit process. He cautioned that more

auditors could lead to corruption and inefficiencies. While he acknowledged some positive aspects of the FBR's transformation plan, he stressed the need for collaboration with the business community to address ongoing issues.

Following a recent meeting with the Chairman of FBR at Customs House in Karachi, Bilwani expressed hope that the FBR would consider the challenges and suggestions presented to create a more taxpayer-friendly environment essential for business and economic growth.—RT

FPCCI And FBR Joining Forces For Groundbreaking Taxation Reforms: Atif Ikram Sheikh

KARACHI: Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), announced a significant partnership between FPCCI and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to develop comprehensive taxation reforms. He emphasized that effective revenue generation is crucial for Pakistan's fiscal health and must involve a consultative and inclusive approach.

The announcement followed a visit by FBR Chairman Rashid Mahmood Langrial to FPCCI's headquarters in Karachi, where he engaged with senior trade, industry, and media representatives. Sheikh reiterated that taxation reforms should focus on broadening the tax base, simplifying the tax system, and rationalizing tax rates to foster a supportive taxation culture.

FPCCI Senior Vice Presi-

dent Saquib Fayyaz Magoon raised concerns over FBR's ambitious revenue target of PKR 12.97 trillion, highlighting the disparity with the economy's 2% growth rate. He warned that this could lead to new taxes and financial burdens on the already taxed business community.

Magoon criticized recent government policies, including the abrupt withdrawal of the 1% full liability for exporters and the implementation of the Tajir Dost Scheme without proper consultation, resulting in a 99% revenue shortfall. He called for a revision of problematic SRO 350 (I)/2024 and urged the revival of the Alternate Dispute Resolution Committee (ADRC) for smoother tax processes.

He also proposed simplifying the Export Finance Scheme (EFS), which currently takes 3-4 months due

to its complexity, and warned against including Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in the regular tax scheme, as it would deter investors.

Khurram Ejaz, a member of the PM's committee, questioned why Pakistani ports do not operate 24/7 like their international counterparts and urged the implementation of FBR's LIVE project to improve customs procedures. Chairman Langrial acknowledged the need to reduce tax rates to alleviate burdens but stated it was not feasible under current conditions. He expressed optimism about potential interest rate cuts and emphasized that promoting a tax culture is essential for the economy's recovery. Langrial also noted that tax evasion remains a significant issue, urging efforts to target evaders rather than compliant taxpayers.—RT

Sindh Government Unveils Ambitious Plan To Restore 350,000 Hectares Of Mangroves

KARACHI: Chief Secretary of Sindh, Asif Hyder Shah, met with a 40-member delegation from the Senior Management Course today, including official students such as Home Minister Iqbal Memon and IG Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon.

During the meeting, Shah outlined the Sindh government's development initiatives, highlighting a significant allocation of 959 billion rupees for the current year. He announced that the Malir Expressway is set for completion by 2025 and that the reconstruction of schools damaged by the 2022 floods, with a target completion date of 2028.

The Chief Secretary reported that 200,000 houses have been rehabilitated fol-

lowing the 2022 floods, with over 430,000 additional homes constructed to the plinth level. He emphasized that Sindh's Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) have gained international acclaim, citing completed projects such as the Karachi-Thatta Dual Carriageway and ongoing initiatives like the Malir Expressway and Dhabaji Industrial Zone.

Highlighting environmental efforts, Shah announced a plan under the Carbon Project to restore mangroves across 350,000 hectares, with the Sindh government having received \$14.7 million in carbon credits so far. He projected annual earnings of \$15 to \$20 million from carbon credits.

The Chief Secretary also outlined a \$200 million

budget for road construction and a \$320 million allocation for canal rehabilitation under the Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project, which totals \$530 million for infrastructure restoration.

Additionally, the Sindh Police reported a significant decrease in crime rates this year, with street crime incidents dropping from 93,467 last year to 56,877 this year. The meeting concluded with updates on police efforts in the Katcha area, including the arrest of 54 suspects, and the martyrdom of 31 police personnel during operations. A budget of Rs 4.8 billion has been set for enhancing police station autonomy, alongside ongoing recruitment for 25,000 additional constables.—RT/Agency

Karachi Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi Inspects Biogas Plant Progress In Malir



KARACHI: Commissioner Karachi Division, Syed Hassan Naqvi, along with Deputy Commissioner Irfan Salam Mirwani, and CEO of Sindh Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF), Khizar Pervaiz, visited the site of Biowaste Energy Ventures Pvt. Limited (BEVPL) in Gadap's Nagori Cooperative Dairy Farming Society. The visit marked the start of construction for the second digester of the biogas plant.

The Government of Sindh has established SEDF to encourage investment in SMEs and MSMEs, driving economic growth, creating jobs, and reducing poverty. SEDF emphasized that the project would reduce carbon emissions and contribute to the socio-economic development of Sindh and Pakistan.—RT

energy, and technology. The BEVPL project, supported by SEDF, involves a commercial-scale biogas plant capable of producing 11,000 cubic meters of biogas daily, to be compressed and supplied to industries in Karachi. The PKR 800 million project, co-financed by Bank Alfalah and USAID, will primarily use animal waste and other biodegradable materials as feedstock.

Commissioner Naqvi praised SEDF for its role in advancing clean energy in Sindh, while Deputy Commissioner Mirwani lauded the project sponsors for their swift progress. CEO SEDF emphasized that the project would reduce carbon emissions and contribute to the socio-economic development of Sindh and Pakistan.—RT

Riaz Chandio Demands Justice For Shah Nawaz Kumbhar's Murder

By Asif Qureshi



KARACHI: Riaz Chandio, Chairman of the Jeay Sindh Mahaz, addressed an emergency press conference at the District Press Club Malir, demanding a judicial investigation into the murder of Dr. Shah Nawaz Kumbhar and accountability for those involved. He stated that their peaceful struggle will continue until the perpetrators are punished. Riaz Chandio criticized the Sindh government for fostering a culture of militancy, claiming that SSPs from Umerkot and Mirpurkhas have yet to be arrested in connection with Kumbhar's murder. He condemned police brutality

against protesters from nationalist parties and civil society on October 13, describing the treatment of peaceful citizens as shameful.

He accused Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam of using funds from drug dealers to gather Afghan refugees at the Gamma Stadium in Mirpurkhas, which he asserted was rejected by the people of Sindh. Chandio claimed that the leader-

ship of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Murad Ali Shah is instigating new conflicts in Sindh, and vowed that residents will not compromise on the rights to their resources. Protests against the PPP's actions were planned from Kashmir to Nagarparkar. Other attendees included Zameer Hajano, Imdad Jalbani, Hamid Sindi, and Niaz Jatoi.

Tragedy In Karachi: Historic Three-Storey Building Crumbles In Old City

KARACHI: A three-storey building in Karachi's historic Pan Mandi area collapsed on Wednesday morning during demolition work, local media reported. The structure, which was in a state of disrepair, came down unexpectedly, but authorities confirmed no casualties. Located within the juris-



isdiction of Risala Police Station, the building was part of the city's architectural heritage. Police and rescue

teams, including 1122 personnel, swiftly arrived at the scene to clear debris. According to officials, workers were dismantling the building when it suddenly collapsed. Investigations are underway to determine whether proper safety protocols were observed during the demolition.—RT/Agency



KARACHI: Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial, Chairman of the FBR, addresses senior representatives of the business community and media at the FPCCI Head Office at Federation House, Karachi.—RT

Barring that natural expression of villainy which we all have, the man looked honest enough.

—Mark Twain

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THURSDAY OCTOBER 17 2024

SCO Leaders Double Down On Peace And Prosperity Pledges

ISLAMABAD: The heads of delegation from Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to peacefully resolving disputes through dialogue and consultations besides emphasizing the importance of strengthening cooperation across various sectors, including politics, security, trade, finance, and cultural ties, to build a prosperous, peaceful, safe, and ecologically sustainable planet.

In a joint declaration issued at the conclusion of the two-day SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting held here, the heads of delegations called for sustainable and inclusive economic growth of member states by optimizing the region's potential in areas such as green development, digital economy, trade, e-commerce, finance and banking, investment, high technology, startups and innovation, poverty alleviation, health care, including traditional and folk medicine, agriculture, industry, transport, logistics connectivity, energy, including renewable energy, communications, science and technol-

ogy, environment and climate change.

The heads of delegations, reaffirming their desire to ensure stable economic and social development in the SCO region, noted the importance of implementing the SCO Economic Development Strategy for the period up to 2030 and the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO member states.

They stressed the need for coordinated efforts through the mechanisms of relevant cooperation in order to implement the respective action plans.

The event was chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and was attended by the leaders from the SCO member states including China's Premier of the State Council Li Qiang, Prime Minister of Belarus Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Olzhas Bektenov, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Tajik Prime Minister Kohir Rasulzoda, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, Kyrgyzstan's Chairman of Ministers' Cabinet Zhaparov Akybek, Trade Minister of Iran Seyyed Mo-



hammad Atabek, and Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

Besides, Mongolia is participating in the summit as an Observer State being represented by Prime Minister Oyuun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai and Turkmenistan as a Special Guest represented by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Rashid Meredov.

Among other dignitaries attending the moot include SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming, Director of Executive Committee SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Ruslan Mirzayev, Chairman of the Board of SCO Business Council Atif Ikram Shaikh and Chairman of the Council

of SCO Interbank Union Marat Yelbayev.

The heads of delegation noted significant shifts in the global economy due to advancements in technology and e-commerce, expressing concern over reduced investment and disrupted supply chains caused by protectionist measures and trade barriers.

Opposing unilateral sanctions and trade restrictions, the delegations emphasized the need for a multilateral trading system to support global sustainable development.

Belarus, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan reiterated their support for China's One Belt,

One Road initiative, highlighting ongoing collaborative efforts to integrate this project with the Eurasian Economic Union.

The heads of delegation underscored the importance of leveraging regional potential and international cooperation to facilitate equitable interactions within the SCO. They called for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, advocating for optimization in green development, digital economy, health care, agriculture, energy, and environmental initiatives.

Heads of delegation also praised Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the SCO for 2023-2024 and emphasized the importance of implementing decisions from the July 4, 2024, CHS meeting, while expressing support for China's chairmanship for 2024-2025.

They noted that the member states advocate respect for the right of peoples to independently and democratically choose their political, social and economic development, emphasizing that the principles of mutual respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of states, equality, mu-

tual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of use of force are the basis for the sustainable development of international relations.

They reaffirm the commitment to the peaceful settlement of differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultations.

They emphasized the importance of leveraging regional potential and international cooperation to foster broad, equitable interactions in the SCO region based on international law and mutual respect.

They highlighted the need to enhance trade and economic ties through the "New Economic Dialogue" concept among SCO member states.

They also stressed the importance of leveraging the digital economy and technological innovations to boost regional competitiveness and ensure that technology benefits all.

The Heads of delegations stressed the importance of deepening cooperation in the field of information security, the relevance of the "digital divide" issue and advocated for exploring the creation of

a mechanism for cross-border data exchange.

They noted the role of standardization tools in trade facilitation and called for the promotion of mutually beneficial and equal interaction between the SCO member states, as well as the exchange of experience in these areas.

They acknowledged the significance of the SCO Industry Ministers' Meeting and proposed its next session in 2025, emphasizing that support for creative industries will enhance competitiveness, reduce unemployment, and foster sustainable growth in the region.

They supported establishing an exchange of experiences on national industrial policies and IT standardization. They emphasized the importance of developing micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises to drive economic growth and job creation, advocating continued cooperation under the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding.

Heads of delegation emphasized the importance of a unified energy vision, calling for continued cooperation in energy infrastructure, secu-

ity, and investment in renewable energy.

They reaffirmed the importance of implementing the road map for increasing the use of national currencies in mutual settlements and supported proposals for an independent settlement mechanism and converging payment systems.

They also recognized the SCO Business Council's role in fostering business cooperation and noted the Interbank Association's efforts in ESG financing and financial inclusion, along with Iran's intention to join the IBA.

Heads of delegation emphasized enhancing railway transport cooperation and welcomed the upcoming meeting of Railway Administrations in Moscow. They advocated for innovative technologies in multi-modal transport and called for developing infrastructure, logistics, and safety measures, aligning with the SCO's Concept of Cooperation on ports and logistics centers.

They also advocated for enhanced cooperation in environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and waste management.—RT/Agency

PM Shehbaz To Wine And Dine Coalition Partners On Constitution Amendment Plans

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif invited lawmakers of all coalition parties for a lunch on Thursday ahead of the National Assembly in which the 26th constitutional amendment is likely to be presented.

According to sources, the meeting will take place at Parliament House at 2 pm. All lawmakers of coalition parties in the centre have been issued invitations.

Meanwhile, the special committee meeting of the Parliament on the constitutional amendments has been rescheduled. The special committee meeting was initially called at 12.30 pm but now it will be held at 11.30am on Thursday.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) successfully reached an agreement on constitutional amendments following their meeting in Karachi.

This was disclosed by JUI-F Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman



Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while addressing a joint presser in Karachi.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that his party and PPP Maulana Fazlur Rehman agreed on the draft of constitutional amendments, hailing Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for the consensus.

The JUI-F chief however rejected the government's initial proposed constitutional amendments, terming them unacceptable. He stressed the need for non-controversial constitutional amendments, saying that the nation, constitution, and parliament require a united voice.

Speaking on the occasion, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman will be meeting with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz President Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday.

He said that the PML-N will also be invited to support the draft finalised by the JUI-F and PPP.

"We will try to include PML-N in this consensus," Bhutto Zardari said, emphasizing that the agreement between PPP and JUI-F will serve as the foundation for future negotiations.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the goal is to resolve public issues, rather than focusing on individual interests or timing.—RT/Agency

Gandapur And Hammad's Fiery Feud Over PTI's D-Chowk Protest



ISLAMABAD: After the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) October 15 D-Chowk protest was postponed, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and senior leader Hammad Azhar engaged in a heated exchange of words during the party's "divided" political committee meeting, sources told media.

The KP chief minister, according to the sources, endorsed postponing the protest, while Azhar — citing the alleged mistreatment of the party, its leadership and workers — insisted that it should be held, as the country welcomes foreign dignitaries for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) conference.

Gandapur, in response to Hammad, taunted him about hiding himself and asking workers to step out for the demonstration.

Deadlock Drama: Special Committee Meeting Hits Snags Over Disputes



ISLAMABAD: The special parliamentary committee's meeting on Wednesday ended without reaching any conclusions.

A follow-up session was scheduled for Thursday at noon.

According to sources, the meeting was chaired by Syed Khurshid Shah, while the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), presented a draft of the constitutional amendments.

The insiders revealed that BAP suggested increasing the number of seats in both the Balochistan Assembly and the National Assembly. Additionally, the party proposed appointing a panel of five judges, instead of the

PM Vows To Ease Cost Of Living For Hard-Pressed Citizens

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said that as they faced global challenges, including inflation and economic uncertainty, the Government of Pakistan remained committed to making life more affordable for its people.

"From ensuring food security to addressing housing needs, our policies are geared towards creating long-term economic resilience," the prime minister said in a message on International Day for the Eradication of Poverty being observed on October 17.

Today, he said, on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, "Pakistan stands united with the global community in reaffirming our commitment to a world where no individual is left behind, where opportunities for success are not limited by one's background or circumstances."

Eradicating poverty was not just a moral duty but a fundamental cornerstone for achieving sustainable development and ensuring peace and prosperity for all, he added.

The prime minister said that their government had always placed the people at the heart of every policy.

"Through our social



safety net initiatives, we have made significant progress in alleviating poverty and ensuring that our most vulnerable citizens are supported. We believe that lifting people out of poverty is not just about immediate relief but about creating sustainable pathways to economic empowerment. Our targeted efforts aim at empowering communities, especially women and children, and giving them the tools they need to build a better future."

PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying:

He further said that their initiatives such as the PM Youth Business, Agriculture Loans, Digi-Skills — free IT trainings and the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund were transforming lives by providing financial assistance and technical support to mil-

lions of families.

Poverty eradication was also at the forefront of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which Pakistan remained fully committed to achieving, he said, adding that they would continue to collaborate with their global partners and work towards these goals with an emphasis on inclusive growth, education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability.

"We are also proud of the progress made in empowering women and ensuring that their contributions are integral to the nation's economic and social fabric," he added.

On the day, the prime minister also extended his deepest appreciation to all those, both in Pakistan and around the world, who were working tirelessly to eradicate poverty.—RT/Agency

Pakistan Defiant: 'Kashmir Is Not India's, Never Was, Never Will Be'

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has rejected India's claim that Jammu and Kashmir was its "integral part" of India, and sought a UN-led plebiscite to determine the will of the Kashmiri people, as demanded by UN Security Council resolutions.

"Jammu and Kashmir is not, never has been, and will never be an 'integral' part of India," Pakistani delegate Ansar Shah told the General Assembly's Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee. "This disputed status of Kashmir is acknowledged by the UN and the international community," Shah, a first secretary at the Pakistani Mission to the UN, said in a response to an accusation by an Indian delegate that Pakistan was misinterpreting the principle of self-determination which, he said, does not justify undermining a member state's territorial integrity. The Indian delegate, Eldos Mathew Punnoose, a counsellor at India's Mission to the UN, was reacting to a sharp statement by Pakistan UN Ambassador Munir Akram who described the Indian occupation of Jammu



and Kashmir as the "worst manifestation of modern-day colonialism." Akram called on the UN to push for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UNSC resolutions and the Kashmiri people's wishes. "India is under a legally binding obligation under Article 25 of the UN Charter to implement the resolutions of the Security Council and enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to exercise their right to self-determination," the Pakistani delegate said. He pointed out that Kashmir was being held by brute force, with all pro-freedom Human Rights Leaders remaining incarcerated and many having died in custody under suspicious circumstances.

Far from seeking a peaceful solution to the dispute, Ansar Shah pointed out that India has resorted to belligerence against Pakistan — threatening to "take over" liberated Azad Jammu and Kashmir, reminding New Delhi that Islamabad will respond decisively to any Indian aggression. The Pakistan delegate went on to call India the "mother" of terrorism in South Asia, having resorted to terrorism against all its neighbours as a tool of its hegemonic policies. "India's campaign of targeted terrorist assassinations in third countries is now common knowledge," he said, adding, its agents have been responsible for at least 22 targeted assassinations in Pakistan.—RT/Agency