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Pakistan undertaking concerted efforts to advance SDGs set by UN: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Today, Pakistan joins the international community in observing the International Day of Democracy. The day provides an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the fundamental values of democracy, including equality, justice and freedom; to promote respect for the will of the people; to safeguard human dignity; and to uphold the rule of law.

In a democratic system of governance, authority is exercised through elected representatives of the people for the welfare and well-being of the public. Parliament, as the central democratic institution of the country, embodies the voice and aspirations of the people.

The Constitution of Pakistan provides the legal framework governing the relationship between the State and its citizens. Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees equal rights to all citizens and equality before the law. At the national level, the Constitution defines the respective roles of the federating units, safeguards the constitutional standing of national institutions, and lays down the framework for governance and administration. Pakistan's federal parliamentary democratic system entrusts Parliament with the responsibility to legislate in accordance with the public interest and the Islamic principles.

In view of the evolving demands of the contemporary era, formulating laws in accordance with public aspirations and the needs of the people is among the fundamental responsibilities of Parliament. To effectively address the challenges of the present era and secure a prosperous future, it is imperative that we remain steadfast in upholding and strengthening the fundamental democratic values that serve as the foundation of public welfare. The Constitution of Pakistan clearly affirms the State's commitment to ensuring the full participation of women in all spheres of national life. Reserved seats for women in the federal and provincial legislatures have been provided to ensure their effective representation.

The State is committed to safeguarding the rights, interests and legitimate concerns of minorities. Reserved seats for non-Muslim minorities have likewise been provided in the federal and provincial legislatures to ensure their representation.

At the international level, Pakistan remains cognizant of its international obligations and fully supports democratic principles. Pakistan is undertaking concerted efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations, including the promotion of democracy, peace and justice, and the development of strong and effective institutions.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with Admiral Dr. Muhammad Ali, Chief of the Indonesian Navy, at Aiwan-e-Sadr



RAWALPINDI: Mr. Ahmad Al Hajjar, Lebanese Minister of Interior and Municipalities, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF) at GHQ, Rawalpindi, during his two-day visit to Pakistan

Operations against militant elements will continue without discrimination: CM Bugti

Says the war against terrorism in Balochistan enters decisive phase

QUETTA, (APP): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has declared that the war against terrorism has entered a decisive phase, stressing that operations against militant elements will continue without discrimination until the last terrorist is eliminated.

He praised the successful operation by security forces in Mastung against Fitna al-Hindustan, noting that the timely and effective action reflects the firm resolve and professional capability of state institutions. According to the Chief Minister, the operation resulted in the killing of commander Naqeeb and two other terrorists, with their vehicle successfully targeted through a quadcopter strike. Sarfraz Bugti commended the professionalism, courage, and effective strategy of the security forces, adding that such actions demonstrate the state's determination not to allow peace-destroying elements to achieve their nefarious designs in Balochistan.

He emphasized that the people of Balochistan stand firmly with the security forces in this struggle, and the sacrifices of personnel for the restoration of peace are a source of pride for the nation.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, Bugti said the fight against terrorism is at a decisive stage and vowed that operations against militant elements will continue relentlessly. He stressed that the resolve of the state will remain intact until the complete elimination of terrorism, ensuring that peace and stability prevail across the province.



QUETTA: Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar inspects the control room of MERC 1122.

PM reiterates Pakistan's steadfast support for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity

ISLAMABAD, (APP): H.E. Mr. Ahmad Al-Hajjar, Minister of Interior and Municipalities of Lebanon, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif today.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Minister for Housing Riaz Hussain Pirzada and Minister of state for Interior Talal Chaudhry were also present.



The Prime Minister welcomed the Lebanese Interior Minister, reaffirming the longstanding fraternal ties between the two countries. He also conveyed his warm wishes to the Lebanese leadership. The two sides reviewed bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction over growing cooperation in interior and security affairs. The Prime Minister condemned, in the strongest terms, Israel's aggression against Lebanon, and conveyed deep sympathy over the loss of precious lives and property caused by the attacks. He reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with the Lebanese leadership and people during these difficult times, and reiterated Pakistan's steadfast support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

COAS reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to strengthen bilateral relations with Lebanon

RAWALPINDI, (APP): Lebanese Minister of Interior and Municipalities Mr. Ahmad Al Hajjar called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ here on Monday at General Headquarters (GHQ) during his two-day visit to Pakistan.

During the meeting, both dignitaries exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, the evolving regional security environment and prospects for further enhancing bilateral relations in security domain, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The importance of strengthening institutional linkages and fostering greater cooperation between the two countries' security institutions was also emphasised.

The COAS reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Lebanon.

Modernizing health, education sectors among our top priorities: Governor

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhail said that my deepest priority and interest is education. I will return here very soon to lay the foundation stone of Islamia University. In line with this commitment, I announce providing Rs. 10 million as seed money for the establishment of Islamia University. This is not merely temporary financial assistance, but an expression of our commitment to transform society through education for the bright future of our new generation. In addition, I also announce a cash prize of Rs. 100,000 each for the female students who secure first, second and third positions from Islamia College in the FSc examinations of the Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education.

He expressed these views while addressing the participants of a ceremony organized by Anjuman Islamia Balochistan at Islamia Girls College. On this occasion, Provincial Minister Mir Asim Kurd Gilo, Sardar Yahya Khan Nasir, Principal Islamia Girls College Professor Shaista Kakar, Muhammad Naeem Ahmed Khan, as well as a large number of teachers and students were present.

'Negative politics cannot stop Balochistan's development, prosperity': Ali Madad Jattak

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Provincial Minister Haji Ali Madad Jattak, reacting to a statement by Balochistan National Party chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal, said that the so-called nationalist sardars and nawabs are unable to digest the ongoing journey of development and prosperity in Balochistan.

He said that, as caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar gave Balochistan a historic gift. Work is progressing rapidly on the project to dualize the "bloody highway" from Chaman to Karachi, which, once completed, will prove to be an important milestone for travel facilities and economic activities in Balochistan.

He said that during the tenure of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, practical progress is also continuing on modern trauma centers, the People's Train Service, Green Bus, Pink Bus and numerous development projects in various sectors in Balochistan.

Dr Rubaba stresses stronger institutional support for women, children

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Provincial Adviser for the Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi visited the Women and Juvenile Facilitation Center on Monday and inspected various sections of the center.

On the occasion, AIG Gender Israr Ahmed Umrani and Center In-charge Shazia Imran gave the Provincial Adviser a detailed briefing about the various sections of the center, facilities being provided to women and juvenile victims, registration of complaints, legal assistance and other relevant measures.

Provincial Adviser Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi visited various sections of the center, reviewed the facilities being provided there and sought information from the relevant authorities on various matters.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said that providing women and children with a safe, dignified and supportive environment is an important responsibility of the Government of Balochistan. She said that an effective system is essential for providing timely legal, social and institutional support to women and juvenile victims. She said that institutions such as the Women and Juvenile Facilitation Center are playing an important role in resolving the problems faced by women and children and providing them access to justice.

Pakistan supports diplomatic efforts for sustainable peace, resolution of disputes through dialogue: President

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari, Monday, called for further strengthening Pakistan-Lebanon cooperation, particularly in the fields of internal security, law enforcement and counter-narcotics.

He was talking to Ahmad Al Hajjar, Minister of Interior and Municipalities of the Lebanese Republic, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release..

The president expressed concern over continuing instability and hostilities in Lebanon and the wider Middle East and their humanitarian and security consequences. He reaffirmed Pakistan's principled support for Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity and said Pakistan supports diplomatic efforts for de-escalation, sustainable peace and resolution of disputes through dialogue and in accordance with international law.

The Lebanese minister was accompanied by Ambassador of Lebanon to Pakistan Abdulaziz Issa, Major General Raed Abdallah, Director General, Internal Security Forces and Brigadier General Sami Nassif, Brigadier General Mahmoud Kobrosly.

Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Minister of State for Interior and Narcotics Control Senator Talal Chaudhry and Senator Saleem Mandviwalla were present during the meeting.

The president stressed the need to explore greater cooperation in extradition and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, as well as exchanges of expertise in disaster preparedness, emergency response, urban search and rescue, emergency communications and humanitarian logistics.

He expressed hope that the engagement would provide fresh momentum to Pakistan-Lebanon cooperation and establish a stronger foundation for sustained collaboration.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail distributing certificates and shields among the position holder students of Islamia Girls College, Quetta.

C&W Deptt abolishes 5,000 posts as technology replaces traditional work

QUETTA, (VoM Report): In a historic move, the Communications and Works Department of the Government of Balochistan has abolished approximately 5,000 posts belonging to 74 different categories that had become completely redundant due to modern technology and advanced machinery, and for which there is no longer any need in the future.

According to sources, approximately 5,000 posts belonging to 74 different categories have been abolished, while work is also underway to abolish a further 1,500 posts. Thus, a further reduction is expected in the number of unnecessary posts in the Communications and Works Department that have lost their usefulness over time. It may be noted that the abolished posts belonged to various categories in which, due to the use of modern technology and advanced machinery, the need for human involvement and traditional methods of work had almost or completely disappeared. In the past, a large workforce and specific traditional posts were required for certain tasks. However, with the use of modern machinery and technology, the nature of these tasks has changed in the modern era.

In view of this situation, retaining such posts could have become an additional financial burden on the government in the future.

The department has also clarified that employees serving against these posts who are completing 30 years of service are being granted their full retirement benefits. The purpose of this measure is, on the one hand, to abolish unnecessary posts that are likely to become ineffective in the future, while on the other hand, ensuring that the legitimate retirement rights of employees serving against these posts are maintained. The abolition of approximately 5,000 unnecessary posts is expected to save the Government of Balochistan billions of rupees in the future. The department has described the move as an important step toward reducing the long-term financial burden on the government treasury.

Had these abolished posts been filled again in the future, the salaries, allowances, pensions and other financial obligations associated with these positions would have continued to affect the Government of Balochistan's treasury for a long period.



QUETTA: Provincial Adviser for the Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi visits the Women and Juvenile Facilitation Center and inspects various sections of the center.

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Water vision

Water insecurity in Pakistan has been building up for decades as per capita water availability has declined from comfortable levels to near-scarcity thresholds. Climate change has intensified the pressure, expanding drought-prone zones and triggering displacement, particularly in Balochistan and Sindh. What is new is the belated recognition of its scale by policymakers, especially after India's illegal suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, prompting water security to finally be treated as a central pillar of national planning. It is in this context that Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal's call for a national consensus to move beyond reactive water crisis management towards an integrated strategy for ensuring water security, particularly in view of India's weaponisation of water, is timely. Few would disagree with the central premise of Mr Iqbal's argument: water can no longer be treated as a narrow, sectoral issue. It has become a foundational issue for national security and economic stability.

Water management in Pakistan has long been undermined by institutional silos, competing provincial priorities and policy inconsistency. A unified national framework anchored in effective coordination between the centre and provinces is therefore essential. After all, water insecurity will affect everyone across provincial boundaries. The proposed alignment of development spending, climate financing and private-sector participation with water security goals reflects a clear awareness that the challenge is as much about governance and financing as it is about physical scarcity. The stress on efficient water use and conservation is also well placed. Agriculture consumes most of Pakistan's water, yet productivity per unit is low. Better seeds, crop zoning, rational pricing policies and incentives for less water-intensive crops are critical reforms we need to implement. Likewise, the focus on groundwater governance is long overdue. Unchecked extraction has emerged as one of the most serious threats to long-term water sustainability, highlighting the need for regulation, monitoring and community-based conservation efforts. Perhaps the most forward-looking aspect of the proposed approach is the emphasis on data, science and technology. Real-time monitoring systems, satellite-based assessments, precision agriculture and AI-enabled forecasting can significantly improve efficiency and transparency in water use. A reliable national water information system can help build trust among provinces, reducing disputes rooted in the absence of reliable data.

That said, the renewed push for large reservoirs risks reviving a contentious policy. Large dams, often presented as silver bullets for Pakistan's water woes, strain public finances, and impose heavy social and environmental costs, causing displacement of communities and affecting livelihoods. Their effectiveness is also uncertain amid climate variability, sedimentation and persistent transmission losses. Hence, side-lining sustainable and cost-effective solutions to make way for large dams would be a mistake.

An asymmetrical war

Zahid Hussain

Speaking at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre in Washington, D.C., in early 2012, Henry Kissinger asserted that, since World War II, the US had entered wars without a clear exit strategy, and often sought a way out shortly after engagement. He highlighted the Afghan conflict as an example of a prolonged and unwinnable war. At that time, the US, despite being the world's greatest military power, was bogged down in a conflict that had entered its second decade. It took another decade for this war to conclude, resulting in utter humiliation for America, which had faced similar challenges in Vietnam and Iraq.

America's longest war in Afghanistan was triggered by a desire for revenge for 9/11. Its military intervention in Iraq, meanwhile, was initiated under false pretenses regarding the possession by Iraq of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). From the outset, both conflicts proved unwinnable, yet deception masked the failures. For nearly two decades, American leaders misled the public about the disastrous outcomes of these wars.

Now, just five years after its disgraceful withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US is embroiled in another conflict with Iran, seemingly ignoring past lessons. Similar to the misleading WMD claims used to justify the Iraq invasion, the exaggerated narrative of Iran's nuclear weapons programme was invoked to launch an attack on the Islamic Republic. However, weeks of relentless bombing failed to weaken Iran's resolve, and the fragile ceasefire negotiated by President Donald Trump has reached a critical point. America's continued blockade of Iran's ports, along with the recent escalation in tensions, has brought both nations perilously close to yet another round of hostilities.

Trump has once again threatened to "erase Iran from the face of the world". Nevertheless, he is far from winning this asymmetrical conflict. As German Chancellor Friedrich Merz noted with reference to the US: "An entire nation is being humiliated by the Iranian leadership… ." This current conflict, unlike previous ones, carries far greater implications not just for the US but for the rest of the world as well.

It raises pressing questions about whether the American president has any viable plan to extricate his country from this catastrophic situation. While Trump claims to hold all the cards, most analysts contend that he possesses no significant leverage in this high-stakes game.

The Iran war has exposed the limits of America's military might in what has been described as an asymmetrical conflict. Iran's use of weaponised drones represents a significant aspect of modern warfare, effectively transforming the battlefield against a more powerful adversary. Although Iran's military installations saw great destruction at the hands of the US-Israel combine, Iran's inexpensive drones and missiles successfully countered the might of the largest military power in the world.

Despite the extensive destruction caused by the relentless bombings carried out by US-Israel warplanes, Iran has continued the mass production of drones and missiles at a fraction of the cost of the weapons produced by its adversaries. According to the Pentagon, the conflict has significantly depleted US stockpiles of sophisticated missiles, which can take years to replenish. America, reportedly, has already incurred losses of $25 billion in this war.

Meanwhile, with an uninterrupted supply of inexpensive drones, each costing approximately $35,000, Iran continues to dictate the terms in the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz, where the situation is impacting the global economy. No degree of bombing can remove the primary retaliatory weapon at Iran's disposal.

Iran has also been using drones and missiles to target data centres established by American tech companies, leading to massive losses. This is a clever strategy causing maximum damage to the adversary in an asymmetric war.

While America's ongoing blockade of Iranian ports may increase economic pressure on Iran, the country can still endure a prolonged conflict. Iran still retains the ability to fire drones at passing oil tankers being escorted by US naval forces through the strait and paralyse the global economy. Trump has repeatedly threatened to deploy ground forces; however, this would be a big blunder and result in greater humiliation for American forces than the one they experienced in Vietnam and Afghanistan. Can an increasingly unpopular president afford to take that risk?

America has never been as isolated in a war as it is now, with its Western allies refusing to join what many of them consider to be an illegal conflict. The Iran war appears to have significantly ruptured the America-led world order, and it seems there is no reversing the tide, given the widening cracks in the Western alliance.

Most concerning for the US is increasing public scrutiny regarding Trump's mental and physical fitness to lead the country during war. The latest Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll indicates that 59 per cent of respondents believe that Trump lacks the mental sharpness required to lead, while 55pc say he's not fit to serve as president. It is indeed troubling to have an individual with questionable mental acuity at the helm of the world's most powerful country during a conflict. However, Trump has dismissed these concerns, as well as the adverse impacts of the war on the American and global economy.

Despite these economic concerns, America's oil companies and military-industrial complex are reaping substantial war profits. American oil companies, in particular, have benefited hugely due to soaring oil prices, with some estimates projecting a windfall of over $60bn for US producers if high crude prices persist. The conflict has caused US crude oil rates to nearly double, rising from $65 a barrel to over $110 within a month. This surge in prices has led to substantial earnings for energy companies, while consumers face higher fuel costs.

Similarly, US arms manufacturers stand to gain significantly from the massive increase in the defence budget and the growing demand for weapons by Middle Eastern countries. Last week, the Trump administration approved an $8.5bn arms sale to Middle Eastern allies to compensate for losses suffered on account of Iranian attacks. While Trump may not be winning this asymmetrical conflict with Iran, which has had a massive impact on the global economy, some American companies are indeed reaping a windfall.

Hard choices

Khurram Abbas

One year has passed since India decided to hold the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance. Pakistan's National Security Council issued a warning, shortly after the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security's decision, that any attempt to divert water flows will be regarded as an "act of war". A year later, there are no visible signs towards the treaty's restoration, and it remains essentially paralysed.

India has expedited development on a number of controversial hydropower projects by revising completion deadlines and making more rigorous funding arrangements. New Delhi has also approved design modifications in order to improve operational flexibility in managing water flows on several projects. Similarly, India has enhanced diversion measures at the Kishanganga project.

The Indian National Register of Large (Specified) Dams lists 15 large (specified) dams in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The Kiru, Kwar and Pakal Dul are among the projects that India has expanded on the Chenab tributaries.

Additionally, India has upgraded local storage systems and canals while increasing irrigation planning and intra-basin water use. These actions will likely lead to a progressive decrease in downstream water availability and an increase in upstream demand. Since April 2025, all of New Delhi's initiatives are meant to bring a change from a project-based approach to a water control strategy at the system level. Due to ongoing hydroelectric projects, India's western river storage capacity could increase two to three times, which will greatly enhance its ability to manipulate water flows.

The majority of these projects are anticipated to be completed between 2030 and 2032. To counter the Indian decision of suspending the IWT, Islamabad had to make a strategic decision: either persuade New Delhi to change its mind or force it to do so. Islamabad has so far preferred a multi-layered legal and diplomatic approach to apply pressure on India.

First, it has sought to utilise the procedural framework of the treaty by formally raising concerns over irregular water flows and the suspension of data exchange through correspondence between its Indus Waters Commissioner and the latter's Indian counterpart. Second, Islamabad has continued to advance disputes related to projects such as Ratle and Kishanganga before the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration. Last year in August, the PCA issued a binding award on the interpretation of the IWT. However, New Delhi has brushed aside the court's decision.

Third, Islamabad has attached hopes to the World Bank for intervention in this issue to ensure that New Delhi restores the treaty.

Pakistan has also explored broader international legal avenues. Islamabad has signalled the possibility of further legal action by framing India's conduct as a violation of international law, particularly the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. Diplomatically, Islamabad has raised the issue at the UN Security Council and several other multilateral forums, and characterised India's actions as the "weaponisation of water". Concurrently, Pakistan has systematically documented violations, including the suspension of hydrological data and irregular flows in the Chenab.However, at this point, Islamabad needs a reality check. The aforementioned efforts may help establish an evidentiary record for future legal or diplomatic purposes but cannot pressurise New Delhi into reversing its decision on the treaty. The World Bank's president Ajay Banga has already clarified that the bank has no role to play beyond facilitation. After one year, Islamabad needs to reassess its plans and actions with strategic clarity on whether and how to compel or convince India to halt its controversial projects and reinstate the treaty.

For Pakistan, there are three strategic policy options. First, Islamabad's declaration that any diversion of water would constitute an "act of war" remains deliberately ambiguous. While such ambiguity preserves deterrence by keeping the threshold undefined, it also creates space for misinterpretation and exploitation of the treaty by New Delhi. Pakistan has already announced that since August 2025, India has manipulated water flows on multiple occasions. To mitigate this, Pakistan could articulate a clearer doctrinal position by publicly defining specific triggers or thresholds that would qualify as an act of war. However, formalising these red lines risks locking the leadership into a commitment trap, which could limit policy flexibility during crises and may raise the stakes of escalation if those thresholds are crossed.

Second, Pakistan could pursue renegotiation of the IWT with a precondition of its engagement on India halting controversial hydro projects until a revised framework is finalised. This option, however, could introduce practical and political challenges. Renegotiation of the treaty will demand a high degree of technical expertise, legal preparedness and institutional coordination. In fact, these are the areas where Pakistan currently faces capacity constraints. Moreover, the proposal of renegotiations would likely require discreet back-channel diplomacy. However, India remains unwilling to normalise bilateral relations. Any overt or covert engagement could also impose domestic political costs on the Pakistani leadership, particularly in a polarised political environment.

Third, Islamabad may continue its existing multi-layered strategy, ie, a combination of legal recourse and diplomatic outreach. While this approach avoids immediate escalation, it suffers from structural limitations. Legal mechanisms under the treaty framework are time-consuming and often yield non-binding outcomes, diluting their effectiveness. Utilisation of diplomatic channels could bring awareness of the gravity of the issue, but keeping in view the international environment, it is highly unlikely that the world community would compel India to undo its decision of a year ago to hold the treaty in abeyance.

Marked as equals

Arifa Noor

I Have a confession to make. I was far from a kid when the Harry Potter books came out and I inhaled them after being introduced to them. I didn't just read them but also noted the publication dates and was among those who would pick up the latest copy on the eve of its release. And then re-read them.

That was, however, quite a few years ago; I haven't returned to the series in a while. But once a fan and all that… A sprinkling of the wizarding world vocabulary still pops up here and there in everyday conversation. And sometimes more.

The Potter series, for those who may not be familiar with the story, is about the boy wizard who defeats Voldemort, another older and more proficient wizard, over seven books.

The reason the two become protagonists dates back to Harry's birth. He is still a baby when Voldemort attacks him but survives; Voldemort fears the baby is destined to cause his (Volde-mort's) death. This is where the story begins.

Later, Harry wonders why Voldemort zeroes in on him. The explanation he is provided is that regardless of whether he was the one who could have killed Voldemort, once the latter attacked Harry, the baby, the elder wizard (popularly known as 'he-who-must-not-be-named') marked him as his equal and his foe. And thus destiny was made.

For some reason, it is this part of the story that has been in mind this week as I came across post after post on Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha's incarceration. The married couple are human rights activists and lawyers who have been sentenced to 17 years in prison for tweets! That is it. Some tweets. This past week marked 100 days of their imprisonment. And so far, these new and improved courts gifted to us by this PML-N-PPP government have not heard their appeal for bail. In the meantime, all those who used to count on Imaan and Hadi for legal assistance are perhaps left all alone, already abandoned by this state. And many did. From the victims of the blasphemy gang to the families whose relatives disappeared to journalists picked up, these two lawyers were the first choice.

Outside of those in power, no one really believes that the conviction is either fair or just. But in this day and age, few have the strength to say this. Most would prefer to simply ignore the issue or express some horror and change the topic. But then, none of that comes as a surprise.

Others still shrug their shoulders and point to other such travesties of justice or simply refer to the past. It is true, we live in terrible times where no one is spared. Consider Yasmin Rashid in Lahore, who is in her 70s and a cancer survivor; she has been behind bars for longer than Imran Khan. And her sin is basically her political views. There is also Ali Wazir, who has been imprisoned more or less since 2018; so much so that he wasn't even allowed his right to attend parliament after having won an election. Neither the PTI speaker nor the PDM one was willing to ensure Wazir enjoyed his parliamentary rights.

One could argue that Imaan and Hadi are younger and healthier than Yasmin Rashid and have been incarcerated for a shorter period than many political prisoners and ask why so much attention is being paid to them. But I digress, for by now, readers may be wondering what Imaan and Hadi's link with Harry Potter is. I sometimes wonder if those who cannot be named have not marked Imaan as an equal by targeting her.

Don't get me wrong. She is exceptional. I say this as someone who admires her greatly. For someone so young and still inexperienced in some ways, her sheer courage and empathy did make her stand out. She wasn't afraid to even take on her mother, Shireen Mazari, when the latter was a federal cabinet minister. This is not easy in our society where children barely have the space to disagree in private, let alone publicly. Neither was she less courageous when it came to support for those facing state violence be it the Baloch or the Pakhtun. But most of all, her empathy for the vulnerable was inspiring. The last time I met her was when the Baloch protesters were in town. She and Hadi had taken the protesters' children out for a meal and a drive. Most of the rest who showed up to express solidarity chatted with the women and perhaps helped them out with food and so on. But few turned up there nearly every day or even thought of entertaining the children who had no choice but to play on concrete as their mothers sat waiting. And this is what Imaan and Hadi did — regularly.

And this is why many of us thought that Imaan would eventually become one of the big names, the heroes this country has and will continue to produce.

Pak, Egypt agree to strengthen agricultural cooperation, focus on cotton Plproductivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Monday sought Egypt's support and technical expertise in increasing cotton yield and improving cotton quality in Pakistan, stressing that Egypt's experience in cotton varieties, quality seed, crop management and value addition could be highly beneficial for Pakistan's cotton sector.

The minister chaired a high-level meeting with Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan Dr. Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid Hassan to discuss ways to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in agriculture, food security and modern farming technologies.

The minister said that Pakistan highly values its longstanding relations with Egypt and expressed appreciation for Egypt's progress in modern agriculture, water management, climate-resilient farming and agricultural technologies. "I am impressed by Egypt's agricultural development and the experience it has developed in improving productivity under challenging conditions," he said.

The minister proposed enhanced cooperation between Pakistani and Egyptian agricultural research institutions, including exchange of experts, research collaboration, capacity building, joint trials and sharing of best practices in cotton production and other priority crops.

He also emphasized cooperation in water-efficient irrigation, seed development, biotechnology, climate-smart agriculture, mechanization, livestock, horticulture and agricultural research, saying that Pakistan was keen to benefit from Egypt's practical experience and technological advancements.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said the government was focusing on raising agricultural productivity, reducing production costs and improving farmers' incomes through modern technologies, quality inputs and stronger research-extension linkages.

Ambassador Dr. Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid Hassan expressed Egypt's readiness to strengthen agricultural cooperation with Pakistan and assured that relevant Egyptian institutions would be encouraged to explore areas of mutual interest.

The Ambassador highlighted Egypt's experience in cotton, irrigation, agricultural research and cultivation in water-scarce and arid conditions, and welcomed greater exchanges between experts and research institutions of the two countries.

Both sides agreed to maintain close coordination and identify concrete areas.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Basir Shamsie, President and CEO of JS Bank, alongside Mr. Noman Azhar, Chief Officer of ZINDIGI - JS Bank, and Mr. Atif Ishaque, Chief Business Officer of ZINDIGI - JS Bank, called on the Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani at the Finance Division.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain meets Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan H.E. Dr. Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid Hassan to discuss enhanced bilateral cooperation in agriculture, particularly measures to improve cotton yield and quality.

Minister announces 400-acre Port Qasim garment city project, 138,000 jobs projected

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has announced plans to establish a 400-acre apparel zone at Port Qasim, with its first phase projected to create more than 138,000 jobs and generate annual exports of around $2.2 billion.

Chairing a meeting on a proposed garment city project, the minister said the export-oriented manufacturing cluster would focus on high-value apparel production and attract private investment.

According to the project plan, the first phase would cover 250 acres, with 35 per cent allocated for internal roads, utilities and green areas. The project is envisaged as a public-private partnership.

The proposed commercial structure comprises 32 industrial plots of five acres each, although the plot size could be reduced to two or three acres to accommodate more investors and manufacturing units.

The Port Qasim Authority (PQA) would provide infrastructure and utilities. Each industrial unit would have access to up to 400,000 gallons of water a day, two megawatts of on-grid electricity and 23,100 pounds of industrial gas a day at 8 pounds per square inch (PSI), enough to support requirements for 10 tonnes of steam.

Pounds per square inch (PSI) is a unit used to measure pressure. It indicates how much force is applied over one square inch of area. For example, 8 PSI means eight pounds of force acting on each square inch.

For the overall project, planned utility capacity includes 13 million gallons of water a day, 64MW of on-grid electricity and 750,000 pounds of industrial gas a day.

Junaid Chaudhry said private-sector participation would be a key component of the project. Under the plan, a Pakistani textile and denim manufacturing company, Artistic Milliners, would establish a manufacturing unit with an investment of more than $18 million, incorporating vertical integration and green technologies.

The project would also have a one-window mechanism for exporters, including streamlined export processing, specialised customs desks and dedicated transport corridors.

Projections presented at the meeting put first-phase employment at 138,125 jobs and annual exports at $2.2bn. The project also aims to raise the average export value of garments to around $8 per piece. The minister said the initiative was part of efforts to expand Pakistan's industrial base and export capacity, with port infrastructure, utilities, customs facilities and private investment integrated into the proposed apparel zone.

Pakistan's budget transparency improves 50% in two years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's budget transparency has improved by 50% in just two years, with the country's score rising from 30 out of 100 in 2023 to 45 in 2025, Advisor to Finance Minister, Khurram Schehzad said while quoting the latest Open Budget Survey (OBS) by the International Budget Partnership (IBP).

According to OBS, the improvement brings Pakistan's score in line with the global average of 45 and places it ahead of several regional and international peers, including India at 44, Sri Lanka at 43, Bangladesh at 37, Nigeria at 24 and China at 19.

The Open Budget Survey is an independent global assessment of budget transparency, public participation and oversight of public finances. The latest results show that Pakistan made progress in several areas that had been identified as weaknesses in the 2023 assessment.

The Executive's Budget Proposal score increased from 43 to 57, while the Enacted Budget score rose from 33 to 50. Pakistan also recorded a major improvement in its Year-End Report, which was previously published late, while its public participation score increased from 15 to 22. The increase in public participation is particularly significant, putting Pakistan above the global average of 17 and the Asia-Pacific average of 18. The improvement reflects efforts to expand stakeholder consultations, strengthen pre- and post-budget engagement and increase parliamentary input into the budget process. The IBP has also recognized improvements in the timely online publication of the Year-End Report.

PPL discovers gas reserves in Sujawal District

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), operator of the Sirani Exploration License holding 75% Working Interest (WI), along with Joint Venture Partner Government Holdings (Private) Limited (GHPL) holding 25% WI, made a gas discovery from its exploration well Dolphin X-1, located in District Sujawal of Sindh province. The well, Dolphin X-1, was spudded as an exploratory well on 17th April 2026 and drilled down to 3,850 meters MD (Measured Depth) to test the hydrocarbon potential of the Chiltan Formation. Hydrocarbon-bearing intervals were identified based on drilling results and open-hole log data. During post-acid testing of the Chiltan Formation, good-quality gas with a heating value of approximately 1,000 Btu/scf flowed at a rate of 0.942 MMscfd (Million Standard Cubic Feet Per Day) against a Wellhead Flowing Pressure (WHFP) .



HYDERABAD: Vendors are displaying apples to attract the customers at Fruit Market.

Pakistan-China B2B cooperation to drive investment, technology transfer, export growth: Haroon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production and Federal Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan on Monday said Pakistan-China Business-to-Business (B2B) cooperation was opening new avenues for investment, technology transfer, local manufacturing and export growth.

The minister made these remarks while chairing a meeting to review progress on Pakistan-China Business-to-Business (B2B) cooperation and the implementation of Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) signed between businesses of the two countries, said a news release.

Senior officials from all relevant ministries, departments, government institutions, and stakeholders attended the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Haroon said that the Prime Minister's visit to China and the Pakistan-China B2B conferences had opened new avenues for economic cooperation between Pakistan and China.

He noted that the B2B engagements had resulted in significant progress on multiple MoUs and joint ventures worth hundreds of millions of dollars across various sectors.

The advisor emphasized that the prime minister had given clear directions to translate Pakistan-China agreements and MoUs into concrete and actionable projects. "Signing MoUs alone is not enough; the real success lies in translating these agreements into practical initiatives and ensuring the commencement of investments and joint ventures," he said. Haroon directed that, in accordance with the PM's instructions, continuous follow-up of all MoUs would be undertaken to ensure timely progress and implementation. He reaffirmed that the government was fully committed to transforming Pakistan-China B2B cooperation into tangible investment, joint production, technology transfer, and increased exports. Haroon described the B2B engagements in the lithium-ion battery, agriculture, and pharmaceutical sectors as an exceptional and historic development, adding that the strong participation of Chinese businesses in these sectors represented a significant industrial opportunity for Pakistan.

He said that Pakistan would further strengthen business-to-business linkages with China to promote technology transfer, local manufacturing, and exports. "Bringing Chinese investment and technology to Pakistan and linking it with local production and exports is a key priority of the government," Haroon Akhtar Khan added.

The meeting reviewed mechanisms for effective coordination among relevant ministries, departments, and stakeholders to ensure that the outcomes of Pakistan-China B2B engagements are translated into concrete investments, production facilities, joint ventures, and export-oriented industrial projects.



Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, is delivering his keynote address on the occasion of ASEAN DAY 2026 at Federation House, Karachi.

Modern digital technologies vital for agricultural transformation: Kirmani

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani said on Monday that digitalization of agriculture sector was a key component of the ongoing agricultural transformation agenda.

He said this while chairing a meeting here at the Civil Secretariat, to review proposals for using modern digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced digital models to support farmers and strengthen agricultural services. Punjab Agriculture Secretary Shakeel Ahmad Mian also attended the meeting. During the meeting, the minister was briefed on an advanced mobile application for crops developed by Syngenta Pakistan.The meeting was informed that digitalization of the agriculture sector was a need of the modern era and that advanced technologies could enable timely and effective agricultural advisory services for farmers.

KP Govt , ADB review cooperation on urban, water projects

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting with the Pakistan Asian Development Bank MTR Mission was held here on Monday under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Department Islam Zaib.

The meeting was focused on current areas of cooperation including the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP) and pipeline initiatives. Key urban and water projects including the Peshawar Greater Water Supply Project and the Climate and Urban Resilience Enhancement Project were discussed in detail.

The ADB Mission lauded the Khyber Cities Improvement Project. The Additional Chief Secretary highlighted ongoing efforts to ensure smooth progress toward timely completion of projects.Regarding pipeline initiatives, the ACS directed relevant officials to consult concerned departments during formulation of PC-I and undertake preparatory work during the design phase to make projects more beneficial, practical and impactful.The ACS further emphasized the need to allocate more resources for interventions that deliver long-term and tangible impacts. The meeting was attended by Secretary Local Government, Chief Economist and other officials from relevant sections along with representatives of the ADB.

Rupee gains 03 paisa against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 03 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.62, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.65. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 278.50 and Rs 278.70, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs 2.45 and closed at Rs 322.43 against the previous day's closing of Rs 319.98, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Gold price rises Rs2,000 per tola

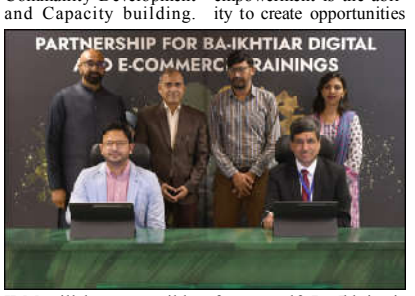
ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of gold in the country witnessed an upward trend on Monday, with the price of 24-karat gold increasing by Rs2,000 per tola to Rs461,936, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. The price of 24-karat gold of 10 grams increased by Rs1,715 to Rs396,035, while the price of 22-karat gold of 10 grams rose by Rs1,572 to Rs363,045.

In the international market, gold was quoted at $4,395 per ounce, showing an increase of $20.

Meanwhile, the price of silver also witnessed an increase, with 24-karat silver rising by Rs80 per tola to Rs7,029.

PTCL expands digital literacy training to 22 districts

KARACHI, (News Desk): Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), Pakistan's leading telecom and ICT services provider, in collaboration with the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), is rolling out the digital literacy training component of its Ba-Ikhtiar Program across the 22 districts where the programme is currently active. The training will be delivered by the Institute of Rural Management (IRM), a leading organization specializing in Community Development and Capacity building.



IRM will be responsible for equipping 2,100 Women with practical digital skills and the tools needed to participate more confidently in today's digital economy.

Participants will receive hands-on training in smartphone usage, digital literacy, online communication, internet safety, and access to essential digital services. PTCL will also provide smartphones to participants, enabling them to continue learning and apply their skills beyond the training environment.

Speaking on the occasion, Amad Khan, Chief Marketing Officer, PTCL, said, "The true measure of empowerment is the ability to create opportunities for yourself. Ba-Ikhtiar is built on that belief. Digital skills are becoming increasingly important in everyday life.

FPCCI calls for stronger Pakistan-ASEAN trade, investment partnership

KARACHI, (News Desk): Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), has stressed upon a more proactive and commercially focused engagement with ASEAN – emphasizing greater trade, investment, joint ventures, technology cooperation and business-to-business linkages between Pakistan and ASEAN countries.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, addressing the Commemoration of ASEAN Day 2026, organized by FPCCI at Federation House, Karachi, under the theme "Strengthening Pakistan–ASEAN Trade, Investment and Economic Partnership" said that ASEAN's growing economic significance offers substantial opportunities for Pakistani exporters and investors. He stressed the need to strengthen direct interaction between the private sectors of Pakistan and ASEAN through business delegations, exhibitions, B2B meetings and institutional linkages.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, highlighted the considerable untapped potential in Pakistan–ASEAN economic relations and emphasized FPCCI' s initiative for establishing the Pakistan–ASEAN Business Council as a dedicated platform for B2B cooperation, trade delegations, investment and joint ventures. He identified textiles, IT, food processing, agriculture & value addition, cold storage, engineering, two-wheelers, tourism.



Street vendors sell carpets to support families at Kali Mori road in Hyderabad.

Kayani reaffirms govt's commitment to cashless economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Railways and Finance, Bilal Azhar Kayani on Monday reaffirmed the government's commitment to advancing a cashless economy and accelerating digital financial inclusion across the country. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of JS Bank that called on him to discuss key strategies for expanding digital financial services and supporting the national vision for a digitally empowered economy, according to a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The delegation was led by Basir Shamsie, President and Chief Executive Officer JS Bank, and included Noman Azhar, Chief Officer of ZINDIGI – JS Bank, and Atif Ishaque, Chief Business Officer of ZINDIGI – JS Bank.

During the meeting, the delegation commended the government's ongoing policy efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting cashless business models and driving formal financial adoption across sectors. Emphasizing the strategic importance of public-private partnership, the Minister highlighted that Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif was personally overseeing the cashless economy.

SC begins New Judicial Year 2026-27

Judiciary's true measure lies in public trust and fairness: CJP

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan Monday opened the New Judicial Year 2026-27 with a renewed commitment to speedier justice, better case management, improved services and measurable institutional reform.

The ceremony, held in Courtroom No. 1 of the Supreme Court of Pakistan here, was presided over by the Chief Justice of Pakistan, and attended by all Judges of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General for Pakistan, the Vice Chairman, Pakistan Bar Council, the President, Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan, and numbers of members of the legal fraternity.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Justice reviewed the Court's institutional reform agenda, structured around five key pillars: technology-enabled service delivery; access and transparency; strengthening of the legal and regulatory framework; leveraging national and international resources; and revitalisation of justice-sector institutions.

He apprised the gathering that, out of 86 reform actions across eight functional areas, 65 have been completed, eight are on track, while 13 require further attention. He emphasised that the ultimate objective of reform is better justice, with judicial independence accompanied by institutional accountability. Highlighting the Court's digital transformation, the Chief Justice referred to the digitisation and barcoding of pending and fresh cases, electronic transmission of orders and judgments, e-Office, paperless court systems and e-filing. He emphasised that the next phase of digital reform must move beyond digitisation towards an integrated and interoperable digital justice architecture, supported by stronger data infrastructure and robust cybersecurity.

The Chief Justice also highlighted progress towards a National Standardised E-Filing Framework, aimed at bringing greater consistency to filing procedures across the Supreme Court, High Courts and District Judiciary and providing lawyers and litigants with a simpler and more predictable filing experience. Provincial Bar Councils and the Islamabad Bar Council have been engaged in the process, and the proposal has been placed before the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee.

On access to justice and public facilitation, the Chief Justice highlighted the establishment and strengthening of the Public Facilitation Centre, digital communication mechanisms, structured feedback systems and improved facilities for litigants, overseas Pakistanis and the media. A Public Facilitation Centre at the Lahore Registry is targeted for completion by mid-November.



ISLAMABAD: Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, addressing the full court reference on commencement of the new judicial year 2026-2027 at Supreme Court of Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon Admiral Dr. Muhammad Ali, Chief of the Indonesian Navy, at Aiwan-e-Sadr

Lebanese Interior Minister appreciates historical importance of Pakistan Monument

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Lebanese Interior Minister Ahmad Al-Hajjar, accompanied by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Monday visited the Pakistan Monument and Islamabad Police Lines during his official visit to Pakistan.

The visit included ceremonial events, briefings on national heritage, and an inspection of Islamabad Police personnel. Upon his arrival at the Pakistan Monument, the Lebanese interior minister was presented a guard of honour by a contingent of the Federal Constabulary. He later visited the Martyrs' Memorial, where he laid a floral wreath and offered prayers in tribute to those who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

During the visit, Ahmad Al-Hajjar was given a detailed briefing on the historical and national significance of the Pakistan Monument.

Pakistan greatly values longstanding friendship with France: President

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday appreciated the outgoing French Ambassador Nicolas Galey for his contribution towards strengthening Pakistan-France relations during his tenure and expressed the hope that bilateral ties would continue to expand in all areas of mutual interest.

The Ambassador of France paid a farewell call on the president here at Aiwan-e-Sadr, a Presidency's news release said.

President Zardari said Pakistan greatly values its longstanding friendship with France and appreciated Ambassador Galey's constructive role in moving bilateral relations forward following a difficult phase. He stressed the importance of regular high-level exchanges, stronger economic cooperation and greater interaction between the business communities of the two countries.

He also conveyed sympathies to the Government and people of France over the devastating wildfires in the country, saying that Pakistan stands in solidarity with France. He appreciated France's acknowledgement of Pakistan's constructive mediation role in the US-Iran conflict.

The president welcomed further cooperation in areas of mutual benefit and appreciated the contribution of French companies and the French Agency for Development to development projects in Pakistan.

The president congratulated Ambassador Galey on the completion of his assignment and conveyed his best wishes for his future endeavours. Ambassador Nicolas Galey expressed appreciation for the support extended to him during his tenure in Pakistan.

Govt making efforts to protect vulnerable segments of society: Ali Pervaiz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik said on Monday that the government would provide around Rs25 billion per month under the Prime Minister's special petrol relief scheme.

Addressing a press conference along with Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, he said despite limited resources, the government was making efforts to protect vulnerable segments of society. "The Prime Minister wants this support to continue for the weakest segments of society until a solution to the situation is found," he said.

The minister said it was difficult to give an exact figure for the number of beneficiaries at this stage as the country had around two crore motorcycles, while the number would vary depending on registration periods and eligibility criteria.

He said the Information Technology Minister had addressed problems encountered during the previous scheme and introduced improvements to the system. Ali Pervaiz Malik said around 1.5 million motorcycles had benefited from the previous scheme, while the current initiative would also cover two-wheelers and three-wheelers.

He said the government expected the scheme to require around Rs25 billion per month, adding that the federal government and the finance minister had assured provision of the required resources.

To a question, he said diesel was currently available in Pakistan at around Rs400 to Rs405 per litre, depending on the location and fuel station, despite significantly higher prices in international markets.

The minister said the government had created room for relief through engagement with local refineries and efforts to revise the pricing mechanism.

He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had intervened and directed the government to engage with refineries to develop a pricing formula based on crude oil instead of relying entirely on refined-product prices.

"Because of that intervention, there is a reduction in diesel prices today," he said.

Pervaiz Malik said diesel played a critical role in the national economy, particularly in transportation and agriculture.

To another question, the minister said the government had made all components of petroleum pricing publicly available to ensure complete transparency in the fuel pricing mechanism.

He said the level of petroleum levy had already been explained. At the same time, every component of the fuel price had been made available on the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) website.

Ali Pervaiz Malik said the government had made complete details public at the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to ensure transparency in petroleum pricing.

"Every component has been placed before the public with complete transparency so that you can monitor it," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses a MoU signing ceremony between Pakistan and Lebanon on transfer of sentenced persons

SCO RATS Council strongly denounces new attacks on Iran

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Council of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO RATS) on Monday condemned the new military attacks against Iran and reaffirmed the SCO's previously expressed position on the issue.

The 46th meeting of the SCO RATS Council was held here under the chairmanship of Pakistan, with delegations from the competent authorities of SCO member states and representatives of the Executive Committee of SCO RATS in attendance.

The meeting was attended by delegations from Pakistan, Belarus, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The council expressed condolences to the government and people of Iran over the tragic death of Iran's Supreme Leader Seyyed Ali Khamenei, as well as to the families of those killed.

It reaffirmed its position on preserving Iran's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity and supported efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions, establishing peace and ensuring stability in the region.

During the meeting, the participants discussed current issues on the international agenda in the field of regional security.



RAWALPINDI: Admiral Dr Muhammad Ali, Chief of the Indonesian Navy, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF) at GHQ

New era of development begins in Balochistan's Sherani district

QUETTA, (INP): A new era of development has begun in Sherani district of Balochistan, where projects under the Balochistan Special Development Initiative are significantly improving public amenities and the standard of living.

Under Phase-I and Phase-II of the initiative, a total of one hundred sixteen development projects were approved for the district, out of which one hundred and fifteen have been successfully completed.

Over six hundred eighty-nine million rupees were allocated for these projects under the Balochistan Special Development Initiative. The FC Balochistan North, along with the civil administration and elected representatives, played a key role in the effective monitoring and successful execution of these projects.

Secure, drug-free learning environment requires coordinated response: NA Body

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) informed the National Assembly Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training that, pursuant to the recommendations of the Sub-Committee on Dyslexia, a number of measures have been introduced to facilitate students with dyslexia during examinations. These measures include provision of additional time and assistance in reading the question paper to students requiring such support.

The 26th meeting of the committee was held under the Acting Chairmanship of Anjum Aqeel Khan, Member National Assembly (MNA) at Parliament House, here, said a press release on Monday.

The Committee stressed the need for regular psychological support and the availability of trained remedial teachers in educational institutions to identify learning difficulties at an early stage and provide appropriate assistance to affected students in the classroom. A Committee Member further informed that legislation relating to dyslexia has also been enacted by the Punjab Assembly, highlighting the need for a comprehensive and uniform approach to address the educational needs of children with dyslexia. The Inter Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC) informed the Committee that, being a coordinating forum for educational boards across the country, it would take up the matter with all Boards to promote uniform measures and ensure that appropriate facilities and support mechanisms for students with dyslexia are adopted nationwide.

Digital mechanism designed for PM's petrol relief scheme: Shaza

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on Monday that the Prime Minister's special petrol relief scheme had been designed to facilitate eligible vehicle users, including those using rented motorcycles and rickshaws for their livelihoods. Addressing a press conference along with Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, she said the government had reviewed lessons from the previous phase of the programme and introduced measures to make registration easier for the public.

"During the last programme, we registered motorcycles only in the names of their owners, but registration remained very low," she said.

Shaza Fatima said ownership would not necessarily be required for motorcycle and rickshaw users operating vehicles rented from others.

However, ownership of an 800cc vehicle would be required to avail the facility.

She said many vehicles were being used on open transfer letters, while some had been purchased and handed over to family members or staff.



ISLAMABAD: Federal ministers Attaullah Tarar, Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Ali Pervez Malik hold a press conference to brief the media on the Prime Minister's fuel relief scheme



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) at the Finance Division

Javed Latif criticizes debate over creation of new provinces in country

LAHORE, (INP): Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Mian Javed Latif has raised several questions while strongly criticizing the debate over creating new provinces in the country and his own party's internal structure. According to reports, speaking at a consultative meeting of the PML-N about the debate over new provinces, Mian Javed Latif said in unequivocal terms that such sensitive and important administrative matters could not be brought up casually. He said it was not possible to dream one night and then create new provinces, adding that people with no connection whatsoever to ground realities were being asked to debate the issue.

Private nature of matrimonial home should not become shield for perpetrators: SC

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Supreme Court on Monday upheld the life imprisonment of an accused, convicted of murdering his wife in Karachi, dismissing his appeal against the Sindh High Court judgment and maintaining the order to pay Rs500,000 compensation.

A 10-page detailed judgment authored by Justice Hashim Kakar held that the chain of circumstantial evidence against the convict was complete, noting that he remained absconding for seven years after the incident.

The court observed that domestic homicide was a crime often difficult to prove and that, in cases involving the unnatural death of a wife, the husband's explanation could assume significance. An unacceptable explanation by the husband could form an important link in the chain of circumstantial evidence, it added.

The Supreme Court, however, cautioned that no automatic presumption of guilt could be drawn against an accused. The presumption of innocence and all legal safeguards available to an accused must remain intact, the judgment emphasised.

The court stressed the need for a 'gender-sensitive approach in the investigation of domestic killings', observing that the private nature of a matrimonial home should not become a shield for perpetrators.

The judgment noted shortcomings in the investigation, observing that despite recovery of a blood-stained hammer and sheet, the articles were not produced before the trial court. The failure to present such evidence constituted serious negligence on the part of the police, it observed.

The Supreme Court directed that police officers should be trained to address gender and patriarchal biases and that gender-sensitive investigation procedures should be adopted in cases involving crimes against women.

It further emphasised accountability for negligence by investigating officers and called for consideration of a system for systematic review of every domestic homicide case.

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