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Provision of essential items at low rates govt's top priority: PM

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said that the provision of essential items to people at low rates is the top priority of the government.

He presided over a meeting on the supply of sugar in the country and price control here on Sunday.

The premier said that in previous months the government had taken strict action against sugar smuggling, which bore fruitful results. He directed the authorities to take solid steps to control the price of sugar besides taking stern action against elements involved in its hoarding.

Shehbaz Sharif directed to prepare a strategy to ensure the provision of the commodity and other essential items at reasonable rates.

"The federal and provincial governments should make joint efforts to ensure the provision of essential items to the common man at low rates," he added.

He said that during the holy month of Ramadan, negligence would not be tolerated regarding control of

prices of essential items. The meeting was briefed about the sugar production and that there was its sufficient stock available in the country. It was informed that fair price shops had been set up to sell sugar at low rates at the provincial level and all possible steps would be taken to completely overcome its smuggling.

Action would be ensured against illegal hoarding of sugar and work at the district administration level would be taken vibrantly in this regard, chief secretaries briefed the meeting.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik and other high-ranking officials attended the meeting. Chief secretaries of all provinces also attended the meeting via video link.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on supply and price control of Sugar.



BAHAWALPUR: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir interacting with students from various universities in Bahawalpur.

PTI graph decreased in KP PM launches histrionic Ramazan package: Muqam

SWAT (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam here Sunday said that the popularity graph of Pakistan Tahrik e Insaaf (APP) has decreased in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where its government has failed to resolve peoples problems despite of 11 years rule.

Addressing a big public gathering at Islampur in Swat district, Engr Amir Muqam said that PTI has deceived people in the name of so called change and failed to deliver on all fronts in KP.

He said that terrorist incidents have increased in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as

evident of the Haqqania mosque blast at Akora Khattak Nowshera while PTI leadership was concentrating to get relief for their founder who was convicted in AlQadar trust mega corruption scam.

He said that opposition parties have no solid agenda for people's welfare.

Engr Amir Muqam said it would have been better if the opposition parties' grand alliance voiced against terrorism, illiteracy, poverty and unemployment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Muqam said that PTI leaders were known for repeating hollow slogans in order to hide poor governance and corruption in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

On the other side, he said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was working tirelessly to take the country out of existing challenges.

Engr Amir Muqam said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has launched Rs20 billion Ramazan relief Package for poor and underprivileged families of Pakistan including KP.

He said the economy that was put in the verge of economic collapse by the PTI Government, has been stabilized by the PMLN Govt after taking tough decisions, and that investment started coming back to the country after a long time.

\$1bn package: IMF's review mission to land in Pakistan today

ISLAMABAD (INP): A 9-member International Monetary Fund (IMF) Review Mission will arrive in Islamabad today (Monday) February 3, 2025, for economic review and release of the second tranche of \$1 billion of the \$7 billion bailout package.

The IMF delegation will be headed by Nathan Porter, who will stay in Pakistan for two weeks.

The IMF mission will engage in negotiations with officials from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Planning, and the State Bank of Pakistan.

The negotiations between Pakistan and the IMF Review Mission will conclude on March 15, 2025. The release of the second installment will conclude on March 15, 2025.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people purchasing fruits and vegetables for iftar at Sasta Ramadan bazaar Aabpara in the Federal Capital.

COAS Gen Asim says Everyone should contribute towards country's development

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Army Chief General Asim Munir has said that everyone has to contribute towards the country's development.

According to the army's media wing, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the army chief was addressing students in Bahawalpur.

General Asim Munir stated that Pakistan is a priceless gift from almighty Allah, Who has bestowed many blessings on this land.

He urged the student to always remember ancestors and our societal values. For the country's development, everyone must share their responsibility. "Instead of engaging in criticism for the sake of criticism, we should focus our attention on our own performance and duties."

The army chief said

that as long as the youth stands shoulder to shoulder with armed forces, no one can harm our country. He paid tributes to the mothers who sacrificed their sons to protect the holy land.

General Asim Munir said that organised outfits are behind terrorism.

Earlier, upon his arrival, the COAS was received by the Bahawalpur Corps commander.

During his visit, General Munir addressed officers and troops, commending their dedication, high morale, and combat readiness.

He emphasised that rigorous training remains fundamental to a soldier's professional development and should continue to be a defining characteristic of the Pakistan Army in tackling modern warfare challenges.

Asad Qaiser vows PTI to launch massive protest after Eid

SWABI (INP): Former Speaker Asad Qaiser has strongly criticized the current parliament, calling it "fake" and demanding transparent elections.

Speaking to the media, Qaiser expressed his deep concerns regarding the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, referring to the province as being "at war." He emphasized that the people of the province are desperate for peace and stability.

Qaiser also condemned the federal government's continued efforts to suppress the Pakistani Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), asserting that the federal authorities are not addressing the pressing issues of peace and security that the country faces.

He further urged the government to revisit its Afghan policy, stressing the need for comprehensive and effective strategies for peace.

In a separate statement, Qaiser expressed sorrow over the recent bomb blast incident, noting that it was the result of flawed

policies.

He reiterated that the focus should be on creating a safe environment for all citizens and emphasized that transparent elections must take place to resolve the ongoing political crisis.

Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Withdraw Illegal Cases

In a related development, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced its decision to withdraw all illegal cases, including those involving PTI members. Muhammad Inam Yousafzai, the Additional Advocate General of the province, confirmed that anyone facing unlawful FIRs in the region will have their cases revoked.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has instructed authorities to ensure that illegal and politically motivated cases be withdrawn. The aim, according to Gandapur, is to relieve the burden on the courts while ensuring that cases are assessed on their merits.

Inflation crisis worsening in Pakistan: Senator Qadir

QUETTA (Online) — Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Defence Production, Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir, has stated that inflation has remained a major crisis in Pakistan for several years, intensifying further during Ramadan.

Despite the government's claims, people have not received any relief, and the prices of essential commodities continue to skyrocket, making life increasingly difficult for the middle and lower-income classes. With the arrival of Ramadan, profiteers have once again become active, allegedly tightening their grip on markets. The Ministry of Finance has also sounded the alarm regarding inflation, warning that the inflation rate could rise to 4% in March, up from 2.41% recorded in January 2025.

In a statement, Senator

Qadir noted that despite assurances from the federal government and sugar mill owners to provide sugar at Rs.130 per kg nationwide, its price has surged to nearly Rs.160 per kg, with wholesale rates also rising. If strict action is not taken against the sugar mafia, middlemen, and hoarders, the price may reach Rs.200 per kg during Ramadan. He pointed out that between June and October 2024, the government allowed the export of 750,000 tons of sugar, followed by another 500,000 metric tons in October 2024. During the first seven months of the current fiscal year, sugar exports to Afghanistan saw a record increase, amounting to \$262.7 million.

The senator urged the government to take stringent measures to ensure the availability of affordable goods during Ramadan.

Pakistan to become a strong economy in few years: Rana

FAISALABAD (APP): Federal Minister and Advisor to Prime Minister (PM) on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sana Ullah Khan said that the government, under visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has put the country on the road to progress and prosperity after saving it from default and it would emerge as a strong economy after a couple of years if the pace of national development continued.

Addressing a Minority Cards distribution ceremony at Iqbal Auditorium University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) here on Sunday, he said that in 1999 Pakistan was making progress on a fast track under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif but the incident of October 12 occurred and the country plunged into unprecedented terrorism and loadshedding.

He said that in 2012,

people again mandated Mian Nawaz Sharif and he overcame issues and put the country on the track to development again. "The dollar rate was about Rs.106, petrol Rs.65 and growth rate was 6.2% but in 2017 a deep-rooted conspiracy was hatched and a project was launched by ousting the PML-N government. The new experiment resulted in an unprecedented price hike and inflation in addition to pushing the country to the brink of bankruptcy," he added.

He said that the country was facing multifaceted crises and people were leading a very miserable life when the PMLN moved a "No Confidence Motion" and saved the country from default. He said that the government was also actively working to reduce inflation which has already dropped from 40% to 4% while more steps are being

taken to further reduce it.

The government has put the country on right track and it would surely emerge as a strong economy of the world after a couple of years if the progress pace continued and no incident like October 12 occurred again, he added.

He said that the constitution of Pakistan safeguards rights of all citizens regardless of caste, creed, religion or background and the government is committing to addressing their genuine issues by providing them basic amenities at their doorsteps. He appreciated the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and said that she had initiated a number of programs for the welfare and betterment of the masses. "CM's Minority Cards are also a significant step to support the minorities and it would help mitigate their sufferings in the wave of inflation", he added.



FAISALABAD: Leader of PMLN Rana Sanaullah, and Minister for Minority Affairs, of the Punjab Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora giving minority card to a man during minority card distributing ceremony, in the city.

AJK PM criticizes irrational thinking mindsets for ulterior motives

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that governance is a serious business that cannot be run merely on someone's wishes but in accordance with the law and constitution. The PM said this while addressing a function after administering oath to newly elected Vice Chairman of the Press Foundation, Sardar Zulfiqar Ali here today.

Speaking on the occasion, the PM, while terming self-accountability as key to develop a sense of self integrity and responsibility, said, "We all have

to undergo self-accountability"

Referring to a specific mindset that fails to think rationally, the PM said, "How can I treat those intellectually blind and immature minds who are unable to see the difference between the civil liberties of Azad Kashmir and Occupied Kashmir?"

Highlighting the Pakistan army's significant contribution in defending the territorial sovereignty of the State, he said that those who criticize the presence of the Pak army in the liberated territory must realize the fact that there would be no one to protect or defend them from enemy if armed forces of Pakistan leave the territory.

Stressing on the need to practice fair and objective journalism, the PM said, "There is a difference between a professional and an accidental journalist".

He said that professional journalists should come forward and give their valuable input and suggestions to the government in order to promote truth and counter falsehood and lies.

Terming journalism as a sacred profession, the PM said that the government would provide all possible resources for the welfare of journalists.

Terrorists target Motorway Police near Sangjani Interchange; van burnt

SANGJANI (INP): Some unidentified terrorists

confirmed that an investigation is underway.

Two days ago, on Feb 28, security forces killed six terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in North Waziristan District on the reported presence of Khwarij. According to the ISPR press release, on February 28, 2025, security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in the general area of Ghulam Khan Kalay, North Waziristan District, in the reported presence of Khwarij. During the conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the Khwarij location.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

The vanquished

It should be becoming more and more obvious to anyone following the judiciary’s new direction that the critics of the 26th Amendment were justified in fearing that it would be abused by the government.

Ever since its enactment, it has become progressively more difficult to rationalise the reconstituted Judicial Commission’s decisions as politically neutral or objective. Take the recent expansion of the Supreme Court’s Constitutional Bench, for example. Why did the bench need to be expanded with five judges, with five judges only, and why did all five have to be only those who have only recently been elevated to the Supreme Court?

There are no legal or moral justifications, only political ones, for why several senior, experienced judges were once again ignored during consideration. Even to the layperson, it is clear that now that the judiciary has fallen to executive control, the vae victis principle has been put into play.

Objectivity would demand that each judge appointed to the Constitutional Bench pass a rigorous test of merit and judgement in constitutional matters. What we have seen, instead, is an arbitrary system of appointment dominated by ‘like-minded’ individuals who feel no need to give the public any reasoning or justification for why they have made their decisions. This lack of transparency hurts judicial integrity.

Several judges and stakeholders had previously demanded that the Constitutional Bench include all Supreme Court justices, at least for the purposes of adjudicating on the question of the legality of the 26th Amendment. This demand has been repeatedly ignored, and the recent expansion of the bench with selected judges suggests it may never be entertained. It is unfortunate that this path has been chosen, as it means that some important questions that concern the legitimacy of the Constitutional Bench itself may never be settled.

Those who have managed to impose their will on the judiciary should realise that they have won a pyrrhic victory. In dismantling a pillar of the state, they have gravely hurt the legitimacy of the current regime in the public’s eyes. The Constitutional Bench is supposed to hear cases with far-reaching implications. Any impression that its judges have been cherry-picked erodes faith in its ability to adjudicate justly and sows the seeds for social divisions.

It is not proper or fair that certain justices are being repeatedly prevented from hearing any matter of national import just because they have vocally defended their independence.

A system of justice that is publicly perceived to be skewed cannot deliver judgements that the public will accept unquestioningly as objective and just. Without the public’s trust, the apex court loses its raison d’être.

Muna Khan

This past Monday morning proved a difficult class to teach and it was not just because it was hot on the heels of the mess that was the India-Pakistan cricket match. I didn’t take into consideration just how difficult the class on obituary writing would prove to be. Let me explain: as part of that lecture, I ask students to write their own obituary so they can understand that this genre of writing is about life, in this case theirs, their accomplishments, how they want to be remembered, and for what. It also allows them to reflect, and reconnect, with what really matters.

However, this past Monday, there was a heaviness in the room, which I soon learned was because several of my students knew Mustafa Amir, the 23-year-old man kidnapped and brutally murdered last month. His case is ongoing so I do not want to weigh in on the investigation, other than lament how the media is treating it as a soap opera.

Of course, I couldn’t have known their connection to Amir or the young men and women allegedly involved in his murder but I should have known this story would be all over the social media platforms they consume. In this case, it includes Instagram and TikTok, and is a major point of discussion on WhatsApp groups they’re a part of. They told me things that aren’t reported or reflected in the mainstream media, which causes a real disconnect between not just the mediums but between generations.

A generational divide is not new but it may be widening as demographics shift, especially with technological innovations. For example, my childhood was spent outside and screen time

was limited — there were few English TV shows in the countries I lived in, and while we watched Bollywood movies on VHS, we weren’t allowed to just plonk ourselves in front of a TV forever. We read, had hobbies, played, and spent time with friends and extended expat families.

Things are different now — and how. Each generation witnesses a wave of new inventions that widen the gap between the young and old, but innovation has come at a dizzying speed in the last few years and brought with it a host of anxiety-related issues. Social media has especially killed imagination by offering audiences a highly curated perspective.

In the last seven years of teaching, the number of students discussing their anxiety openly has grown. I’m glad the cloak of shame around this has been lifted but I worry they don’t have the tools needed to deal with anxiety. They aren’t used to being alone with their thoughts; there is so much distraction in the form of apps, etc, that they do not know how to deal with problems on their own. Smartphones have transformed childhood — let alone adolescence — and caused the “great rewiring” of an entire generation’s social and intellectual development, writes Jonathan Haidt in his book The Anxious Generation.

I’ve read a lot of studies about the connect between social media and depression in teens but Haidt’s book gave me a new perspective on “digital underparenting” and “real world over-parenting”. Children have unsupervised access to digital devices, while also being protected from harm in the real world. It is a strange mix which has

resulted in a generation with addiction-like behaviour, and who are unable to handle challenges which are a part of everyday life.

I understand the world is very different to when I was growing up and I can sympathise with parents needing to protect their children — but at what cost? You and I have likely faced similar experiences of being lost and surviving because of essential life skills that come with, well, life.

My fear for each cohort grows every year. They are spending more time, Haidt writes, on screen-based leisure activities, compared to my generation where we were outdoors, getting hurt or lost, etc. This generation has access to (onscreen) attention 24/7 but the cost is feelings of isolation, a rise in eating disorders and self-harm, as well as depression and anxiety — higher in girls. It has ruined their ability to concentrate and pay attention. We will feel the consequences of this when there will be a slowing down of innovations. How can you create something if you can’t sit still long enough to think?

We are paying too high a price for children who go through “puberty with a portal in their pocket” as Haidt writes. He has answers which are possible to enact, maybe enforce, like making it harder for children to get social media accounts. Or not giving children smartphones until they are 16, disallowing phone use at schools, and most importantly returning to a childhood that involves more personal interactions, less device use. This isn’t just a parent’s responsibility; it requires input from schools, Big Tech and governments.

Below the radar

Riddled with biases

Ahsan Jehangir Khan

Whilst there are many problems with the 26th Amendment, perhaps the most glaring one is the composition of the restructured Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP). By granting the executive a greater number of votes, the amendment flung the door wide open for court-packing. Judicial appointments can now be gifted to favourite lawyers or those cosy with the sitting government (or the actual wielders of power). In doing so, the amendment appears to strategically align the judiciary’s direction with the executive’s preferences. This begs the question: why is the lawyer to justice route even an option?

Even before the amendment, the JCP was flawed. It appeared to champion a system where lawyers, save a few, with the ‘right’ connections — leaders of the bar or any of the chiefs’ favourite lawyers — would appear on the elevation agenda. While it would be ‘contemptuous’ to discuss familial connections or allegations of favouritism in judicial appointments, it is undeniable that questions about transparency and merit persist. This perception has led to a cycle where lawyers of average competence are elevated to the bench, contributing minimally to the evolution of jurisprudence. One case relates to a recently elevated senior lawyer, who last year stood before the Supreme Court and tried to cite an act, unaware that it had been struck down in 2012. Often, such judges are seen to align themselves with a few intellectually robust colleagues, inadvertently creating a culture of conformity rather than independent judicial thought. It’s judicial groupthink at its finest.

If the goal is to recruit judges with an actual command over the law and to eliminate bias, the district and sessions judge route is a better choice. Unlike the arbitrary elevation of lawyers (and/or advocate generals), district and sessions judges come with judicial records: tangible proof of their competence (or lack thereof). These judges are recruited through advertised vacancies, followed by an exam, and an interview. In stark contrast, the current elevation process for lawyers places significant weight on their professional profiles, which does not always correlate with judicial competence.

A senior judge of the Islamabad High Court had, some years ago, described a high court judgeship as ‘on-the-job training’, an observation that reflects the reality of many judges assuming office with limited prior judicial experience. There are exceptions, like the recently elevated Azam Khan, Tasneem Sultana, and Khalid Shahwani, all of whom rose from the district and sessions courts, but these are few.

Presently, once elevated, the initial appointment is as an additional judge, after which confirmation as a justice often follows. In practice, navigating this process is seen as being influenced by relationships within the judiciary, with strategic alliances playing a role in career longevity. Once confirmed, justices often enjoy significant autonomy, which can insulate them from constructive criticism or calls for accountability (conversely, political missteps or personal shoddy references in the Supreme Judicial Council). Although the new JCP rules are a step towards reform, the entrenched culture of judicial camaraderie remains a formidable barrier. Un-

less the new rules actually lead to someone being removed for being a mediocre judge, they can’t really be relied upon.

Compare this to district and sessions judges who can get trainings and even upskill. This ensures continuous development which can be effectively used to prepare them for the complexities of higher judicial roles. Elevating judges from this pool would compel aspiring high court judges to commit to a full-time judicial career, ensuring a bench populated by better-educated, more dedicated, and genuinely talented individuals.

If the judiciary, and bar councils and associations are serious about reducing executive interference and fixing the judicial appointment process, they should abandon the lawyer to justice route altogether. The district and session judge to additional judge path should be the norm, not the exception. Elevating judges from the district and sessions courts nearly guarantees a pool of candidates with proven judicial records, assessed on the basis of merit rather than connections. Such a shift would also raise the bar for district and sessions judge recruitment: harder exams, stricter standards, and a focus on quality over quantity.

The current system is riddled with favouritism, biases, and a glaring lack of accountability. Tweaking the composition of the JCP won’t solve this. The only real solution lies in adopting a transparent, structured, and meritocratic approach — one that prioritises competence and independence over political convenience. Anything less is just lipstick on a deeply flawed system.

Commerce News

ICIEC and ITFC sign a credit insurance policy to enhance trade facilitation for member countries

JEDDAH (Online): In a significant development for synergy and cooperation, the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment & Export Credit (ICIEC) and the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) both members of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group signed a Documentary Credit Insurance Policy (DCIP). This strategic cooperation marks a robust step forward in managing and mitigating risks associated with Letters of Credit (LC) transactions involving Shariah compliant goods

and services across OIC member countries and beyond, helping strengthen the economic resilience of these member countries.

The policy will provide critical coverage for ITFC transactions, enhancing trade confidence and facilitating smoother financial operations in global trade involving Shariah compliant products and services, thereby benefiting the broader economic landscape of the member countries. It is designed to provide ITFC with a comprehensive risk management tool to safeguard its

LCs Confirmation transactions. The initiative seeks to address inherent risks associated with international trade and these robust risk mitigation measures are poised to support increased trade volumes among member countries, thereby contributing to the enhancement of intra-OIC trade as well as international trade. Increased trade strengthens the bonds between these countries, ensuring that risks are managed adeptly and contributing to sustainable development and overall regional prosperity.

Ramazan model bazaars, sugar sales points set up in Sargodha

SARGODHA (APP): The district administration of Sargodha, under the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has established two Ramazan Sahulat model bazaars, five Ramazan Sahulat bazaars and 23 sugar sale points across the district to provide relief to consumers.

According to a spokesman for the district administration on Sunday, the initiatives aim to ensure the availability of essential food items at subsidized rates, directly benefiting the public. He said the Ramazan sahalat model bazaars were set up at University Road Sargodha, and Circular Road Bhera, where traders are offering poultry, eggs, sugar, flour, and 16 other essential items at reduced prices.

Similarly, five sahalat relief bazaars were established at key locations, including Tanki Ground block no. 5 in Bhalwal, opposite MC Offices in Sahiwal and Sillanwali tehsils, near Ghaara Bus Stand in Kot Momin tehsil, and close to the post office in Shahpur tehsil.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Leghari calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Pak businesses urged to explore trade, investment opportunities in Oman

LAHORE (Online): Pakistan Ambassador to Oman, Naveed Safdar Bokhari On Sunday disclosed that numerous opportunities await Pakistani businessmen for collaboration, joint ventures, investment, and boosting exports to Oman. Speaking here on On Sunday to Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq, he emphasized the importance of leveraging Oman’s ports and logistics infrastructure to increase Pakistan’s exports to regional and international markets.

Oman’s strategic location and business-friendly environment make it an ideal partner for Pakistani entrepreneurs looking to expand their reach in the Gulf region and beyond. He urged Pakistani businessmen to explore sectors of agriculture, information technology, construction, and energy, where both countries can benefit from mutual expertise and resources. He also stressed the importance of leveraging Oman’s ports and logistics infrastructure to increase Pakistan’s exports to regional and international markets.

PCMEA seeks tax relief to boost handmade carpet exports

ISLAMABAD / LAHORE (Online): The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) has raised concerns over the challenges faced by the handmade carpet industry in a high-level meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan. The delegation highlighted critical issues, including the imposition of a 10% regular duty on

partially processed raw materials imported via the Torkham border, the reduction of sales tax from 25% to a non-refundable 5%, and prolonged delays in shipment clearance.

The delegation, led by PCMEA Patron-in-Chief Abdul Latif Malik, Vice Chairman Riaz Ahmed, and senior leader Usman Ashraf, highlighted the adverse impact of these policies on the sector.

Farmers imparted awareness on use of saline groundwater

MULTAN (APP): The Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences at Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture, Multan, organized a Farmer Field Day on the effective use of saline groundwater for vegetable cultivation. The event was part of the Punjab Agricultural Research Board-funded project (PARB 20-70), focusing on food self-sufficiency, climate adaptation, and technological advancements in salt-affected agriculture.

Alert for wheat growers

MULTAN (APP): The Pest Warning Wing of the Agriculture Department has issued an alert regarding wheat diseases.

It said some spots of brown and yellow rust have been observed on the wheat crop in Punjab. The current weather conditions are favorable for the spread of diseases.

As per the Agriculture department Punjab’s recommendations, farmers should inspect their crops daily. If signs of disease appear in patches, they should consult local agricultural experts and spray only recommended pesticides on affected areas.

BMP for measures to curb capital flight, retain financial resources in country

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry’s Businessmen Panel (BMP) has emphasized the need for curbing capital flight and brain drain, calling for measures to retain Pakistan’s financial and human resources within the country.

BMP Chairman and FPCCI former president Mian Anjum Nisar underscored the need for urgent reforms to restore investor confidence, address economic hurdles, and prevent further capital outflows. Expressing concern over the growing number of Pakistani

businesses relocating abroad, he pointed out that thousands of individuals have transferred their businesses overseas to secure citizenship through investment programs.

He expressed optimism that Pakistan could become a trillion-dollar economy within the next six to seven years if the right economic policies were implemented. He also highlighted the progress in the agriculture sector, noting that rice exports had reached \$3.8 billion and total agricultural exports had climbed to \$9 billion, shifting Pakistan from an import-driven to an export-driven economy.



MULTAN: A vendor is arranging and displaying clothes to attract customers at his roadside setup.

Pakistani entrepreneurs urged to tap opportunities under Saudi Vision 2030

LAHORE (Online): Coordinator to the Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman, Saif Ur Rehman, On Sunday called upon Pakistani entrepreneurs for timely seizing the vast opportunities offered under “Saudi Vision 2030.”

According to a message received here on Sunday from Riyadh he highlighted the transformative potential of Saudi Arabia’s ambitious economic diversification plan, which aims to reduce the kingdom’s dependence on oil and foster growth in various sectors, including tourism, technology, food

including snacks of international standards and infrastructure. He urged Pakistani businessmen to actively explore partnerships and investments in Saudi Arabia, leveraging the strategic ties between the two countries. He noted that “Saudi Vision 2030” offers a unique platform for Pakistani entrepreneurs to expand their businesses, access new markets, and contribute to the economic development of either countries. He stressed the need for proactive engagement, encouraging entrepreneurs to participate in trade exhibitions.

CM orders strict crackdown against inflation, hoarding

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has issued strict directives for an effective and comprehensive crackdown to control inflation across the province.

Chairing a video link meeting with commissioners and deputy commissioners on Sunday, the CM instructed authorities concerned to launch a robust campaign against price gouging. She ordered that official price lists be prominently displayed at all shops and markets.

To ensure the smooth supply of essential food items, she directed strict monitoring of demand and supply chains and called for immediate action against hoarders. She further instructed Punjab Chief Secretary to personally oversee the anti-price gouging and anti-hoarding campaign and to

submit a detailed daily report on pricing.

CM Maryam Nawaz emphasized that the prices and quality of essential commodities must be strictly maintained. She also directed deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners to keep a close watch on the prices of flour and roti. In addition, she instructed the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) to launch a crackdown to ensure the quality of edible items.

During Ramadan, the availability and pricing of fruits and vegetables will be closely monitored. She warned that strict legal action would be taken against those attempting to inflate prices. "Ramadan is a month of blessings and mercy; traders must be considerate towards the underprivileged," she said, urging the business community to voluntarily lower prices during the

holy month. "Across the world, prices are reduced in Ramadan, and we should also follow this practice voluntarily," she added.

The CM further directed that essential commodities be provided at lower rates in all Sahulat Bazaars across Punjab. She assured that she is personally monitoring price fluctuations multiple times a day via a dedicated dashboard.

The chief minister warned that any negligence in the anti-profiteering campaign would not be tolerated. She reiterated that strict, indiscriminate action would be taken against profiteering and hoarding throughout Ramzan.

This year, on the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab government is providing cash assistance of Rs 10,000 to 3 million.



LAHORE: Muhammad Irfan Dahi, former Member of the National Assembly along with Muhammad Khan Dahi, Member of the National Assembly call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Youth delegation of ISYD, ITA discuss empowerment, social change with Governor Kundi

LAHORE (APP): A youth delegation from the Institute for Social and Youth Development (ISYD) and Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) held a meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, hosted by (PPP).

The discussion centered on youth empowerment, social change, and strengthening collaborations to expand youth-led initiatives in KP. The delegation was

led by Joshua Dilawar, a social activist and highlighted their work in addressing critical social challenges, including gender-based violence (GBV), social cohesion, peacebuilding, women's empowerment, digital literacy, and climate action.

They shared insights on how young people are leveraging technology, startups, fashion, arts, and culture to drive meaningful change.

The discussion focused on the role of

artistic mediums such as theatre, storytelling, and digital art in challenging societal taboos and fostering positive behavioral change.

ISYD presented its innovative methodology for using creative expression to educate and inspire communities, while ITA showcased its impactful work under the Aawaz-II, PLP, and Young Omang programs, aimed at strengthening youth and community engagement.

Arora distributes minority cards

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora said that the government is committed to protecting rights of the minorities in addition to redressing their genuine problems and providing them all basic amenities at their doorsteps. He was addressing a minority card distribution ceremony at Iqbal Auditorium of University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) here on Sunday. He said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has introduced several programs for the minority communities. However, minority cards are a historic step of the government for the welfare of minorities.

He said that in the first phase minority cards would be distributed

among 50,000 individuals selected from about more than 90000 applications purely on merit. However, from next year, the number of the beneficiaries would be increased up to 75,000, he added. He said that Rs.4 billion was also allocated for development work in minority residential areas and their places of worship. Special minority scholarships will be introduced to support the students in their education. Plans are also underway to initiate IT education programs and skill-based training for underprivileged minority youth so as to help them to unlock their potential. A special e-learning program would also be launched soon to enhance educational opportunities for minority children.



HYDERABAD: Commuters pass through nearby an open sewerage main hole that may cause any accident specially in night hours, showing the negligence of concerned departments, at Bacha Khan Chowk road in Hyderabad.

KP police vow full support for injured personnel

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have reaffirmed their commitment to supporting personnel injured in the line of duty. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Zulfiqar Hameed declared that the force stands firmly behind its brave officers, ensuring they receive the best medical care and support.

This assurance came during a visit by PSO to IGP Imran Khan (PSP) to Hayatabad Medical

Complex, where he met with police officers wounded in recent terrorist attacks in Lakki Marwat and Khyber District. On behalf of the IGP, he praised the injured personnel for their courage and presented them with flower bouquets and relief checks. IGP Zulfiqar Hameed also spoke to the injured officers over the phone, boosting their morale and vowing to utilize all available resources.

Political leaders, analysts express concern over ongoing wave of violence in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Political leaders and analysts on Sunday voiced deep concerns over the deteriorating security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, urging all stakeholders to adopt a comprehensive strategy to curb the violence.

They warned that not only the general public but also political figures are now at risk. Talking to media here, ANP leader Mian Iftikhar Hussain termed the Akora khattak attack a continuation of ongoing terrorism. He stressed that terrorists have no religion or sect, labeling them as enemies of humanity. He called for decisive action against all terrorists, without distinguishing between "good" or "bad" elements.

Hussain expressed concern that the wave of terrorism, which ANP has long faced, is now targeting other leaders and political parties, necessitating

urgent attention.

Former Jamaat-e-Islami chief Siraj-ul-Haq questioned the motives behind targeting Maulana Hamid-ul-Haq and Darul Uloom Haqqania.

He lamented that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not only facing severe attacks but is also caught in political instability, trapped between federal and provincial governments. He emphasized that the people of the province are suffering due to this uncertain situation. KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi also criticized the provincial government for its inaction, stating that its negligence has worsened the security situation.

Senior journalist Mushtaq Yousafzai, noted that despite numerous operations and security measures, violence continues unabated, causing growing frustration and fear among the public.

Dacoits flee away from Motorways

WAH CANTT (APP):

The unidentified attackers restored indiscriminate firing at the patrolling car of the National Highway and Motorway Police on the Islamabad-Peshawar motorway (M-1) near the Hakla interchange, turning it to ashes. The officials of the Motorway Police narrowly escaped, received minor injuries, and were shifted to Wah General Hospital. The official sources said that the official of the National Highway and Motorway Police, identified as Sub Inspector Ijaz and Constable Ibrahim, were on routine patrol near Taxila to check the suspicious activity as some highway robbers looted three persons in the same area a few hours ago.

The unknown attackers restored indiscriminate firing at the police car; as a result, it caught fire and burnt into ashes. They said that the attackers fled the scene while taking advantage of darkness.

International News

UK, France working with Ukraine on plan to end fighting: Starmer

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain and France are working with Ukraine on plans to end the fighting with Russia, Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Sunday, as European leaders gathered for crisis talks after a blowout between Kyiv and Washington.

Speaking ahead of a summit in London with more than a dozen European leaders seeking a way forward on the three-year-old conflict, Starmer urged world leaders to "work together", saying "nobody wants to see" scenes like Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and US counterpart Donald Trump's clash in the Oval Office on Friday.

"We have to find a way

that we can all work together. Because, in the end, we've had three years of bloody conflict. Now we need to get to that lasting peace." Starmer told the BBC.

"The United Kingdom, along with France and possibly one or two others, will work with Ukraine on a plan to stop the fighting, and then we'll discuss that plan with the United States."

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni echoed the sentiment, saying as she met Starmer in his Downing Street home, "It is very, very important that we avoid the risk that the West divides." Ukraine's allies have been underscoring their steadfast commitment to counter growing concerns

that Trump is about to sell Kyiv short in negotiations with Russia.

Starmer warmly welcomed Zelensky to the British capital on Saturday, the day after the Ukrainian leader was kicked out of the White House, extending a loan to strengthen Ukraine's depleted defences.

The London meeting brings together leaders from around continental Europe, including France, Germany, Denmark and Italy, as well as Turkey, Nato and the European Union.

With fears growing over whether the United States will continue to support Nato, the meeting will also address the need for Europe to increase defence cooperation.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky and Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer pose for a photo during their talks in London.

Nato urges Zelensky to mend his relationship with Trump

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS/WASHINGTON: Nato chief Mark Rutte said on Saturday he told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky that he needs to find a way to restore his relationship with US President Donald Trump after their clash at a White House meeting on Friday.

The confrontation flared over differing visions of how to end Russia's three-year-old invasion, with Zelensky seeking strong security

guarantees from a Trump administration that has embraced diplomacy with Vladimir Putin's Russia.

The meeting, which Rutte described as "unfortunate", plunged ties between Kyiv and its top military leader back to a new low. "I said: I think you have to find a way, dear Volodymyr, to restore your relationship with Donald Trump and the American administration. That is important going forward," Rutte told the BBC.

US aircraft carrier arrives in South Korea, days after North Korea test-fired missiles

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: A US aircraft carrier arrived in South Korea on Sunday in a show of force, days after North Korea test-launched cruise missiles to demonstrate its counterattack capabilities. The arrival of the USS Carl Vinson and its strike group at the South Korean port of Busan was meant to display a solid U.S.-South Korean military alliance in the face of persistent North Korean threats, and boost interoperability of the allies' combined assets, the

South Korean navy said in a statement. It said it was the first US aircraft carrier to travel to South Korea since June.

The deployment of the carrier is expected to infuriate North Korea, which views temporary deployments of such powerful US military assets as major security threats.

North Korea has responded to some of the past deployments of US aircraft carriers, long-range bombers and nuclear-powered submarines with missile tests.

China warns of retaliation if US raises tariffs

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Beijing said on Friday it opposed President Donald Trump's latest threat to slap an extra 10 per cent duty on Chinese imports, accusing the US of "shifting the blame" for the flow of fentanyl and promising retaliation to protect its interests.

China's commerce ministry said the country has some of the world's strictest anti-drug policies and highlighted the risks new tariffs would bring to global supply chains.

Trump said on Thursday his proposed 25 per cent tariffs on Mexican and Canadian goods would take effect on Tuesday (March 4), along with the extra 10 per cent duty on Chinese imports.

The fresh China tariffs, in addition to the 10 per cent tariff levied on Feb 4, coincide with the start of China's annual parliamentary meetings on Wednesday, a set-piece political

event where Beijing is expected to unveil its main economic priorities for the year. The announcement also leaves Beijing less than a week to publish counter-measures, as the Trump administration shows signs of a hardening in its stance towards its strategic rival despite backing down on the threat of tariffs of up to 60 per cent when Trump took office.

"China has repeatedly stated that unilateral tariffs violate World Trade Organisation rules and undermine the multilateral trading system," a commerce ministry spokesperson said in a statement.

"China has one of the strictest and most thoroughly enforced anti-drug policies in the world," it said. "(The US) once again is threatening additional tariffs. Such behaviour is purely shifting blame and shirking responsibility, which is not conducive to solving its own problems."

At least 25 trapped after avalanche in Indian mountain state

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: At least 25 people remain trapped under snow after an avalanche struck the Indian Himalayan mountain state of Uttarakhand, authorities said on Friday, following recent heavy snowfall in the region. The avalanche occurred near a highway in the state's Chamoli region, adjoining Tibet, and less than 5 km (3 miles) from the Hindu temple of Badrinath, which is visited by hundreds of thousands of devotees every year.

It struck a labour site of the federal Border Roads Organisation (BRO), where eight containers and one shed, with 57 workers inside, were buried under the snow, according to an Indian army statement.

Five of the containers had been located, the statement said, and the search for the remaining three was ongoing. At

least 32 workers had been rescued, Chamoli's District Administrator Sandeep Tiwari told news agency ANI on Friday evening, and there was no indication of any casualties. Rain and snowfall, however, were limiting mobility and the use of helicopters, he said.

Members of the army were seen carrying a person on a stretcher through knee-deep snow, in images shared on X, as more snow continued to fall. India's weather department expects "heavy to very heavy" snowfall - defined as at least 12 centimetres (5 inches) of snow - over the state through Friday and to then subside "significantly". Two teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) deployed for the rescue operation were also facing delays in reaching the workers.

NIRC introduces modern digital system to minimize pendency, 80% pending cases resolved in 3 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Justice @ Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui, Chairman of the National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC), has launched full bench hearings via video link to accelerate and streamline case proceedings and in the initial phase, the system has been implemented in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, with plans to expand to Quetta, Multan, Sukkur, and Peshawar in the next phase.

Speaking to journalists in his chamber, the NIRC Chairman stated that, in the past, he and his staff had to travel to various cities for week-long hearings, causing inconvenience to petitioners and lawyers while also incurring high TA/DA expenses.

However, the introduction of video link hearings will ensure swift justice and facilitate petition-

ers more effectively.

He further highlighted that in the past three months, 80% of pending cases have been resolved, and there has been a significant increase in case registrations, reflecting growing trust in the commission.

Discussing NIRC's background, Justice @ Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui noted that the commission was established in 1972 through amendments to the Industrial Relations Ordinance of 1969. It was initially tasked with the registration of trade unions and federations at the industrial and national levels. Over time, its mandate expanded to address unfair labor practices and labor disputes. Following the 18th Constitutional Amendment, labor welfare matters were devolved to the provinces, and the Industrial Relations Act of 2012 was enacted to

regulate labor issues in the federal capital and inter-provincial organizations.

The legal experts, trade unions, and other stakeholders have welcomed this initiative, expressing hope that it will ensure faster and more transparent justice. They emphasized that the move will not only ease legal proceedings for petitioners but also enhance the efficiency of the commission.

The lawyers and labor organizations have hailed it as a landmark development, predicting that it will play a crucial role in strengthening industrial relations. The trade union leaders believe that leveraging modern technology will improve the resolution of labor disputes, ensuring that long-standing issues are addressed more swiftly and that workers receive timely justice.



ISLAMABAD: Director of the International Animals Welfare Organization, Four Paws, Dr Amir Khalil examining 7-year old bear rescued from captivity in Punjab's city Jauharabad at the Animals Rescue Centre (old Murghazar Zoo), in the Federal Capital.

Civilian deaths surged in Feb amid rising militant attacks, PICSS

ISLAMABAD (Online):

According to a report by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), militant violence in February 2025 saw a marginal increase in attacks but a sharp surge in civilian casualties, according to a report by the Islamabad-based think tank Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS). The country witnessed 79 militant attacks, resulting in the deaths of 55 civilians and 47 security personnel, while 81 security forces personnel and 45 civilians sustained injuries.

Security forces intensi-

fied their counter-militancy operations, eliminating 156 militants, injuring 20, and arresting 66. February 2025 marked the first month since August 2024 in which civilian fatalities surpassed those of security forces. Civilian deaths rose by 175 percent compared to January 2025, when 20 civilians were killed, while security forces' casualties declined by 18 percent, down from 57 in January. Militant fatalities also dropped by 25 percent, with 208 killed in January compared to 156 in February.

ary.

A significant increase in militant arrests was recorded in February, with 66 suspects detained—the highest monthly figure since December 2023, when 139 militants were apprehended. Notably, 50 of these arrests occurred in the erstwhile FATA region, while 16 were made in Punjab.

Balochistan remained the most volatile province, recording 32 militant attacks that claimed 56 lives, including 35 civilians, 10 security personnel, and 11 militants.

DC outlines challenges, updates of ICT's Ramazan bazaars

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Sunday outlined the challenges and updates as the city's Ramazan bazaars face overwhelming crowds and dwindling stocks.

Talking to media persons at the H-9 Ramazan Bazaar, he said that the five Ramazan bazaars are operational, but high demand and logistical hurdles have led to supply gaps and parking chaos.

On the occasion, the DC said the five Ramazan bazaars are currently active across Islamabad. However, the G-6 bazaars remains closed due to unresolved security concerns.

He noted that 80% of essential items have already been sold. The surge in visitors, described as "unprecedented," has strained supplies, particularly fresh fruits. Long queues and packed stalls highlight the high turnout, with residents rushing to buy subsidized goods. Memon acknowledged that fruit shortages are directly linked to the massive influx of shoppers.

He claimed that the strict quality checks are in place, though no specific metrics were shared. Vendors have also been instructed to avoid polythene bags, aligning with environmental policies.

curity concerns.

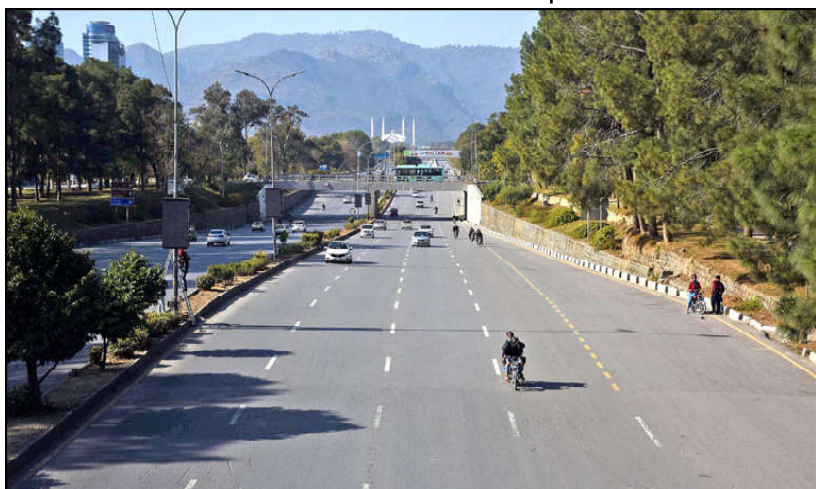
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I'abad Police, all stakeholders on same page over Ramadan security

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Islamabad Capital police held meetings on Sunday with delegations of religious scholars, organizers, and peace committee members across the district to discuss security arrangements for the holy month of Ramadan. A public relations officer told APP that the meetings aimed to enhance security measures and foster community cooperation in maintaining harmony, brotherhood, and peace throughout the sacred month. He said religious scholars and clerics assured their full support in ensuring a peaceful environment.



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted Faisal Avenue on Sunday during Holy month of Ramadan, in the Federal Capital.

Nationwide heavy rainfall alert issued, citizens advised precautions

ISLAMABAD (APP): As Pakistan enters the holy month of Ramadan, the National Weather Forecasting Center Sunday issued a warning for heavy rainfall and intense precipitation where citizens are advised to take precautionary measures to ensure their safety, including avoiding travel to flood-prone areas, staying indoors during heavy rainfall, and following evacuation orders from local authorities.

According to the forecast, a low-pressure system will bring vigorous rainfall and snowfall to the northern regions on Sunday (today) and tomorrow, private news channels reported. Punjab is expected to experience torrential downpours, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will witness rain and snowfall in both its plains and mountainous areas until March 4. Local authorities have also been placed on high alert.

Hilly areas, including Murree and Galiyat are also predicted to receive significant rainfall and snowfall. The Meteorological Office further announced that a potent weather system is anticipated to enter Balochistan today, generating thunderstorms, heavy rain and snowfall in mountainous regions.

Metro, E-bus services win public acclaim

ISLAMABAD (APP): As urban mobility in federal capital transforms into an affordable and comfortable journey, commuters have expressed satisfaction and appreciation for improved and time and money saving transport system.

Both the Metro Bus and E-Bus services have validly won public acclaim for respectfully facilitating women and elderly people as gone are the days when commuters were left on the mercy of rude wagon and mini-bus owners.

The modernized transport network has not only made commuting easier but has also contributed to reducing traffic congestion and environmental pollution. These bus services, covering key areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, have significantly reduced travelling time and provided a comfortable, affordable and reliable mode of transportation.

"I was once used to see my elders suffering from pangs of travelling by privately owned vehicles as it

was exhausting and sometimes intimidating to rely on those old vans," remarked Maryam Sultan, a high school teacher who commutes daily from Rawalpindi to Islamabad.

"But, now I feel much safer travelling to and from work especially during the evening hours," she shared her enthusiasm for the upgraded transport system. "As a working woman, the new bus services have been a pleasant experience for me and many others of my class."

Maryam Sultan was not alone to appreciate this new mode of travelling as thousands others daily commuters like her, had the same feelings.

"I used to spend hours in traffic jams daily and it was often painful to stall amidst blowing horns and smoke emitted by vehicles," said Ahmed Ali, a government employee. "It was costing me much, disturbing my monthly budget. But, now, I just hop on Metro Bus and reach my office in

30 minutes. It's affordable, comfortable and saves my time."

Recent addition of E-Bus service has further upgraded public transport system in Islamabad. These eco-friendly buses running on electric power have been integrated into existing Metro Bus network, providing seamless connectivity across the city. This service operates on 14 routes, covering major destinations.

"E-buses are amazing. They are quiet, clean and environmentally friendly. I feel good knowing that I'm contributing to reducing pollution by using this transport," said Ayesha Khan, a university student.

Affordability of these services has also been a reason for their popularity. With fares as low as Rs. 50 per ride, the Metro Bus and e-bus services are accessible to people from all walks of life.

"It's a blessing for people like me who cannot afford private vehicles," Ayesha Khan said. "I can

Irfan expresses confidence over opposition alliance to shun PTI's destructive politics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senator Irfan Siddiqui Sunday expressed confidence that the government will remain steadfast against the opposition alliance, believing key parties will uphold democratic principles and shun PTI's chaotic politics.

In an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, Irfan Siddiqui welcomed the opposition alliance as a democratic right, but expressed confidence that key parties will not endorse destructive politics.

Irfan Siddiqui stated that in a democratic setup, there should be no deadlocks, but PTI's actions led

to an impasse.

Siddiqui further praised Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman and Achakzai for consistently upholding democratic norms and culture, describing them as sensible politicians who have always prioritized the country's democratic values.

Responding to a query, he reaffirmed their alliance, acknowledging PPP's formidable political struggle and assuring that their concerns will be prioritized and addressed promptly. He emphasized that ongoing meetings are being conducted to discuss and resolve pressing issues, further solidifying their partnership.

Dr. Shezra extends Ramazan felicitations, stresses unity

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Newly appointed State Minister and MNA for PML-N, Dr. Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal Sunday extended warm greetings to the nation on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, emphasizing the crucial role of national unity in driving Pakistan's progress.

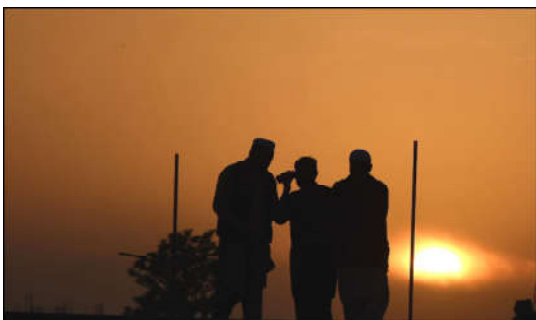
In an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, she emphasized the need for unity among all political parties in Pakistan, stressing that they should work together for the nation's progress rather

than perpetuating intolerance.

Kharal also stressed the importance of promoting tolerance and civilized language among Muslims, emphasizing that this is crucial for securing a brighter future for upcoming generations.

Mansab Ali praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team for their efforts in stabilizing Pakistan's economy and averting a default.

She further stated that the primary objective of political parties should be to serve the nation.



ISLAMABAD: People on their way during sunset on the first day of the Islamic holy fasting month of Ramadan, in the Federal Capital.

Two-day Aawaz Forum “Empowering Communities, Amplifying Voices” held

ISLAMABAD (APP): A

two-day learning and experience sharing forum titled “Empowering Communities, Amplifying Voices” organised by Aawaz II brought together members of community forums, civil society representatives and government stakeholders to showcase community-driven initiatives addressing critical social issues.

The forum demonstrated how sustained grassroots engagement has transformed local responses to gender-based violence (GBV), child marriage and social exclusion in programme districts across KP and Punjab.

British Council Country Director, James Hampson, emphasised the programme's remarkable impact, stating, “This is a remarkable programme with more than 35 million people reached across 37 districts, of which more than 1 million have benefited directly from Aawaz II.”

The Aawaz partners, volunteers and communities have proved that when we work together, we can bring change together.” Mr Ali Naqvi, UK Aid representa-

tive, echoed this view, highlighting how community-led initiatives are accelerating social behavioural change for enhancing inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Mr Wazeer Zada, Focal Person to Chief Minister KP on Minorities Affairs, outlined increased resource allocation towards minority scholarships and interfaith harmony programmes. Additional Inspector General Punjab Police, Muhammad Azhar Akram highlighted institutional reforms through Tahafuz and Meesaq Centres, demonstrating how community feedback shapes government responses to GBV. Panel discussions focused on behaviour change from grassroots to policy level, featuring key initiatives from both programme provinces. The forum spotlighted the transformative role of women and youth in community change.

Through participatory dialogue, panelists and audience members examined how women from diverse backgrounds are reshaping social narratives.



KARACHI: A large number of faithful offering dua before break their fast at New Memon Masjid on the first day of holy fasting month of Ramadan.

IIUI Organizes Seminar on Kashmir Solidarity

ISLAMABAD (Online):

The International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) organized a seminar on Kashmir Solidarity at its Faisal Masjid campus, where speakers urged the international community to play its role in the resolution of the Kashmir issue. The participants emphasized the significant contribution of academia in furthering the Kashmir cause through dedicated research and intellectual discourse.

The event was attended by prominent intellectuals, policymakers, and academicians, including former minister and seasoned analyst Mushahid Hussain Syed, Special Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Mr. Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Rector IIUI Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, President

IIUI Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed, Shamim Shawl, Zahid Saffi and Dr Nazir Hussain.

The seminar attracted a diverse audience, including students, faculty members, and researchers who engaged in discussions on the pressing need for global intervention in the Kashmir crisis. Addressing the seminar, renowned intellectual and former minister Mushahid Hussain Syed paid rich tribute to the brave freedom fighters of Kashmir. He particularly highlighted the role of Kashmiri women in the resistance movement, stating that their resilience and sacrifices have set an exemplary precedent.

Criticizing the global double standards and apathy towards the Kashmir issue, he asserted that India is sponsoring state terrorism not only in Kashmir but across multiple regions of the world.

AIOU's exams to begin today across the country

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is conducting its final exams of Matric, FA, and I.Com programs (Semester Autumn 2024) from today (Monday) 3rd March, simultaneously across all four provinces, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

The date sheet for these exams is available on the university's website (www.aiou.edu.pk), while roll number slips have been uploaded to students' CMS portals.

According to the released date sheet, exams will be held continuously from March 3 to March 28. There will be Eid-ul-Fitr holidays from March 29 to April 2. The first exam after Eid will take place on April 3, and the exams will continue until April 11.

Death anniversary of renowned Urdu poet Kazmi observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Death anniversary of renowned Urdu poet known as founder of modern Urdu ghazal Nasir Kazmi was observed on Sunday.

Born in Ambala in 1925, passed his matriculation examination from Muslim High School Ambala and got admission in Government College Lahore for bachelor degree but he had to leave education due to the unrest witnessed during the partition of the sub-continent. Nasir Kazmi worked in Welfare Department for some time and then in the Agriculture Department. While associated with Radio Pakistan, Nasir Kazmi wrote sketches of classical Urdu poets Mir Taqi Mir, Nazir, Wali, Insha and so on, which became very popular.



ISLAMABAD: People buy fritters for iftar on the first day of the Islamic holy fasting month of Ramadan, in the Federal Capital.