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dailyindish@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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Govt. committed to steer country out of economic crisis: PM Shehbaz

Govt fully committed to provide educational facilities, vocational training to women

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reiterated the government's resolve to steer the country out of the challenge of economic crisis by bringing structural reforms in the economic sector to provide maximum facilities to the people of the country.

He said that the government was fully committed to increase tax to GDP ratio, tap the huge potential of natural and agriculture resources, stop smuggling, power theft, and losses of the State Owned Entities.

Addressing a cheque distribution ceremony among the affected people by torrential rains and snowfall in the area, the

prime minister called for setting aside all the differences in the larger national interest to work as a nation to ensure that the country was developing at a faster pace.

Currently, he said the country's tax collection target for the current fiscal year was 1.2 trillion which was not up to the true potential due to tax evasion by certain sections. He said tax evasion was one of the biggest challenge that would be resolved to increase the country's resources. "If we have no resources, how we will build the infrastructure of health, education and other important sectors," he maintained.



MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif interacting with the families of the deceased and injured in the wake of recent torrential rains and heavy snowfall.

IT Initiative Programme held under Ultra-soft System.

Youngsters have to learn modern skills for leading successful life, insists Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stressed that the younger generation has to learn modern skills along with education for leading successful life. This is why, we are determined to make them skilled besides being degree holders.

The day is not far away when the youngsters from Balochistan would not go to abroad and other provinces as night watchmen, labourers or drivers for earning livelihood but they would be hired as the successful professional, IT expert, civil engineers, researchers or scientists.

These views were expressed by the Governor while addressing the partici-

pants of IT Initiative Programme held under the Ultra-soft System here in Quetta on Friday.

The UNHCR Quetta head, Taspay Baklay, Director General of National Institute of Management, Muhammad Aslam Ghani, Commissioner Afghan Refugees, Arbab Talib, head of Ultra-soft System, Asif Naem and others were also present. Besides them, the male and female students getting training of the courses of artificial intelligence and online business were also present.

It may be mentioned that the Governor Balochistan had started the IT Initiative Programme for generating means of livelihood for the unemployed youth of the province few months back.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar distributing laptops among the Batch-1 students of free IT and AI courses.

BA demands provincial Govt. to approach federal Govt. for declaring ZAB martyr officially

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly has adopted a joint resolution demanding of the provincial government to approach federal government for declaring Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto as martyr at official level.

The joint resolution presented by the Member Provincial Assembly belonging to Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani in the session with Deputy Speaker Ms. Ghazala Gola in the chair also demanded to declare Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) as national democratic hero.

The joint resolution was presented on behalf of the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri,

Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, Ali Madad Jatak and other members of the assembly.

According to the content of resolution, the due legal process and fair trial was not done in the case of death sentence of ZAB, as ruled by the Supreme Court in its' onion the other day.

As per the resolution, the death sentence of ZAB was judicial murder. It was also asserted that ZAB was physically hanged to death, but practically he is still alive among the masses.

The resolution demanded of the House to ask provincial government to approach federal government for declaring ZAB as martyr officially and declare him national hero.



AWARAN: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir giving a cheque to a relative of Shuhada during the visit at Awaran district

Zardari, Achakzai vying for presidential election today

Mehmood Achakzai asks ECP to delay presidential election as the electoral college for the presidential poll is incomplete



Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Asif Ali Zardari, the joint candidate of PPP and the PML-N, and Sunni Ittehad Council's candidate Mahmood Khan Achakzai are vying for the office of President.

The President is elected by an electoral college comprising members of the Senate, National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies.

Voting is held through a secret ballot. A joint session of the parliament will be held at the



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting regarding Quetta Development Package

4 terrorists killed in NW IBO

Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: On 8 March 2024, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in North Waziristan District, on reported presence of terrorists.

During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and the terrorists, as a result of which four terrorists were sent to hell.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

He also directed to start work on the service road of Sariab road immediately.

Similarly, the protected U-turns should also be built on the roads under Quetta Development Package.

He said that the maintenance expenditures can be met by making the important sites of newly built roads commercialized.

He stressed that the work on service road should be completed within six



QUETTA: MPs Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa, Zarak Khan Achakzai, Mir Ali Madad Jattak, Haji Barkat Ali Rind, Haji Noor Muhammad Dumar, Mir Zabid Ali Reki, Mir Yousif Aziz Zehri and Molvi Noorullah expressing their views on a joint resolution presented in Balochistan Assembly session chaired by Deputy Speaker Ghazala Gola

Visits Awaran district

Success of Balochistan is success of Pakistan: COAS

Promises army's support for people of Balochistan; Vows to bring peace and prosperity with people's support

Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir, NI (M) visited Awaran district of Balochistan. During the visit, COAS was briefed on the security situation and efforts being undertaken by Pakistan Army in the socio-economic development and agriculture potential of the province.

COAS interacted with the local elders, farmers and families of Shuhada and assured them of the Army's unstinting support for their security and welfare, while paying rich tribute to the sacrifices rendered by the Shuhada.

While interacting with the notables and farmers of

Awaran, COAS emphasized the importance of agriculture and Army's commitment to the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI). COAS said that farmers will be provided with all kinds of agricultural facilities, including the provision of easy agricultural loans, seeds, fertilisers, solar tube wells and guidance by agriculture experts, so that they can cultivate their lands and become partners in the progress and development of Pakistan.

Later on, COAS inaugurated Cadet College Awaran and interacted with faculty members and students. The Army Chief appreciated the establishment of yet another Cadet College in Balochistan for the

people of the area. He reiterated his commitment that Pakistan Army will continue development and relief activities in Balochistan in collaboration with the concerned civil departments.

COAS remarked "Success of Balochistan is success of Pakistan. People of Pakistan are proud of the brave people of Balochistan who have stood tall against all odds. Armed Forces of Pakistan and Law Enforcement Agencies will continue to render their services in support of the people of Balochistan for peace and prosperity."

Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Corps Commander Balochistan Corps.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi being presented with the farewell Guard of Honour, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Balochistan cabinet to be formed after Senate polls:

Asif Ali Zardari to be elected as President with thumping majority, believes CM

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has firmly believed that the central leader of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Asif Ali Zardari will be elected as President of Pakistan for the second time, with thumping majority.

Speaking to the media persons before the session of provincial assembly here on Friday, the Chief Minister said that the PPP would speak to all political parties for mustering their support for Presidential election.

He also mentioned that the talks have been done

with Maulana Fazlur Rehman and provincial leadership of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) for support in the presidential election.

He said that Asif Ali Zardari is the kind of reconciliation, and he is in favour of taking all along after his election as President.

Regarding formation of Balochistan cabinet, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the cabinet of province would be formed after elections of Senate.

He also said that the PPP and Muslim League-Nawaz would form the cabinet in consultation with other coalition partners.

President Alvi presented farewell guard of honour

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday was given a farewell guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Army.

The guard of honour ceremony was held at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Dr Arif Alvi will relinquish the charge of his office on March 9 (Saturday) after election of a new president.

Meanwhile, the election of the 14th president of Pakistan will be held tomorrow (March 9).

In apparent rebuff to PTI IMF says its scope is limited to economic issues

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says its scope is restricted to economic issues and it cannot interfere in any country's internal and political affairs.

IMF spokesperson Esther Perez confirmed that the fund received on Feb 20 a letter from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) which demanded linking the release of the next tranche with political stability in Pakistan and responded that it (IMF) was concerned about economic matters.

She said the Fund was an international organisation and its mandate was restricted to economic issues only.

"IMF does not comment on local and political issues and encourages fair and peaceful resolution of disputes," she reiterated.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), in the letter, asked the IMF to factor in the country's political stability in any further bailout talks. The PTI sent a letter to the IMF detailing its position.

Administrator MCQ transferred; Hamza Shafqat given addl: charge

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Quetta (MCQ), Abdul Jabbar has been transferred and directed to report in the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD) with immediate effect.

According to the official notification issued here by S&GAD on Friday, the Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafqat has been given the additional charge of Administrator MCQ in addition to his own duties.

PML-N to vote for Zardari in presidential election: Maryam



LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that 'unlike' outgoing president, Asif Ali Zardari would follow the constitution in 'letter and spirit' after taking office as President.

According to details, Maryam Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari co-chaired a joint parliamentary parties meeting of the PPP and PML-N in which a mechanism was devised for the presidential election in the Punjab Assembly.

Speaking on the occasion, the PPP chairman said that he came to meet the Punjab Assembly members to seek support for Asif Ali Zardari in the presidential election. He said that Pakistan is currently going through a crisis and all political parties have to play their role to take the country out of crises.

Supply of wheat to be ensured at official rate: CS assures to provide relief to masses in Ramadan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan has assured to provide maximum relief to the general public during holy month of Ramadanul Mubarak.

He also said that supply of wheat would be ensured at the official rate in sasta bazaars.

He asked the Deputy Commissioners to pinpoint the sasta bazaars well before the holy month in order to facilitate the masses. Moreover, the provi-

sion of edibles should be ensured at the utility stores.

The Chief Secretary was presiding over the meeting of Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners here on Friday. He congratulated all the Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners on holding the general elections successfully.

The Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners briefed in detail about provision of best facilities in schools and healthcare institutions.

CM restores Health Card facility in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, announced on Friday that free medical treatment for all residents of the province through Health Cards will be restored from the first day of Ramadan.

Addressing the media after a cabinet meeting, he emphasized that ensuring peace and security in the province remained the top priority for his government. During the holy month of Ramadan, he disclosed that a cash amount of Rs. 10,000 would be disbursed among approximately 850,000

deserving individuals, with data collected from the Ehsas Program. An additional amount of Rs. 10,000 will be provided to an additional 150,000 people from all provincial constituencies, he said.

To assist poor people, he mentioned the functional establishment of "Langar Khanay" and announced that the provincial government would organize "Sheri" and "Iftari" meals at hospitals to facilitate the attendants of patients.

Ali Amin Gandapur further stated that youth would be provided skills training for job creation,



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Balighur Rahman is taking oath of office from Chief Justice of Lahore High Court Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan while Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is also present in the Governor House.

Asif Zardari will be elected President with thumping majority: Afridi

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Information PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Amjad Khan Afridi has said that all democratic political parties would vote for Asif Ali Zardari to elect him for the second term with thumping majority.

In a statement issued here on Friday, the PPP KP chapter's spokesman took exception to the demand of Mahmood Khan Achakzai for the postponement of presidential poll, saying it is surprising that the winner of a single parliamentary seat is making such demand.

He said that no one would be allowed to hatch conspiracy against democracy and destabilize the country. He added that Achakzai is sleeping rabbit sleep and could become the President of Pakistan.

The PPP leader said that Asif Ali Zardari could be elected as President of Pakistan without allotting reserved seats to Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), while after sensing defeat Mahmood Khan Achakzai is bent upon adopting cheap tactics. He further accused Achakzai of making futile attempts.

SFA takes measures to ensure supply of adulteration-free food items during Ramadan: DG SFA

KARACHI (APP): Director General Sindh Food Authority (SFA) Agha Fakhar Hussain on Friday briefed a meeting that the Authority is making every possible effort to ensure supply of adulteration-free food items during Ramadan ul Mubarak.

The DG SFA attended the meeting held at Commissioner House here, said a statement.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Karachi, Police, Price Control Committee and senior officers of relevant departments.

Not a single day but every day is women day: Maryam Nawaz

LAHORE (Online): Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Maryam Nawaz has said not a one day is women day but every day is women day.

"Women are our heroes. A woman has to wage much struggle to get recognition. I myself worked hard to assert myself in party and everywhere. I am grateful to opponents to help me reach this slot. I faced harassment. I was kept in jails. She said this while addressing a function on the eve of women international day.

She announced to evolve zero tolerance policy against harassment of women. More conducive environment will be available to working women due to safety app. It is my desire every woman benefits from this app.

She underlined that getting underage girls employed and then subjecting them to violence is source of grave concern for us. There is need to get implement laws against forced labor sternly.

She urged that parents should take their children into confidence so that they could tell them whenever they are subjected to harassment outside. Girls should be made powerful.



LAHORE: MPAs elected on minority special seats taking oath during Punjab Assembly Session.

PDMA, UNFPA launch GBViE framework to curb gender violence

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) commemorated International Women's Day and inaugurated Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) framework.

Director General PDMA, Muhammad Qaisar Khan appreciated the collaboration of UNFPA and emphasized the importance of prioritizing gender equality in disaster response efforts.

He stated, "On the day, we recognize the urgent need to address the critical issues of gender-based violence, particularly in emergency situations." "The GBViE framework is a crucial step forward in our collective efforts to ensure the safety, dignity, and rights of all individuals, especially women and girls, in emergency settings. By integrating gender considerations into our disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, we can better protect and support the most vulnerable members of our communities", he said.

Secretary Relief Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Inayat Ullah Wasim said that International Women's Day serves as a reminder of the invaluable contributions of women make to the society.



HYDERABAD: Large number of women participating in a rally in connection of International Women's Day at Thandi Sarak.

IG Police pays tributes to all women of society

LAHORE (APP): Police, women are showing excellent skills and performance alongside men. He said that women serving in Punjab Police are our pride and valuable asset, lady police officers and official play an outstanding role in law and order, crime control and community policing.

The IG Punjab said that providing equal opportunities and favorable environment to women is indispensable for sustainable economic and social development. Punjab police is ensuring prompt registration of FIRs and arrest of culprits in case of crimes against women.

Dr. Usman Anwar said that Women Safety App, Helpline 15.

ZAB declared martyr, national hero in PA resolution

LAHORE (APP): Former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has been posthumously declared a martyr and national hero by a resolution passed with overwhelming support in the Punjab Assembly.

The resolution was presented on Friday in the Assembly by Ali Haider Gillani, the parliamentary leader of the Pakistan People's Party.

Four more kidnapped from Shikarpur

By Adeel Ahmed
SHIKARPUR: Four more persons were kidnapped from Shikarpur District in a day from the jurisdictions of Naparkot Police Station and New Faujdari Police Station here on Friday.

According to initial reports that some group of armed men kidnapped the five persons traveling on datson vehicle from village KB Allah Bux Soomro Rahimabad Link road near Khanpur who were returning back after attending the religious meeting there in the jurisdiction of Naparkot Police Station.

Justice Malik takes oath as new LHC CJ

LAHORE (APP): Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan on Friday took oath as the 52nd chief justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) in a ceremony held at the Governor's House here.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman administered the oath to Justice Khan.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz attended the ceremony. LHC senior puisne judge Justice Shujaat Ali Khan and other judges, Punjab

Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan, provincial ministers, federal and provincial law officers, corps commander of Lahore, inspector general of police Punjab, judicial officers and relatives of the chief justice were also present. Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Zaman read out the notification of the appointment of the chief justice.

After taking the oath, the chief justice arrived at the LHC where he was warmly welcomed.

Protest continue for recovery of hostages

Independent Report
MIRPUR MATHILO: Protested in front of SSP Ghotki's office in Mirpur Mathelo for the fifth day on behalf of political and social organizations, journalists, and hostages' relatives and citizens for the recovery of the hostages who were abducted by bandits from Ghotki district.

Demonstration, sit-in, sloganeering for the recovery of hostages, police administration completely failed to recover the hostages.

International News

North Korea's Kim guides artillery firing drill, KCNA says

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guided an artillery firing drill by the Korean People's Army, the country's military force, on Thursday, state media KCNA reported on Friday.

The drill involved units that are in firing range of "the enemy's capital," the state media said, referring to Seoul, the South Korean capital and added it "fulfilled important military missions for war deterrence." Thursday's artillery drill was aimed at increasing combat readiness posture and actual war capability, KCNA said.

Kim urged to push forward with preparations so the artillery sub-units could "take the initiative with merciless and rapid strikes at the moment of their entry into an actual war."

"He stressed the need to train all the artillerymen of the whole army into experts in artillery engagement ... and set forth important tasks for rounding off the artillery war preparations," the report said, referring to the leader of the reclusive state. The move comes as the South Korean and US militaries kicked off their spring drills known as the Freedom Shield exercises on Monday with twice the number of troops joining compared to last year.

Seoul's defence minister, Shin Won-sik, visited the Capital Defense Command on Thursday and ordered a firm response if North Korea made provocations aimed at the capital.

The move comes as the South Korean and US militaries kicked off their spring drills known as the Freedom Shield exercises on Monday with twice the

number of troops joining compared to last year.

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The Korean People's Army conducts an artillery firing drill, KCNA news agency reported, in North Korea in this picture released by the Korean Central News Agency.

Hamas team leaves Cairo after stalemate in Gaza truce talks

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Hamas said its delegation had left Cairo on Thursday amid ongoing negotiations on a ceasefire accord in Gaza that mediators hope to achieve before Ramadan early next week.

After four days of talks mediated by Qatar and Egypt to secure a 40-day ceasefire ahead of the fast month there is still no sign of progress on key sticking points, with both sides blaming the other.

"Hamas's delegation left Cairo this morning for consultation with the leadership of the movement, with negotiations and efforts continuing to stop the aggression, return the displaced and bring in relief aid to our people," a Hamas statement said.

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri said Israel had been "thwarting" efforts to conclude a ceasefire deal. He said that Israel was rejecting Hamas's demands to end its offensive in the enclave, withdraw its forces, and ensure freedom of entry for aid and the return of displaced people.

Health officials in Gaza said the number of people confirmed killed in Israel's offensive had now passed 30,800. It reported 83 deaths in the past 24 hours and witnesses said the Israeli bombardments continued in Khan Younis, the southern city of Rafah, and areas in central Gaza.

China says more Indian troops at Himalayan border won't ease tensions

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China believes that India's move to add more troops at their disputed border is "not conducive to easing tensions", a foreign ministry spokesman said on Friday.

India has freed up a contingent of 10,000 soldiers, previously deployed at its western border, to strengthen its disputed border with China, according to several media reports. The two countries have previously agreed to maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels, and recently held a constructive meeting on resolving border issues in the western sector.

UK PM Sunak's mother-in-law appointed to Indian parliament

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: The mother-in-law of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was on Friday appointed to serve in India's parliament, capping a career working for the philanthropic arm of her billionaire husband's tech firm.

Sudha Murthy, 73, is the former chair of the Infosys Foundation.

Biden orders US military to establish port in Gaza

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden will tell Congress on Thursday that he has ordered the US military to set up a port in Gaza to get more humanitarian aid into the beleaguered territory by sea, senior US officials said. The major announcement will not involve any US boots on the ground in the Palestinian enclave, as military personnel will stay offshore while other allies are involved, officials said.

"Tonight the president will announce in his State of the Union address that he has directed the US military to undertake an emergency mission to establish a port in Gaza," a senior administration official told reporters.

"This port, the main feature of which is a temporary pier, will provide the capacity for hundreds of additional truckloads of assistance each day," the official said on condition of anonymity. US officials said the "significant capability will take a number of weeks to plan and execute," and would involve a maritime corridor bringing aid by sea from the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

US officials were careful to stress that American troops would not be on the ground in Gaza, which has been under relentless Israeli bombardment since the Oct. 7 attack.

A second official said it was "foreseen to be an operation that won't require boots on the ground." "The US military has unique capabilities. And they can do things from just offshore that are extraordinary and so that is the concept of operations that the president has been briefed on," the official said.

287 children are missing in Nigeria's forests

Monitoring Desk
ABUJA: Security forces swept through large forests in Nigeria's northwest region on Friday in search of nearly 300 children who were abducted from their school a day earlier in the latest mass kidnap, which analysts and activists blamed on the failure of intelligence and slow security response.

The abduction of the 287 children in Kaduna state, near the West African nation's capital, is one of the largest school kidnaps in the decade since the issue was highlighted by the kidnapping of schoolgirls in Borno state's Chibok village. Analysts and activists say the security lapses that allowed that mass abduction remain. The victims of the latest attack — among them at least 100 children aged 12 or under — were surrounded and marched into a forest just as they were starting the school day, said locals in Kuriga town, located 55 miles (89 kilometers) from the city of Kaduna. One man was shot dead as he tried to save the students, school authorities said.

As Kaduna Gov. Uba Sani and security officials met with aggrieved villagers on Thursday, they pleaded with the governor to ensure the release of the students and secure their villages.

"Please stay and help us, please don't leave us," one woman cried as the governor's convoy sped off.

The school — located with no fencing close to nearby forests that often serve as enclaves for armed gangs — was "surrounded from all angles" by the motorcycle-riding gunmen who arrived at the school just after 8 a.m., said Joshua Madami, a youth leader in the area.

Security forces did not arrive at the scene until several hours later, locals said, prompting concerns from families and analysts that the gunmen might have gone deep into the forest with the children.



Ottawa Police Service officers surround a home after four children and two adults were found dead inside a neighbouring house in the Ottawa suburb of Barrhaven, Ontario, Canada.

US, Turkey kick off comprehensive talks to explore improving troubled ties

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US and Turkey are set to kick off comprehensive talks on Thursday to discuss if the NATO allies can move beyond deep rooted disagreements over issues such as Syria and Ankara's close ties with Russia.

Senior US and Turkish officials are set to meet at the State Department for several rounds of talks focusing on topics spanning Syria, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, defense cooperation, energy, counterterrorism and the Israel-Hamas war.

The conversations, dubbed the Strategic Mechanism, will set the stage for a meeting on Friday between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan.

Sweden joins Nato in shadow of Ukraine war

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Sweden on Thursday became the 32nd member of Nato in the shadow of the war in Ukraine, ending two centuries of official non-alignment and capping two years of torturous diplomacy.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson was visiting Washington, where Secretary of State Antony Blinken was to ceremonially receive the ratification documents after the hard-fought battle to secure the green lights needed from all Nato members.

"This is a historic day. Sweden will now take its rightful place at Nato's table, with an equal say in shaping Nato policies and decisions," Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in a statement.

"After over 200 years of non-alignment Sweden now enjoys the protection granted under Article 5, the ultimate guarantee of allies' freedom and security," he said.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy in Turkey where Erdogan is expected to press for negotiations to end Russia war

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was in Istanbul on Friday for talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan whose NATO-member country has sought to balance its close relations with both Kyiv and Moscow and repeatedly offered to act as a peace-broker between them.

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Pakistan stands shoulder to shoulder with Kashmiris: PM

MUZAFFARABAD (Online): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Kashmiris in their just struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination.

He expressed the resolve during his meeting with Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq during his visit to Muzaffarabad today.

The Prime Minister also assured Pakistan's unconditional support to the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir for the Kashmir cause.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on as-

suming the office of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and expressed his best wishes.

He also thanked Shehbaz Sharif for undertaking the visit of Azad Kashmir immediately after assuming the office of the Prime Minister.

He said the visit of Shehbaz Sharif to express solidarity with the Kashmiris, affected by torrential rains, reflects that hearts of Pakistani people always throb with their Kashmiri brethren.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the presence of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister distributed compensation cheques among people affected by rains and snowfall in Muzaffarabad.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributing Khatoon-e-Pakistan Awards among the high achievers women in their respective fields on the eve of International Women Day.

Issues are not resolved through violence & provocations: Endeavours being made to resolve demands of Chaman's dharna in peaceful manner: Speaker BA

Abdul Khaliq Achakzai says he is equally mindful of problems faced by participants of dharna and people of Chaman during last six months

CHAMAN: The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai has stated that the utmost endeavours are being made to resolve the demands of dharna continued in Chaman in the peaceful manner. However, he asserted that demands are not resolved by spreading violence or chaos.

The Speaker Balochistan Assembly was addressing the participants of dharna in Chaman on Friday. A large number of people were present at the dharna, which otherwise is continued for last six

months to pressurize the government for acceptance of demands.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai said that he supports demands of Chaman dharna and he has never been in support in enforcing passport system for across the border movement.

He said that he is more aware of the issues of unemployment and poverty being faced by local people of Chaman due to the government's policies. He is equally mindful of the problems faced by the participants of dharna and people of Chaman during last six months.

But, he is against making politics on the dharna or provocation of people, just because our issues would not be resolved through violence and provocation, rather they would increase further, adding he feared.

The Speaker Balochistan Assembly also said that he is native and representative of the area, and livelihood of thousands of four people is linked with the border. Even he is also affected due to the situation like all others present in the protest sit-in.



QUETTA: MPAs Mir Sadiq Sanjrani and Dr. Rubaba Khan Bulendi meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Safaraz Ahmed Bugti.

Daring women of Balochistan flying flags of success in all fields despite challenges: Bugti

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the women of Pakistan including Balochistan are second to none, and especially the daring women of the province are flying flags of success in all fields despite numerous challenges and resources constraints.

In a message issued on the eve of International Women Day observed on Friday, 8th March in the country as elsewhere in the world, the Chief Minister said that the formation of civilized societies and development and prosperity of the nations is not possible without active participation and cooperation of women.

The Chief Minister

said that our women believe in waging continuous struggle in the footsteps of the Mother of Nation, Muhtarma Fatima Jinnah.

Similarly, the martyr Muhtarma Benazir Bhutto had told the world with her political struggle and sacrifice that our women are not second to none in any field.

He said that the courageous women of Balochistan are making achievements and proving mettle in every field. These women have brightened the name of province and country through their struggle, he commended.

He also said that it is our top priority to remove the hardships facing the womenfolk in all sectors and provide them the necessary facilities.



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms. Ghazala Gola administering oath of the membership of Provincial Assembly to Sadiq Sanjrani, Mir Zafarullah Zehri, Muhammad Khan Lehri and Noor Muhammad Dummer.

CM summons GM SSGC, CEO QESCO on public complaints

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti took notice of the public complaints about sui gas and electricity in Quetta city.

The Chief Minister took notice of the public complaints during the session of Provincial Assembly held on Friday.

Different members had raised the issue of sui gas and electricity while delivering speeches at the session.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti summoned the General Manager Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) and Chief Executive Officer of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) over the issues related to their organizations today (Saturday).

PPP, all coalition parties pledge to maintain political traditions based on tolerance & respect in Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and all coalition parties have vowed to maintain political traditions based on tolerance and respect in the province.

They have also expressed the resolve to establish good governance, public welfare, eliminate terrorism and establish sustainable peace in the province under leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

The members of provincial assembly were at the dinner reception arranged by the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti here on Friday.

They also expressed the resolve to move ahead for public welfare and development in province under a unified approach.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that Balochistan is the province having traditions and it would be our endeavour to take all along for development of the province and its people.

He also vowed to get the masses rid of problems by establishing good governance.



LONDON: High Commissioner of Pakistan to UK Dr. Mohammad Faisal, spouse Dr. Sarah Naem, Director General FCDO Mr. Owen Jenkins, British PM's Trade Envoy for Pakistan Mr. James Daly MP and guests cutting cake at Pakistan Day Reception.

Ghazala welcomes resolution giving ZAB as Shaheed status

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola on Friday welcomed the resolution for giving Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto as status of "Shaheed" and declaring the former premier of Pakistan a democratic hero of the nation, in a session of the Balochistan Assembly held here.

The resolution was presented by member provincial assemblies (MPAs), in an assembly session.

In her statement issued here, Ghazala Gola said, it was a great honor for me to chair the session of the Balochistan assembly while tabling the same resolution.

Ghazala Gola said that Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the most popular prime minister of Pakistan who gave the first constitution to this country and laid the foundation for making Pakistan a nuclear power.

She said that Z.A. Bhutto was sentenced to death without giving a fair trial. She added that the Supreme Court has opined in the presidential reference filed 12 years ago by Pakistan People's Party co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari.

The high ups of SSGC and QESCO would present their point of view on the public complaints in the Chief Minister's chamber located in the provincial assembly.

The members of assembly would also be present on the occasion.

Senator Mushahid demands release of Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD (Online): Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed has said in Senate that Imran Khan be released and all the prisoners be granted general amnesty.

He said this in his farewell address in Senate Friday.

He held that the political forces should forge good relationship with judiciary, establishment and powers that be.

He called for immediate release of all political forces.

He went on to say the respect of upper house has enhanced due to issuance of production order of Senator Ejaz Chaudhry by deputy chairman Senate.

He underlined if talks can be held with TIP and disgruntled Baloch then why these cannot be with political parties.



QUETTA: MPA Raheela Durrani cutting cake during a ceremony on eve of World Women Day organized by SCAP-Balochistan.

Hamza takes measures to ensure maximum facilities to masses

QUETTA (APP): The Quetta administration under the supervision of Commissioner Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat has taken multiple measures to ensure the provision of maximum facilities to the people and governance in the provincial capital city.

Talking to APP, Commissioner, Hamza Shafiqat on Friday said that the city administration had formulated a comprehensive plan to ensure civic facilities to

the masses. The city administration has decided to auction the designed parking plazas and motorcycle stands in the city to generate more revenue.

He said the authority would auctioned around 100 parking spots transparently and enhanced tax collection to generate more revenue which would be spent on the development of the



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan addressing Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners Conference.

Outlined by India, seeking more permanent seats Pakistan rejects as 'flawed' UNSC reform proposal

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has firmly rejected a UN Security Council reform model proposed by the aspirants for permanent seats (India, Brazil, Germany and Japan), saying any expansion in the permanent category will compound the 15-member body paralysis, and prevent the majority of small and medium-sized states from serving on it.

The plan, presented on Thursday by India on behalf of the so-called Group of Four nations, proposes the Council's membership from 15 to 25-26, adding six permanent and four or five non-permanent members, while hinting at "flexibility" on the veto issue.

"As a member of the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) Group, it is evident that our position has consistently opposed the issue of the creation of new permanent members," Ambassador Munir Akram, per-

manent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the long-running Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) aimed at restructuring the Security Council to make it most effective, representative and accountable. On its part, the UFC group has proposed a new category of members—not permanent members—with longer duration in terms and a possibility to get re-elected.

Emphasizing that the two basic vectors for reform were expansion and equitable representation, Ambassador Akram said the G-4 model would direct the effort in the "opposite direction", noting it would expand 6 new permanent seats, but only 5 new non-permanent seats—making the proportion of the members who are permanent versus those who are non-permanent ever greater.

The Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council reform, which began in February 2009

have remained stalled. Despite a general agreement on enlarging the UNSC, as part of the UN reform process, member states have remained divided over details.

The UNSC currently has five permanent members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—and 10 non-permanent members elected for a two-year term.

"Today," the Pakistani envoy pointed out, "the permanent members are 1 to 2—5 permanent members to 10 non-permanent members"—whereas in the G-4 model, in a 26-member council, the equation would be 1 to 1—11 permanent members to 14 or 13 non-permanent members," reducing the proportionality between the two membership categories by half and lessen the chances of representation for the rest of the 182 countries who will not be permanent members on the Security Council.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo along with Tri-Services Officers during the closing session of exercise SEASPAK 2024, in Karachi.

Pak Navy's Maritime Exercise Seaspark-2024 concludes

Independent Report KARACHI: The concluding session of Pakistan Navy's Major Maritime Exercise SEASPAK-2024 held at Karachi. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the session as Chief Guest. The exercise was conducted in North Arabian Sea to validate operational plans designed under realities of ever-evolving geo-strategic environment of PAF and Pak Army also participated in the exercise to practice tri services synergy during war.

Addressing the closing session, Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted that the exercise helped in synergizing Naval Operations with Land and Air Operations. He stressed that the on-going strategic competition among major

countries are being increasingly confronted with difficult foreign policy choices to safeguard national interests. Evolving character of war under Grey Hybrid scenarios coupled with internal security challenges also complicate the threat matrix. All these threats and challenges necessitate a constant review of our operational plans through major exercises.

Earlier, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) presented overview of the exercise and conduct of the exercise was discussed threadbare to draw pertinent lessons. Towards the end, recommendations were presented to revise war plans and strategies under the evolving maritime environment in the region.

Exercise SEASPAK-2024 was aimed to assess combat readiness and operational preparedness of Pakistan Navy to meet the entire spectrum of National Security Challenges in the Maritime Domain. The exercise was conducted on a two force format with Blue Force being the own and Orange Force being the enemy forces. Successful conduct of the exercise was a testimony of perpetual readiness of Pakistan Navy in proving its capability to combat broad spectrum of threats in the maritime domain.

The concluding session of the exercise was attended by high ranking officers from Sister Services and notable representatives from various Ministries.



ISLAMABAD: Women activists scuffle with police personnel during Aurat March, a demonstration rally, to mark the International Women's Day, in the Federal Capital.

Punjab, Balochistan healthcare commissions join hands

LAHORE (APP): The healthcare commissions of Punjab and Balochistan will collaborate further to improve the healthcare service delivery systems of both provinces and benefit from their respective ambits of functioning.

According to the PHC spokesperson on Friday, this was decided by the commissions in a two-day meeting held at the PHC office. Chairperson Board of Commissioners BHC Justice (ret'd) Abdul Hameed Baloch led an eight-member delegation comprising members of the Board and other officials, whereas Chairperson BoC PHC Justice (ret'd) Muhammad Bilal Khan headed his team. Detailed discussions were held regarding the health landscape of their respective provinces. The officials diltated upon various aspects and issues of quality assurance in the healthcare service delivery, implementa-

tion of rules and regulations, minimum service delivery standards (MSDS) and their enforcement in the healthcare establishments (HCEs). The visiting delegates appreciated the PHC for its success in bringing reforms to the provincial health sector. While welcoming the BHC delegation, Chief Executive Officer PHC Dr Muhammad Saqib Aziz briefed the delegation about the regulatory framework and its consequential impact on the quality of healthcare services, jurisdiction, working, mandate and achievements of the PHC. The visiting delegates were briefed about the PHC's performance, and were told that so far the Commission had registered more than 62,000 besides preparing the MSDS for all kinds of treatment facilities and enforcement of the Standards in the HCEs. About the training of the health professionals on the MSDS.

500 liters of harmful milk destroyed in Loralai crackdown

QUETTA (APP): At least 500 liters of detergent (Surf) found, harmful milk was destroyed in crackdown against adulteration mafia in Loralai by Balochistan Food Authority (BFA) on Friday.

According to BFA spokesman, a fine was also imposed on the milk seller involved in the scandalous business of adulteration besides, hundreds of liters of expired cooking oil of a well-known company were also seized during operations in Loralai along with the district administration.

Extra virgin cooking oil

was found in a well-known restaurant and was being used in cooking, the restaurant owner was fined for violating the rules, during the inspection action was taken against 2 other restaurants for violation of SOPs, the spokesman said.

Earlier, on-the-spot testing of milk samples was done to check the quality of milk. Actions against the mixed mafia were conducted under the leadership of Deputy Director BFA (Loralai) Sharafuddin and in the presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Zehri.