

Independent

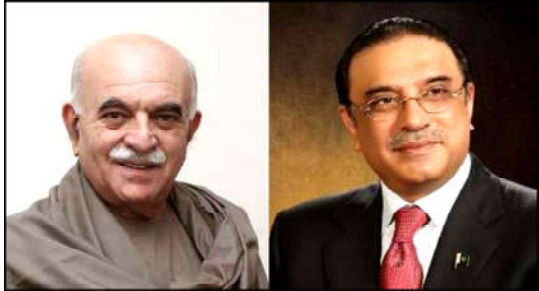
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Zardari, Achakzai vying for presidential election today

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

parliament house in Islamabad tomorrow in which the members of National Assembly and the Senate will exercise their right to vote.

Similarly, the provincial assemblies will hold their sessions tomorrow for the election. Polling will begin at 10:00 am and continue till 4:00 pm.

INP adds: Mehmoood Khan Achakzai—the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) backed presidential candidate—on Friday asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to postpone

the election as the electoral college is "incomplete".

In a letter to the chief election commissioner on Friday, Achakzai said that stated that electoral college for a presidential election was "still incomplete".

"As yet no one was elected on those reserved seats and without nominations and proper election on these seats, if the presidential election is conducted as per the schedule that would be denial of their votes, which otherwise is against the fundamental rights, law and constitution," stated the letter. "Under the above circumstances, it is submitted that the proposed election to the office of the President of Pakistan is clearly impossible, therefore the same may kindly be postponed or delayed till completion of electoral college accordingly in the best interest of justice, fair play and equity."



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.

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.

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

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.



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

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

The UNHCR Quetta head, Taspy Baklay, Director General of National Institute of Management, Muhammad Aslam Ghani, Commissioner Afghan Refugees, Arbab Talib, head of Ultra-soft System, Asif Naeem 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,



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 would 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 Ulama-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.



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

CM directs to ensure speedy completion of QDP by working round the clock

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to ensure speedy completion of the Quetta Development Package by working round the clock.

The Chief Minister was chairing a review meeting about progress of the Quetta Development Package here on Friday.

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

Similarly, the projected 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

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.

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 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.

"Asif Ali Zardari treats all political parties with the same affection he shows to his party. Insha' Allah, Asif Ali Zardari would take care of the members of the National Assembly, Senate, and provincial assemblies in four provinces," Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said.

The PPP chairman said that a political party used to do "politics of division", urging the need to eradicate the same. "The young generation has to be taken forward in such a way that they can bury the politics of hatred and division," he added.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari hoped that the president, prime minister, and chief ministers of all provinces would take all-out measures to resolve the issues being faced by the masses.



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

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Result tampering

The botched conduct of the Feb 8 election continues to haunt the Election Commission of Pakistan. After failing to meet the legal deadline of Feb 22 to publish all Form 45s, the Commission finally released the documents on Tuesday, in the process triggering another storm of complaints regarding blatant and, in some instances, rather crude manipulation of electoral results. The Form 45, which is a tally of all votes cast at a polling station for each of the contesting candidates, is the formal documentation of the first and most important step in the post-poll vote-counting exercise. A copy of it is supposed to be issued to the nominee of each candidate who witnesses the count of ballots. Since the result of an election is built on the consolidation of individual Form 45s issued by presiding officers from each polling station, the integrity of these forms is what ultimately legitimizes the poll exercise.

In the case of the recent general election, many candidates had complained that the Form 45s they received from the presiding officers in their respective constituencies were showing very different results than those announced by the ECP after unlawful and as yet unexplained delays.

There were several rival candidates and even entire parties endorsing the PTI's claim of victory on various seats based on the Form 45s collected by them, even though official results had declared some other candidate as the winner. Since the ECP's copies of its Form 45s had not been shared till earlier this week, it was impossible to determine where exactly the official count and the Form 45s issued to candidates had deviated. The documents now released seem so full of inconsistencies and errors that they have bolstered the persistent allegations of widespread tampering with results and strengthened independent observers' demands for a transparent audit of election results.

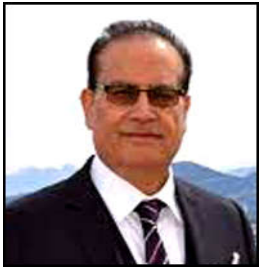
Where, on the one hand, the ECP insisted on rigid interpretations of election rules and laws to deny the PTI its bat and the Sunni Ittehad Council its share of reserved seats, it cannot expect the nation to look the other way when it comes to its own violations of legal deadlines and failure to explain the glaring anomalies in its announced results. This duplicity cannot be condoned. Given how crudely vote counts have been overwritten in some of the Form 45s shared by the ECP, the Commission must explain why it considered it appropriate to announce winners and allocate seats based on seemingly tampered documents without conducting some kind of cross-checking first.

It must also organise an immediate, independent audit of the election results that have been contested, which all important stakeholders should be invited to witness. It will prove extremely difficult for the nation to move forward unless these disputes are resolved.

Upgraded CPEC, President Xi and Shahbaz Sharif

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC, CEO ATV



As anticipated, Chinese President Xi Jinping, known for his deep and affectionate sentiments towards Pakistan, was the first head of state to extend congratulations to Mr. Shahbaz Sharif upon assuming the office of Prime Minister.

This gesture reflects President Xi's special regard for Pakistan, highlighting his reputation as one of the most benevolent leaders globally, particularly towards Pakistan.

As the leader of China, one of the fastest-growing nations worldwide, President Xi's support will give added confidence to the newly elected Prime Minister, who is soon to face significant economic, financial, and political challenges. The brief yet impactful message not only conveyed congratulations but also emphasized a revitalized vision for the future of Pakistan-China cooperation which was delineated into five distinct areas, underlining a roadmap for their continued collaboration.

Firstly, emphasis was placed on nurturing and preserving the longstanding friendship between the two nations. Secondly, emphasized exchanges and cooperation across a wide spectrum of fields. The third to advance and upgrade the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The fourth to deepen cooperation and foster resilience. Fifth to ensure tangible benefits for the populace of both nations.

While all five elements hold significance, the joint development of an upgraded version of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) emerged

as particularly pivotal, with far-reaching implications.

This revamped iteration of CPEC, built upon a reassessment of its initial framework (CPEC-1) transcends its previous focus on infrastructure, energy, and communication projects. Instead, it embraces a multifaceted approach centered on fostering economic prosperity, industrial development, ICT, livelihood projects, mining and mineral exploration and development, agriculture, political, economic, education, science and technology, cultural, and people-to-people relations. It also covers food security and research, media exchanges, space cooperation, urban sustainable development, climate change, vaccine development, transportation, energy.

In essence, the upgraded CPEC delineates five distinct corridors, each tailored to address key priorities and aspirations.

A Growth Corridor, aimed at driving economic expansion by focusing on infrastructure development projects that directly stimulate economic activity. Such as expanding existing industrial zones and creating new special economic zones to attract foreign investment. It includes improving transportation networks to facilitate trade domestically, regionally and globally, diversify Pakistan's export basket and expand its industrial base and connect Gwadar with the landlocked countries, thus opening new vistas to the west and beyond.

The Livelihood-Enhancing Corridor aims to bridge socio-economic disparities by empowering individuals and communities by harnessing the potential of the country's youthful population and capitalize on the growing social consciousness to transition towards a knowledge-driven society. Central to this vision is the

development of human and social capital alongside institutional reforms that prioritizes sustained, inclusive growth, emphasizing indigenous solutions and involving all segments of society. Creating an enabling environment for the private sector to drive economic growth and enhance national competitiveness. It focuses on enhancing living standards through investments in education, healthcare, social services, and poverty alleviation initiatives besides uplifting rural communities aimed at improving the overall quality of life for all Pakistani citizens.

The Innovation Corridor will foster technological advancement through the establishment of research and development centers, fostering collaboration between universities and industries, and investing in digital infrastructure aimed at ushering the country into a new knowledge revolution by introducing disruptive technologies such as micro-electronics, computers, telecommunications, human-made materials, robotics, and biotechnology. By catalyzing significant increases in productivity and giving rise to entirely new economic sectors, the corridor serves as a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship. It aims to position Pakistan as a hub for technological excellence, driving economic growth and enhancing competitiveness globally. Through strategic investments and partnerships, the Innovation Corridor seeks to propel Pakistan forward as a leader in technological innovation and advancement.

The Green Corridor in Pakistan is committed to promoting environmental sustainability by prioritizing investments in renewable energy sources, clean technologies, and sustainable waste management. Emphasizing the importance of moderniza-

tion, food security, and agricultural and environmental protection. This vision advocates for energy conservation, commercialization of renewable energy, and the adoption of advanced biofuels and synthetic fuels. It also calls for the implementation of alternative propulsion methods and energy-efficient urban infrastructure. Through these initiatives, the Green Corridor aims to mitigate environmental degradation, enhance energy security, and build resilient communities, ensuring a more sustainable and prosperous future for Pakistan.

The Open Corridor aims to ensure inclusivity and accessibility, extending the benefits of CPEC-1 and II to a wider range of people and regions in Pakistan. This initiative envisions empowering local communities, providing skills training, facilitating access to financing for small businesses, and offering clear information about opportunities. While achieving this ambitious vision requires careful planning and collaboration among stakeholders, it holds immense potential to uplift all of Pakistan through equitable development.

Since its announcement five months ago, the upgraded China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has transitioned from the drawing board to practical implementation. The Chinese Ambassador recently unveiled promising developments regarding CPEC, announcing the successful launch of the Growth Corridor, Livelihood-Enhancing Corridor, Innovation Corridor, and Green Corridor, alongside the Open Corridor.

Concrete plans are underway in collaboration with Xinjiang province to revolutionize Pakistan's agricultural sector, aiming to modernize and boost productivity. This initiative involves introducing high-quality seeds, lever-

aging cutting-edge technology and implementing comprehensive training programs to cultivate skilled human resources. Additionally, infrastructure is being developed for storage, preservation, value addition, marketing, and exports of staple crops, cotton, vegetables, and fruits. Development cooperatives in selected agricultural hubs will ensure maximum benefits to farmers regardless of land holdings.

Moreover, several Chinese companies are poised to invest in green energy projects, including photovoltaic and other renewable energy initiatives with low carbon emissions.

They are committed to environmentally friendly and high-tech projects. Many Chinese companies are pledging to establish manufacturing facilities.

The completion of Rashakai SEZ Phase-I was also announced by the ambassador, marking a new stage of high-quality development for CPEC. These advancements inject new momentum into fostering an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future.

Sizable progress has been made to convert the Khunjerab Pass into an all-weather border by upgrading customs and logistics services to facilitate seamless trade and movement of people. Secondly, efforts have been directed towards making the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) fully operational, enhancing connectivity and accessibility to the region. Additionally, operationalizing the Pak-China Friendship Hospital and accelerating the expansion of the desalination plant and other key projects have been expedited to improve healthcare facilities and address water scarcity challenges.

Thirdly, multiple

memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and agreements have been inked between China and Pakistan, covering commerce, communication, and transport sectors, notably including the Main Line-1 (ML-1) rail project, whose cost has been reduced from \$9 billion to \$6.7 billion. Spanning 1,733 kilometers, ML-1 will link Peshawar to Karachi, significantly enhancing Pakistan's transportation infrastructure. Additionally, an MoU between The United Energy Group of China and Pakistan Refinery Ltd for a \$1.5 billion investment aims to boost the refinery's production capacity, significantly increasing the country's petrol and high-speed diesel production.

Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, a dynamic leader known for his proactive approach, will undoubtedly take President Xi's letter seriously. The letter, while extending congratulations, underscores an unwavering commitment and resolve to project both CPEC-1 and the Upgraded CPEC-2 forward with accelerated momentum to yield tangible results. It emphasizes the imperative of giving undivided attention to both phases of CPEC and calls for building the capacity of government and private institutions to handle the influx of massive investment. President Xi's directive underscores the urgency of developing managerial skills to navigate highly precise and high-value projects, enhancing transparency and expediency in processing proposals and projects, and creating highly efficient and effective enabling conditions to ensure the timely completion of corridors and projects within the agreed-upon timeframe and with the intended output and outcome.

Commerce News

Dar urges political parties for Charter of Economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader of the House in the Senate, Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday urged all political parties to get united and sign a Charter of Economy to get the country out of financial trap.

In his farewell speech, the Senator said that time has come to work together for the betterment of Pakistan. Ishaq Dar thanked his party leadership for honoring him with the role in the Senate of Pakistan since 2002.

He said that during his tenure, he witnessed many ups and downs and the Senate played an important role in the parliamentary history of Pakistan and will always be remembered in golden words.

He said difference of

opinion is the beauty of democracy but opposition for the sake of opposition is a disaster for the country.

He said Senate is a symbol of the federation therefore the sanctity of this House must be maintained at all costs and the protest should be within the limits.

He stressed all political parties for the Charter of Reconciliation and Charter of Economy to get the country out of financial trap. "We should avoid personal vengeance against each other and take the country forward collectively", said the Senator adding that all political parties should work together to get Pakistan's name included in G-20 countries.

He said Pakistan is an atomic power, therefore

the enemies of Pakistan have interest in weakening the country and all political parties remain busy fighting with each other. He said that all political parties should make sacrifices for Pakistan. Senator Mian Raza Rabbani in his farewell speech, said that it was not appropriate to talk about the country whose financial sovereignty was mortgaged with international financial institutions. He said it is also inappropriate to comment on hybrid system over the parliament and internal politics of the country. He also urged all political parties to have a grand national dialogue to get the country part of international financial institution and hybrid political system.

Turkiye CG visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Consul General of Turkiye Durmus Bastug and Commercial Attache Nurettin Demir visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Friday to discuss ways and means to boost the bilateral trade and investment relations.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik and Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh warmly welcomed the distinguished guests.

During a meeting, President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik said Pakistan and Turkiye committed to enhancing bilateral cooperation in various sectors as focused by various Government-to-Government meetings in the past few years.

He said: "We are thankful that Turkiye is also an important investment partner as number of Turkish firms are working in Pakistan in the domains of energy, finance, and infrastructure projects. We believe that both Turkiye and Pakistan must harness each other strengths and expertise to drive mutual progress and prosperity."



RAWALPINDI: Group photo of People's Trader Cell President Tariq Waheed Butt and Secretary General Naveed Kanwal on the occasion of congratulating the newly elected President Malik Shaukat Hayat Kekezai and the newly elected Secretary General Adnan Ahmed of Central Anjuman Tajran Gwalmandi.

Envoy urges Pakistani investors to invest in Ethiopia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, on Friday urged the Pakistani business community to invest in Ethiopia that offered comparative advantage in form of important geographical location, cheap and clean energy and skilled human resources.

Addressing a Business Forum on Ethiopia-Pakistan Bilateral Trade at Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Lahore, the ambassador said his country was hosting the Invest Ethiopia Conference from April 28-30 in Addis Ababa to

showcase extraordinary investment opportunities in Ethiopia, said a press release issued here.

Accorded to Ambassador Jemal Beker, it was a high time for the business community of Pakistan to explore the lucrative market of Ethiopia which was a gateway to the African continent of more than 1.4 billion people.

He said Ethiopia was a signatory to the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement which meant that whatever produced in Ethiopia could easily be traded to the entire Africa.

The ambassador highlighted the economic reforms carried out by the reformist Government of Ethiopia to build a home grown economy to achieve a robust and sustainable economic growth by creating an enabling environment for business community and foreign investors. He said under its economic reforms, Ethiopia had laid a major focus on its five economic sectors including agriculture and agro-processing, manufacturing, mining, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and tourism.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 190 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Friday, gaining 190.67 points, a positive change of 0.29 percent, closing at 65,603.09 points against 65,793.76 points the previous trading day. A total of 481,704,055 shares valuing Rs16,992 billion were traded during the day as compared to 354,153,110 shares valuing Rs14,435 billion the last day. Some 355 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 206 of them recorded gains and

119 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 30 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 59,083,977 shares at Rs 4.83 per share, Cnergycio Pakistan with 51,468,215 shares with 4.89 per share and Kohinoor Spinning with 45,948,000 shares at Rs 5.52 per share. Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 160.00 per share price, closing at Rs 8,050.00, whereas the runner-up was Pakistan Services Limited with a Rs 29.99 rise in its per share.

SBP announces holiday on first Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has announced that all its public dealing offices will remain closed on 1st Ramadan-ul-Mubarak. According to the SBP Statement issued here on Friday, the day will be observed as bank holiday for the purpose of Zakat deduction. All banks, Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and Microfinance banks (MFBs) will remain closed for public dealing. However, all employees of the Bank, DFIs and MFBs will attend their office on bank holiday as normal working day.

Pays tribute to Pakistani women SBP Director stresses for women's digital financial inclusion key to progress

ISLAMABAD: Director at the State Bank of Pakistan Abid Qamar Friday paid tribute to Pakistani women for pivotal role in nation building and urged for women's digital financial inclusion as economic empowerment is key to Pakistan's development.

Talking to PTV news channel, while paying tribute to Women on International Women day he stressed that the women's financial inclusion is crucial to promoting gender equality and empowering women in all aspects of their lives.

"No nation can rise to the height of glory unless their women are side

side with them", he said, adding, recognizing their important role, SBP has taken a number of steps towards financial inclusion of women.

He added that this initiative envisions greater engagement of women in the financial sector through increased employment in financial institutions as well as enhanced access to financial services.

"SBP considers it imperative to support the career progression of the women employees and encourage them to aim for leadership position with the hope that in the coming years women in leadership position should become the norm, not the exception".



ISLAMABAD: People are busy buying vegetables in Friday Weekly Bazaar.

PARC signs agreement to enhance livestock, dairy production

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Holstein Research Management Dairies Private Limited, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), for enhancing livestock and dairy production in the country.

Under this partnership, both organizations have pledged to provide technical support for capacity building and to conduct training programs in Theriogenology, animal breeding and genetic research and development.

In this regard, the

PARC also organized an international seminar focusing on genetic and economic impact of Norwegian red dairy cattle.

The seminar provided a platform for experts and stakeholders to explore the potential of Norwegian red cattle in enhancing genetic and domestic breed improvement in the dairy industry. PARC's institutions, the National Institute for Genomics and Advanced Biotechnology (NIGAB) and the Animal Sciences Institute (ASI).



ISLAMABAD: Women visiting stalls at 10th National Women at Work commemorating International Women's Day organised by Lok Virsa with the collaboration of Devcom-Pakistan and dtn.

SCCI president inaugurates Bank Alfalah on Ring Road

PESHAWAR (APP): President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Fud Ishaq on Friday inaugurated a new branch of Bank Alfalah on Ring Road, Hayatabad here on Friday. During the inauguration ceremony, the SCCI executive members Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Hafaf Ali Khan, Secretary General Sajjad Aziz, members of the business community, along with the Bank Al-Falah Regional Head Jamil Ahmad Sauval, Area Manager

Muhammad Adil, Branch Manager Taniya Khan, Regional Coordinator Asadur Rehman and others were present.

Talking on the occasion, the SCCI chief praised the Bank Alfalah for its services and facilitation to the business community. He said the Bank Alfalah's business-friendly policies have become fruitful for the traders and asked other commercial banks to adopt such pro-business policies to facilitate the community.

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 "Sehri" 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,

along with financial assistance in the form of grants and interest-free loans to establish their businesses. He said that there would be no compromise on the development of the province and demanded the federal government to release arrears of Net Hydel Profit.

He welcomed Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif's visit to rain-affected areas and his announcement of compensation for affected families after the recent rains. He added that the provincial government had already released funds to the rain-affected areas.



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.

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 MATHELO: 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.

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 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.

She announced to evolve zero tolerance policy against harassment



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.

Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has paid rich tributes to all the women of the society.

On exclusive message of International Women's Day, Dr. Usman Anwar said that Punjab Police salutes all brave mothers, sisters, daughters of nation especially of martyrs and ghazis. He said that on International Women's Day, Punjab Police reiterates its determination to fight against gender based crimes, sexual harassment and violence against women. The IG Punjab said that today's woman is more conscious, courageous and empowered than ever before and in all departments of Punjab

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.

Earlier this week, the North Korean state media said Kim inspected field training of troops at a major military operations base in the western region of the country.

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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 west-eastern region.

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 ad-

dditional 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.

During the talks in Istanbul, Erdogan was expected to press for negotiations to end Russia's war in Ukraine, now in its third year, a Turkish government official said. Talks would also focus on a possible new measure that would guarantee navigational safety of commercial vessels in the Black Sea, the official said.

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.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributing Khatoo-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

Independent Report
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 our 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: 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 Dumar.

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.



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

Independent Report
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.

The initiatives taken by the Quetta administration have brought improvement in the civic life of the capital city of the province.

Under the supervision, measures have been taken for the betterment of traffic, removal of encroachments, cleanliness and restoration of street lights in the 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 and issues of quality assurance in the healthcare service delivery, implementation 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.



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

Independent Report
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, permanent 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 even greater.

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



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

Pakistan stands shoulder to shoulder with Kashmiris: PM

Independent Report
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 assuming 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 throbs 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 snow-fall in Muzaffarabad.



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

Pak Navy's Maritime Exercise Seaspark-2024 concludes

Independent Report
KARACHI: The concluding session of Pakistan Navy's Major Maritime Exercise SEASPARK-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. Relevant elements 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 SEASPARK-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.

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.



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

Independent Report
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.

500 liters of harmful milk destroyed in Loralai crackdown

Independent Report
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.



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

Independent Report
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 dilaated upon various aspects and issues of quality assurance in the healthcare service delivery, implementation 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.

Senator Mushahid demands release of Imran Khan

Independent Report
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 by Senator Ejaz Chaudhry by deputy chairman Senate.

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