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dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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PTI, PML-N break ice as Gandapur calls on Shahbaz PM Shahbaz assures of resolution of KP's feasible demands

CM Gandapur hails positive meeting with PM, Stresses political engagement to solve political issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday assured that all justified demands of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province would be met while keeping in view the current financial situation of the country.

Welcoming Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, the prime minister said that all the four provinces were the components of the federation and when they moved together, the country achieved progress and development.

The chief minister who called on the prime minister also briefed him on the administrative affairs of the province in detail, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal,

Minister for States and Frontier Regions Amir Muqam and other relevant senior officials.

The prime minister stressed to sit together to resolve all issues, adding the public welfare would be the top priority of their collective efforts.

The federal government believed in working in harmony with all the provincial governments including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and would foster the strong bonds.

The chief minister also expressed the resolve that the provincial government wanted to move with good intentions and was committed to play its positive role in the national development.

Meanwhile Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur on Wednesday expressed satisfaction following his first meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, highlighting its positive tone and focus on addressing public and provincial concerns.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Safaraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a review meeting about Communication and Works Department

Presides over meeting of Communication & Works Dept: CM expresses dissatisfaction over quality of development projects; directs to improve performance

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti directs to prepare comprehensive mechanism for recruitments on vacant posts purely on merit

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed dissatisfaction over the quality of development projects executed by the Communication and Works (C&W) department and directed to improve performance in this regard.

The Chief Minister was chairing a meeting held to review the performance and functioning of the C&W department here on Wednesday.

The Secretary C&W Department briefed the meeting about the functioning of department and development projects.

While expressing his dissatisfaction over the construction projects, the Chief Minister remarked that standard of development projects don't happen to be of national standard

even, what to speak of international level.

He also observed that the PC-I of the projects are not prepared keeping in view of the requirements, rather these are copied and pasted.

Questioning about the concept paper, Mr. Bugti asked the concerned high ups that how a concept paper prepared otherwise only in 10 minutes can meet the public needs?

He asserted that the direction has to be corrected and governance has to be improved.

He also asserted that the concept paper bases on the cut and paste would not be considered in future at all.

Speaking at the meeting, Chief Minister inquired from the Secretary C&W that how many officers

were suspended on the advance-payment?

On this, the Secretary Communications told that departmental action is continued against them.

However, the Chief Minister told that he would be pleased if you (Secretary) would present the data about suspension of the officers.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that there's no concept of accountability and answerability without reward and punishment.

He ordered to all the officers to remain present at the places of their postings in zones and districts. He made them bound to continuously monitor the projects while remaining in the field.

He said that the people of province should know that officers are present in their offices.

PTI conspiring against Pakistan by giving a false narrative to European Union: Tarar

PTI spokespersons receiving instructions from jail to harm Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataulah Tarar on Wednesday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was conspiring against Pakistan by giving a false narrative to the European Union.

"The spokespersons of PTI are getting instructions from jail to harm the country, but no one will be allowed to harm the economy," he said while addressing his maiden press conference after assuming charge as Minister for Information and Broadcasting here.

Lashing out at the PTI leadership, the minister said its conspiratorial elements were again trying to attack the country's economy as in the past too, PTI did a heinous act by writing a letter to the International Monetary Fund

asking it not to enter into a loan agreement with the Pakistan government.

He said that the PTI spokespersons were getting instructions from Adiala jail to harm Pakistan.

Tarar alleged that the founder of PTI had tried to make this country default but with the grace of Allah and Shehbaz Sharif's personal interest, Pakistan entered into an agreement with the IMF.

He said now again the PTI leadership wanted to sabotage the agreement with the IMF through another letter.

He asked the question as to in what capacity were they writing this letter to the IMF.

"Protecting the state of Pakistan and the national interest is our first responsibility. Strategies and steps are being taken for revival



of the economy," Tarar maintained.

The minister said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was working day and night for the improvement of the economy and daily he chaired three to four meetings on the economy only.

He said that the prime minister was working to end inflation and unemployment in the country.

The minister said on the other hand there was a political party which did not

see anything beyond itself, and it did not care about the national interests or integrity of Pakistan.

He said Pakistan could earn precious foreign exchange if GSP plus status from EU continued, it would help create more job opportunities and strengthen rupee as a currency.

"If Pakistan has GSP plus status, foreign exchange will come, our exports will increase, rupee will become stable, inflation will be reduced and employment opportunities will be provided", Ataulah Tarar remarked.

At the start of his press conference he assured that he would try his best to take measures for the welfare of media workers and journalists.

"The doors of the Ministry of Information are opened for journalists and will try to play the role of a bridge between the government and the media," he added.

He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had started working on a strategy to deal with the challenges faced by the economy as soon as he assumed office.

He said it was an honour that yesterday, Bloomberg magazine mentioned Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif regarding his potential for betterment of Pakistan's economy.

The minister said that Bloomberg also termed the choice of Muhammad Aurangzeb as finance minister as the best choice who as an economist had vast experience at global level.

GoB imposes ban on transfers of civil officers

Independent Report QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has imposed ban on the transfer and posting of the civil officers and other employees with immediate effect.

According to an official notification issued here by the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD) on Wednesday, the ban has been imposed on the transfer and posting of the officers up to Grade-21 until further orders. The ban has been imposed on special directives of the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

New govt to start work on five new economic corridors: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Soon after the formation of the elected government, progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), particularly the five new economic corridors, including the Corridor of Job Creation, Innovation, Green Energy and Inclusive Regional Development, has been expedited.

The newly-appointed Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, chaired an important meeting on Wednesday to initiate work on the five new corridors in the second phase of CPEC, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

Commander Bahrain National Guard, CJCSC discuss matters of security, defence cooperation

Independent Report RAWALPINDI: Commander Bahrain National Guard, General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, here at Joint Staff Headquarters on Wednesday.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), during the meeting matters of bilateral professional interest and further strengthening of security and defence cooperation between the two countries were discussed.



Both sides reiterated the resolve to further strengthen security and defence cooperation between the two brotherly countries. Earlier, upon arrival at Joint Staff Headquarters, a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent presented 'Guard of Honour' to the visiting dignitary.

Imran Zarkoon posted as Principal Secretary to Chief Minister

Independent Report QUETTA: In a significant administrative reshuffle within Balochistan's governance framework, the Balochistan Provincial Service proudly announces the appointment of Grade 20 officer, Imran Zarkoon, as the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Balochistan. This appointment comes as a result of Imran Zarkoon's exceptional service record and his recent promotion in grade 20 during the review board, underscored by his advanced educational pursuits overseas.

Hailing from the Kohlu region of Balochistan, Mr. Zarkoon is distinguished as the sole officer from the Balochistan Provincial Service to have graduated from the esteemed Oxford University, UK. His academic brilliance further shines through his Masters in Development from the London School of Economics and Political Science, UK. Imran Zarkoon also has the



unique honor of being the first Pakistani to receive the Senior Fellow in Public Service Award at the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, along with holding a position as a Senior Executive Fellow at Harvard Kennedy University in the United States.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal chaired a meeting to bring major reforms in Planning Commission on March 13. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Planning Ministry and Members Planning Commission.

Visits FIA HQs Interior Minister orders FIA to take measures to curb corruption, smuggling

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday vowed to crackdown on corruption and improve the agency's efficiency.

He was addressing officer after reaching Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Headquarters where he was welcomed by Director General (DG) FIA.

He said corruption will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Corruption is the evil of our society, there will be zero tolerance on it. He said that FIA is a very important institution of national security and safety, it has to be up-

graded and brought to international standards.

The minister directed, pending promotion cases should be disposed of within thirty days, to encourage officers.

He said like promotion were given in every department in Punjab. In the same way, promotions should be given to eligible employees in FIA.

The efficiency of the institution will be proved when the big fish are caught, said the interior minister adding that through effective measures, the scourge of fake medicines will also have to be eradicated from the country.

Nine die in recent rain-related incidents in Balochistan

QUETTA (INP): As many as nine people, including children, lost their lives in recent rain-related incidents in Balochistan.

According to a report released by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), those who died belonged to Kharan, Kech, Barkhan, Chaman and Pishin on Wednesday.

The report says 259 houses were completely destroyed, while 1, 40 were partially damaged.

Similarly, it says that four roads were completely destroyed while one of the bridges was washed away by floodwaters.

The PDMA says 80 boats of fishermen were also destroyed due to rains. The Authority says more rain and snow are expected in different districts of the province, including the provincial capital Quetta, during the next 24 hours.

Giving further details, it says thundershowers are expected in Chaman, Ziarat, Pishin, Kalat, Chagai, Sorab, Sibbi, Naseerabad, Mastung, Noshki and Loralai. Similarly, it says rain and snow are likely in Harnai, Sheerani, Zhob, Musakhel, Kohlu, Qila Saifullah and other areas of Balochistan.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Jiang Zaidong calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM reaffirms to ensure timely implementation of CPEC initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday emphasised that his government would work tirelessly to ensure timely implementation of the initiatives under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He stressed that Pakistan was keen to move to the next phase of CPEC, including operationalisation of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to facilitate Chinese investment in Pakistan.

The prime minister was talking to Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Jiang Zaidong who called on him at the Prime Minister's House, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Dr. Ahsan Iqbal,

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi and the foreign secretary also attended the meeting.

The prime minister said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) had been created during his previous tenure to attract foreign investment in priority sectors including agriculture, IT, minerals and renewable energy.

He said Chinese companies would find many profitable opportunities in Pakistan. The prime minister thanked President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang for their warm messages of greetings on his re-election and assumption of office.

He reciprocated the warm sentiments expressed by the Chinese leadership and lauded their contribution and commitment to the strengthening of the iron-clad friendship between Pakistan and China.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting at FIA headquarters.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Political faults

Constructive politics goes beyond mere agitation and protest. Unfortunately, over the past decade or so, all of Pakistan's major political parties have demonstrated a disappointing lack of vision with which they could inspire the people of this country.

Admittedly, this is not entirely our politicians' fault: incessant interference in the democratic process has upended the rules of politics, making it so that political parties see a greater incentive in winning the favour of those pulling the strings than in putting effort into generating good ideas for public welfare that can be backed by popular support.

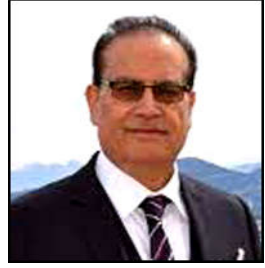
Considering how long this disequilibrium has been allowed to persist, it is no surprise that modern politicking in Pakistan has been reduced to 'us vs them' fights based on divisive narratives, referring to rivals with insulting epithets, rabble-rousing over moral panic situations, and accusing the competition of corruption.

The PTI is often accused by its critics of triggering this decline, and not without reason. The party was initially nurtured by the establishment as a counterweight to the PML-N and PPP, and it seized power by constantly attacking and delegitimising its peers. It was fed with so much confidence that it came to believe it was above the rules of politics. It sought to tear down the fragile structure of Pakistan's fledgling democracy, perhaps aspiring to build it anew.

However, it came up short in terms of capability. By the time its crutches were taken away, the party had grown too accustomed to confrontation. It fought for survival using the same self-righteous anger it had once been encouraged to use against its rivals — only this time, it was turned on those who had been nurturing it.

In the recent elections, the party managed to achieve the unthinkable. Its credentials and mandate can no longer be denied — it is now an entity that doesn't need any external support. However, the manner in which it has wielded power in the past still gives many cause for concern. Its quick successes seem to have engendered a youthful hubris that sees it get carried away when the situation requires patience. Its supporters don't realise that change is a process, not an event. Their angry campaigns on social media only reinforce their image as a volatile crowd. In this context, the party's recent announcement of a shadow cabinet to oversee the Punjab government is an encouraging sign. It indicates that the party is maturing politically. It must do more. Another good step would be to start talking to other political parties.

The PTI should know that it is welcome as a disruptive force in the political landscape as long as it can make a distinction between disruption and outright destruction. It must learn to wield its influence responsibly.



By Qamar Bashir
Press Secretary to the President (Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC

On the occasion of the World Day Against Cyber Censorship, celebrated globally on March 12th, the Paris-based media watchdog, Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF), unveiled the launch of Operation Collateral Freedom (OCF). This initiative empowers over 100 media outlets in 32 countries to bypass censorship, marking a 20% increase from the previous year. Operation Collateral Freedom achieves this by creating mirror sites of blocked websites, ensuring constant synchronization with the originals and placing them in various online locations.

OCF helps the journalists to adapt to the evolution in censorship techniques, provides the media with IT resources through the Collateral Freedom app since August 2023, which allows them to mirror sites hosted on the online infrastructure used by RSF. So far 480 mirror sites on RSF's servers are currently enabling access to 100 censored media outlets.

Pakistani journalists grappling with censorship and social media restrictions have an opportunity to benefit from RSF's Operation Collateral Freedom. Through this initiative, RSF creates mirror sites of blocked media outlets, providing users ac-

cess to content otherwise censored. Journalists can request their websites be mirrored and utilize the Collateral Freedom app for technical support, ensuring their content remains accessible despite censorship attempts. By staying informed about RSF's efforts, collaborating with international partners, and advocating for press freedom, Pakistani journalists can effectively combat online censorship and ensure their voices are heard.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has consistently voiced concerns regarding restrictions, both official and unofficial, on press and media freedom in Pakistan. In an open letter to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif on March 4th, RSF urged the new government to take immediate steps to restore press freedom, significantly weakened in recent years. RSF highlighted that the 2024 electoral process witnessed a notable surge in violations against media freedom, emphasizing the critical need for prompt and effective measures to address these issues. RSF condemns the arbitrary shutdowns of the Internet and mobile services, as well as the blocking of social media platforms for political purposes, deeming such actions unacceptable in a democratic society and urged the government to provide an assurance that it will refrain from resorting to these authoritarian measures, which undermine freedom of expression and access to information.

RSF's assessment underscores Pakistan's standing in media freedom, ranking 150th out of 180 countries. Shockingly, between 2012 and 2022, 53 journalists lost their lives in Pakistan, with convictions secured for only 4% of these cases. RSF highlights various forms of media coercion in Pakistan, including military interference, journalist abductions by intelligence agencies, legislative misuse to muzzle journalists, arbitrary Internet shutdowns, and draconian media laws. The lackluster investigations into these crimes perpetuate impunity, denying justice to victims. RSF emphasizes the urgent need for strengthened legislation to combat impunity and ensure respect for the rule of law, particularly concerning criminal activities by security services deemed "troublesome," such as abductions, secret detentions, and torture.

RSF underscores Pakistan's status as one of the most perilous environments for journalists, marked by extensive censorship and self-censorship. Urgently, RSF calls upon the new government to address this critical issue and honor commitments made by political parties during the electoral campaign. These include establishing a Safety and Security Commission for journalists, as pledged by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and revising the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016, as promised by

the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). RSF urges the government to combat harassment against women journalists, enforce laws protecting journalists from undue influence or intimidation. RSF challenges the government to review several laws that encroach upon press and media freedom, including certain clauses of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance 2023 (PEMRA Amendment Act). These amendments purportedly combat disinformation but risk enabling media censorship. RSF insists on precise definitions for terms like "authentic information" and "disinformation" to prevent license withdrawal or outlet suspension. The Official Secrets Amendment Act (2023) requires revision to prevent its misuse against journalists. Additionally, Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016, known as "PECA," is currently utilized to censor social media criticism and must be revised to safeguard online freedom of expression.

In his inaugural address to the newly sworn-in cabinet, the Prime Minister rightly underscored trade and investment as critical areas for uplifting the beleaguered state of the economy. However, while emphasizing hard work as the primary pathway to achieving economic progress, it's imperative to recognize that the perception of a country's brand value plays a pivotal role in attracting favorable trade and investment.

Investors and trade partners seek stability, transparency, and reliability, qualities that can only be fostered through genuine institutional reforms and unwavering commitment to democratic values which include freedom of press and media. Therefore, it's paramount for the government to prioritize these foundational pillars of governance to pave the way for sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

Regrettably, the current brand image of Pakistan languishes at its lowest, trailing behind many regional counterparts and only marginally above war-torn nations. This dismal performance extends across various international indices and rankings, spanning from soft power and economic indicators to rule of law, legislative freedom, democracy, justice, and freedom of press and media.

To effectively stimulate trade and investment, there must be a concerted effort to uplift Pakistan's brand image across all these fronts. This entails upholding the rule of law, adhering steadfastly to democratic principles, ensuring the freedom and independence of vital institutions, and safeguarding the fundamental rights of speech, assembly, and media.

Without tangible improvements in these areas, mere lofty promises, impassioned speeches, or even diligent hard work will fall short in revitalizing the country's economic prospects.

Commerce News

PM visits USC outlets to inspect Relief Package implementation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday paid surprise visits to different Utility Stores across the federal capital to inspect the execution of the Prime Minister's Ramadan Relief Package.

During the visit, he interacted with the beneficiaries of the scheme and inquired whether they faced any issues while benefiting from the package.

He instructed the authorities concerned to ensure that entitled beneficiaries of the Relief Package faced no problem in availing the facility.

Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said the federal government had announced

a historic Ramadan Relief Package worth Rs 12 billion under which eatable items would be provided to the deserving families at subsidized rates during the holy month of Ramadan at the Utility Stores outlets across the country. Besides, he said under the package, additional stipend will also be given to the families registered in Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

PM Shehbaz Sharif said under the federal government's Ramadan Relief Package, Rs 77 per kg subsidy was being given on wheat flour while Rs 100 per kg subsidy was being offered on ghee besides a subsidy of 20-30% on other food items such as rice, pulses, sugar

etc for the deserving families.

He informed that under the package, the BISP beneficiaries would get additional stipend worth Rs 10,000 each, while under Kafalat programme, thousands of families from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and Balochistan will get additional amount of Rs 2000 each.

The prime minister said he had appointed several teams that would pay surprise visits to various USC outlets to check the availability and quality of the food items adding that strict action would be taken against those involved in selling low quality items at the stores.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits various special distribution points of Utility Stores Corporation set up with regard to PM's Ramzan Relief 2024.

Jam Kamal leads trade initiative to address economic challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): In response to directives from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, chaired meeting at the Ministry of Commerce, marking a proactive approach to addressing current economic challenges.

During the meeting, Minister Khan reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to increasing the nation's trade volume, said a press release issued here.

He emphasized the urgency of meeting the

targets set by the Prime Minister and outlined plans for implementing proactive measures. Minister Khan outlined a clear vision for the Ministry's direction over the next five years. This vision prioritizes increased trade volume, enhanced investment opportunities, and a focus on aligning with global standards.

He emphasized the crucial role of both local and foreign investors in achieving these goals and pledged to create a more facilitating environment for all.

The Minister further

emphasized the importance of measurable targets and tasked the Ministry with setting ambitious yet achievable benchmarks for growth and progress.

Recognizing the critical role of trade revitalization, Minister Khan underscored the importance of strengthening relationships with both domestic and foreign business communities.

He highlighted the necessity of collaboration with stakeholders at all levels to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Finance Minister says: Documentation of economy, digitization top Govt priorities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that documentation of economy and end to end digitization of tax system were the top priorities of the government.

The finance minister Wednesday visited Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Headquarters and held introductory meeting with its members to discuss the board's performance and future initiatives.

The minister stressed the urgent need for digitizing the FBR to enhance transparency and

efficiency in tax collection. These initiatives would focus on enhancing tax collection through improved FBR governance, comprehensive documentation of the economy, and full-scale digitization.

The government is considering strategies to broaden the tax base by incorporating wholesale/retail, real estate, and agriculture sectors into the tax framework, he said.

Aurangzeb said that digitization is a means to an end and implementing digital solutions are pivotal to modernizing our tax administration.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Food Bilal Yaseen and Provincial Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain along with Deputy Commissioner Rafiya Haider inspecting the prices of Edibles Items during their visit to Badami Bagh Vegetable and Fruit market.

Shafay for bringing new investments to Punjab

LAHORE (INP): Provincial Minister for Industries & Trade Chaudhry Shafay Hussain on Wednesday underscored the need to bring new investment in Punjab so as to create new employment opportunities and vowed to make the province as a real trade and investment hub.

He expressed these views during his visit to Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT) office here. The Board CEO Jalal Hassan briefed the minister about the performance of PBIT and its future line of action.

Chaudhry Shafay

Hussain called for arranging road shows in such countries having potential to invest here in Punjab. He said that the PBIT Board of Directors would be activated soon and such persons would be introduced in the PBIT who can play their vigorous role to bring new investment in the province.

The Provincial Minister directed the authorities concerned to persuade the solar panel companies to manufacture solar panels at the local level.

PAJCCI hails by-road transportation of fruits from Pakistan to Russia

PESHAWAR (APP): Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) has highly hailed transportation of fruits from Pakistan to Russia through centuries old road link between Sub-Continent and Central Asian Republics (CARs) via Afghanistan.

"The news about sending of citrus in 16 trucks of National Logistic Cell (NLC) from Pakistan to

Russia is very good omen for businessmen of the country and would open new vistas of trade and commerce in the region," observed Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi, Coordinator PAJCCI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a press statement issued here on Wednesday, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi said this trade route has great potential which if tapped would prove very valuable for country.

LESCO detects 63,066 power pilferers in 181 days

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 63,066 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) in 181 day of grand anti-power theft campaign. The LESCO spokesman told media here Wednesday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves.

Chinese loans aimed at steering Pakistan out of debt trap: consul general

FAISALABAD (APP): Chinese Consul General in Lahore Zhao Shiren said on Wednesday that Chinese debt was only 13 per cent of total foreign debt of Pakistan and its basic objective was to help steer the country out of the debt trap by extending necessary financial assistance.

Addressing the business community at Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said China had never pressured Pakistan for repayment of its loans

while recently the Chinese government rolled over the loan of \$2 billion. He said that Pakistan had got excessive foreign loans while its GDP was only \$350bn. "China is helping Pakistan to overcome its financial constraints," he added.

Responding to a question about issuing multiple visas, Zhao said a very limited number of multiple visas were being issued in addition to the single and double entry visas.

Gold rates dip by Rs.1,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold in the local market decreased by Rs.1,800 and was traded at Rs.228,300 on Wednesday as against its sale at Rs.230,100 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.1,544 to Rs.195,730 from Rs.197,274 whereas that 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs.179,420 from Rs.180,834, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver witnessed no change and was traded at Rs.2,600 and Rs.2,229.08 respectively.



Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb chairing a meeting during his visit to FBR Headquarters.

Chief Minister KP holds meeting over law, order

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Ghandapur Wednesday presided over the important meeting related to law and order here with all concerned authorities including Chief Secretary and Inspector General of Police.

The chief minister was briefed by the officials of the security forces on the overall law and order situation in the province with challenges, future action plans, and other matters on behalf of the concerned authorities were also discussed.

The decision was taken to release a fund of three billion rupees for the purchase of armored vehicles, weapons and

other modern equipment for the police. Chief minister announced to inclusion of the heirs of police martyrs in the Ramadan package. He said that Rs 10,000 will be given to the heirs of police martyrs under the Ramadan package of the provincial government. Chief Minister Ali Amin Ghandapur has also taken noted decisions for the children of police martyrs and directed the concerned authorities to fix a one-time quota for the recruitment of children of all martyrs under the Shahada Quota.

A case should be prepared for the approval of the Cabinet for this purpose, the chief minister directed the meeting. It is worth mentioning

here that by setting a one-time quota, all the children of martyrs waiting for recruitment under the martyr quota will be able to be recruited simultaneously.

Children of police martyrs have been waiting for many years due to the low quota of martyrs, the meeting was told. Work should be done to start the Safe City project in all the divisional headquarters of the province, the Chief Minister directed.

The meeting also deliberated on issues related to the establishment of a security division within the police for the security of important personalities and installations.



LAHORE: A delegation from different walk of life meeting with Provincial Minister Specialized Health Care and Medical Education Khawaja Salman Rafique.

Local govt minister pledges to make 'Clean Punjab' campaign mass movement

Independent Report LAHORE: Minister for Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Punjab Zeeshan Rafique has pledged to ensure cleaning of drains every week at village level and to increase the number of cleaning staff, saying that 'Clean Punjab' [Suthra Punjab] campaign will be turned into a mass movement with the help of people.

He said for provision of better civic facilities, an effective sanitation model was being developed in villages. While presiding over a meeting on 'Suthra Punjab' campaign at the Civil Secretariat, he said cleanliness campaign was going on vigorously across the province. "On the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, provision of necessary machinery was being ensured," he added.

of better civic facilities, an effective sanitation model was being developed in villages.

While presiding over a meeting on 'Suthra Punjab' campaign at the Civil Secretariat, he said cleanliness campaign was going on vigorously across the province. "On the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, provision of necessary machinery was being ensured," he added.

China to launch merit, need-based scholarships for UAF students: CG

FAISALABAD (APP): Chinese Consul General Zhao Shiren has said that his country's relations with the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) would be taken to the new heights and in this context, they intended to launch a merit and need-based scholarship project for students of the university. He expressed these views during a meeting with UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan whereas deans, directors and Chinese universities alumni were also present. Zhao Shiren said that Pakistan and China were enjoying

time-tested relations which had strong bases on brotherhood. The two countries are collaborating with each other in energy, infrastructure, agriculture, education and other sectors to achieve common goals. He praised the UAF leadership and faculty for the university development and addressing agricultural challenges. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has however opened new avenues for development, he added. Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that 70 teachers from the UAF had received higher education from universities in China.

PFA imposes Rs 630,000 fine on six FBOs

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA), under the supervision of its Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid, visited 18 food points including five superstores, seven poultry shops and six chicken carrier vehicles in Samanabad and Tollinton Market.

The DG said that the food authority imposed Rs 630,000 collective fine on six food business operators (FBOs) for violating the Punjab Pure Food Regulations besides discarding 1,200kg adulterated butter, 200kg substandard desi ghee and 90kg diseased and dead chicken.

Canadian HC visits Meesaq Centre in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP): A delegation led by the Canadian High Commissioner visited the Meesaq Centre in Cantt Thana here on Wednesday and received a briefing on the facilities and initiatives at the centre.

The delegation included the Director General of the National Police Bureau, Dr. Ehsan Sadiq. The Senior officers, including SSP Operations and SP CIA, welcomed the delegation, a news release said.

Minister Health for eradication of polio

Independent Report PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting, chaired by Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah, took place on Tuesday to discuss polio, ongoing challenges, and future strategies.

The meeting included the Special Secretary of Health for Polio Eradication, Abdul Basit, as well as the Provincial EOC Deputy Coordinator, Team Lead from the World Health Organization, and other officials.

During the meeting, the minister was briefed on the current situation of polio in the province, imminent challenges, and proposed plans for the future. Special Secretary for Polio Eradication, Abdul Basit, presented an overview of the polio

situation, addressing concerns and outlining potential strategies.

The situation of polio cases in southern regions was particularly highlighted, with a special exchange of views on the challenges faced in those areas. Minister Shah delved into the reasons behind the persistence of polio campaigns in regions such as Bannu, Lakki Marwat, and Upper and Lower Waziristan.

The meeting also addressed the security challenges faced during polio campaigns in the southern regions. Minister Shah was informed about the security concerns and issues leading to the cancellation of polio campaigns in various southern districts.



KARACHI: Passengers sit on the roof of a bus on MA Jinnah Road in Provincial Capital. Pakistan has one of the world's worst records for fatal traffic accidents, blamed on poor roads, badly maintained vehicles and reckless driving.

Punjab health minister vows comprehensive health sector improvement

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Specialised Healthcare and Medical Education Khawaja Salman Rafique reiterated the government's commitment to enhancing the health sector.

In a series of meetings held at his office on Wednesday, he emphasised the inclusion of all stakeholders in the process to ensure effective reforms. Under the directive of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif,

Minister Rafique affirmed the government's dedication to providing better health facilities to the public. Improving the conditions of government hospitals across Punjab stands as a top priority on the agenda.

He pledged to present a comprehensive report to the chief minister after conducting thorough visits to government hospitals, aiming to address public concerns and enhance service delivery.

7 dead, 1,129 injured in Punjab road accidents

Independent Report LAHORE: At least seven people were killed and 1,129 injured in 1,096 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 492 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 637 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams. The data analysis showed that 605 drivers, 46 underage drivers, 155 pedestrians, and 376 passengers were among victims of the road crashes.

Police arrest two female drug smugglers

PESHAWAR (APP): Mardan City Police, led by SHO Mukadam Khan on Wednesday conducted a successful operation against drug dealers, resulting in the arrest of two female drug smugglers. The arrested individuals, identified as Shumaila and Gulfam, residents of Ternab Charsadda, were apprehended while attempting to smuggle drugs to Punjab.



LAHORE: Teachers and students of Islamia University Bahawalpur are protesting against the alleged sexual harassment in front of Press Club in the Provincial Capital.

LHC gives opportunity to govt for filing reply to SIC's plea

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday adjourned hearing of a petition against non-allocation of reserved seats to Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) till March 25.

The court gave an opportunity to provincial and federal governments for filing written replies to the petition by the next date of hearing.

The single bench comprising Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal heard the petition filed by SIC Chairman Sahibzada Hamid Raza.

During the proceedings, a provincial law officer sought time for filing written reply to the petition while responding to a court query. He submitted that some members had taken oath on reserved seats. The reply will be filed to the extent of other members who had not sworn in yet, he added.

At this stage, the petitioner's counsel requested the court to issue a stay order, adding that it was an important matter. However, the court declined the request.

International News

Putin warns the West: Russia is ready for nuclear war

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin warned the West on Wednesday Russia was technically ready for nuclear war and that if the U.S. sent troops to Ukraine, it would be considered a significant escalation of the conflict.

Putin, speaking just days before a March 15-17 election which is certain to give him another six years in power, said the nuclear war scenario was not "rushing" up and he saw no need for the use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine.

"From a military-technical point of view, we are, of course, ready," Putin, 71, told Rossiya-1 television and news agency RIA in response to a question whether the country was really ready for a nuclear war.

Putin said the U.S. understood that if it deployed American troops on Russian territory - or to Ukraine - Russia would treat the move as an intervention.

"(In the U.S.) there are enough specialists in the field of Russian-American relations and in the field of strategic restraint," said Putin, the ultimate decision maker in the world's biggest nuclear power.

"Therefore, I don't think that here everything is rushing to it (nuclear confrontation), but we are ready for this."

Putin's nuclear warning came alongside another offer for talks on Ukraine as part of a new post-Cold War demarcation of European security. The U.S. says Putin is not ready for serious talks over Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine has triggered the deepest crisis in Russia's relations with the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and Putin has warned several times the West risks provoking a nuclear war if it sends troops to fight in Ukraine.

Putin sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022, triggering full-scale war after eight years of conflict in eastern Ukraine between Ukrainian forces on one side and pro-Russian Ukrainians and Russian proxies on the other.

In a U.S. election year, the West is grappling with how to support Kyiv against Russia, which now controls almost one-fifth of Ukrainian territory and is rearming much faster than the West and Ukraine.

Indian troops begin Maldives pullout after quit order

Monitoring Desk MALE: India has begun withdrawing military personnel operating surveillance aircraft in the Maldives after the new pro-China president ordered them to leave, defence authorities said on Tuesday.

An official of the Maldives National Defence Force (MND) said 25 Indian troops deployed in the southernmost atoll of Addu had left the archipelago ahead of March 10, the official start of the withdrawal agreed by both sides.

"We can confirm that the Indian troop withdrawal is underway," the MND said in a statement. President Mohamed Muizzu came to power in September on a pledge to kick out Indian security personnel deployed in the Maldives to patrol its vast maritime border. The two sides had agreed to complete a withdrawal of 89 Indian troops and their support staff in the Maldives by May 10.



Vladimir Putin speaks during an interview in Moscow.

China says military delegation visited Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: A Chinese military delegation recently visited the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal to discuss further cooperation in defence issues, Beijing said on Wednesday.

Beijing is seeking to build closer ties in South Asia in a push to counter its strategic rival India for influence.

Last week, the Maldives said it had signed a "military assistance" deal with China after ordering Indian troops deployed in the small but strategically-

placed archipelago to leave. Beijing confirmed on Wednesday that a delegation had visited the country and met with pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu during a trip that also took them to Sri Lanka and Nepal from March 4 to 13.

In all three countries, "they exchanged views on military relations and regional security issues of common concern", the Chinese military said in a statement on its official WeChat account.

The delegation of of

Missile hits apartment buildings in Ukraine's Kryvyi Rih, 3 dead, 38 hurt

Monitoring Desk KYIV: A Russian missile slammed into two apartment buildings in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih on Tuesday, killing three people and injuring at least 38, with rescue teams sifting through rubble late into the night in a search for survivors. Ten children were among the injured. Serhiy Lysak, governor of Dnipropetrovsk region, put the provisional injury toll at 28 adults and 10 children and later said

rescue operations had been completed. "Two buildings were hit, one five storeys, one nine storeys," Lysak wrote on Telegram. "The number of injured is constantly rising as is the number of children injured."

Oleksandr Vilkul, head of the Kryvyi Rih's military administration, said at least three hits from the missiles were recorded in the city. He said at least five of the adults and one child being treated in hospital were in critical condition.

Israeli forces kill teenager, two other Palestinians in West Bank raid after deadly night

Monitoring Desk JENIN: Israeli forces killed two Palestinians during a raid in the occupied West Bank early on Wednesday, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported, bringing to five the number of Palestinians killed in different incidents within several hours. Yousef Nimer, a witness, said Israeli forces began firing at people he was sitting with outside a hospital in the city of Jenin as they were finishing Suhr, the final meal before sunrise during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

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Hungary summons US envoy over Biden comments

Monitoring Desk BUDAPEST: The Hun-ga-rian government on Tuesday rejected US President Joe Biden's accusation that Prime Minister Viktor Orban was "looking for dictatorship", summoning the US ambassador over the claim. Relations between the two Nato allied countries have been frosty over the past years, as the United States has frequently criticised Hungary for its close relations with Russia, for holding up Sweden's Nato bid and over democratic backsliding.

Hezbollah attacks two Israeli bases with 100 rockets

Monitoring Desk BEIRUT: Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah said on Tuesday it launched over 100 rockets at Israel's two military bases in retaliation for a strike on the country's east that killed one person the day before.

Hamas ally Hezbollah and Israel have exchanged near-daily cross-border fire since the Gaza war erupted in October, but several Israeli strikes have recently hit Hezbollah positions further north, raising fears of a full-blown conflict.

Hezbollah launched more than 100 Katyusha rockets on Tuesday morning at two military bases in the occupied Golan Heights, the group said in a statement.

This was in response to the Israeli attacks on our people, villages and cities, most recently near the city

of Baalbek and the killing of a citizen", it added.

On Monday, Israeli air strikes near Lebanon's city of Baalbek killed one person. The Israeli military confirmed its jets had hit two sites belonging to Hezbollah's forces in retaliation for strikes on the occupied Golan Heights over several days.

Earlier on Tuesday, Hezbollah said its chief Seyed Hassan Nasrallah met Khalil al-Hayya, a leading member of Hamas's political bureau.

They discussed ceasefire talks for the Gaza war, as well as attacks by Hamas's regional allies to support its war efforts, the Hezbollah said in a statement.

Hezbollah chief Nasrallah is due to give a televised speech on Wednesday.

US announces emergency Ukraine aid, as Poles warn of Russia threat

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden announced an emergency \$300 million military aid shipment for Ukraine on Tuesday, as Poland's leadership visited the White House to warn of the growing threat from Russia.

The White House sidestepped Republicans in Congress, who have for months blocked a much larger package for Kyiv's desperate fight, by using money that the Pentagon had saved on recent purchases. But it warned that the new stopgap package would only last weeks, far too little to stem recent military advances by Russian President Vladimir Putin's troops as they take advantage of US paralysis.

The announcement came as Biden was preparing to host Poland's President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who came bearing

warnings that Russia's aggression will not stop at Ukraine. "This ammunition will keep Ukraine's guns firing for a period, but only a short period," White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters as he announced the aid package. Sullivan added that the aid may only last a couple of weeks, leaving Ukraine outgunned in the face of a Russian war machine that is churning out arms and throwing troops at stalemated towns to force a breakthrough. "It is nowhere near enough to meet Ukraine's battlefield needs and it will not prevent Ukraine from running out of ammunition in the weeks to come." The shipment would include long-range US-made HIMARS rocket systems, anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, artillery shells and small arms ammunition, the Pentagon said.



Greta Thunberg is removed by police officers as she demonstrates outside the Swedish parliament building together with a group of climate activists in Stockholm, Sweden.

Unemployed Afghans risk death and debt in hunt for gold

Monitoring Desk YAFTAL SUFLA: Tearing off a piece of mouldy flatbread, Homayon gulped tea in a brief reprieve from the din of the machines he and a dozen other men were using to dig for gold on a mountainside in north-eastern Afghanistan.

The 30-year-old found little work as a mechanic in nearby Faizabad city, so he banded with

other unemployed men to try their luck carving out a living in the rocky mountains that dominate Badakhshan province.

"Five, six of us were jobless, we came here to see if we can find anything," Homayon said, as the handful of men finished their break and returned to work at the small-scale mine they had set up.

PM hopeful of Pak-Gulf trade to surpass \$1 bn annually

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that once the Pakistan-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Free Trade Agreement come into effect, the existing bilateral trade volume of USD 1 billion per annum had the potential to enhance manifold.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Commander of the Kingdom of Bahrain General Sheikh Mohammad Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa who called on him to convey the greetings of King of Bahrain Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

The prime minister warmly welcomed General Sheikh Mohammad to Pakistan and thanked the Bahrain leadership for their messages of felicitations on his re-election as prime minister, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The situation in Gaza was also discussed and both sides called for an immediate ceasefire and ensuring urgent provision of humanitarian assistance to the innocent Palestinians, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan.

The two countries had excellent defence cooperation, and his visit would enhance these relations even further.

Probe into Opp Leader's 'breach of privilege' allegation directed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Speaker, National Assembly Ghulam Mustafa Shah on Wednesday while exercising his powers directed to initiate a probe into the allegations leveled by the Opposition Leader pertaining to the breach of privilege of the members of the House committed by the Islamabad Capital Territory Police.

The Deputy Speaker while chairing the National Assembly initiated the proceedings by administering oath to the new members of the House including Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) and Tankeen Akhtar Niazi of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Fataha prayer was also offered for the 14 drowned sailors of fishing village Ibrahim Haideri in Karachi.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Safaraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting to review affairs of Health Department.

Pakistan, China to march toward shared development, prosperity: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday said Pakistan and China will march toward shared development and prosperity with joint investments in diverse projects.

In an interview with Xinhua news agency, PM Sharif said the friendship between Pakistan and China spanned more than 70 years and has been nurtured by both countries' leadership to promote friendly relations.

He added that the two

countries have developed as all-weather, "Iron Brothers" and have unique associations of friendship that have stood the test of time. "This friendship now must achieve higher heights," he added.

Chinese President Xi Jinping had congratulated Sharif on his election as prime minister of Pakistan on March 3. In his response, Sharif deeply appreciated Xi's warm message of facilitation and continued support for Pakistan.

"I deeply value his sentiments not only for the people of Pakistan, for our friendship, but our mutual cooperation," he said. "For me, it's a very good start." Highlighting Chinese modernization, a key term defining China's journey to rejuvenation, Sharif, who has served three terms as chief minister of Punjab province, stressed that Pakistan should emulate the model.

"It is a great success model and success story," the prime minister said,

adding that generations of visionary Chinese leaders have led their people to create unprecedented development miracles, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and providing vast rural populations with access to education, health, medical facilities, and employment. The Chinese modernization model created growth centers and sectors that produce competing products by procuring modern knowledge in science and technology, he said.

The meeting decided to ensure posting of doctors and quality healthcare facilities in the interior province.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister regretfully pointed out that majority of doctors are desirous of making their postings in Quetta. However, he directed to the concerned authorities to transfer the doctors in interior province from Quetta without any pressure, and beginning should be made from his district i.e., Dera Bugti in this regard.

The Chief Minister directed to ensure online biometric attendance of the doctors at their respective duty places.

He also directed to install biometric system in all district headquarter hospitals within one month. The necessary summary should be sent for installation of biometric system to him today, and he would accord approval to it right now, adding he stressed.

Mr. Bugti directed to lodge FIR against those making the biometric system disorder intentionally. In addition to this, he also directed to make the Cath lab and CT scan machine functional immediately, he directed further.

He said that we are spending Rs. 60 to 70 billion annually on treatment of the people, but the results are disappointing.

He directed the Secretary Health and Secretary Finance to visit Sindh and prepare recommendations for improvement in the health sector.

He said that the Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has instructed the Sindh government to provide assistance to Balochistan for improvement in the health sector.

Earlier, while briefing meeting, Secretary Health told that there are around 4,000 doctors serving in the health department, but most of them are posted in Quetta. He said that almost all the doctors want to serve in Quetta and no one wants to serve in the interior parts of the province.

Bugti pledges to build standard healthcare institutions in Balochistan on pattern of Sindh

CM directs to ensure online biometric attendance of doctors in all district HQs hospitals of province

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has made a pledge to build the standard healthcare institutions in the province on pattern of Sindh.

He stressed that we have to go for public-private partnership in order to provide quality medical services to the patients.

The Chief Minister was chairing a review meeting of the provincial health department here on Wednesday.

The meeting decided to ensure posting of doctors and quality healthcare facilities in the interior province.

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NA passes resolution demanding ZAB be declared national democratic hero

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Wednesday passed a resolution urging the Federal Government to officially declare former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as a Shaheed and national democratic hero.

The resolution, moved by Shazia Marri, recognized that the trial and subsequent conviction of former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were a gross miscarriage of justice.

The resolution saluted the struggles of Begum Nusrat Bhutto, Shaheed

Mohatma Benazir Bhutto, and the Pakistan People's Party workers who sacrificed their lives to establish this truth.

It appreciated the determination with which President Asif Ali Zardari filed a presidential reference to reopen the case 12 years ago, and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who single-mindedly pursued it.

The resolution lauded the Supreme Court of Pakistan for finally acknowledging and accepting the glaring injustice meted out to Shaheed Zulfikar Bhutto 44 years ago in its judgment.

In light of the historic judgment of the court, the resolution demanded that the unjust verdict given in the Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto case must be overturned.

It also called for conferring the highest civil award, Nishan-e-Pakistan, upon Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Furthermore, the resolution demanded the establishment of the Nishan-e-Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Award for workers and activists who have fought and sacrificed their lives for true democracy in Pakistan.

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Federal Minister for Interior & Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting at Ministry of Narcotics Control in Islamabad.

Dar receives congratulatory messages from world FMs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has received congratulatory messages from his counterparts of various countries on assuming his office.

Foreign Minister of Czech Republic Jan Lipavsky, congratulating Ishaq Dar on his appointment as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan said Czechia and Pakistan had long enjoyed friendly and constructive relations.

Foreign Minister of Maldives Moosa Zameer also extended congratulations saying he was confident that the bilateral relations will continue to grow stronger under his leadership.

ECP finalizes arrangements for conducting Senate by-polls today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday has finalized arrangements for conducting by-elections on Thursday to fill six Senate seats left vacant by the Senators, who were elected to the National and provincial assemblies in the February 8 elections.

The ECP has already dispatched ballot papers and other polling materials to provincial assemblies of Sindh and Balochistan.

Polling was being held for one seat reserved in Islamabad and two general seats in Sindh, as well as three general seats for representing Balochistan. The polling will continue from 8 am to 4 pm at Parliament House, as well as in the buildings of the Sindh and Balochistan Assemblies.

CM orders to dismiss doctors absent from duties in BMC Hospital for several years

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has ordered to dismiss all the doctors who have been absent from their duties for several years in the Bolan Medical Complex (BMC) Hospital Quetta.

The Chief Minister was on late-night surprise visit to the BMC Hospital between Tuesday and Wednesday.

He visited the BMC Hospital to review the situation of health services in the night at the major public sector hospital of Quetta. He expressed his anguish over the absence of doctors from their duties in the hospital. He ordered to dismiss all those doctors who are absent from their duties for last many years.

He also directed to suspend all those doctors and medical staff who are committing negligence from their duties.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti was also displeased to see the poor cleanliness situation in the hospital besides seeing the non-functional machines there.

School admission drive continues in full swing, says Director Schools

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Director Schools Balochistan, Abdul Wahid Shakir has stated that the school admission campaign is continued in full swing in the province.

He expressed the hope that desired goal of the admission campaign would be achieved by enrolling maximum number of children in the schools.

The academic books have been distributed in all government educational institutions.

While speaking to the senior journalist of Chaman, Syed Sardar Muhammad Khondoi, the Director Schools exhorted the parents to get their children enrolled in the schools and decorate them with the ornament of knowledge so that their future is brightened.

SC issues written order regarding hearing on journalists' case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday issued written order regarding hearing of a case pertaining to the FIA's notices to journalists on alleged anti-judiciary campaign.

The four pages order issued by the top court said that the reports of FIA and police regarding attacks on journalists are not satisfactory. It directed the FIA and police to submit detailed reports again.

It said that the Supreme Court or the Registrar Office did not ask for any action against any journalist. The name of the judiciary was wrongly used in the notices issued to journalists.

Naqvi visits Ministry of Narcotics Control

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi visited the Ministry of Anti-Narcotics on Wednesday.

On his visit, he announced not to use his office in the Ministry of Anti-Narcotics saying office in the ministry of interior is enough for him because offices in two ministries are a waste of resources.

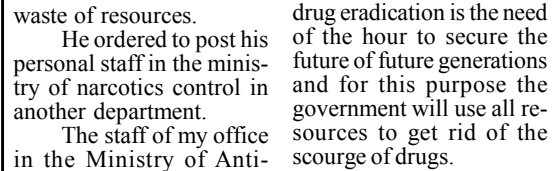
He ordered to post his personal staff in the ministry of narcotics control in another department.

The staff of my office in the Ministry of Anti-Narcotics should be posted in another department.

The manpower of the Minister's Office should be used in other necessary places in the Ministry, said Mohsin Naqvi.

Federal Minister of Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi was given a special briefing regarding the affairs of the Ministry.

The minister said that drug eradication is the need of the hour to secure the future of future generations and for this purpose the government will use all resources to get rid of the scourge of drugs.



ISLAMABAD: Commander of Bahrain National Guard calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Security wall at Gwadar North Free Zone completes

ISLAMABAD (INP): The construction of the 8-km-long boundary wall around Gwadar North Free Zone (Phase II) has been finally completed.

It is a landmark security project that will make sure safety at the north and the south side of Gwadar North Free Zone (Phase II) spreading over 2,221 acres of land, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday.

The 14-feet-high security cemented-wall starts from Gwadar Fish harbor and ends at Koh-e-Mehdi (famous mountain of Gwadar), around five kilometers away from Gwadar Port. The wall runs along the six-lane Eastbay Expressway.

Alongside the Security wall, Gwadar Free Zone North Phase (II) is going to be equipped with all allied services including telecom cabling, sewerage pipes, power transmission lines, road networks and potable water supply lines.

Pakistan envoy calls on Vietnam President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to Vietnam, Samina Mehtab called on President of Vietnam Vo Van Thuong in Hanoi for a farewell meeting.

During the call on, both sides reviewed the overall bilateral ties, with special emphasis on political relations and economic cooperation.

Ambassador Samina Mehtab expressed the desire of the Government of Pakistan to further strengthen bilateral ties with Vietnam in all spheres of mutual interaction.

According to a press release issued on Wednesday, she put forward proposals for cooperation in the fields of political ties, trade, and parliamentary exchanges.

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Displeased to see poor cleanliness, out of order machines

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ASTORE: Heavy machinery being used to remove snow and boulders from the blocked road of Astore Valley by the staffer of Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management authority and Works Department after heavy snow fall and rain in area caused land sliding in diffident area.

By-elections for 23 constituencies on April 21

ISLAMABAD (APP): By-elections for 23 constituencies, comprising six national and 17 provincial assembly constituencies, would be held on April 21, said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The by-elections for many of these National and Provincial constituencies were postponed from February 8 due to various reasons, including the death of contesting candidates and candidates running for multiple seats. Additionally, some constituencies were vacated by winners of dual seats.

According to the schedule released by the Election Commission of Pakistan, by-elections will be held in six National Assembly constituencies, 12 in Punjab, two in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, two in Balochistan, and one in the Sindh Assembly constituencies.

Polling is being held in NA-08 Bajaur, NA-44 Dera Ismael Khan-I, NA-119 Lahore-III, NA-132 Kasur-II, NA-196 Kamber Shahdadkot-I, and NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad-I constituencies. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly comprises PK-22 Bajaur-IV and PK-91 Kohat-II constituencies, while the Balochistan Assembly includes PB-20 Khuzdar-III and PB-22 Lasbela constituencies. A by-election will be held in the Sindh constituency PS-80 Dadu-I. The elections are being held in various Punjab Assembly constituencies, including PP-22 Chakwal-Cum-Falagang, PP-32 Gujrat VI, PP-36 Wazirabad-II, PP-54 Narawal-I, PP-93 Bhakkar-V, PP-139 Sheikhupura-IV, PP-147 Lahore-III, PP-149 Lahore-V, PP-158 Lahore XIV, PP-164 Lahore-XX.



QUETTA: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai presiding over a meeting regarding repair and renovation of Balochistan Assembly