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Member APNS & CPNE

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PM, newly-pick cabinet members visit GHQ. Civil, Military leadership reiterate commitment to work together for prosperous, secure Pakistan

PM says Pakistan is destined to rise and the role of the Armed Forces in ensuring peaceful rise of Pakistan cannot be over-emphasized

Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: Civil and Military leadership of the country have reiterated the commitment to upholding national interests and working together for a prosperous and secure Pakistan.

This was expressed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir during Prime Minister's visit to General Headquarters in Rawalpindi today. He was accompanied by key members of the Cabinet.

The Prime Minister was received by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, and was presented guard of honour.

Floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada was laid by the Prime Minister, to pay tribute to the martyrs.

During the visit, Prime Minister and Cabinet members engaged in discussions with military leadership on matters of national security, regional stability and military preparedness.

They were briefed on the current security environment, threat spectrum, response to the security threats and ongoing counter terrorism operations.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assured that the Government shall provide all the resources required for ensuring operational readiness of the Armed Forces.

The Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet appreciated the professionalism, operational readiness, and sacrifices of Pakistan Army in war

against terrorism.

They also commended the dedication of the Pakistan Army in safeguarding the nation's territorial integrity and ensuring peace and stability.

The Prime Minister said Pakistan is destined to rise and the role of the Armed Forces in ensuring peaceful rise of Pakistan cannot be over-emphasized.

The COAS thanked the Prime Minister for the visit and reposing confidence in the Army.

The COAS affirmed that Pakistan Army will continue to measure up to the nation's expectations and will resolutely support the Government in addressing the security challenges facing Pakistan.

President Zardari visits mausoleum of Bhutto family

LARKANA (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday visited the mausoleum of the martyrs of Bhutto's family at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

He visited the grave of former prime minister and chairperson of PPP Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, laid a floral wreath at the grave and offered "Fateha".

Asif Zardari also visited the graves of founder-chairman of PPP Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Madar-e-Jamhooriat late Begum Nusrat Bhutto, late Shireen Amir Begum, late Mir Murtaza Bhutto and late Mir Shahnawaz Bhutto and laid floral wreaths and offered fateha.

He also prayed for the development and prosperity of the country.

The president was accompanied by Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah on the occasion.

Earlier, on his arrival at Sukkur Begum Nusrat Bhutto Airport, the president was received by Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, Mayor Sukkur Barrister Arslan Sheikh, DIG Sukkur range, Commissioner Sukkur and other top officers of the Sukkur and Larkana divisions.

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RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif presiding over a meeting during his visit to GHQ

NA passes resolution condemning Israeli war on Palestinians

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Assembly on Friday passed a resolution categorically condemning Israeli war on Palestinians.

The resolution moved by Shazia Marri denounced the continued Israeli aggression which has led to the loss of over thirty thousand lives of Palestinians since October last year.

The resolution called upon the federal government to play a more proactive role in pushing the international community to enforce a ceasefire in Gaza.

The House also offered fateha for the Palestinians martyred in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar laid before the House two bills today. These included: The Civil Courts Amendment Bill, 2024 and the Legal Aid and Justice Authority Amendment Bill, 2024.

The chair referred the bills to the standing committees concerned.

Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar

also laid before the House seven ordinances.

These included: Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation Amendment Ordinance 2023, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation Amendment Ordinance, 2023, Pakistan Postal Services Management Board Amendment Ordinance, 2023, the National Highway Authority Amendment Ordinance, 2023, the Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance, 2023, the Privatization Commission Amendment Ordinance, 2023 and the Establishment of Telecommunication Appellate Tribunal Ordinance, 2023. The House also passed a resolution moved by the Law Minister extending the period of the ordinances for a further period of one hundred and twenty days.

Responding to a calling attention notice moved by Naveed Qamar and others, Minister for Commerce Jamal Kamal Khan said the temporary ban on export of bananas and onions is Ramadan specific.

ISLAMABAD: PTI Secretary General and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub, flanked by his party Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali and senior leader Asad Qaiser talking with mediamen.

ISLAMABAD (INP): Foreign Office Spokesperson Murtaza Zahra Baloch has rejected the news circulating on Media regarding the visit of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) delegation to Pakistan.

In response to media queries regarding this visit, she said any stories regarding the visit of a high-level IAEA delegation to Pakistan are fake news. She said no official from IAEA is currently visiting Pakistan, nor are any policy talks planned in the near future with IAEA. She further said that Director General IAEA visited Pakistan in February 2023.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Friday issued written order regarding hearing on a case pertaining to the license of sub-machine guns and prohibited bore weapons.

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It said, "The population is left at the mercy of those publicly brandishing

SMGs and other prohibited bore weapons and the police, the home departments of the provinces and the Ministry of Interior appear uninterested in keeping the people safe. In the area of virtually every market, marriage hall, school and even hospital there are SMGs on open display, including pickups with gun-toting men; the police look the other way and do not challenge when they are illegally double-parked.

A great sense of insecurity must undoubtedly be felt by the majority of the law abiding citizens, who are also intimidated by such offensive behaviour. This lawless state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue. "We are informed that licenses for prohibited bore weapons are issued 'for the purpose of protection or sports'. With regard to whether any other document or permit allowing possessing and carrying prohibited bore weapons the Ministry of Interior skirts the query; it does not provide an answer", it said.

The order said, "During the hearing we enquired how the police or the members of any other law enforcement agency would verify whether the license shown is genuine; we were shockingly told that there is no such mechanism in place. Therefore, even if the police wanted to verify whether a person is in legal possession of a non-prohibited bore weapon they would not be able to do so."

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Friday passed a resolution amidst ruckus by the opposition, extending seven ordinances for a period of 120 days.

The resolution moved by Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar - received approval under Article 89 of the Constitution.

The extended ordinances include the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, the Pakistan Postal Services Management Board (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, the National Highway Authority (Amendment) Ordinance,

2023, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, the Privatisation Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, and the Establishment of Telecommunication Appellate Tribunal Ordinance, 2023.

The resolution brought by Tarar received 130 votes in favour, while sixty-three lawmakers, mainly from the PTI-SIC, opposed it, tearing up copies of the agenda.

The opposition labelled the assembly proceedings as "unlawful".

Speaking on the floor of the House, PTI leader Omar Ayub stated, "We reject the extension of the ordinances." He criticised the rushed legislation, questioning if it was tantamount to selling off the country.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The opposition on Friday claimed that the government's amendments in various ordinances would cast direct impact on the lives of the people.

In a press talk at Parliament's Media Centre, PTI Secretary General and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub, flanked by his party Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali and senior leader Asad Qaiser, criticized the government for carrying out legislation without any consultation with the opposition.

People have been left at the mercy of those waving prohibited arms freely: SC

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LARKANA: President Asif Ali Zardari showering flowers on the grave of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at his mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto.

President Zardari's gratitude shows Pak-China ties now at high level: Wang Wenbin

BEIJING (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari's positive statement is commendable and his gratitude to Chinese President Xi Jinping also shows that the relations between Pakistan and China are now at a high level, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Wang Wenbin said on Friday.

In his letter, President Zardari thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for extending warm congratulations on his re-election as the President of Pakistan.

President Zardari also expressed his commitment to working closely with the Chinese President to the deepen practical cooperation, strengthen the all-weather partnership, and foster a shared community for the benefit of the two countries. "We commend President Zardari's positive statement," Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing in response a question raised by APP.

The spokesperson said that after President Zardari's election, President Xi Jinping expressed congratulations pointing out that the two countries are good neighbors, friends, partners and brothers.

"The ironclad friendship is a historical choice and the treasures for the two peoples," he added.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan addressing the concerns regarding the ban on the export of bananas and onions in National Assembly Session.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Superintendent of Police Khalid Mari on Friday died after armed men opened fire at him in Sibi district of Balochistan.

Deceased was brother of Asghar Mari who contested recent general polls as independent candidate from Sibi.

The DSP was way home when armed men targeted him at Cainak Chowk spraying him with bullet shots.

Resultantly, he suffered critical injuries and succumbed to injuries while way to hospital.

The assailants managed to escape. Local administration is looking into the incident.

Further probe is underway.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Five more Members of the National Assembly elected on reserved seats took the oath on Friday.

Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, administered the oath to the women elected on reserved seats.

MNAs who took the oath included Naïma Kanwal, Asma Arbab Alamgir, Shaheen Shah, Ghazala Anjum and Naeema Kishwer Khan.

Peoples Party's Mir Changez Khan Jamali, Sabir Baloch, Mir Naimatullah Zehri, Nawabzada Saifullah Magsi and Rozi Khan Kakar.

Similarly, among those collected papers from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz were: Shahzaib Durrani, Aurangzai Khetrani and Tariq Hussain.

The Balochistan Awami Party's Ejaz Sanjrani, Kohda Babar and Mobin Khilji were also those who collected the nomination

Daily Voice of Masses
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Irsa controversy

On Thursday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif avoided a public showdown with the PPP — a key ally whose support he must retain to keep the minority PML-N government in power — by rescinding the contentious appointment of retired bureaucrat Zafar Mahmood as the new Irsa chairman. However, it remains unclear if he moved with such speed just to appease the PPP, or whether his advisers had realised the ‘illegality’ of one of his administration’s first major acts.

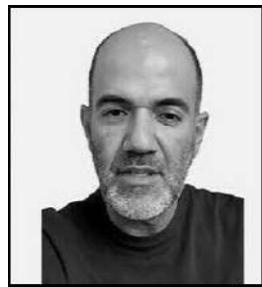
It appears that the appointment was made under a controversial ordinance seeking to restructure Irsa. The ordinance became infructuous as former president Arif Alvi had refused to sign it, as it could have caused friction between the centre and provinces.

The ordinance, prepared by the caretaker government towards the end of its tenure, in breach of its mandate and without consulting the provinces or the CCI, had suggested substantive changes in the ‘federal structure’ of the water regulator, which monitors the distribution of Indus waters among the provinces in accordance with the Water Apportionment Accord, 1991. The ordinance aimed to revise Irsa’s composition, vest its chairman with vast powers, and cut the provinces’ role in its decision-making functions. The chairman was empowered to also review and settle provincial grievances, rendering Irsa members ineffective. Currently, the Irsa chairmanship rotates among the four provincial members, and the authority’s decisions on water issues are made based on majority votes.

Since these proposals allow the PM to exercise a lot of power on Irsa through its chairman and the federal government and effectively have complete control on the authority’s decision-making functions, the ordinance had drawn wide opposition from the Sindh caretaker cabinet and experts. At a time when certain centralist forces are touting the reversal of the landmark 18th Amendment and curtailment of the provincial share of federal taxes under the NFC award as the solution to Pakistan’s economic and political problems, the attempt to ‘centralise’ Irsa and reduce the provincial role in decision-making could exacerbate centre-province and interprovincial disharmony. Besides, the message Islamabad tried to send to the smaller provinces by appointing a strong proponent of Kalabagh as Irsa’s head was unmistakable.

In this context, nobody can fault PPP’s Naveed Qamar for calling out the PM for his “very serious, illegal and unconstitutional” order to, intentionally or unintentionally, attempt to use the infructuous ordinance to “usurp” the rights of the provinces through the appointment of the Irsa chief. “On the very first day, if we start encroaching upon the rights of the provinces, how do we function as a federation?” he asked. While making consequential decisions like this, Mr Sharif should not forget that ill-advised actions can have very serious ramifications for the federation, even if these suit his own party’s politics.

TikTok wars



Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Long before Pakistan’s latest hybrid regime imposed its unannounced ban on the social media site X, TikTok was shut down four times between 2020-21. YouTube was also temporarily banned by Pakistani authorities in the recent past. But the TikTok story takes us far beyond our own uniquely militarised context.

Earlier this week, 81 per cent of members in the US House of Representatives voted in favour of a bill to ban TikTok. The only way the fastest-growing social media app amongst the young can avoid being kicked out of the US market is by its parent company, ByteDance, to divest entirely within six months. The layperson has been led to believe that China owns — and hence controls — ByteDance. In fact, like most contemporary tech companies, it is mostly financed by global investors.

The bill still has to be cleared by the US Senate before going to the White House, but the fact that it has been floated shows how the contradictions of a complex global political economy have become acute and will likely intensify. On the one hand is the fact that capitalism is a fully globalised economic system in which China and many other non-Western economies are major players due to the outsourcing of the manufacturing industry from Western countries after the end of the Cold War. On the other hand is the increasing insularity

of politics in the face of fallout due to the unfettered globalisation of capital.

The far right in Western countries grew out of the global financial crisis of 2007-9. But today, it is a supposedly ‘liberal’ Democratic president in the US that is ratcheting up geopolitical tensions between the pre-eminent global superpower and its emergent rival, China.

Cutting-edge digital technology embodies these contradictions. The world’s most profitable tech companies include Google, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Nvidia and Meta. All of them are headquartered in Silicon Valley and can, on the surface, be considered ‘American’ companies. But to take just one example: Apple’s most well-known and marketable commodity, the iPhone, is largely manufactured in China by an outsourcing company named FoxConn. While there have been attempts to shift some production to India after Covid, the vast majority continue to be manufactured in China.

At an even more molecular level, China is the world’s biggest market for semiconductor chips — the single most important intermediate good in the manufacturing of electronic devices. The US is highly reliant on Chinese companies for materials that are vital for semiconductor production, like gallium and germanium. Long before the prospective TikTok ban, the Biden administration articulated its plans to roll back China’s growing influence by announcing trade bans which equate to “choke points” in the semiconductor supply chain. But the problem is that globalised supply chains supersede any particular ‘national interest’. For most of the modern era, Western dominance has been sustained despite contradictions generated by the interests of Western traders, merchants

and manufacturers to seek profit across the world on the one hand, and the imperatives of empire-building in the name of individual nations — whether Dutch, British, French or American — on the other hand. But in our hyper-digitalised, globalised present, contradictions are of a different magnitude.

Where does that leave the mass of the world’s people? First of all, we must avoid the binary that technology companies and their social media platforms are harbingers of democracy while the state — whether US, Pakistani or another — is exclusively the bad guy. Most tech companies facilitate states when the latter impose censorship and demand access to our data for surveillance purposes. Tech companies also use data to make us into dumbed-down consumers — this ‘platform capitalism’ has earned these companies trillions, turning them into the most profitable businesses in history.

Yes, it is essential that we fight for the freedom to use social media apps for anti-establishment causes. We must resist the ban on X, which is all about suppressing disclosures against post-poll rigging and repression in Pakistan. We must defend TikTok’s mostly unfiltered algorithm, which has allowed the most pro-Palestinian content since Oct 7, 2023. In a similar vein, we must not be drawn into geopolitical wars such as that which Washington is propagating against China. But there are also other wars — class, ethno-national, patriarchal, ecological — in which the mass of the world’s people are pitted against both capitalist technology firms and the coercive surveillance state. These are the wars which will ultimately determine our collective fate. It is this long-term horizon which must guide our battle of ideas on social media. — Courtesy Dawn

Words vs works



Jan-e-Alam Khaki

Muslim-majority societies in general, and South Asian Muslim societies in particular, face numerous conflicting issues with regard to everyday life. These admittedly are very complex problems, which do not lend themselves to easy solutions. This article will focus on what the writer thinks is a major issue and its possible solutions. This issue may be seen as the vast difference between the words we profess (ideals), and the works or actions we demonstrate (realities) in daily life.

Muslim-majority societies are quite proud of having a great religion, great people, a great culture, a great ethical system, etc. Indeed, we may be great in many ways, as we claim. Nonetheless, what needs to be noted is that a nation or a community becomes great not necessarily by claiming greatness, but through evidence on the ground. No society is perfect; that is a given. But what is not a given is the huge difference between our words and actions.

In so many surveys, we always stand near the bottom — whether it is corruption, security of life, respect for human rights, or religious freedom. Despite our claims to greatness, in our daily lives — on the streets, in our offices — we tend to show less than ideal conduct. Look at the way the public has encroached on the roads, public thoroughfares, markets, shopping plazas. The most agonising indiscipline is seen on the roads everywhere —

in both rural and urban settings. Breaking basic traffic laws and discipline is seen as a mark of pride, though all suffer.

We are indeed very good at upholding and observing our religious or cultural practices, which include rituals, customs and attire that are supposed to show our religiosity. We are good even in almsgiving and philanthropy, but in practice, we tend to lack in ethical values, care and concern for the larger society, as required by our faith. Generally, I think a great many of us do not even think about these issues. Often, people say it is the rulers (only) who are corrupt, completely ignoring the fact that we — as common people — waste no time in making unethical choices.

Moreover, I wonder where our leaders come from; do they fall from some other world, or do they rise from amongst us? Blaming our politicians, or bureaucracy, does not absolve us from the way we treat our society. Rich or poor, low or high, illiterate or educated, all seem to contribute to this mess. A beggar who does not need to beg but still does so is a corrupt human; a wealthy person feeding the cycle of corruption is corrupt; a blogger who disseminates fake news is corrupt. If one moves through small or big bazaars, or tries to drive on the roads, one is amazed as to who is really corrupt! Wherever we — the common folk — can, we usurp the rights of others with impunity, and then blame the police or politicians. Not that they are angels, but perhaps we all compete in this corruption.

I think one particular issue plaguing society is the habit of showing off via actions that are symbols of piety, but that lack the spirit that qualifies one as a decent human being. The double standard is reflected well through recent stories of corruption and moral degradation even by those who belt out slogans of justice. It was their actions that betrayed them. Why, one wonders, is there so much gap between words and works, even by those who profess godly attributes, yet resist them so easily?

We need to undertake a rigorous scrutiny of our lives to understand which aspects require serious attention. It is clear that we need to pay attention to our act-i-o-n-s, not so much to our slogans. Self-critique should lead us to focus more on good conduct, proving that actions speak louder than words.

In Islamic ethics, the contradiction between belief and action is called hypocrisy (munafiqat) — an act condemned in strong words. The Quran emphasises competing in good acts (fastabiqul khayrat), because “...the goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute” (5:48). Rather than focusing on who is right we need to focus on what is right (action). Sometimes, people take refuge behind their religious garb to do all sorts of unethical things. This has led to tarnishing the name of religion.

No doubt there are countless very good people as well, doing marvellous things for society in their personal and professional capacity. There are people who always think of doing something good for others and society as a whole. There is no dearth of such people.

Let us, therefore, try to do what we can to make this society a little better with each passing day. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Temporary ban on banana, onion exports implemented for Ramazan: Jam Kamal Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Friday addressed concerns regarding the ban on the export of bananas and onions, clarifying that the restriction is specifically for the duration of Ramazan and is temporary.

The decision to impose the ban was made at the cabinet level following the submission of a summary by the Ministry of National Food Security, and a price escalation predicted by the sensitive price index and export association,

said a press release issued here. This move came in response to a calling attention notice raised by Syed Naveed Qamar and other legislators regarding the impact of the ban on agricultural exports.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan assured the assembly that the ban would remain in effect until the 15th of the following month, highlighting the government’s sensitivity to the concerns raised by agriculturists.

The temporary ban on the export of bananas and onions during Ramazan aims to ensure an adequate

domestic supply of these essential commodities during the holy month, which would ease common people and does not create a false shortage perception.

The government’s decision reflects its commitment to balancing the needs of local consumers with the interests of agricultural producers. While the ban presents a short-term restriction on export opportunities for farmers, it underscores the government’s proactive approach to managing food security during religious observances.

Weekly inflation up by 1.35 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.35 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on March 14, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 32.89 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, increased by 0.91 per cent and went up to 320.06 points from last week’s 317.18 points.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Eight ships namely, MSC Rowan, Athenian, Grammy Brave, Silver Zoe, FSM, Dravin, Al-Rayyan and CP Shenzhen, carrying Container, General Cargo, Gas oil, LPG, LNG and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, FOTCO Terminal, Engro Terminal, Southern Gas Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Thursday. Meanwhile three more ships, Bharadwaj, MSC Spring-III and Hafnia Shanghai scheduled to load/offload River Sand.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb calls on by Ambassador of the European Union (EU), Dr. Riina Kionka & discussed matters of mutual interest, economic & financial relations between the EU & Pakistan.

Finance minister appraises EU, Ambassador on vital reform priorities of Govt

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday appraised the European Union (EU) Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kionka about the important reform priorities of the Government.

The Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kionka called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, said a press release issued here.

The Finance Minister also shared possible areas of mutual collaboration including digitization, export competitiveness, livestock and dairy production.

The Ambassador acknowledged the economic agenda of the Government and assured the Finance Minister of EU’s continued support to Pakistan.

The Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, at the Finance Division.

Finance Minister

Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed the Ambassador of the EU and appreciated the longstanding bilateral relations and development cooperation between EU and Pakistan.

He thanked the Ambassador for EU’s ongoing support in flood-affected areas of Pakistan.

Dr. Riina Kionka congratulated the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue on his recent appointment to office and looked forward to collaborating with the new Government.

Zong, JS Zindigi sign MOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zong 4G Pakistan’s leading mobile network operator, and JS Zindigi, a leading digital financial services provider, announced a lucrative partnership to offer Banking-as-a-Service (BaaS) within the My Zong App (MZA).

JS Zindigi is a digital financial services provider in Pakistan, offering a comprehensive suite of mobile wallet solutions and digital banking services. Based on a dedicated team empowered by the latest technology, upholding the highest ethical standards

seeking to create value for their stakeholders and a responsible contribution to society, said a news release. This collaboration brings greater financial convenience to Zong 4G’s broad user base. My Zong App users can now open JS Zindigi wallet accounts directly within the app, enabling them to avail a range of JS Zindigi’s digital financial services.

This integration will allow users to effortlessly top-up their mobile accounts, settle postpaid bills and to purchase Zong 4G data bundles.

Economy improving, confidence of investors rising: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that the economic conditions are improving and confidence of investors is rising.

to slash interest rates by at least four percent.

During the current year, the overall economic conditions were better than last year, he added.

However, it was the new government’s responsibility to improve further the conditions, and they will continue to receive the unconditional support of the business community.

The business leader said there was yet to be an immediate solution to Pakistan’s economic problems. A long battle will have to be fought for this, which will be a test of the new government and the finance minister, and success will be the only option.

Talking to business community on Friday, he said that the improved situation infuses confidence in the local and foreign investors, while the central bank was also considering some reduction in the interest rate. Mian Zahid Hussain said the business community wants the Central Bank



ISLAMABAD: MNA Anjum Aqeel and President ICCI Ahsan Bakhtawari taking oath from newly elected cabinet members of F-8 Traders Association.

Engro fertilizers engages dealers for urea price enforcement

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to support the Government’s efforts to ensure urea availability at official prices, Engro Fertilizers has urged its dealers to comply with company guidelines on pricing and strictly ensure product availability to the farmers.

commented that “Engro Fertilizers has always adhered to highest standard of integrity and holds the same expectations from its dealers. To support the prosperity of farmers, Engro dealers must ensure urea availability at official prices.

To enforce guidelines of selling Urea at MRP, Engro Fertilizers hosted dealer conferences in Lahore, Multan and Hyderabad, said a news release received here on Friday.

Further, Engro Fertilizers has not increased the selling price of imported urea to facilitate the Government in providing support to farmers.”

Addressing the event participants, Engro Fertilizers VP Marketing Atif Muhammad Ali

the dealers were also updated on the recent gas price hike and the disparity of gas prices that exists among different fertilizer players.



ISLAMABAD: CEO Telenor Khurram Ashfaq calls on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

ADB delegation calls on KP CM, discusses mutual cooperation

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of Asian Development Bank (ADB) called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur at Pakhtunkhwa House, Islamabad and discussed with him matters related to mutual cooperation with special focus on development projects of public welfare being carried out in the province with the financial assistance of the bank, said an official press release issued here on Friday.

Provincial Minister Arshad Ayub was also present on the occasion. Talking on this occasion, the Chief Minister termed the Asian Development Bank as an important development partner of the provincial government and said that his government wanted to continue this partnership in a more integrated and an effective manner. He added that work on a number of development projects in the various sectors with the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank was in progress. However, the chief minister said that incumbent provincial government also wanted to further enhance and extend this mutual cooperation and partnership to different sectors including water supply, solar energy, flood protection, solid waste management, urban transport, agriculture, livestock, food security and other sectors of social services. "We expect special cooperation from our development partner for the development of newly merged districts and other backward areas of the province," he said and added that providing employment opportunities

to the people and promoting self-employment among our talented youth are the priority areas of his government. Apart from this, he said the government also plans to initiate a program for renovation of all major cities in the province. He further stated that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project assisted by ADB was an important project of the provincial government; we need special cooperation for implementing Phase-II of this project as well. "The provincial government has a lot to do in different sectors specially in tourism, health, education, PHE and others," he remarked and said that the government would like to work in a partnership with ADB for providing basic facilities in the sectors of social services.



NAWABSHAH: President Asif Ali Zardari offers Fatcha on his father Hakim Ali Zardari's grave.

Minister inaugurates Ramazan Dastarkhwan in Panah Gar Mardan

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru has inaugurated the Ramazan Dastarkhwan at the Panah Gah run by the Social Welfare Department at the District Headquarters Hospital, Mardan. Members of Provincial Assembly, Iftikhar Ali Mashwani, Tufail Anjum, Abdul Salam Afridi, Ehtsham Advocate and Zarshad Khan besides Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayaz Khan Sherpao, Medical Superintendent of DHQ Hospital Dr. Javed

Iqbal also participated in the inauguration ceremony. On this occasion, the minister was informed that Sehri and iftar facilities were regularly provided to common people including patients' caregivers. Talking to the media persons, Zahir Shah Toru said that at the moment a total of 11 Panah Gahs were functional in the province where quality food was provided in iftar and Sehri to the people. To a question, the minister informed that a special campaign was going on throughout the province to control prices.

PHC CJ to retire on April 14

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court Justice Ibrahim Khan would retire on April 14. The present Chief Justice PHC, Justice Ibrahim Khan, became an Additional Judge of Peshawar High Court in 2016. He became a permanent judge of PHC in 2018 and the Chief Justice of the high court on July 6, 2023. After the retirement of Justice Ibrahim Khan, the number of judges in the High Court would be reduced to 14.

Man awarded 10-year jail for selling prohibited drugs

SARGODHA (APP): Chairman Drug Court Syed Khalid Javed Bukhari decided a drug case on Friday and awarded 10-year jail term to a medical store owner after solid evidence was presented against him about violation of the rules. According to the prosecution, Drug Inspector Sahiwal Fahim Zia had sent a challan in 2017 against medical store owner, Hamza, a resident of Sahiwal, alleging that he was selling prohibited medicines without having any licence.

Governor hosts ceremony for gold medalist students of Khyber Girls Medical College

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Friday arranged a ceremony to give cash prizes to the top three gold medalists of Khyber Girls Medical College (KGMC). The ceremony was also attended by Mayor Peshawar, Haji Zubair Ali, Vice Dean KGMC, Professor Amir Muhammad, faculty members, students and parents of gold medalist students.

medal in a session 2018-19 and Ayesha Iqbal who was on top in 2019-20. Ten students from merged districts including four girl students of Mohmand, two from South Waziristan, and one student each from Khyber, Bajaur, North Waziristan and Frontier Region Peshawar were also given prizes. Cash assistance was also given to forty class IV employees of KGMC.

The governor gave cash prizes to three students of KGMC including Tasneem Zehra of Upper Dir who won the gold medal in the session of 2017-18, Mahnoosh Saleh winner of the gold

ceremony, the governor congratulated students and their parents expressing hope that new doctors would tirelessly work for the betterment of the ailing community with passion and professionalism.



LAHORE: US Consul General, Ms. Kristin K. Hawkins meeting with Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan.

7 dead and 1276 injured in 1195 road traffic crashes in Punjab

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Emergency Services Department (ESD) responded to 1195 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. In these RTCs, 7 people died, whereas 1276 were injured. Out of these, 566 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 710 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals. The majority (73%)

involved Motorbikes, therefore effective enforcement of traffic laws and lane discipline are essential to reduce the increasing number of road traffic crashes. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 700 drivers, 57 underage drivers, 177 pedestrians, and 406 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 232 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 251 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Faisalabad 97 in with 105 victims and at third Multan.



KARACHI: Senior Leader of MQM-P Syed Mustafa Kamal visiting Aukhwat Foundation Office.

Punjab govt to initiate think tank to boost healthcare systems

Independent Report
LAHORE: In a bid to enhance healthcare services across the province, Punjab Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Khawaja Salman Rafiq has announced the formation of a dedicated think tank. The initiative aims to revamp the health sector, with a focus on flagship programs at various levels of healthcare facilities. The inaugural meeting of the Health Advisory Committee, chaired by the minister alongside Primary and Secondary

Healthcare Department Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir, marked a significant step towards this endeavor. Both ministers emphasized the government's commitment to leveraging the expertise of seasoned health professionals for system enhancement. During the meeting, Provincial Minister of Primary and Secondary Health Care Khawaja Imran Nazir expressed gratitude for Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's dedication to improving healthcare.

Robbers gangs busted, stolen motorcycles recovered

MULTAN (APP): Police claimed to have arrested two gangs involved in motorcycle snatching and recovered Rs 1.5 million stolen motorcycles from their possession. According to spokesperson for police, SHO Sadar Nazakaat along with his team raided and arrested two members of Adnan alias Dani gang including ring leader Adnan and Bilal. Likewise, ring leader of Fida Hussain alias Fida Hussain named Fida Hussain was arrested by the police. Police have also recovered 14 stolen motorcycles from the arrested suspects. 20 cases were traced from the arrested accused. Further action was being taken by the police against the accused.

Record of cases registered against Imran Riaz, Azam presented in LHC

LAHORE (Online): Record of the cases registered against the journalist Imran Riaz and PFI leader Azam Swati has been presented in Lahore High Court (LHC). The petition regarding provision of details of the cases came up for hearing in LHC Friday. FIA and IG Punjab presented details of cases on the order of court. Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Tariq Bashir submitted the

details of the cases from FIA side. According to state counsel one case is registered in cyber crime Lahore against the journalist Imran Riaz, one in City police station Sangla Hill Nankana Sahb and two cases in police station Attock and Sadar police station Chakwal. The other different five cases registered against Imran Riaz have been cancelled.

International News

Putin asks voters, including in annexed Ukrainian areas, to determine Russia's future

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin appealed to voters, including in annexed parts of Ukraine, to be united in determining Russia's future by casting ballots in this week's presidential election which he is all but certain to win. "It is vital to underscore our cohesion and resolve and move forward together. Every vote you cast is valued and meaningful," Putin said in a video address first shown in the Russian far east and reported by national news agencies. "I therefore ask you in the coming three days to

Polls open in Russian vote to extend Putin's reign

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russians started voting on Friday in a three-day presidential election that is set to hand veteran leader Vladimir Putin another six-year term as the raging conflict in Ukraine spreads further into Russian territory. In power as president or prime minister since the final day of 1999, the former KGB agent is casting the election as a show of Russians' loyalty and support for his military assault on Ukraine, now in its third year. Polling stations in a country spread over 11 time zones opened at 8am on Friday (8pm GMT Thursday) on the Far Eastern Kamchatka peninsula and will close on Sunday at 8pm (6pm GMT) in Russia's Kaliningrad exclave, wedged between EU members Poland and Lithuania.

exercise your right to vote." Putin, 71 and in power as president or prime minister since 2000, faces three challengers in three days of voting beginning on Friday. None of the challengers has criticised him. Opinion polls show he is supported by a majority of Russians, with one survey last month giving him 75% support. Two candidates who had hoped to run on a platform of calling for an end to the war in Ukraine, officially described by Russia as a "special military operation," were ruled ineligible.



A woman votes in Russia's presidential election in the far eastern city of Vladivostok.



PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in the driver's seat of a new main battle tank after a training exercise for tank crews at an undisclosed location.

The first ship to use a new sea route approaches Gaza with 200 tons of aid

Monitoring Desk
WADI GAZA: A ship carrying 200 tons of aid approached the coast of Gaza on Friday in a mission to inaugurate a sea route from Cyprus to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in the enclave five months into the war between Israel and Hamas. The ship, operated by the Spanish aid group Open Arms, left Cyprus on Tuesday towing a barge laden with food sent by World Central Kitchen, the charity founded by celeb-

city chef José Andrés. It could be seen off Gaza's coast Friday morning. Israel has been under increasing pressure to allow more aid into Gaza. The United States has joined other countries in airdropping supplies to the isolated region of northern Gaza and has announced separate plans to construct a pier to get aid in. Aid groups said the airdrops and sea shipments are far less efficient ways of delivering the massive amounts of aid needed in Gaza.

North Korean leader 'drives' new battle tank

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea leader Kim Jong Un drove a "new-type main battle tank" while overseeing military training exercises, state media said on Thursday, as Seoul and Washington wrap joint drills to improve deterrence. Wearing a black leather jacket, Kim saluted ranks of camouflage-uniformed troops, and watched live-fire "training march" exercises from a field command post, flanked by top generals, images published by state media showed.

US Senate leader says Netanyahu an obstacle to peace

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer called on Thursday for new elections in Israel, harshly criticising Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as an obstacle to peace. Democrat Schumer, long a supporter of Israel and the highest-ranking US Jewish elected official, told the Senate that Netanyahu's government "no longer fits the needs of Israel" five months into a war. "As a democracy, Israel has the right to choose its own leaders, and we should let the chips fall where they may. But the important thing is that Israelis are given a choice. There needs to be a free debate about the future of Israel after Oct 7," Schumer said. "In my opinion, that is best accomplished by holding an election," he said.

Israeli strikes kill at least 29 Gazans awaiting aid, say Palestinian officials

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: At least 29 Palestinians were killed while awaiting aid in two separate Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, Gaza's health ministry said. In the first incident, Palestinian health officials in the Hamas-ruled strip said eight people were killed in an airstrike on an aid distribution centre in Al-Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip. Later, at least 21 people were killed and more than 150 wounded by Israeli gunfire at a crowd

awaiting aid trucks at a northern Gaza roundabout, Gaza's health ministry said. In a statement, Israel's military denied attacking aid centres, describing the reports as "false." "As the IDF assesses the incident with the thoroughness that it deserves, we urge the media to do the same and only rely on credible information," the statement said. The Gaza conflict has displaced most of the enclave's 2.3 million population. Chaotic scenes and deadly incidents have taken place during aid distributions

as desperately hungry people scrambled for food. On Feb. 29, Palestinian health authorities said Israeli forces shot dead more than 100 Palestinians as they waited for an aid delivery near Gaza City. Israel blamed the deaths on crowds that surrounded aid trucks, saying victims had been trampled or run over. In Deir Al-Balah, also in central Gaza, an Israeli missile hit a house on Thursday, killing nine people, Palestinian medical said.

Hezbollah tells Iran it would fight alone in any war with Israel

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: With ally Hamas under attack in Gaza, the head of Iran's Quds Force visited Beirut in February to discuss the risk posed if Israel next aims at Lebanon's Hezbollah, an offensive that could severely hurt Tehran's main regional partner, seven sources said. In Beirut, Quds chief Esmail Qaani met

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the sources said, for at least the third time since Hamas' deadly Oct. 7 attacks on southern Israel and Israel's devastating retaliatory assault on Gaza. The conversation turned to the possibility of a full Israeli offensive to its north, in Lebanon, the sources said.

At least 8 dead after migrant boat sinks off Turkey, state media says

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: At least eight people drowned when a rubber boat carrying migrants sunk off Turkey's northwest province of Canakkale, the state-run Anadolu news agency reported on Friday.

US commandos train for the unexpected in North Korea's shadow

Monitoring Desk
GWANGJU: US special operations troops in South Korea are training and preparing for unexpected threats at a time when global crises are more interconnected than ever, their commander said during an exercise this week. "Nothing in the history of the United States should give us any

faith and confidence that we know where the next threat is coming from," Brigadier General Derek Lipson of Special Operations Command - Korea said in an interview on the sidelines of joint drills. Nuclear-armed North Korea in recent years has made unprecedented strides in its weapons programs.

Data collected through 7th digital census is strategic resource for data driven Policy making: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Friday said the data collected through 7th Population and Housing Census-2023 is a strategic resource for 'Data Driven Policy Making'.

Ahsan Iqbal appreciated PBS on completing gigantic activity of 7th Population and Housing Census in challenging timelines during his visit to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) after assuming the charge of the Ministry, said a press

release issued here.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal anticipated that it is the time to get the benefits from the digital Population Census that was conducted in 2023 and was approved unanimously.

Professor Ahsan Iqbal announced to conduct First Data Fest in Pakistan in 2024, the initiative of First Data Fest will be a great step towards extending the benefits of data and bridging gap between data producers and users.

As it will inform Government and Private Sec-

tors, Academia, business communities how to get benefit from Data.

"The population Growth Rate of Pakistan is 2.55% which is alarming and indicative of decline in proper allocation of resources", Prof. Ahsan Iqbal.

"Efforts should be made to work in collaboration with universities to share practical knowledge with students of Statics and relevant Field", Prof. Ahsan Iqbal.

For Price Governance and controlling inflation,

PBS has developed Decision Support System for Inflation (DSSI). The live demonstration of system was presented by Mr. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal, Member (Support Services/IT).

Chief Statistician, Dr. Naem uz Zafar, Member (Support Services), Mr. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal and Member (Census and Surveys) along with senior officers of PBS extended a warm welcome to the Minister and congratulated him on assuming his responsibilities.



Nawabshah: President Asif Ali Zardari meets with elected representative at Zardari House.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Donald Blome, Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

DG BCSA, participants of 3rd MCMC visit TBTP Wildlife component office

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Director General Balochistan Civil Service Academy (BCSA), Dr. Hafeez Jamali along with faculty members and participants of 3rd Mid-career Management Course (MCMC) visited the TBTP Wildlife Component office here on Friday.

Also present on the occasion were Secretary Forests and Wildlife, Abdul Rauf Baloch, Chief Conservator Syed Ghulam Muhammad and CDS Syed Abdul Jalil Agha were present.

The visitors were briefed about the modern

technology, EB X sense fly. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Forests and Wildlife, Abdul Rauf Baloch said that GIS and Remote sensing is requirement of the present era.

He said that no department can process without using modern technology and procedure without coming at par.

DG BCSA appreciated the initiatives of Forests and Wildlife and announced to continue activities with Forest department in future. In the end, gifts and souvenirs were distributed among the participants.

AC Sanjawi visits utility store to review price of items

QUETTA (APP)- Assistant Commissioner (AC) Sanjawi Moeem Khan Gichki visited the utility store on the special instructions of Deputy Commissioner Zariat Hamoodur Rehman on Friday and reviewed the prices of items and quality of them. He found severe shortage of sugar and ghee in the store. The Assistant Commissioner also assured to meet the shortage immediately by contacting the concerned authorities to eliminate the shortage of essential items in the utility stores. He said that in order to provide relief to the people under the Prime Minister's Ramadan package in the holy month of Ramadan and ensure the supply of self-drinking flour, ghee, sugar, pulses, rice and other items in the stores in charge of utility stores.

SBP to announce monetary policy on March 18

KARACHI (INP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will announce monetary policy on Monday March 18, 2024.

According to a statement issued here on Friday, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of SBP will meet on March 18 to decide about the Monetary Policy.

The MPC will review the overall economic and financial situation, major indicators, data of different sectors, and major developments taken place since the announcement of the previous monetary policy.

DC Suhbatpur chairs meeting for provision of facilities to people in Ramadan

QUETTA (APP)-Deputy Commissioner (DC) Suhbatpur Mir Miran Khan Baloch on Friday chaired a meeting to implement official price control of edible items to provide maximum facilities to people in the Holy month of Ramadan.

Assistant commissioners of Anjuman Tajran Urban Action Committee and utility stores and others participated in the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Suhbatpur Mir Miran Khan Baloch said that the traders community should play their vital role to cooperate with the administration to implement the price control of items and provide cheap food items to the people during the month of Ramadan.

He said that by serving the poor and needy people in this blessed month, we could have peace of mind and beauty our hereafter. Legitimate profits should be earned, hoarding and high sellers would not be allowed.

Quetta district admin warns stern action against illegal petrol pumps

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Quetta district administration has decided to take stern action against the illegal mini petrol pumps operating in the metropolises.

The administration has directed the owners and operators of illegal mini petrol pumps to close down their outlets, otherwise stern action would be taken against them.

The Assistant Commissioners of Quetta have issued official letters addressing the owners / operators of the illegal mini

petrol pumps to close their illegal business within five days. Otherwise, their outlets would be sealed and FIRs would be lodged against them on violation, it has been warned by the Assistant Commissioners.

Prior to this, the Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat had also taken notice of the operation of illegal mini petrol pumps in Quetta and directed to take action against those involved in the illegal business.

Delegation of Beef, Mutton Association calls on Hamza Shafiqat

QUETTA (APP)-A delegation of Beef and Mutton Association led by President of Beef Haji Sarmad Siddique and Naseebullah met Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafiqat on Friday. The delegation of Beef and Mutton Association said that a committee was formed to analyze the livestock market in the Price Control Committee meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's Office.

In which representatives of Labor Department, Industry Department, DC Office and Beef and Mutton Association went to the cattle market and bought animals and determined the price after slaughtering them. The delegation said that the demand of Beef and Mutton Association is that the price list should be issued in the light of the report of the analysis committee.

They said that raids on butchers' shops, fines and arrests have been started as soon as Ramadan begins, this was causing concern among members of the Beef and Mutton Association.

They said that the series of raids on butchers' shops should be stopped and a new price list should be issued to them. Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafiqat listened carefully to the problems of the representatives of Beef and Mutton Association and assured them to solve their problems, saying that our effort would be to provide maximum relief to the people and save the butchers from loss. The Beef and Mutton Association announced the postponement of its protest in the light of the report of the analysis committee.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta and Administrator Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat presides over a meeting, at Metropolitan Corporation Office in Quetta.

Religious scholars, leaders denounce Islamophobia as a threat to global peace, harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) observed the 'International Day to Combat Against Islamophobia' across the nation, with religious scholars and leaders delivering poignant messages during Friday prayers.

They unequivocally denounced Islamophobia as a manifestation of fear, prejudice, and hatred against Muslims, stressing the urgent need for its swift and complete eradication.

The escalating tide of Islamophobia in the Western world, they warned, not only precipitates a clash between civilizations but also poses a grave threat to global peace.

Emphasizing Islam's core message of security and

peace for all humanity, they lamented that Islamophobia fosters inter-faith animosity and erodes understanding between civilizations. Furthermore, they underscored Islam's teachings of promoting interfaith harmony, categorically stating that Islam is neither an extremist religion nor does it endorse terrorism.

PUC Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, along with esteemed scholars including Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Nauman Hashir, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Muhammad

Ashfaq Pittafi, Maulana Abu Bakr Hameed Sabri, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Haq Nawaz Khalid, Maulana Obaidullah Gormani, Allama Tahir-ul-Hasan, Maulana Hanif Osmani, Maulana Muhammad Asghar Khosa, Maulana Anwar-ul-Haq Mujahid, Maulana Abdul Malik Asif, Maulana Aslam Siddique, Maulana Abdul Hakeem Athar, Maulana Abdullah Haqqani, Maulana Abdul Waheed Farooqi, Maulana Abu Bakr Hamza, Maulana Habib Rehman Abid, Maulana Aminul Haque Ashrafi, Maulana Izzatul Haque Khalid, Sahibzada Hamza Tahirul Hasan, Maulana Saadullah Ludhianwi, Maulana Anisur Rahman Baloch.

Pak Railways breaks record with longest freight train run

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has shattered records with its latest freight train journey, marking a significant milestone in the nation's transportation sector.

The historic freight train, spanning an impressive length of over 2,500 feet and comprising a whopping fifty coaches, embarked on its journey propelled by the formidable GE U40 locomotive engine, said Railway spokesperson on Friday.

He said that this monumental train journey commenced from Karachi, the bustling metropolis of Pakistan, carrying a staggering load of over 3,000 tons of cargo destined for Kotri.

This monumental initiative not only signifies a breakthrough for Pakistan Railways but also promises substantial benefits for the nation, he added.

By transferring such massive quantities of cargo via rail, the spokesperson said the endeavor was poised to alleviate the burden on road traffic significantly, easing congestion and enhancing transportation efficiency across the country.

Moreover, he said the shift towards rail transport for freight purposes aligns with global efforts towards environmental preservation, as it effectively reduces pollution and carbon emissions associated with traditional road transport methods.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, receives comprehensive briefing at Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

PM, US ambassador discuss bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan Donald Blome paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Friday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction on the present state of bilateral relations. He emphasized the need to maintain the positive momentum by regular convening of existing dialogue mechanisms, focused on trade, investment, energy, health, defence, education, agriculture and climate change.

The prime minister said that his government would focus on macro-economic reforms to stabilize the economy and attract foreign investment. In this

regard, he also highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) that has been established to fast-track foreign investments in priority sectors in Pakistan.

A number of issues of bilateral and regional significance were also discussed during the meeting, including the situation in Gaza and the Red Sea, developments in Afghanistan, as well as the case of Dr Aafia Siddiqui, which was raised forcefully by the prime minister.

While congratulating the prime minister on his re-election, ambassador Blome said that the U.S. considered Pakistan an important partner and hoped to work with the government to build stronger ties between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, receives comprehensive briefing at Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

No one to be allowed to violate official price list, warns Additional DC

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Additional Deputy Commissioner Chaman, Arif Khan Kakar has categorically stated that no one would be allowed to violate the official price list during the month of Ramadanul Mubarak in Chaman.

He said that stern action is being taken against the profiteers and hoarders.

He said that several shops were sealed and many shopkeepers were arrested on the charges of profiteering in Chaman on directives of the Deputy Commissioner Captain (Retd) Raja Athar Abbas.

The teams headed by Additional Deputy Com-

missioner Arif Khan Kakar, Assistant Commissioner Sadar, Habibullah, Tehsilidar Sadar, Abdul Razzaq Miani, SHO Levies and Police have been continuing inspection of different outlets including biscuit factories and bakery shops. Many shops were arrested on charges of profiteering besides poor cleanliness and hygienic conditions there.

In addition to this, inspection of utility stores is also being done in the town to check the prices there.

It is being ensured by the administration to ensure availability and selling of the edibles and other items on official price list.

Ramadan is month of personal accountability & reform: Samina

Independent Report
 QUETTA: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri on Friday said that the month of Ramadan was the month of personal accountability. This month teaches us to control our desires and self through which the believers have the ability to lead a life with patience and discipline, she said.

She expressed these views in her statement here saying that this time in Ramadan, must remember the Palestinian brothers and sisters in your prayers and make special prayers for them that Allah protects the Palestinian citizens from the persecution of Israel and grants us Muslims the ability to help the Palestinian people. She said that it was a matter of concern for the Muslim Ummah that the Israelis have failed to stop the ongoing brutality of the Palestinians. Senator Samina also said that we should look around and if someone was in need, help him immediately, this way

Submission of papers for Senate election begins

KARACHI (APP): The process of submission of nomination papers for Senate elections has started from today (March 15) which will continue till March 16.

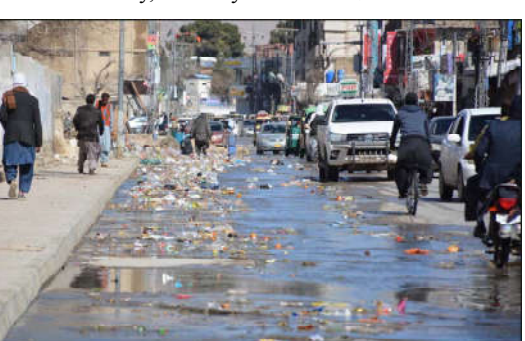
According to the schedule issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan for the Senate elections, the Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh/Returning Officer for Senate Elections Sharifullah is receiving nomination papers from candidates.

The list of candidates will be published on March 17, after which the scrutiny of papers will be done on March 19.

Pak Army organizes cultural symposium in Bajaur

BAJAUR (Online): Pakistan Army organized a cultural symposium for the protection of regional language, traditions and culture in Bajaur district.

Renowned poets from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated in the symposium. The local singers presented Pashto language and its historical significance in their own style through folk music. More than 75 paintings by various artists were also exhibited in the symposium, while stalls of books, handicrafts and local products were also set up.



QUETTA: A view of accumulated sewerage water on imdad chowk crating problems for locals.



QUETTA: Haq Do Tehreek Chairman, Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

Sardar Sarbuland welcomes resolution passed in NA regarding Shaheed ZAB

QUETTA (APP)-Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Balochistan Spokesperson Sardar Sarbuland Jozezai welcomed the resolution passed in the National Assembly (NA) regarding Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He said that the Senate, Balochistan and Sindh Assembly have already passed the resolutions, Barrister Gohar's stance regarding the resolution was condemnable, which PPP Balochistan was condemned.

In a statement issued here on Friday, Sardar Sarbuland Jozezai said that the Supreme Court of Pakistan has said in its opinion on the presidential reference regarding the execution of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that the punishment given to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was wrong.

He said that the Sen-

ate of Pakistan, Balochistan Assembly and Sindh Assembly officially approved the resolutions declaring Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as martyr and national hero. After which the National Assembly has also passed this resolution with a huge majority, in which it is demanded that the unfair decision be changed, he said.

He said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto should be officially declared a martyr and given the highest civilian award Nishan Pakistan. He said that Barrister Gohar's statement on the approval of the resolution is condemnable and shameful. Sardar Sarbuland Jozezai has congratulated the members of the National Assembly of PPP and allied parties on the approval of the resolution by the National Assembly.