

Independent

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UNSC demands immediate ceasefire in Gaza for first time

US abstains, remaining 14 council members vote yes, resolution demands immediate release of all hostages, expansion of humanitarian aid.

UNITED NATIONS, United States (AFP/APP): After more than five months of war, the UN Security Council for the first time Monday demanded an immediate ceasefire after the United States, Israel's ally which vetoed previous drafts, abstained.

Drawing unusual applause in the often staid Security Council, all 14 other members voted in favor of the resolution which "demands an immediate ceasefire" for the ongoing Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

The resolution calls for the truce to lead to a "lasting, sustainable ceasefire"

and demands that fighter groups should free people seized on October 7.

Russia at the last minute objected to the removal of the word "permanent" ceasefire and called a vote, which failed to gain a passage.

The successful resolution was drafted in part by Algeria, the Arab bloc's current member on the Security Council, with a diverse array of countries including Slovenia and Switzerland.

The United States has vetoed previous bids for a ceasefire but has shown growing frustration with Israel, including its stated

plans to expand its military operation to the packed southern city of Rafah.

A change in tone towards its Middle Eastern ally was seen Friday, when the United States put forward a resolution to recognize "the imperative" of an "immediate and sustained ceasefire." But that text was blocked by Russia and China, which along with Arab states criticized it for stopping short of explicitly demanding Israel halt its campaign in Gaza.

The United States had repeatedly blocked ceasefire resolutions as it attempts to walk a line between supporting Israel

with military aid and voicing frustration with leader Benjamin Netanyahu as the civilian death toll in the Gaza Strip mounting.

Unlike Friday's text, the call for a ceasefire in the new resolution is not directly linked to ongoing talks, led by Qatar with support from the United States and Egypt, to halt fighting.

Israel has criticized the Security Council for previous resolutions.

The October 7 attack by the fighter group on Israel resulted in the deaths of about 1,160 people, according to an AFP tally of Israeli figures. Israel's mili-

tary campaign in response to eliminate fighter group, has killed more than 32,000 people, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Palestine territory.

The Security Council has been divided over the Israel-Gaza war since the October 7 attacks, only approving two of eight resolutions, which both mainly dealt with humanitarian aid.

And those resolutions seem to have had little effect on the ground, where UN personnel say Israel continues to block aid convoys as experts warn of looming famine.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Broadcasters Association calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Privatization of loss making entities priority of govt PM urges electronic media to support govt's efforts for country's development

Seeks to counter 'fake news menace' via mainstream media; Says media's role is crucial in the development; Terms mainstream media fourth pillar of state; Efforts afoot to privatise loss-making enterprises

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has urged the electronic media to support government's efforts for the development and prosperity of Pakistan.

He was talking to a delegation of Pakistan Broadcasters Association, comprising Shakeel Masood, Mir Ibrahim, Mian Amir Mahmood and Sultan Lakhani, in Islamabad on Monday.

The PM said he formed the government at a time when the country was faced with immense difficulties.

The biggest challenge was to put the economy back on track, he said and informed the delegation about the economic priorities of the government.

He informed that 49,190 complaints were received online in 2023, which was an increase of 47% from last year adding that 22,321 complaints were received through the mobile app, showing an increase of 21% as compared to the year 2022.

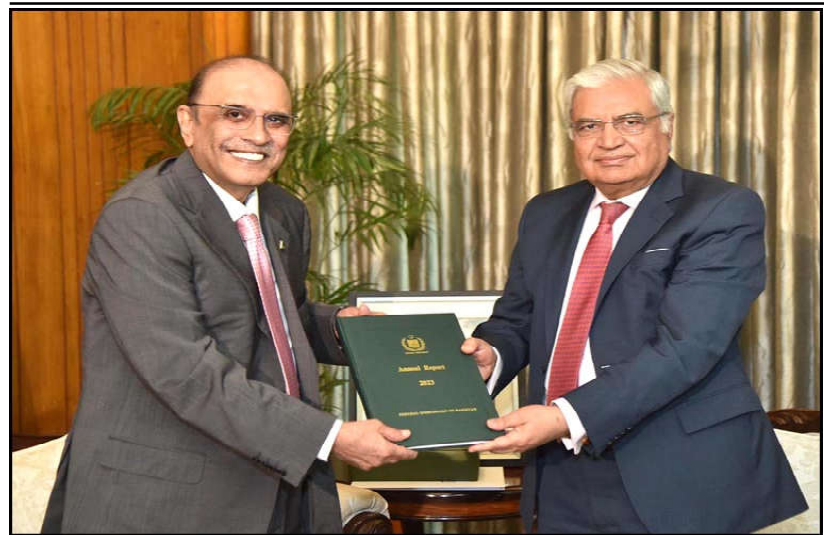
He said that the ombudsman was providing speedy and free-of-cost justice to the complainants against the maladministration of various government departments.

The prime minister was talking to a delegation of Pakistan Broadcasters Association including Shakeel Masood, Mir Ibrahim, Mian Amir Mahmood and Sultan Lakhani.

He said a committee had been formed to bring down the expenditure of the government and it would soon present its recommendations which he would put before the nation.

The federal cabinet had decided not to take salaries and perks, he told.

He said the services of international experts were being hired for complete digitalization of Federal Board of Revenue, adding the government would duly recognize the top taxpayers, exporters and women entrepreneurs of the country.



ISLAMABAD: The Wafaqi Mohtasib of Pakistan, Mr Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, presenting the Annual Report-2023 to President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Annual report presented to President Wafaqi Mohtasib disposes of 193,028 complaints in 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wafaqi Mohtasib of Pakistan has processed a record 194,099 complaints against the maladministration of government departments in 2023, which is 18% higher than the previous year.

Out of these, 193,028 complaints were disposed of which is 22% higher than the year 2022.

This was reported by Wafaqi Mohtasib Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi who called on President Asif Ali Zardari and presented the annual report of the Federal Ombudsman, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Action started to dismiss 2,000 habitual absentee teachers: CM vows to cleanse Education Department of every kind of unnecessary interference

High level meeting chaired by CM decides that Chief Secretary would complete process of dismissal of habitual absentee teachers within two month

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that work had been initiated against 2,000 habitual absentee teachers and adding vowed to cleanse the Education Department of every kind of interference.

He asserted that the appointment of the officers and heads of academic institutions would be made purely on merit and no political pressure would be entertained in this regard.

The Chief Minister was chairing a high level meeting of Education Department here on Monday.

The meeting decided to dismiss the habitual absentee teachers, make the non-functional schools functional and recruit the teachers for meeting the shortage of teachers.

The meeting reviewed the matters about increasing literacy ratio in the province, attendance of teachers, provision of basic facilities and the issues being faced by government educational institutions.

Certain decisions were also made for improving the overall situation and performance of the education department.

Those who were

present in the meeting were included member of provincial assembly, Mir Zahoore Buledi, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary planning and development, Abdul Saboor Kakar, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Imran Zarkoon, Special Secretary Asfandyar Baloch, Secretary Education, Saleh Muhammad Nasar, besides other concerned officials.

The meeting decided that the Chief Secretary would complete the process of dismissal of habitual absentee teachers within two months.



CHAMAN: Acting Governor Balochistan, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai chairing a meeting to review law and order situation. DC Chaman Raja Athar Abbas, Shahid Jameel Kakar, Muhammad Arif Kakar and other officers are also present

Visits Chaman, chairs meeting on law & order, other issues: No one to be allowed to create law and order situation at all, asserts acting Governor

Independent Report
QUETTA: The acting Governor Balochistan, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai has categorically stated that no one would be allowed to create law and order situation and all available resources would be mobilized for elimination of criminal elements.

The acting Governor was chairing meeting of the district officers of all the government departments, administrative officers and police in Deputy Commissioner office Chaman on Monday.

The meeting focused on the law and order situation and other issues being faced in Chaman.

The Deputy Commissioner Chaman briefed the acting Governor about the issues of the border town.

Moreover, the district officers of all concerned departments also briefed about the law and order situation as well as the issues related to the Pak-Afghan border separately.

Addressing the meeting, acting Governor assured of his every possible cooperation to resolve the issues being faced by all the departments.

He also promised to provide more vehicles and equipment to the district administration to maintain law and order and cope with challenges in this regard.

In addition to this, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai also assured every possible cooperation to meet the requirements and resolve issues of Chaman.

He said that it is important for all departments to be on one page for resolving the issues.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a high level meeting of Education Department

SC seeks details pertaining trials of accused involved in May 9 riots

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday sought details from federal government pertaining to the trials of accused of May 9, riots, in review petitions against termination of 'civilians' trial in army courts.

The court asked the attorney general to provide details on next hearing that how many accused out of 103 are innocent and would be acquitted.

A six-member bench headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Irfan Saadat Khan, heard the review appeal.

During the course of

proceeding, Attorney General of Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan informed the court that the trials of 103 accused in line of May 9, riots have been completed in the army courts. However, the final judgments were not announced due to the directions of the top court.

He said that some accused would be acquitted and, however, detention would be considered as sentence for some others. Justice Amin ud Din Khan remarked that the decisions should be announced that who were being acquitted.

The court, on the occasion, rejected the request of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to withdraw the review petition.

Inflation, improvement of trade major challenges: Jam

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Monday said that the control over increasing inflation and improvement of trade in the country were big challenges for the incumbent government. He said that the federal government was seriously contemplating the current situation and would address it in the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

While talking to media during his visit to pay homage to father of the nation Q u a i d - e - A z a m Mohammed Ali Jinnah at the mausoleum, he said that the federal and provincial governments would have to jointly address the challenge of rampant inflation.

FM reiterates Pakistan's support for Palestinian cause

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause and called for an urgent and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza.

He was talking to Palestinian Ambassador Ahmed Jawad A. A. Rabeji paid a courtesy call on in Islamabad today.

The ambassador also conveyed his warm wishes to the Foreign Minister on the assumption of office.

Japanese Ambassador Mitsuhiro Wada also paid a courtesy call on the Foreign Minister today.

Bilateral relations and collaboration in trade, investment, and export of manpower were discussed.

Ishaq Dar appreciated the longstanding development partnership between Pakistan and Japan. He also stressed the need to further enhance this mutually beneficial relationship in all domains.

Hindu community close to our heart: CM celebrates Holi, cut cake at CM Secretariat

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti celebrated Holi along with the Hindu community here on Monday.

The Chief Minister cut cake to mark celebrations of Holi at CM Secretariat.

Present on the occasion were the member of the provincial assembly, Sanjay Kumar and people belonging to the Hindu community.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that Hindu community of Balochistan is very close to our heart. He said that he feels pain of any person from minorities.

Power struggle causes disarray in PTI's ranks: Attaullah Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday said that there was a sheer power struggle within the ranks of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) that may lead to its disintegration or creation of a forward block.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that top PTI leaders like Gohar Khan and Sher Afzal Khan were taking contradictory stances on different issues.

He regretted the "childish attitude" put by the PTI which was a national party.

Tarar advised the PTI leaders to shun its internal politics and play its due role in strengthening the economy.

Lambasting the PTI, he said sometimes they wrote a letter to the IMF, but sometimes asked the European Union to investigate the election process in Pakistan. If they had any complaint, they should knock the door of the Election Commission of Pakistan or Election Tribunals, he said.

He said once they were accusing the US of toppling the PTI government, now they had hired lobbying firms in the United States.

The minister said that

American diplomat Donald Lu had called the PTI founder as a "certified liar".

He urged the PTI leaders to join mainstream politics and contribute to the nation building process. "We need to create unity and consensus at the national political scenario", he opined.

The minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the government was fully committed to the agenda of economic reforms.

He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was holding meetings on the economy on a daily basis as the government's focus was on solving the people's problems. "We are focusing on measures like privatization, reduction of government expenditure, tax reforms, digitization of FBR, expansion of tax net and reduction of tax burden on the poor segments of the society."

He said that for the first time in the history, taxpayers would be honored with awards in the coming days.

"The government of Pakistan will, for the first time, give awards to businessmen who increase the tax volume," he remarked.



QUETTA: Provincial President PML(N) Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, MPA Asghar Khan Tareen and former Senator Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Smog country

As if all of Pakistan's other troubles were not enough, the country has now been named the second most polluted in the world — trailing only behind Bangladesh — in the 2023 World Air Quality Report published by IQAir. We are smack-dab in the middle of a huge environmental crisis. Pakistan has average PM2.5 concentrations at 73.7 micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) — a staggering 14 times higher than the World Health Organisation's guideline of no more than 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

It is critical to comprehend the gravity of these statistics. PM2.5, or particulate matter 2.5, refers to tiny particles or droplets in the air that are two and a half microns or less in width. These particles are so small that they can penetrate deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream, causing severe health issues, including respiratory infections, heart disease, and strokes.

Moreover, it makes other non-communicable diseases such as mental health issues, diabetes and infertility more likely, besides affecting the cognitive development of children. The fact that all Pakistani cities included in the study had PM2.5 concentrations at least six times above the WHO's recommended levels is a glaring indictment of the country's air quality and demands immediate intervention at the highest levels.

The causes of such severe air pollution are manifold, with agriculture practices, industrial emissions, vehicular pollution, and geographical and climate conditions playing significant roles. Specifically, winter temperature inversions in Punjab, combined with emissions from crop burning and industry, as well as activity from brick kilns, have created a smoggy, health-damaging environment.

Despite measures such as banning crop burning and initiating public transportation projects, the air quality continues to deteriorate, signalling that current efforts are not enough. And time — quite literally — is running out. Based on data from the Pakistan Air Quality Initiative, hazardous air quality is shaving off an estimated 4.4 years from the life expectancy of Pakistan's inhabitants. The new government needs to rise to the occasion and take bold steps. It must urgently overhaul environmental regulations, aggressively invest in renewables, and champion public transportation. It is not just regulations that are needed: enforcement is paramount. There is an urgent need to enhance the capacity for monitoring and managing air quality. Public awareness campaigns are crucial to educate citizens about the sources of pollution and the steps they can take to reduce their personal contributions to air quality degradation. Vehicles must undergo mandated smoke checks, as is done in developed countries. Moreover, collaboration with neighbouring countries is essential, given the transboundary nature of air pollution. We face a stark choice: enact decisive, immediate measures or suffer irreversible damage to our health and environment. Pakistan's life expectancy isn't stellar as it is; it needn't be cut any shorter.

Turbulent Sahel

Mohammad Ali Babakhal

The Sahel, a vast stretch of land below the Sahara and extending from Burkina Faso to Eritrea, has become the global epicentre of terrorism. The Global Terrorism Index reports that in 2022, this region witnessed more terrorism-related fatalities than both South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa combined, underscoring a grim escalation in violence. A staggering 65 per cent of terrorist attacks targeted 10 countries within the Sahel, marking it as a focal point of global concern.

Amid this backdrop of escalating violence, the humanitarian situation in the Sahel is becoming increasingly dire. Over 33 million people in the region are in desperate need of life-saving assistance, grappling with the repercussions of intensified conflict and insecurity. The educational infrastructure has also taken a massive hit, with the UN reporting more than 10,000 schools shuttered, affecting millions of children and undermining future prospects for stability and prosperity.

The year 2022 spotlighted the Sahel in the global terrorism landscape, with four out of the 10 countries most affected by terrorism found in this region. Terrorism fatalities in the Sahel accounted for 43pc of the global total, a stark rise from just 1pc in 2007. Burkina Faso registered the largest increase in terrorism-related deaths during the year, rising from 759 to 1,135. The country, along with Mali, in particular, has become a hotbed of terrorism, accounting for 73pc of terrorism-related deaths in the Sahel in 2022, and 52pc of all such deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. Most attacks in the Sahel are attributed to unknown groups, though both IS and JNIM

(Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimin) are active there.

The complex challenges exacerbating the security situation include political instability, food shortages, ethnic tensions, rapid population growth, environmental degradation, etc. The region harbours 58pc of the global population facing food insecurity, with its countries languishing at the bottom of the Human Development Index. These factors together contribute to a fertile ground for terrorism and conflict.

The operational strategies of militants in the Sahel mirror those seen in other conflict zones, with groups exploiting weak governance and rural vulnerabilities to enforce control. The shifting dynamics of terrorism from north-eastern Nigeria to the Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger tri-border area, alongside the spread to coastal West Africa, illustrate the evolving and expansive nature of the threat. The departure of French forces from Mali has led to a surge in violence, highlighting the Sahel's geopolitical significance and the international ramifications of local conflicts.

Militant groups in the Sahel are broadly categorised into local and transnational factions, with the latter including affiliates of Al Qaeda and IS. These groups have exploited the region's political instability to recruit members and expand their influence. The formation of JNIM, an umbrella organisation for Salafist jihadist groups, marks a significant attempt to consolidate various factions under a unified command, aiming to challenge regional states and international interests.

The political landscape in the Sahel has been further

destabilised by a spate of military coups, attributed to widespread dissatisfaction with governance and economic conditions. These coups, while promising reform, often exacerbate the underlying issues that fuel extremism and conflict. Environmental challenges and rapid population growth compound the Sahel's security dilemmas. The Ecological Threat Report by the Institute for Economics and Peace highlights severe water and food risks, stressing urgent comprehensive strategies to address these threats. With some countries in the Sahel projected to experience dramatic population increases, the pressures on already scarce resources will intensify, and may fuel further conflict and displacement.

Addressing the crisis in the Sahel demands a multidimensional strategy that extends beyond military solutions. Efforts to deradicalise and prevent the recruitment of the region's youth are essential, considering the Sahel's demographic profile with 64pc of the population under 25. Building an inclusive social contract between governments and their citizens is crucial to addressing grievances and restoring trust, which are fundamental to achieving lasting peace.

The Sahel's trajectory is a critical concern for both regional and global security. For any long-term plan, preventing violent extremism is the best antidote to defeat terrorism. The world must prioritise a coordinated, comprehensive response that tackles the root causes of instability, from governance failures to socioeconomic disparities, to reverse the tide of violence and terror in the region.

— Courtesy Dawn

The TikTok problem

Zarrar Khuhro

Typically, you can't get the red and blue tribes that make up the legislative branch of the American Empire to agree on anything at all, and so it came as a surprise to some when the now infamous TikTok ban bill passed through the House of Representatives with all the ease of a super-heated knife through a soft slab of butter. With 352 votes in favour and 65 against, the bill enjoyed the kind of bipartisan consensus that less important issues (like providing affordable healthcare, or pardoning student debt, or funding Ukraine's unending war) rarely get.

The bill requires TikTok's owners ByteDance to sell the social media platform by September or face being banned in the US. The reason being given by the bill's supporters is that the Chinese government is able to access the data of the roughly 170 million TikTok users in the US and is able to 'tweak' the algorithm in its favour, thus subtly controlling the kind of content American TikTok users get to see. This is a direct threat to national security, claimed Nancy Pelosi and others, and thus could not be tolerated.

In one sense you could look at this as a continuation of the aggressive US stance against China, which includes posturing in the South China Sea in line with the Asian Pivot, the building of anti-China alliances with the aim of 'containment' and the attempted hobbling of Chinese technology, as we saw with the measures taken against Huawei.

But what explains the urgency and the remarkable agreement across a deep political divide to vote for this measure, and that too by many representatives who have themselves built a massive following

on TikTok? Take a deeper look and it turns out that it's not so much about the national security of America, as it is about the national security of Israel.

After the Oct 7 attacks, as Israel jumped on the chance to fulfil its genocidal agenda by massacring the population of Gaza, a change was noticed among populations in the West. Young people took to the streets and protested with increasing determination and volume against what they clearly saw as barbarism perpetrated by a Western-supported Zionist regime steeped in the traditions of colonialism and apartheid. Western elites and their affiliated media outlets at first dismissed the protests, then demonised them and seemed aghast when they not only continued, but increased in frequency and volume.

'What could the reason be?' Zionist-allied political and media establishments in the West asked themselves. Could it be that young people didn't like seeing Palestinians starve, bombed and slaughtered before their eyes? Could it be that they were repulsed by images of Israeli soldiers triumphantly looting and blowing up homes and posing with the lingerie of killed and displaced Palestinian women? Could it be that these same people now actually wanted to learn the truth about this longstanding occupation?

No, decided the ruling classes, the problem was social media and TikTok in particular where, as with every other social media platform, pro-Palestinian voices, videos and hashtags far outnumbered pro-Israeli ones.

Jonathan Greenblatt, director of the pro-Zionist Anti-Defamation League, admitted as much in a leaked audio call when he warned that they (pro-Israel groups)

"had a serious TikTok problem". Then, when the bill was drafted it quickly received the backing of the powerful pro-Israel lobby groups, the Jewish Federations of North America.

And, of course, when we look at Mike Gallagher, the Congressman who wrote the bill, we find that the all-powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee was his top funder in the last election cycle. AIPAC, con-cerned about the drubbing that Israel's reputation is deservedly receiving, is breaking out the chequebook in the coming election season and has put together a war chest of \$100m to defeat candidates they deem insufficiently worshipful of Israel.

But a pushback is starting: a group of prominent Jewish-Americans, including educators, actors, writers and professors signed an open letter condemning AIPAC, and Pam Keith, a former US Congresswoman from an overwhelmingly Jewish district, used some very colourful language while calling out AIPAC on X. Mainstream media in the US is also plucking up courage, with MSNBC doing a whole six-minute segment on how AIPAC influences US politics.

However, the hold of the Israeli lobby on American politics remains unshakable for now; the House of Representatives recently passed a measure in a 286 to 134 vote banning aid to UNRWA and also providing an additional \$14 billion to Israel.

AIPAC, for its part, touted the success of its backed candidates in the Democratic primaries, leading one to wonder whether America is the only country where a foreign power can openly boast of buying politicians. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM 'Ramadan Relief Package' to provide relief to the people: Jam Kamal

KARACHI (Online): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan has said that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has increased the amount of Ramadan Relief Package from Rs7.5 billions to Rs12.5 billions to provide relief to the common-men. He stated this while talking to media persons on the occasion of his visit to a Utility Stores here on Monday.

The Minister said that the federal government was taking initiatives for the provision of relief to the public.

He said that around all

the items were available at the Utility Store in reasonable prices.

The Utility Stores were not meant for solution to beat the inflation, he said adding that these were merely a step for relief.

Kamal said that there was a need to balance the law and order situation and other challenges. He said that the onus was on the government to put the house in order. He said that the government had to boost the industry and manage the matter of energy crisis in the country.

He further said that there were six to seven projects in the pipeline. Replying to a question

about law and order situation, he said that there was a need to review the issue of unemployment and address the law and order situation.

He further said that the federal and provincial governments were on the same page regarding the law and order situation and other challenges.

Replying to another question, he said when we borrow from IMF then we had to return it in a good manner. Earlier, the Minister Jam Kamal visited the Utility Store and took details of the relief being provided to the people.



ISLAMABAD: Country Director Teradata Global Consulting Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd, Haroon Kanth called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

Data availability vital for better service delivery: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, on Monday said that availability of data in the digital era is crucial.

During a meeting with the Country Director of Teradata Global Consulting Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd, Haroon Kanth, Shaza Fatima highlighted the significant role of data in decision-making processes. She said that a stable

database is essential for enhancing service delivery, emphasizing the importance of a credible database for capacity building within government organizations.

Shaza Fatima urged Teradata to collaborate with the Ministry of IT and Telecom to achieve these objectives.

In response, Haroon Kanth assured that Teradata is prepared to work closely with the government of Pakistan.

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 373 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Monday, gaining 373.82 points, a positive change of 0.57 percent, closing at 65,525.65 points against 65,151.83 points the previous trading day.

A total of 261,194,334 shares valuing Rs.8,945 billion were traded during the day as compared to 208,408,686 shares valuing Rs. 7,149 billion the last day.

Rupee gains one paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday gained 01 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.12 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.13.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278.25 and Rs281, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 19 paisa to close at Rs300.84 against the last-day closing of Rs301.03, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.83, whereas a decrease of 06 paisa.

Ministerial Committee reviews Ramadan package

Independent Report LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain chaired a meeting of Ministerial Committee to review Ramadan Relief Package here at Civil Secretariat on Monday.

Provincial Ministers Bilal Yasin, Ashiq Hussain Kirmani, Azma Bokhari and the secretaries of the relevant departments were also present, while divisional commissioners attended the meeting through video link.

In the meeting, implementation of Ramadan Relief Package, availability of essential items, prices and

monitoring process were reviewed.

The committee expressed concern over the increase in the prices of chicken during the last three days and directed the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to reduce the prices of chicken meat. Ch. Shafay said that the supply of poultry in the market should be closely monitored during the last 10 days of Ramadan.

He said that on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, largest Ramadan package in the history of Punjab is being successfully delivered at the doorsteps of people.



LAHORE: Chairman of All Punjab LPG Distributor Association Mian Muhammad Ajmal, Ghulam Mustafa, Tehsil Khan and others addressing a press conference.

FBR to Launch Tajir Dost Scheme for Small Traders, Shopkeepers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has announced the initiation of tax collection under the newly proposed Tajir Dost Scheme for small traders and shopkeepers, slated to commence on July 15, 2024.

The scheme, initially launched in six major cities including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, and Peshawar, holds potential for future expansion.

Under the Tajir Dost Scheme, monthly advance tax payments will kick off

on July 1, 2024, with the first payment due on July 15, 2024.

Subsequent payments will be due on the 15th of each following month, facilitating convenient payments through a dedicated computerized system using a Payment Slip ID (PSID) generated by the Tajir Dost module or the FBR's online portal a private news channel reported. Traders and shopkeepers participating in the scheme will be required to make monthly advance tax payments.



ISLAMABAD: Tailors busy stitching clothes for upcoming Eid ul Fitr festival at Aabpara.

Azam assesses prices, facilities at utility store

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tarar, conducted a thorough inspection of a utility store in the provincial capital on Monday, focusing on product quality, facilities, and sales mechanisms.

During his visit, Minister Tarar observed the sales activity, assessed the availability of facilities, and scrutinized the stock of discounted products.

Engaging with store staff, Minister Tarar inquired about any existing challenges and checked the rate list to ensure transparency.

Speaking to the

media, he emphasized the government's commitment to prioritizing economic improvement, citing Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's leadership as pivotal to the nation's economic progress.

Minister Tarar underscored the government's dedication to providing essential facilities, highlighting the announcement of the largest Ramadan package in the country's history. He elaborated on the inclusivity of the package, emphasizing special discounted rates for both Benazir Income Support Program beneficiaries and the general public.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, MSC Bremen, MSC Lome-V, Bekforest, Paloma and Mackenzie, carrying Container, Canola Seed, Gas oil and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Grain Terminal, Oil Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Spring-III, Taxidiara and Shiva scheduled to load/offload Container, Cement and LPG also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today.

Ten ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, MSC Lome-V, MSC Bremen and Al-Wajbah left the Port on today morning while two more ships, Forshun and Bharadwajare expected to sail on today afternoon. A cargo volume of 126,368 tonnes, comprising 86,443 tonnes imports cargo and 39,925 tonnes export cargo carried in 3,820 Containers (1,892 TEUs Imports and 1,929 TEUs export).

PM's decision to put burden of tough decisions on elite hailed

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt has lauded the decision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to transferring the burden of difficult decisions on the elite instead of the poor masses.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he said that the state of the economy and the general populace would have been much different if a decision of this nature had been made several decades earlier.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that the prime minister

understands the importance of the National Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) which was poised to promote investment in the country.

The PM also understands the importance of cordial relations between the center and provinces and with neighboring countries and he was aware of the impact of inflation and people's worries, he added.

The business leader said that PM Shahbaz Sharif also knows that running the country was impossible without painful reforms and improving infrastructure.

Minister visits PSRA; directs for provision of quality education

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister Elementary and Secondary Education Faisal Khan Tarakai visited the Private Schools Regulatory Authority (PSRA) on Monday and directed for provision of quality education.

Managing Director Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat and her team gave a detailed briefing to the provincial minister about the performance of the institution and the goals achieved. The minister was

briefed that the work of our institution is registration, regulation and supervision of private schools. Fees are determined by classifying the schools on the basis of various facilities in the schools. They briefed that a total of 10,907 schools are registered with us in which more than 3,100,000 male and female students were getting education. Provincial Education Minister Faisal Khan Tarakai



LAHORE: Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Advisor Tourism says: Providing relief to govt employees in budget seriously considered

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Zahid Chanzeb, Adviser to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Tourism, Culture and Archives has said that the KP government is seriously considering providing relief to the govt employees in the new budget and improving their working conditions side by side with its efforts for the welfare of other segments of society.

He said that private schools are also our institutions and we are providing all kinds of support to them. He was talking to the delegation of the clerks' community that called on him under the leadership of Mubashir Aftab Dalazak,

PHC issues detailed judgment on allocation reserved seats

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court on Monday issued a 30-page detailed judgment in the case filed by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) regarding allotment of reserved seats and rejected the petition of SIC.

A five-member bench of the Peshawar High Court gave a brief verdict on March 14 while the judgment was written by Justice SM Atiq Shah.

LHC summons AG, AAG on SIC petition

Independent Report
LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) while hearing the petition filed by Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) against not giving reserved seats to them has summoned Attorney General (AG) and Additional Attorney General (AAG).

The hearing of the case has been adjourned. The state counsel while giving arguments during the hearing of the case said a petition like this has been filed in Peshawar High Court (PHC) too. Judgment on it is reserved. The counsel for SIC requested the court to hear the AG too.

Minister inaugurates SSC at UET

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): Minister for Higher Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Meena Khan inaugurated the Student Service Center (SSC) at University of Engineering Technology (UET) here Monday. It is a newly established one-stop solution center, equipped with modern technology to facilitate the students in their academic matters such as transcripts, course registration and degree clearance etc.

The Minister Higher Education was received by Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali, Vice Chancellor UET Peshawar who apprised him of his vision to facilitate the students on top priority with his student centric approach. He told that the SSC will be equipped with modern technology to reduce the wait time and well trained staff. The Deans, senior faculty and administration were present on the occasion.

Meena Khan said that promoting engineering education and facilitating the students to the remote areas of KP was a sacred mission of UET Peshawar which was appreciable. He congratulated Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali and his team for opening up a center.



SIALKOT: Member Punjab Assembly Faisal Ikram Chaudhary and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain inaugurates the tree planting campaign in educational institutions of Sialkot District by planting saplings in Centers of Excellence Lady Andersen Girls Higher Secondary.

Appellate Tribunal approves nomination papers of Azam Swati

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): The judge of Appellate Tribunal, Peshawar, in a short judgment on Monday approved the nomination papers of PTI backed candidate for the general seat of Senate on his appeal and reserved the judgment on technocrat seat.

Azam Swati had filed an appeal against the rejection of his nomination papers for the general seat. The hearing was conducted by Appellate Tribunal judge Justice Shakeel Ahmed. The counsel of Azam, Barrister Waqar Ahmed informed the Tribunal that three persons raised objections on the nomination papers of Swati including the two who were not candidates in the election. He said one objection was that Azam Swati had now provided the details of the cases filed against him and he did not provide this in the general election NA-15. He argued that after the general election, Azam Swati filed petitions in the High Court and was provided with the details of the cases and the same was provided in the Senate election papers.

4.8 mln ration bags distributed, 6132 profiteers arrested

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): On the instructions of the Chief Minister Punjab, the provincial government is successfully continuing the Nighaban Ramzan package for providing relief to deserving families during the holy month of fasting and so far 4.8 million ration bags have been delivered to the needy people at their doorsteps. Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman chaired an important meeting held at the Civil Secretariat to review the Ramzan package and price control measures.

deputy commissioners participated through video link. Officials briefed the meeting that 6,132 person were arrested and 2109 cases were registered in the crackdown over profiteers in Ramzan, and the price magistrates checked nine hundred thousand places and imposed fines of Rs. 75 million over violations. The Chief Secretary said that the delivery of ration bags at doorsteps under the Ramzan package was a big challenge, adding that the role of administrative officers in the successful implementation of the program was commendable. He also praised the Punjab Information Technology Board for ensuring transparency in the Ramzan package through digital monitoring. The meeting decided that certificates of appreciation.

Body of missing youth found in sewerage drain

Independent Report
FAISALABAD (APP): The body of a youth was found in a sewerage drain, three days after he went missing, in the area of Bachiana police station. Police said on Monday that 28-year-old Waqas-ul-Haq, resident of Chak No.564-GB had gone missing three days ago.

ANF arrests 13 drug smugglers in 13 operations

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its ongoing operation against drug trafficking managed to recover over 44 kg drugs in 13 operations and arrested 13 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He said that 1.8 kg ice and 1 kg heroin were recovered from a passenger going to Dubai at Islamabad Airport. In another operation at Islamabad Airport, 1.8 kg heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar. In third operation, 1 kg heroin was recovered from a parcel sent to UK at a courier office in Rawalpindi.

PDMA releases Rs.348m for TDPs of North Waziristan

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday released an amount of Rs 348 million as monthly financial assistance (sustenance allowance) to the affected families of Operation Zarb Azab in North Waziristan who are duly certified by NADRA and registered as temporarily displaced persons (TDPs).

receive it through SIM messaging within a day or two. In a statement issued by the office of the Director General PDMA Qaiser Khan, it has been said that the said financial assistance is being given to more than 17 thousand families of North Waziristan who are duly certified by NADRA and registered as temporarily displaced persons (TDPs).

International News

Russia casts doubt on Islamic State responsibility for concert attack

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia on Monday challenged assertions by the United States that the Islamic State (IS) militant group orchestrated a gun attack on a concert hall outside Moscow that killed 137 people and injured 182 more, accusing Washington of covering for Ukraine. In the deadliest attack inside Russia for two decades, four men burst into the Crocus City Hall on Friday night, spraying the crowd with bullets during a concert by Soviet-era rock group Picnic. Four men, at least one a Tajik, were remanded in custody on terrorism charges. They appeared separately, led into a cage at Moscow's Basmany district court by Federal Security Service officers. IS has claimed responsibility for the attack, a claim that the US has publicly said it believes, and the militant group has since released what it says is footage of the attack. US officials said they had warned Russia about an imminent attack earlier this month.

President Vladimir Putin has not publicly mentioned the militant group in connection with the attackers, who he said had been trying to escape to Ukraine. Putin said some people on "the Ukrainian side" had been prepared to spirit the gunmen across the border. Ukraine has denied any role in the attack and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has accused Putin of seeking to divert blame for the attack by mentioning Ukraine. Russia's Foreign Minister

spokeswoman Maria Zakharova called into question US assertions that IS, which once sought control over swathes of Iraq and Syria, was behind the attack. In an article for the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, she said the US was evoking the "bogymen" of IS to convert "wards" in Kyiv and reminded readers that Washington had supported the mujahideen fighters who fought Soviet forces in the 1980s. Two US officials said on Friday that the US had intelligence confirming IS's claim of responsibility. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov later told reporters that Russia could not comment on the IS claim while the investigation was ongoing and would not comment on US intelligence, saying it was sensitive information.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (C) inspecting the First Tank Armored Infantry Regiment, which is under the direct control of the Seoul Ryu Kyong Su Guards 105th Tank Division of the Korean People's Army (KPA) at an undisclosed location in North Korea.

Israel pounds Rafah in southern Gaza despite ceasefire calls

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israel's military carried out new airstrikes in Gaza and laid siege to two hospitals on Monday, despite what the UN chief called a growing international consensus to tell Israel a ceasefire is needed. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also issued a new call to Israel to allow aid in to northern Gaza to combat starvation after more than five months of war and not to carry out a threatened assault on the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

"It is absolutely essential to have a massive supply of humanitarian aid now," Guterres said during a visit to Jordan. Rafah, the last refuge for about half of Gaza's 2.3 million population after many people arrived in search of shelter after being displaced by fighting elsewhere, came under heavy fire in the latest Israeli attacks, witnesses said. Palestinian medics said 30 people had been killed in the previous 24 hours in Rafah.

Simon Harris set to become Ireland PM

Monitoring Desk
ATHLONE: Simon Harris is set to become Ireland's next prime minister after the governing Fine Gael party appointed him as its leader on Sunday, following an uncontested election. The 37-year-old said it was the "absolute honour of my life" to be appointed party leader, and his rise to the country's top job is expected to be confirmed when the Irish parliament returns from recess early next month. He will take over from Leo Varadkar, who announced his resignation on Wednesday.

Myanmar's next election may not be nationwide, junta chief says

Monitoring Desk
MYANMAR: Myanmar plans to have an election if there is peace and stability, but may not be able to hold the vote nationwide, its ruling military general said, according to Monday's state media. In a transcript of an interview with Russia's Tass news agency carried by Myanmar's state media, Min Aung Hlaing said the military, which took power in a 2021 coup, still planned to hold an election to return to democratic rule.

North Korea says Japan PM requested summit with Kim Jong Un

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister said on Monday that Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has requested a summit with her brother, adding a meeting was unlikely without a policy shift by Tokyo. Relations between the two countries are historically strained, including by a long-running kidnapping dispute and North Korea's banned weapons programmes, but Kishida has recently expressed a desire to improve ties, which Pyongyang has hinted it is not opposed to. Last year, Kishida said he was willing to meet Kim "without any conditions", saying Tokyo was willing to resolve all issues, including the abduction by North Korean agents of Japanese

citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, which remains an emotive issue in Japan. "Kishida... conveyed his intention to personally meet the President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as soon as possible," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency. Kim Yo Jong — who is one of the regime's key spokespeople — had hinted last month at a possible future invitation for the Japanese leader to visit North Korea. But she said the "history of the DPRK-Japan relations gives a lesson that it is impossible to improve the bilateral relations full of distrust and misunderstanding," without a substantive policy change on Tokyo's part.

Palestinians describe bodies and ambulances crushed in Israel's ongoing raid at Gaza's main hospital

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: Palestinians who fled an ongoing Israeli raid of Gaza's main hospital described mass arrests and forced marches past bodies in interviews on Sunday, while the United Nations said Israel is now blocking its main agency helping Palestinians from sending food aid to the enclave's devastated north. Israel's military says it has killed more than 170 militants and detained about 480 suspects in the raid on Shifa Hospital that began Monday, calling it a blow to Hamas and other armed groups it says had regrouped there as the war nears the six-month mark. The fighting highlights the resilience of Palestinian armed groups in a heavily destroyed part of Gaza where Israeli troops have been forced to return after a similar raid in the war's earliest weeks. Kareem Ayman Hathath, who lived in a five-story

building about 100 meters from the hospital, said he huddled in the kitchen for days while explosions sometimes caused the building to shake. Early Saturday, Israeli troops stormed the building and forced dozens of residents to leave. He said men were forced to strip to their underwear and four were detained. The rest were blindfolded and ordered to follow a tank south as blasts thundered around them. "From time to time, the tank would fire a shell," he told the Associated Press. "It was to terrorize us." Israeli jets on Sunday launched several strikes near Shifa Hospital, which largely stopped functioning following the November raid. After claiming that Hamas maintained an elaborate command center there, Israeli forces months ago exposed a single tunnel leading to a few underground rooms.



Presidential candidate Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who is backed by Senegalese opposition leader Ousmane Sonko, walks with one of his wives after casting his vote at the polling station at Ndiagianio in Mbour, Senegal.

Forced Rafah population transfer would be a 'war crime', Macron warns Israel

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that any forced transfer of people from the southern Gaza city of Rafah would constitute "a war crime". In a telephone call between the two leaders, Macron also "strongly condemned" Israel's announcement Friday of the seizure

of 800 hectares of land in the occupied West Bank for new settlements, said his office. Activists say Israel's declaration that the land in the northern Jordan Valley was now "state land" was the single largest such seizure in decades. Macron also repeated his opposition to any Israeli military operation to fight Hamas in Rafah.

Serbians angry at Trump family deal for site of Nato bombing

Monitoring Desk
BELGRADE: A bombed-out building in Belgrade, which has stood as a national symbol of the 1999 Nato strikes on Serbia, might soon become a luxury hotel financed by Donald Trump's son-in-law — much to the anger of locals. Jared Kushner, who also served as an adviser to his father-in-law during his US presidency, confirmed in mid-March his plans to invest in luxury real estate in Serbia, including the old site of the Yugoslav army headquarters. Serbian opposition member of parliament Aleksandar Jovanovic Cuta and an investigation by the New York Times revealed that the Serbian government was going to transfer the building and the surrounding land to a company owned by Kushner. Leaked plans indicated the building would be replaced by three large glass towers a few metres from the Serbian defence and foreign ministries.

PM directs swift action against tax defaulters, evaders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed initiation of action against tax defaulters and evaders on emergency basis.

The prime minister directed for constitution of a committee to identify the hurdles and responsibilities in the track and trace system. The committee would identify the hurdles and people involved in tax theft within seven days. The prime minister chaired a meeting regarding implementation of Track and Trace System in Islamabad, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The committee would be tasked to submit future proposals over enforcement of automatic tax system in factories and industries.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers including Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzaib Khan, Chairman

FBR Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana and other senior officials.

The prime minister questioned as to why the system was still inactive?

He observed that this system should have been made functional in tobacco, sugar, cement and fertilizer industries in the last two years, adding that the system should be placed in other important sectors of the economy.

He said that all the legal impediments in the enforcement of track and trace system should be removed.

The prime minister directed that the system should be enforced at all the production lines of cement factories, besides he summoned a comprehensive plan over digital strategy and automated track and trace system.

He further directed that all those factories that resisted the implementation of track and trace system should be immediately sealed.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding implementation of Track and Trace System.

FIA assures SC to withdraw cases against journalists Amir Mir, Imran Shafiqat

ISLAMABAD (Online): FIA has assured Supreme Court (SC) to withdraw cases against Amir Mir and Imran Shafiqat in notices case issued to the journalists.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa remarked no one will be allowed to use the court.

A 3-member bench presided over by CJP heard the case Monday.

At the inception of hearing of the case Attorney General (AG) Mansoor Khan and barrister Salah ud Din of Press Association of SC came on the rostrum.

The CJP inquired from the counsel we see the date first. A two members bench had taken notice in 2021. Had this matter been resolved at that time then you would have not seen this day. Now this case has come from 2-member bench to 5-member bench. It was said only chief justice can take suo motu notice. That matter was more grave than issuance of notice by FIA.

Barrister Salah ud Din said both the matters have their own gravity. The CJP remarked we

cannot say both matters are having gravity of the same nature. If FIA notice is completely illegal it can be challenged. Charge is levied but stance is not presented by appearing in the court.

The CJP while moving to lawyer Haider Wahid said you are talking of media regulation. We will not allow the court to be used. Have you freedom of press case or you have some other agenda.

He inquired FIR was registered against Imran Shafiqat in the tenure of which government.

Attorney General (AG) replied during PTI founder government FIR was registered. Imran Shafiqat had made vlog against state institutions and high officers.

The CJP remarked we know it how the FIR is registered. People forget the past soon. Is there any solid case against Imran Shafiqat. Was there any serious case or FIR was lodged to harass.

AG replied Imran Shafiqat did not commit some serious crime. To me there is no such thing in this case.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain in a meeting with the President Pakistani Overseas Community, Malawi Country in East Africa Chaudhry Karamat.

Crackdown started against illegal & unauthorized rickshaws in Quetta

Independent Report QUETTA: The Regional Transport Authority and Traffic Police have started crackdown against the illegal and unauthorized rickshaws in Quetta city.

The crackdown is in line with the vision of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and on directives of the Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat and supervision of Secretary Regional Transport Authority, Waheed Sharif.

The teams comprising Secretary RTA and Traffic Police Sariab circle launched crackdown against the illegal rickshaws.

In this regard, nine illegal rickshaws were impounded from Brewery road, BMC stop and old bus stop double road.

Moreover, 41 rickshaws were also challaned in violation of the traffic

laws. It may be mentioned here that the movement of rickshaws has been banned from all the check posts in light of the order of High court and decisions made in meeting held under chair of Commissioner Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat.

The high ups on the occasion said that action has been expedited against the illegal and bogus rickshaws in the city.

No relaxation would be given to anyone in this regard, adding he asserted.

They said that the action has become unavailable against the illegal rickshaws in order to improve flow of traffic.

They also directed to carry the original permit and documents along with them. Otherwise, they would be charged heavy fine, it was warned.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari distributing commendation shields among military and civil officers who successfully organized Pakistan Day Parade, in a shield distribution ceremony held at Aiwan-i-Sadr.

Saudi Envoy calls on Minister for Power

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki Monday called on Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari.

During the meeting, the minister acknowledged the steadfast support of the brotherly country in all challenging situations, said a news release.

Awais Leghari highlighted various investment opportunities, particularly in the transmission sector, and assured the ambassador of investor-friendly policies under the current government.

The ambassador pledged support for Saudi businesses to explore Pakistan's investment potential.

JC recommends appointment of Justice Hashim as BHC CJ

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Judicial Commission of Pakistan recommended the appointment of Justice Hashim Khan Kakar as Chief Justice of the Balochistan High Court (BHC) on Monday. The judicial commission meeting under the chairmanship of Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa was held and reviewed the appointment of judges. The commission also recommended the permanence of six additional judges of the Sindh High Court (SHC) in the meeting and sent the matter to the Parliamentary Committee for final approval.

It is worth mentioning that Justice Hashim Khan Kakar is currently the Acting Chief Justice of the Balochistan High Court.

Court allows PTI leaders Murad Saeed to contest Senate polls

PESHAWAR (INP): Peshawar High Court's (PHC) appellate tribunal on Monday allowed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Murad Saeed, Khurram Zeeshan, and Azam Swati to contest the Senate elections. After rejection of their nomination papers by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the PTI leaders had approached the Appellate Tribunal.

The nomination papers of Azam Swati, Murad Saeed, and Khurram Zeeshan were rejected by returning officer for various reasons. The tribunal pronounced a verdict that was reserved earlier after the conclusion of the arguments from both sides. The tribunal comprising Justice Shakeel Ahmed allowed Murad Saeed and Khurram Zeeshan to contest the Senate elections on general seats while Azam Swati.

Siraj rejects trade with India

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq has rejected the statement made by the foreign minister regarding the revival of trade relations with India.

He emphasized that the nation would not entertain any form of relationship with the neighboring country at the expense of the blood of the Kashmiri people.

"We will adamantly oppose any trade or other engagements with India until the Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with the United Nations resolutions," he stated during a media interaction on Monday, prior to departing for Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah. In the meantime, JI vice-emir Liaquat Baloch has assumed the role of acting emir.

Sirajul Haq asserted that India has been complicit in the bloodshed of the people of Occupied Kashmir, citing its unilateral revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status five years ago, in violation of international and bilateral agreements.

Fostering parliamentary diplomacy; essential for world peace: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that upholding values of democracy, peace and the rule of law are essential for global growth and development. "Pakistan is a peaceful country that believes in dialogue for cooperation and understanding," he expressed while addressing the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva on "Parliamentary diplomacy: building bridges for peace and understanding".

The Speaker said that fostering bilateral and joint partnerships through the Parliamentary Friendship Groups among parliaments of the world would strengthen the parliament-to-parliament contacts, said a press release issued here Monday.

While appreciating the IPU's efforts for peace and understanding across the globe, he has said the world is witnessing death and destruction in Gaza at an unimaginable scale as over 30,000 civilians have been killed, most of whom are women and children.

He expressed his resolve that Pakistan would continue to raise grave concerns at the situation in Gaza where heart-rending images of death and destruction from Gaza are emerging.

Ayaz Sadiq also said that Israel's actions violated all international humanitarian and human rights law deliberately attacking civilian targets and as such, constituted war crimes and crimes against humanity.

During his speech, he also reiterated strong and unequivocal condemnation of the indiscriminate use of force by Israel and call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza.

"We have always and will continue to stand by our Palestinian brothers and sisters for the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination for a viable, secure, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital."

While mentioning the grim situation of violations of human rights in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, he said that Kashmiris had been suffering the indignity and oppression over seven decades.



QUETTA: A representative delegation of Joint Action Committee University of Balochistan led by Prof. Kaleemullah Bareech meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

Maryam vows to end economic woes jointly

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb discussed the country's economic challenges and vowed to pull Pakistan out of economic crisis through joint efforts.

M u h a m m a d Aurangzeb congratulated the Chief Minister on assuming charge of her office, and termed her election as country's first female Chief Minister as a great milestone in the democratic history of Pakistan, according to a handout issued here Monday.

The Federal Finance Minister hailed Maryam Nawaz Sharif's initiatives for social welfare of the people.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister thanked Muhammad Aurangzeb for the good words. She also congratulated him on assuming charge as Federal Finance Minister, and expressed her best wishes for his success. She hoped that Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb would take people-friendly decisions for economic turn around of the country.

CP of JUI candidate for against Langove: BHC issues notices to both parties to appear on next hearing

Independent Report QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has issued notices to both parties on the constitutional petition of JUI-F candidate, Sardarzada Saeed Ahmed Langove for PB-36, Kalat.

The Judge of BHC, Mr. Justice Abdullah Baloch heard the petition filed against the candidate of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), Mir Ziaullah Langove.

The petitioner had raised objection on the notification of dated February 22, 2024 issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan under Section of Elec-

tion Act 2017, 98 (2). Mir Ziaullah Langove was declared successful candidate from PB-36 Kalat. The petitioner Sardarzada Saeed Langove had levelled serious allegation of big scale irregularity in the election process.

The petitioner secured 10,654 votes from 85 out of 92 polling stations, as per the Form 47 issued by the concerned Returning Officer on 09.02.2024.

The Returning Officer issued another list from 47 polling stations on 11.02.2024 under which, Mir Ziaullah Langove was declared successful with 14,670 votes.



DERA BUGTI: MNA Mian Khan Bugti along with Coordinator EOC Syed Zahid Shah inaugurating polio campaign. Deputy Commissioner Azhar Shahzad is also present.

No leniency for those accused of releasing girls' objectionable photos: Islamabad High Court

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday observed that the people accused of sharing objectionable pictures of women with others and similar offences do not deserve any leniency. The remark came during the hearing of a plea seeking bail of a man, Muhammad Haseeb, who is accused of sharing objectionable pictures of a girl on social media site Facebook and her father and husband

and in many cases their family life has destroyed; the girls have also committed suicide, hence the accused committing such offences are not entitled for any leniency," the court stated in a written order. The case against Haseeb was registered at the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Cybercrime Reporting Centre, Islamabad, under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, alleging that the accused "disgraced and destroyed

and in many cases their family life has destroyed; the girls have also committed suicide, hence the accused committing such offences are not entitled for any leniency," the court stated in a written order. The case against Haseeb was registered at the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Cybercrime Reporting Centre, Islamabad, under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, alleging that the accused "disgraced and destroyed

CM calls for finding sustainable solution to financial matters of PSUs

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has underlined the need to find sustainable solution to the administrative and financial matters of the public sector universities.

In this regard, viable strategy would be prepared after consultation with the stakeholders.

The Chief Minister said that the concerned authorities would be issued directives to make payments of the salaries of the employees of universities.

However, in addition to this, effective system of

financial and administrative answerability would also be ensured in the universities.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the delegation of Joint Action Committee of University of Balochistan who called on him under leadership of Professor Kalimullah here on Monday.

During the course of meeting, the matters about nonpayment of the salaries and other related issues were discussed.

Also present on the occasion were members of the provincial assembly Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi and Ali Madad Jatak.

Ishaq Dar, Britain's FS discuss ways to further enhance bilateral relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday received a telephone call from Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs Lord David Cameron, and expressed resolve to enhance bilateral relations in diverse areas. "Today, I received a telephone call from Lord David Cameron, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of Great Britain", Ishaq Dar wrote on X (formerly Twitter).

During the conversation, they discussed bilateral relations and regional issues. They also resolved to continue working closely to further enhance strong bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, education, climate change & people-to-people contacts.

Meanwhile, according to a press release issued by the Foreign Office spokes-

person, the Foreign Minister, reiterating the importance of Pakistan-UK relationship said that Pakistan and the UK had longstanding, historic relations with multifaceted cooperation. The Foreign Minister emphasized the early conclusion of the Enhanced Strategic Partnership (ESP) agreement to take relations to the next level.

The foreign minister stressed on the need to enhance bilateral cooperation in trade and investment, people to people contacts and climate. He stressed on the need for early resumption of PIA flights between Pakistan and the UK which would further bolster linkages, particularly in view of the large Pakistani diaspora in the UK.

The two ministers also discussed important regional issues including Afghanistan and the situation in Gaza.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti along with MPA Sanjay Kumar and others cutting cake to mark celebrations of Holi at CM Secretariat.

Polio outbreak response campaign launches

ISLAMABAD (APP): A crucial polio campaign to immunize more than 8.8 million children under the age of five against the paralyzing poliovirus has begun in 26 districts from Monday.

This polio outbreak response campaign is being held in 11 districts of Balochistan, seven districts of Sindh and five districts of Punjab after the detection of polio cases in Dera Bugti and Chaman and the detection of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in sewage samples of several districts of these provinces.

Urging parents to vaccinate their children, Federal Secretary for Health Ifkhar Ali Shallwani said, "Protecting children from incurable polio is a top priority for the government, which is why in response to virus detections, we are deploying polio teams during Ramadan to vaccinate children and keep their immunity against polio high."

He added, "Poliovirus can leave your child para-

lyzed for life and it is critical for children to have the immunity to fight off infection."

He said, "I urge all parents in these districts where the virus has been found to open your door to vaccinators and ensure that your children receive two drops of this essential vaccine." Dr Shahzad Baig, Coordinator for the National Emergency Operations Center for Polio Eradication, said that WPV1 has been detected in 71 environmental samples so far this year, mostly in Balochistan and Sindh, and has paralyzed two children in Balochistan. "This vaccination campaign is specifically being held in districts where there have been virus detections ahead of the high travel season of Eid to prevent any further spread of the virus as people travel for the holidays."

He said that the Polio Programme has a rapid response system in place and has already conducted two nationwide campaigns.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta and Administrator Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat exchanging views with a delegation of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) led by Jahanzaib Khan during meeting held in Quetta.