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dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Hub

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IMF program is vital for stability of economy: PM

Announces significant incentives for highest tax payers

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has said IMF program is essential for stability of the economy.

"IMF program is necessary for the stability of economy. If economy is weak then no one pays heed. If we don't carry begging bowl even then they say begging bowl in under their armpit. There is mountain of loans on Pakistan and we pay salaries out of loans and execute development work. Providing better environment to tax payers is priority of government. We will have to abide by the principles of Qaid-e-Azam to rid of loans. Doing business is not business of governments. Government has to extend help to the private sector in collaboration with the provincial governments. Youths are our valuable asset.

We will have to make them skilled. Ghaza ceasefire resolution should be implemented at every cost. Pakistan will continue to extend help to the op-

pressed Palestinians, he said this while addressing Tax Excellence Award ceremony here Tuesday.

He held the adoption of resolution in UN Security Council (UNSC) with reference to ceasefire in Ghaza is good omen. Israel is perpetrating the worst barbarity in Ghaza. Implementation of ceasefire resolution is very important.

He went on to say the tax payers are great heroes and national architects. They scaled up exports. The motive behind this ceremony is to give message to nation that the government and private sector have to work together for development of the country. We have to end the red tapism. The decision making process have to be accelerated.

He stressed that we will have to provide business friendly environment to address economic challenges. Federal government has to work along with the provinces. All the governments are equally responsible for the mistakes committed in the past.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the Chinese Embassy, and met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to offer condolence over the death of Chinese nationals in a suicide attack in District Shangla.

China demands thorough probe Military vows action after Shangla suicide attack kills 6 including Chinese engineers

ISPR says armed forces to hold all those involved in aiding terrorism accountable with nation's support, ironclad ally China; Certain foreign elements are complicit in aiding and abetting terrorism in Pakistan, driven by their vested interests; PM visits Chinese embassy, assures high-level probe; Anti-Pakistan elements will not succeed in harming Pak-China ties: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Five Chinese and one Pakistani national were killed on Tuesday in a terrorist attack near Besham in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a statement.

"The government of Pakistan strongly condemns this heinous act of terrorism," the statement said adding "We will take all necessary measures to

bring the terrorists and their facilitators to justice. Such dastardly acts cannot dent the resolve of Pakistani nation to fight against the scourge of terrorism."

Today's attack was orchestrated by the enemies of Pakistan-China friendship. The government will resolutely act against all such forces and defeat them.

The people and government of Pakistan stand shoulder-to-shoulder with

our Chinese friends in this difficult time and extend sincere condolences to the families of the Chinese nationals killed in the attack.

Pakistan and China are close friends and iron brothers. The life and safety of Chinese nationals in Pakistan is of paramount importance. Pakistan will continue to work with our Chinese brothers in ensuring the safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects

and institutions in Pakistan, the statement added.

The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Monday in a statement said that with the unwavering support of the resilient nation and the country's ironclad ally China, the Armed Forces would ensure that all those involved in aiding terrorism, directly or indirectly, are held accountable and find their due come-up-pance.

CM Bugti launches cleanliness drive in Quetta

Independent Report QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti launched the cleanliness drive in Quetta to dispose and collect garbage through heavy machinery provided by PDMA to the Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC).

Speaking on the occasion, he said the corporation would collect waste through heavy machinery as the city produced around 1.5 million tons of garbage annually.

Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti said this waste could have been a precursor to a major disaster as there are most areas of Quetta where garbage has never been collected.

He said that the Commissioner Quetta was assigned additional charge of administrator Quetta and gave him a target.

The chief minister said that modern heavy machinery has been provided to QMC to make the provincial capital a clean city. He ordered that salaries would

be issued to the working employees of Metropolitan Corporation. The employees were protesting on failure to perform duties but not for salaries, he said and adding employees should perform their duty and we will resolve the problem of salaries.

He directed the citizens to support the cleaning campaign launched in Quetta. Sarfraz Bugti said he will visit remote areas of Balochistan to meet the people and resolve their problems.

He said emergency has been imposed in the Health and Education Department to ensure basic facilities to the masses at their door step.

Sarfraz Bugti said the number of government teachers was more than Punjab, but the huge recruitment was not resulting in high outcomes.

He said efforts are being made that candidates elect unopposed in Senate elections and all political parties in the province have been taken on board.



President, PM discuss overall political, economic situation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari in Islamabad on Tuesday and discussed the overall political and economic situation of the country. They expressed their joint commitment to steer the country out of the challenges. They also discussed measures to provide relief to the people during Ramadan.

Imran demands fresh inquiry after Donald Lu rebuffs 'cipher conspiracy'

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan on Tuesday demanded a fresh inquiry into United States Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu's statement denying 'cipher conspiracy' that US engineered his ouster from power by supporting the

then opposition's no-confidence motion in April 2022.

Testifying before a Congressional panel last week, the top US diplomat said: "I wanna be very clear on this point [that] this conspiracy theory is a lie [and] it is a complete falsehood."

Speaking to journalists at Adiala jail, Khan denied the reports that the US envoy met him in the prison. He said that he would speak to the US envoy about Lu's statement and the alleged role of the US embassy in the

ciphergate if he met him.

"The original copy of cipher is with the Foreign Office, we were only given a paraphrased copy [of the document]," the former premier said while referring to the allegations that he misplaced the classified cipher document that he received as the prime minister.

The PTI founder said that a prime minister is "not the security guard" of his office; instead, there are some security protocols for the PM office.

Khan also called for a separate judicial commission to investigation into May 9 incidents and February 8 elections.

"A political party is being eliminated on the pretext of May 9 events," he added.

The former prime minister said that the president and Senate elections have no value after a "rigged" election.

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh visiting the Pakistan Maritime Academy.

Govt to hold exclusive civil awards ceremony for frontline doctors, paramedics died during COVID-19

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has decided to hold an exclusive civil awards ceremony for the doctors and paramedics who had lost lives their lives during COVID-19 pandemic, an official statement said Monday. Last year on August 14, the President of Pakistan had awarded Tamgha-i-Imtiaz posthumously to 299 doctors and paramedical staff who died while rendering services during the pandemic.

However, due to unavailability of essential data and information with the Federal Ministry of Health, their names could not be included for civil awards ceremonies held at the federal and provincial levels this March 23rd.



SHANGLA: View of site after targeted suicide bomb blast while rescue operation and investigation is underway, in Shangla.

CM pays tribute to security force for thwarting attack on Turbat Naval Airbase

Independent Report QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday paid tribute to the security forces for thwarting the terrorist attack on Turbat Naval Airbase.

He said that the terrorists were defeated by the timely action of the security forces saying that the forces took effective action and brought the terrorists to hell.

The CM said provincial government was determined to root out the menace of terrorism from the province and the country.

He said that the entire nation stands by its brave security forces for foiling design of nefarious anti-peace elements.

Mean while Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday strongly condemned the terrorist incident in Besham area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He also expressed his sorrow on death of Chinese residents in suicide attack and extended his condolences to the Chinese Government and Chinese people for the death of Chinese residents.

The CM said that people of Balochistan expressed deep sorrow over the incident. The elements involved in terrorist incident in Besham will not be pardoned, he said.

He also prayed for early recovery of those injured in the incident.

President lauds valour of security forces for foiling Turbat terror attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday lauded the security forces for their successful operation to foil a terrorist attack at the Naval Base in Turbat.

The president, in a statement, said that timely and effective action by the security forces to thwart the attack was appreciable. He also lauded the valour of the soldiers who carried out the clearance operation and eliminated the terrorists.

President Zardari paid tribute to Sepoy Noman Fareed who embraced martyrdom during the operation.

Reiterating the government's resolve for the complete eradication of terrorism in the country, he prayed to Allah Almighty

FM discusses cooperation with Turkish, Russian, Swedish envoys

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has underlined Pakistan's commitment to further deepen cooperation with Turkey in all areas of mutual interest.

He said this while talking to Ambassador of Türkiye Dr. Mehmet Pacaci in Islamabad today who paid a courtesy call to him.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Minister also received the Russian Ambassador Albert Khorev and discussed bilateral areas of cooperation including global and regional issues of mutual concern.

Swedish Ambassador Henrik Persson called on Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad on Tuesday.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations and cooperation in trade, investment, education, and people-to-people exchanges.

Four terrorists killed Militant attack on Pakistan Navy base in Turbat foiled

Terrorists attacked naval base on night of March 25 and 26; Sepoy Noman Fareed embraced martyrdom during fight; Security forces "immediately mobilised" to support naval troops.

RAWALPINDI (INP): A Balochistan Frontier Corps soldier was martyred while four terrorists were killed as security forces thwarted an attack on a naval base in Turbat last night, the military's media affairs wing said.

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that terrorists attempted to attack PNS Siddique in Turbat last night. It said that the attempt was foiled due to the "swift and effective response by the troops ensuring the safety and security of personnel and assets".

"Security forces in the vicinity were immediately mobilised to support the naval troops. Synergetic and effective response by the armed forces enabled killing of all four terrorists in ensuing joint clearance operation," it said.

The ISPR said that during the intense fire exchange 24-year-old Sepoy Noman Fareed of the Balochistan Frontier Corps embraced martyrdom. Makran Commissioner Saeed Ahmed Umrani had earlier told Dawn that heavy exchange of fire and explosions were reported from the vicinity of Turbat airport on Monday night.

ISPR stated, "Security forces of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism. Earlier, security forces foiled a terrorist attack on Pakistan Navy's Airbase PNS Siddique in Turbat, late Monday night.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) four terrorists armed with heavy weapons and explosives attacked the Naval base in Turbat. However, timely action by navy personnel thwarted the assault, preventing any harm to the base or its personnel.

Four terrorists gunned down in DI Khan IBO: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (INP): Security forces gunned down four terrorists in Dera Ismail Khan (DIK) Intelligence Based Operation (IBO). In a statement released on Tuesday, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) stated that the security forces conducted the "IBO on the reported presence of terrorists".

During the conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between Pakistan security forces and the terrorists, as a result of which four terrorists were gunned down. The terrorists were identified as Mustafa, Qismatullah and Islamuddin, who were involved in an attack over security forces and civilians. Arms and ammunition were also recovered from

President summons NA session on April 1

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned the session of National Assembly on the 1st of next month at four pm. It will be the second session of the 16th National Assembly.

PM welcomes UNSC resolution for ceasefire in Gaza

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has welcomed the UN Security Council resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza. In a statement, he urged the international community to ensure the implementation of the Security Council's resolution for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. He said the ongoing Zionist oppression against innocent Palestinians in Gaza must be stopped permanently. The Prime Minister said thousands of women and children have been martyred in Israel's barbaric attacks.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal chairing a meeting on progress of Gwadar Power Plant with Chinese company.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Ceasefire, finally

Over five months since the Gazan slaughter began, the UN Security Council finally approved on Monday a resolution calling for a ceasefire in the occupied Palestinian territory. Several such attempts had been made since the conflict between Israel and Hamas began on Oct 7, yet the US had vetoed three ceasefire resolutions.

This time, probably because of the international backlash against Israeli barbarism, as well as domestic criticism of the Biden administration's 'iron-clad' support for Tel Aviv's murderous campaign in an election year, Washington decided to abstain. This may indicate the American government's moral ambiguity over the mass murder of over 32,000 Palestinian civilians — the US ambassador to the UN said they "did not agree" with everything in the resolution — but perhaps such a position is preferable to stonewalling every attempt to stop the butchery.

While there is little to celebrate, as the level of suffering in Gaza is staggering, at least the people of the besieged Strip will be given a break from the daily dose of death and destruction to mourn their loved ones, and start the long, painful process of healing. The UN secretary general was recently at the Rafah crossing and called for removing the obstacles that are blocking aid from reaching Gaza. Israel is the biggest obstacle, and it is hoped the ceasefire will allow food, water and medical aid to reach hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in distress. Famine — most of it manufactured by Israel — now stalks Gaza, with the WHO saying children in the Strip are on the "brink of death". Moreover, thousands of children have been orphaned in this unholy war, and are in particular need of medical and psychological attention to help them deal with the trauma of watching genocidal violence unfold before their eyes. These must be the immediate goals of the international community.

Apart from extending prompt humanitarian assistance to Gaza's population, all sides must work towards a more permanent cessation of violence. It should be remembered that an almost weeklong truce was agreed to in November, but broke down soon after.

The current arrangement should be more durable. While talk of 'solutions' may be unrealistic right now, once the dust has settled, Israel should be made to pay for the murder of thousands of innocents. Palestinian lives matter, and a generation of orphaned Gazan children will be looking to the world community to secure justice for them.

All eyes will now be on Israel and the US, its chief patron. Will Tel Aviv abide by the UNSC resolution? Or will it live up to its reputation of being a rogue state by dismissing this binding call, and continuing with its criminal campaign in Gaza? The days ahead will be critical for the entire region.

All that glitters

Muhammad Moin Masood

The law is all about relationships. Ostensibly, it is a body of rules dictating relationships and the interconnectivity of our shared social experience. States, provinces, governments, statutory bodies, private companies, parents, spouses, and total strangers — the law dictates the interactions between two entities/individuals. The law determines our relationships.

However, what sort of relationships does the law determine? What kind of connection between two groups/individuals does it help set up? When the law compels two groups/individuals to mould their actions in a particular way, what is the result and where does it leave the connection with others in this world?

More often than not, the law helps set up a relationship where one party is stronger than the other. This is truer in the domain of public law. Between a state and an individual, between a parent ministry and an autonomous body, between the Speaker of the House and ordinary legislators — the law wants one in a position of strength and the other in a position of weakness or subordination.

This also holds true for relationships between private parties — from the right of divorce granted to the husband to majority shareholding in a company. In fact, if you look closely, it seems that the law requires one to be higher and the other to be subordinate.

That's how the law deems a relationship to be a lawfully workable one. It is, therefore, not hard to miss why the early jurists looked at the law as simply the

command of a higher power backed by the threat of coercion.

However, this article is not about age-old jurisprudence. One must look beyond the dictates of the law and pierce the veil of legal normality to assess whether this is true. Can society only function if it is held together by the chains of law linking our affairs top to bottom? Determining our relationships where one has power and the other is left at the mercy of the law? Or can this lopsided picture of the law be inverted, and can we forge relationships of equality? Can we act in a way that subverts this understanding of relationships — personal, professional, social and political — that one party is in a position of power and the other is not?

These questions could be answered in the affirmative. One can rage, cry out, march, speak, and shout — these are commendable acts of courage to highlight what one perceives as an injustice. However, you can also look at it another way. The mistake lies in yielding to the legal fiction that the law sets up — of taking the strength of one party at face value. Yes, the party in a 'legally strong' position has an advantage that the law bestows on it but that very strength has its own failings and disadvantages.

On the other hand, those who are looked upon as 'legally weak' are unaware of the inherent strength that lies in that very 'weakness'. Take the example of David and Goliath. At one hand is the massive Goliath, a towering warrior and at the other is David, an apparently weaker and smaller shepherd boy armed with only a slingshot. One seems to have all the

power and the other is at his mercy. However, as Malcolm Gladwell recounts in his book *David & Goliath*, it is precisely because David was seen as small and weak and Goliath as huge and strong that he was able to overcome Goliath. The slingshot was actually a missile aimed at a slow-moving huge lump of muscle which found its mark with devastating effect.

When looking at advantages, disadvantages and the power imbalance between those with strength and those who are weak, we can always invert the picture. Those who are powerful, are also weak because of that very power. Those who are deemed to be weak, have an advantage because of their relative weakness. This is the inner strength that can be tapped into despite the hurdles of the law. This was the inner strength on display during the suffragette's movement, the civil rights movement, the independence struggle and countless other struggles around the world. This is the piece of resistance in any resistance.

We can create relationships anew based on this deeper understanding of our strengths and weaknesses which is more valuable than any understanding of the law.

We may hike through precedent, expend all our energy on the letter of the law, take our knives out and slice through arguments, conceptualise and stress the theories of the kings of old.

Just to find the right workings of our relationships in society. However, the true picture may just emerge when you invert those relationships. All that glitters is not gold. -- Courtesy Dawn

Wasting waste

Jamil Ahmad

Waste management is a major challenge as the world's material footprint expands to meet the needs of economic development and a large population. Growing at 2.3 per cent annually, global production and consumption of material resources has tripled over the past 50 years. The volume of waste produced has also grown significantly during this period.

As resource exploitation is set to increase, the waste generated in the process will also grow, posing serious threats to human health and the environment, while exacerbating the crisis of climate change, nature loss and pollution.

With their capacity constraints of waste collection and disposal, developing countries feel the impact on multiple fronts. Waste is either dumped in landfills, burnt in the open, or thrown into rivers and other waterways. Chemical effluents and sewage are often discharged into rivers. Thus polluted water and toxic air spread disease and take lives in the absence of effective policy and regulations.

The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Global Waste Management Outlook 2024 reveals that last year 2.3 billion metric tons of municipal solid waste was generated, which is set to reach 3.8bn metric tons by 2050. An estimated 540 million metric tons of municipal solid waste was not being collected, mostly in developing countries. The problem is acute in South Asia where rapid urbanisation and a growing population have accelerated waste generation. South Asia's 2bn-plus people constitute a quarter of the global population with per capita daily waste generation of about 0.5 kilograms. UNEP estimates that

in Central and South Asia only 37pc of refuse generated is collected against a global average waste collection rate of 75pc. In contrast, in developed countries, almost all the waste is collected and disposed of. The huge volume of uncollected municipal refuse is creating health problems and an environmental disaster, while the costs of healthcare and pollution are rising.

However, waste management itself is a costly affair. "In 2020, the global direct cost of waste management was estimated at \$252bn," notes the UNEP report. "Factor-in the hidden costs of pollution, poor health, and climate change from poor waste disposal practices, the cost rises to \$361bn." It could almost double to \$640bn by 2050 without urgent action.

The problem is aggravated by the linear approach of the current economic development paradigm, which resorts to the indiscriminate use of material resources in pursuit of raising GDP. For cash-strapped developing countries, the challenge to keep town and cities clean and secure from disease is insurmountable. Establishing or revamping national strategies and developing action plans for waste management is fundamental. They would need innovative ways to urgently prioritise policy actions that reduce waste generation as well as technical and financial support from development partners to implement waste management strategies.

An intersectional approach to policy development for waste management will minimise the multidimensional and harmful impact of municipal solid waste on poor and marginalised sections of society. UNEP and other UN organisations have identified policy measures which can help. Adopting a circular development model will reduce pressure on resource use and help decouple waste generation from economic growth based on the '3R' principle of reduce, reuse, and recycle. In this way, waste is converted into resource for another cycle of sustainable production.

Circularity and resource efficiency can be improved by harnessing digital technology and AI to mainstream sustainability practices across all sectors and move to a model of a zero-waste economy. Waste can also be used as a re-source to produce electricity.

The unregulated urban sprawl in many parts of South Asia without proper waste strategies is escalating the waste problem. More than half the waste generated is organic, which emits greenhouse gases if left to rot. Wasting this waste is unwise. The potential of 'waste-to-energy' must not go untapped. Local authorities and city administrations responsible for waste management must be enabled and provided with adequate resources for implementing action plans.

Human behaviour under the influence of a consumerist mindset and throwaway habits is also a major factor in the generation of waste. Governments, local authorities, industry, civil society, and media will need to work together to encourage a behavioural change for sustainable consumption and to raise awareness among households and citizens.

Achieving the SDGs related to poverty, health, water and sanitation, cities, climate change are all affected by the problem of uncollected and untreated municipal solid waste. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Finance minister terms tax award winners 'national heroes'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday termed the tax award winners 'national heroes,' urging the countrymen to pay their due taxes being responsible citizens.

"You [the tax award winners] are really our national heroes. The entire nation and the country should follow you as a beacon of light," the minister said while addressing the Tax Excellence Awards distribution ceremony here. The high taxpayers were awarded with the prizes by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Highlighting importance of tax collection in revenue generation, Aurangzeb said direct tax

on domestic side and exports on the external front were levers of the growth and development. "In Pakistan's case, the both flows have been raise-bound and therefore underwhelming, and redressing them on urgently basis is critical."

The finance minister reiterated a firm resolve of the government for restructuring and digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), for which it was in process of appointing consultants "for design and implementation in term of end to end digitalization."

He talked about bringing structural reforms, doing end-to-end digitalization and ensuring transparency in the tax collection system,

stressing that "We have to plug the leakages. There is a huge room for improvement in operational effectiveness of something rolled out few years back."

Aurangzeb was of the view to restore the confidence of superior clients' trust [high tax payers] in the government policies and transparency in the tax-collection system, which would help expand the tax-base.

The minister warned that the import-led and subsidy-supported businesses were not sustainable anymore and the country would have to accelerate export led-growth to achieve the trajectory of sustainable growth.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presents awards to the highest taxpayers and exporters of the country at the Tax Excellence Awards 2024.

Minister Khalil Sindhu says: Govt implementing IT-based track & trace system in factories to control production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs Tahir Khalil Sindhu Punjab said on Tuesday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will make the track and trace system fully functional for tax prevention in all sectors including tobacco, cement, sugar, and fertilizer industries.

Talking to PTV News, he said that FBR along with federal ministries and provincial departments is introducing a track and trace system in factories in Pakistan to promote

transparency.

He further said that by introducing a track and trace system in various sectors, tax authorities will get quick and comprehensive access to data, facilitate proactive decision-making, and improve the accuracy of tax assessments.

He said that the track and trace system aims to increase tax revenue through better monitoring and regulation.

Replying to a question, he said that Shehbaz Sharif had strongly advised to use of the track and trace system

to prevent counterfeiting and substandard products.

This system is now fully functional in all fertilizer industries, he further said. Track and trace systems will also empower businesses to ensure quality control and compliance throughout the supply chain, the minister explained. To another question, the minister added that besides preventing revenue leakages, it will help in minimizing human intervention and thus pave the way for a transparent and reliable tax compliance system across the country.

Malik, UAE envoy agree on enhancing collaboration in petroleum sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik, and the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi on Tuesday agreed to enhance collaboration in the petroleum sector.

In a meeting, the ambassador congratulated Dr Musadik Malik on assuming the charge of the Ministry of Petroleum, said a news release.

He highlighted the historical significance of relations between the UAE and Pakistan.

CM Maryam Nawaz says Want to cooperate with China in agriculture, IT, environment sectors

Independent Report LAHORE: "Pakistan and China have maintained closest and strongest friendship, but there is still a lot of room for improvement in economic ties," said Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Chairman China State Construction Engineering Corporation, Mr Wang Yaobang. She added, "There are numerous opportunities for collaboration."

Madam Chief Minister expressed her resolve to welcome China's cooperation in agriculture, IT and environmental protection. She appreciated and

said, "CSCEC's projects in Pakistan demonstrate construction quality and professionalism." She added,

"She is grateful to China State Construction Engineering Corporation for undertaking construction projects in Punjab like Arfa Karim IT Tower in Lahore."

Madam Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "China's one-window operation system for investment promotion is the best model worldwide." She added, "CPEC is China's gift to Pakistan. Punjab government will fully cooperate for the timely completion of CPEC projects."



LAHORE: Chairman China State Construction Engineering Corporation's (CSCEC) Chairman Mr. Wang Yaobang meeting with Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Shafay reviews CM's youth skill development program

Independent Report LAHORE: Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain chaired a meeting to review the progress of ongoing development schemes and various features of CM Youth Skills Development Programme here at TEVTA Secretariat on Tuesday.

The meeting decided that no new institution would be set up without improving the existing institutions. The provincial minister said that TEVTA's (Technical Education and

Vocational Training Authority) institutions and laboratories would be aligned with global requirements. He added that laboratories should be upgraded with the cooperation of universities like UMT (University of Management and Technology), while biometric attendance of students and staff should also be arranged in TEVTA institutes, besides paying special attention towards the future of microchip manufacturing. Language courses including Arabic, German, Korean, Japanese and Spanish.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE Hamad Obaid Al-Zaabi calls on Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik.

Pak-Qatar sign agreements to boost Pak workforce opportunities in Qatar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government of Pakistan and Qatar have signed several agreements and letter's of Intent (LOIs) with top Qatari companies the main purpose of this initiative was set to significantly enhance employment opportunities for the Pakistani workforce in Qatar.

An official source told APP, the signing of these Agreements with renowned Qatari firms, including Qatari

Diyar-Saudi Bin Laden Group Construction (QD-SBG), Hamad Bin Khaled Contracting Company W.L.L. (HBK), Ali Bin Ali Holding W.L.L., Sheikh Jabor Bin Mansour Bin Jabor Bin Jassim Al Thani (JMJ) Holding, Tabeer Care Medical Services, and Al Rawnaq International Commercial Projects, marks a crucial step in strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and Qatar.

Governor written letter to CM Punjab for appointments to important posts in universities

Independent Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman/Chancellor has written a letter to Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz to draw her attention for permanent appointments to the most important posts in universities across Punjab. Governor Punjab said that in the past appointments to the statutory posts were not made in time in the universities across Punjab. He added that due, the most important positions of the universities

including vice chancellor, registrar, treasurers and controller of examinations are lying vacant. He said that these positions play a key role in running the universities in a better way. The Punjab Governor emphasized that immediate steps should be taken for permanent appointments to these positions so that the universities can make progress in the fields of education and research.

Meanwhile, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman approved the 28-day ex-Pakistan leave of Principal

Aitchison College Michael A. Thomson. In the absence of Principal Aitchison College, Anna Kamran and Khalid Noon Barsar will look after the administrative affairs in his place. Besides, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman strongly condemned the suicide blast in Shingla. He expressed deep sorrow and regret over the death of six people including Chinese nationals in this incident. Governor Punjab also extended his condolences to the families of the deceased.



GILGIT: Deputy Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Sadia Danish in a meeting with the PPP workers.

LHC CJ presides over first meeting with D&SJs

LAHORE (APP): Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan on Tuesday presided over the first meeting with the district and sessions judges of all 36 districts of Punjab.

LHC Registrar Sheikh Khalid Bashir, Director General of District Judiciary Malik Muhammad Sajid Ali Awan, and Senior Additional Registrars of all three allied LHC benches were also present on the occasion.

During the deliberations, district and sessions judges from across Punjab voiced their perspectives, laying the groundwork for constructive discourse. Subsequently, Chief

Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan unveiled a series of immediate directives aimed at bolstering the efficacy and integrity of the judicial process. Among the key initiatives announced: Implementation of video conferencing technology for evidence recording and argument hearings within the district judiciary; swift dismissal of frivolous litigation upon initial review, with stringent penalties for offenders; mandate for judicial officers to prioritize courtroom presence, with sanctions for prolonged absence; revamping the curriculum of the Punjab Judicial Academy to align with contemporary legal standards.

ANF recovers 640 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 640 kg drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that 230 kg heroin and 220 kg crystals were recovered from the Western Bypass Quetta area. In the second operation, 100 kg opium and 80 kg hashish were recovered from Mashkil Chagai.

In the third operation, 6.8 kg weed was recovered from three accused arrested from Sher Shah Toll Plaza Multan.

Anti-kite flying walk organised in Muzaffargarh

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Kite-flying is completely banned in the district and police would deal violators of the ban with sternly.

This was stated by District Traffic Officer, Zafar Hayyat during an awareness walk organized to highlight the dangerous impacts of flying kites here on Tuesday.

The walk was attended by local trade unions, members of civil society, and the media.

The walk started from the police line after passing through the main bazaar and culminated at Fyaz Chowk.

CM decides to establish liver transplant center

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has announced plans to establish a liver transplant and bone marrow transplant center aimed at enhancing healthcare services in the province.

The decision was made during a high-level meeting attended by provincial cabinet members, health experts, and officials.

The initial liver transplant center is slated to be established at the Institute of Kidney Diseases in Peshawar, with plans to relocate these vital facilities to Khyber Medical University.

Additionally, the

meeting also decided on plans for setting up the Institute of Neurosurgery, to be located at Fountain House Peshawar. The provincial government aims to provide accessible liver and bone marrow transplant services to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, thereby mitigating the necessity for individuals to seek treatment outside the province.

Moreover, efforts are underway to ensure round-the-clock availability of dialysis services in government hospitals equipped with such amenities, with endeavors to introduce dialysis services in hospitals currently lacking them.

AG KP says: Governor can't summon assembly session for oath taking on reserved seats

PESHAWAR (APP): The office of Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has submitted reply to the Peshawar High Court and the Law Department saying that the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cannot summon assembly session by himself for the swearing-in ceremony of elected members on reserved seats.

According to the document, "Assembly

meeting can be convened on the advice or requisition of the Chief Minister, calling the meeting by the Governor was an unconstitutional process, so it cannot be implemented."

The reply further said that the governor can convene the first meeting after the election by himself, besides, the governor can also convene the meeting in case of no-confidence motion.

Five senior faculty members of PIBC offer resignation

MULTAN (APP): Five senior faculty members of Pak Italian Modern Burn Centre (PIBC) offered resignation against second time appointment of Executive Director, Dr Naveed Akhtar on political basis and indecent behaviour of senior registrar, Dr Ahmed Ali Malik with senior medics.

They sent their resignation to Secretary Specialized Health care and Medical Education, Ali Jan Khan.



LAHORE: Teachers and parents of students of Aitchison College are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, outside Punjab Governor House building in Lahore.

16 development schemes worth Rs 72.997b approved

LAHORE (APP): The Provincial Development Working Party, Punjab (PDWP) in its 48th meeting of the current financial year here Tuesday approved 16 development schemes at an estimated cost of Rs 72.997 billion.

P&D Board Chairman Barrister Nabeel Ahmad Awan presiding over the PDWP meeting that approved the following schemes:

1) Channelization of Jabba Nullah Tehsil & District Mianwali at the

cost of Rs 960.456 million

2) Concrete Lining of Maggi Magassom Link RD 0 to 58500 at the cost of Rs 420.263 million

3) Rehabilitation of 6R/Hakra with System at the cost of Rs 461.283 million

4) Rehabilitation of 7R/Hakra with System at the cost of Rs 414.936 million.

5) National Program for Improvement of Watercourse In Pakistan (Punjab component) Phase-II at the cost of Rs 47503.49 million.

International News

Ukrainian says a third of Russian warships in the Black Sea have been destroyed or disabled

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukraine has sunk or disabled a third of all Russian warships in the Black Sea in just over two years of war, the navy spokesman said Tuesday, a heavy blow to Moscow's military capability.

Ukraine's Navy spokesman Dmytro Pletenchuk told The Associated Press that the latest strike on Saturday night hit the Russian amphibious landing ship Kostiantyn Olshansky that was resting in dock in Sevastopol in Russia-occupied Crimea. The ship was part of the Ukrainian navy before Russia captured it while annexing the Black Sea peninsula in 2014.

Pletenchuk has previously announced that two other landing ships of the same type, Azov and Yamal, also were damaged in

Saturday's strike along with the Ivan Khurs intelligence ship.

He told the AP that the weekend attack, which was launched with Ukraine-built Neptune missiles, also hit Sevastopol port facilities and an oil depot.

Russian authorities reported a massive Ukrainian attack on Sevastopol over the weekend but didn't acknowledge any damage to the fleet.

Pletenchuk said that with the latest attack, a third of all warships that Russian had in the Black Sea before the war have been destroyed or disabled. Moscow officials have kept mum on most of Ukrainian claims, but previous navy losses have been confirmed by Russian military bloggers and media.

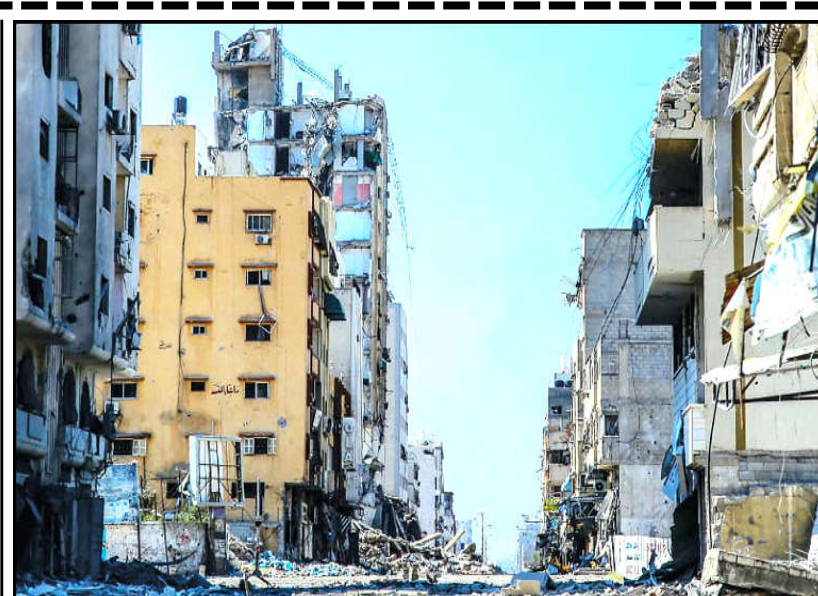
At the same time, Pletenchuk acknowledged

that just two of about a dozen of Russian missile carrying warships have been sunk and pledged that Ukraine will continue the strikes.

"Our ultimate goal is complete absence of military ships of the so-called Russian Federation in the Azov and Black Sea regions," Pletenchuk told the AP.

Successful Ukrainian drone and missile strikes have provided a major morale boost for Kyiv at a time when its undermanned and under-gunned forces are facing Russian attacks along the more than 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line.

Challenging Russia's naval superiority also has helped create more favorable conditions for Ukrainian grain exports and other shipments from the country's Black Sea ports.



A view of destruction from Israeli strikes in Gaza City.

Airstrikes in Syria kill an Iranian adviser and a member of a World Health Organization team

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: A series of airstrikes in eastern Syria on Tuesday killed more than a dozen people, including an Iranian military adviser and a team member working for the World Health Organization, officials and reports said. It was not immediately clear who was behind the airstrikes in Syria's eastern province of Deir el-Zour that borders Iraq.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the strikes killed 15 people including an Iranian adviser

with Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, two of his bodyguards as well as nine Iraqi fighters from an Iran-backed group and two Syrians working with the Iranians. It added that a Syrian engineer was also killed. Iran's state news agency confirmed that a Revolutionary Guard member was killed in Syria.

Dama Post, a pro-government media outlet in Syria, said the strikes targeted the provincial capital of Deir el-Zour that carries the same name, and the towns of Mayadeen and Boukamal.

Two Moscow attack suspects travelled 'freely' because no arrest warrant: Turkish official

Monitoring Desk

ISTANBUL: A Turkish security official on Tuesday said two of the Moscow concert hall attack suspects travelled "freely" to Russia as no arrest warrants were issued against them. Russian authorities detained 11 people in connection with Friday's attack, which saw camouflaged gunmen storm into Crocus City Hall, open fire on concert-goers and set the building ablaze, killing at

least 139 people.

Two of those, Tajik nationals Rachabalizoda Saidakrami and Shamsidin Fariduni, "were able to travel freely between Russia and Turkey since there was no warrant for their arrest", the official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. The two had both spent time in Turkey shortly before the attack and entered Russia together on the same flight from Istanbul, the official said.

UN expert accuses Israel of several acts of genocide

Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: A UN rights expert said on Monday there were "reasonable grounds" to determine that Israel has committed several acts of "genocide" in Gaza, also evoking "ethnic cleansing".

Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur on the rights situation in Palestinian territories, said there were clear indications that Israel had violated three of the five acts listed under the international genocide convention.

"The overwhelming nature and scale of Israel's assault on Gaza and the destructive conditions of life it has inflicted reveal an intent to physically destroy Palestinians as a group," she said in a report.

Albanese, an independent expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council but who does not

speak on behalf of the United Nations, said she had found "reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating the commission of... acts of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza has been met".

The report, entitled "Anatomy of a Genocide", listed those acts as: "Killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to the group's members; and deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part". Israel's diplomatic mission in Geneva said the country "utterly rejects the report". Albanese's report, which she is due to present to the Human Rights Council on Tuesday, maintained that Israel's "genocidal acts" followed "statements of genocidal intent".

Hong Kong leader says early prison release unlikely for national security offenders

Monitoring Desk

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's leader John Lee said on Tuesday it would become "common practice" not to grant people convicted of national security offences early release from prison under the city's new national security law.

Lee's remarks at a weekly press conference came amid local media reports that activist Ma Chun-man was the first prisoner blocked from early release for good behaviour after the new law took force at the weekend. The law, known as Article 23, covers new or updated offences including sedition, espionage and interference by external forces, sparking international criticism that some definitions are too vague and it could damage the Chinese-ruled city's international financial hub credentials. Hong Kong officials have said Article 23 was vital to plugging loop-

holes and bring long-term stability after the former British colony was rocked by months of protests in 2019.

Ma, dubbed "Captain America 2.0" for wielding the comic book hero's shield during the 2019 pro-democracy protests, was convicted in 2021 of inciting secession through his slogans, statements and placards under an earlier Beijing-imposed security law. He was sentenced to five years and nine months. Ma later won an appeal and his sentence was reduced to five years. If granted the usual one-third reduction for good behaviour, he would have been released on Monday.

Lee said endangering national security was a serious crime and it needed to be made clear to everyone that perpetrators of such crimes would not normally be granted an early release from prison.



Supporters of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange hold a banner and placards outside The Royal Courts of Justice, Britain's High Court, in central London, UK.

Japan approves plan to sell fighter jets to other nations

Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: Japan's Cabinet on Tuesday approved a plan to sell future next-generation fighter jets that it's developing with Britain and Italy to other countries, in the latest move away from the country's postwar pacifist principles.

The contentious decision to allow international arms sales is expected to

help secure Japan's role in the joint fighter jet project and is part of a move to build up the Japanese arms industry and bolster its role in global security.

The Cabinet also endorsed a revision to Japan's arms equipment and technology transfer guidelines to allow coproduced lethal weapons to be sold to countries other than the partners.

Trump wins lifeline in civil fraud case

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Donald Trump was thrown a huge lifeline on Monday when an appeals court slashed what could have been a crippling demand for a nearly half-billion-dollar bond payment and also gave him 10 more days to pay. The Republican presidential candidate got the unexpectedly positive news about his New York civil fraud case while he was sitting in court for another case — a hearing in his upcoming criminal trial over paying hush money to a porn star. Trump had been facing a Monday deadline to pay the huge amount pending an appeal against a judge's decision that he is liable for fraudulently conspiring to inflate his net worth. Trump had made clear he was unable to find the \$454 million and he risked seeing New York state confiscate parts of his property empire in response. Now with Monday's decision, he will have 10 more days to pay just \$175 million.



ISLAMABAD: Federal minister for Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif chairs a meeting on outsourcing of airports and privatisation of PIA at aviation division.

Pakistan committed to complete TAPI gas pipeline project: Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, describing it as a flagship project essential for the country's energy needs.

During a meeting with the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, Atadjan Movlamov, the Minister said that TAPI gas pipeline project is very important for Pakistan's energy requirements, said a news release issued by the Ministry of Energy Petroleum Division.

During Musadik Malik's previous tenure in office, the project experienced unprecedented momentum, resulting in significant progress and tangible outcomes. He reiterated his

dedication to advancing the project.

The Ambassador Movlamov felicitated the Minister on assuming office and commended his dedication to the project.

Acknowledging the Ambassador's warm wishes, Dr. Musadik Malik expressed gratitude for the support and pledged to uphold the partnership between both countries.

Atadjan Movlamov briefed about the scheduled intergovernmental commission and working group meetings for the project this year.

The envoy said that TAPI represents a win-win situation for all involved parties.

He extended an invitation to the Minister to participate in the Turkmenistan Energy Forum scheduled to be held in Paris next month.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkmenistan H.E. Atadjan Movlamov called on Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik.

Shangla Attack: Interior Minister briefs Chinese Envoy about rescue operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior and Narcotic Control, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi on Tuesday reached the Chinese embassy in Islamabad immediately after the suicide attack on the car of Chinese citizens in Shangla and briefed the Chinese Ambassador about the details of blast and ongoing rescue operations.

In a condemnation statement issued by his office, the minister expressed heartfelt grief and sorrow, condolence to the families

of the deceased Chinese citizens, the attack on the fraternal relations between Pakistan and China is intolerable.

Naqvi said the whole Pakistani nation was an equal participant in the grief of its Chinese brothers, adding that the government would deal with the elements involved in the attack with iron hands by ensuring a comprehensive investigation of the incident. He said the great bilateral relations would not be affected due to such attacks.

FM Ishaq Dar, Uzbek counterpart discuss bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Discussed all areas of mutual interest and invited him to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience. Also assured him of my full support to further bilateral relations between our two brotherly countries for the benefit of our people," he added.

On his X account, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said that he was delighted to receive telephone call from his brother Uzbek FM Saidov. "Thanked him for his message of felicitation.

Reciprocating his post, FM Saidov, posted on X that it was a pleasure to have a phone conversation with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

Amna Baloch meets Director Carnegie Europe

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU, Amna Baloch on Tuesday met Director Carnegie Europe Rosa Balfour in Brussels and discussed matters of mutual concern.

In the meeting, they also discussed the ongoing policy debates in Europe and beyond.

The two sides also explored avenues of collaboration and think tank cooperation.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Baloch announced on her X account that she will hold e-khuli katchehri for the Pakistani community residing in Belgium and Luxembourg on Wednesday (March 27).

The community members can register on the following link: forms.

Baloch demands investigations into Shangla suicide blast

LAHORE (INP): Acting Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Liaquat Baloch strongly condemning the Shangla blast has demanded an immediate investigation into the tragic incident and strict punishment to the perpetrators.

In a statement issued from Mansoor on Tuesday, he expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of five Chinese and one Pakistani in the suicide attack.

Liaquat Baloch said that the incident was a conspiracy to sabotage Pak-China relations and the CPEC project. Security authorities and the government should ensure the safety of Chinese citizens in the country and provide complete details of the incident to the Chinese embassy and government to restore confidence.

He expressed condolences from Jamaat-e-Islami to the Chinese government, people, and embassy.

AT allows Moonis Elahi to contest by polls

LAHORE (Online): Appellate Tribunal (AT) of Lahore High Court (LHC) has allowed Moonis Elahi son of former Chief Minister Punjab Pervaiz Elahi to contest the by polls.

Appeal plea filed by Moonis Elahi against the decision of returning officer came up for hearing in AT of LHC Tuesday.

The AT while nullifying the Returning officer decision allowed Moonis Elahi to contest by polls.

It is pertinent to mention here returning officer had rejected the nomination papers of Moonis Elahi in PP-158.

President calls on provinces to prioritize primary, secondary education for orphans

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday urged provincial governments to take special measures aimed at ensuring access to primary and secondary education for orphaned children across the country.

Stressing the need to actively participate in the cause of education, training and care of orphans, the president said the support and education of orphans was a common responsibility of all of us.

He was speaking at an iftar dinner hosted by him for the orphaned children at the President House on the occasion of Orphans Day.

Every year on 15th of Ramadan, the World Orphan's Day is celebrated on the call of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in all the member countries.

President Zardari said he was delighted to meet the innocent and charming children.

Aseefa Bhutto Zardari was also present at the ceremony. She also met orphans from different cities.

Chairman Pakistan Orphan Care Forum (POCF) Air Marshal (ret) Farooq Habib addressing the event said the POCF

was working for the upbringing and care of orphans. He said healthy societies always care for the development and education of the vulnerable, especially orphans.

He said there were about 4.6 million orphans in the country while the POCF was taking care of around 100,000 orphan children.

Expressing gratitude to President Asif Zardari, the Chairman POCF said inviting children to the presidency would increase their confidence and motivation.

Law minister chairs meeting for tax reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday said that Federal Board of Revenue would nominate full time departmental representative for courts so that tax related cases could be concluded as early as possible.

A meeting regarding tax reforms and tax collection was held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Law Raja Naem Akbar and Afaq Qureshi Member Operations (IR). Some of the crucial decisions were taken during the meeting. The law

DG NAB (Balochistan) conducting general public hearings regularly

QUETTA: In compliance to directions of the Chairman NAB, NAB (Balochistan) regularly conducts general Public Hearing on the last Thursday of every month to give direct access to complainants and receive complaints concerning corruption and corrupt practices.

This initiative reflects NAB's commitment to promote transparency and accountability in Pakistan. In this connection a General Public Hearing is being held at the National Accountability Bureau (Balochistan), Shahra-e-Gulistan, Quetta Cantt on Thursday dated 28th March, 2024 from 11:00 am to 03:00 pm, wherein Director General NAB will personally meet with the complainants and receive complaints. It is clarified that as per revised policy, no anonymous/pseudonymous complaints will be entertained. Only substantiated complaints within the purview of NAB will be dealt with in accordance of NAA Act 2022.



ISLAMABAD: Honourable Mr. Justice Iqbal Hameedur Rahman, Chief Justice, Federal Shariat Court administrator oath to Mr. Justice Ameer Muhammad Khan as Judge of Federal Shariat Court.

Measures for creating awareness among public against TB: Doctors

QUETTA (APP): Expert doctors stressed that measures would be taken to provide awareness about tuberculosis (TB) in the public to prevent the same diseases which cases were increasing every year.

Tuberculosis (Tuberculosis) is an infectious and curable disease, despite being a curable illness; its cases are increasing every year, timely diagnosis, treatment and prevention of tuberculosis is very important for which we have to make joint efforts.

These views were expressed by the Chief Executive Officer of Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital Dr. Shireen Khan and other expert doctors in a seminar held in Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital on the occasion of World Tuberculosis Day.

A large number of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lab specialists and officials participated in the seminar.

The seminar was organized by Pakistan Chest Society with the mutual support of Mercy Corps. Honorable Dr. Ashraf Bugti was the chief guest of the seminar.

Before the formal start of the seminar, an awareness walk was also organized at Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital to provide awareness about TB. In which specialist doctors, staff nurses, representatives of Mercy Corps and people associated since then participated.

Speaking at the seminar, TB experts said that according to the report of the World Health Organization, 258 people were suffering from this disease in every 100,000 population.

They said that all available resources were being utilized on TB diagnosis and treatment, there was a need to provide awareness about tuberculo-



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari was called on by WAPDA Chairman Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Sajjad Ghani.

Government ends gas slab discount, moves to flat rate system

ISLAMABAD (INP): The government has abolished the current tiered gas billing system with slabs and discounts, instead moving to a flat rate system for gas consumption. This change will impact domestic and industrial consumers alike, as everyone will be charged the same rate regardless of the amount of gas they use.

Under the new system, the price per unit of gas (MMBTU) will be uniform across sectors, including domestic, commercial, general industry, and even export-oriented consumers. The exact price is yet to be finalized and awaits approval. However, it is expected to be around Rs. 4,501 (excluding taxes) for consumers in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad.

This decision comes on the heels of a recent request by Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) for a 147% increase in gas

tariffs. During a public hearing, the company argued that the gas price needs to be raised to Rs. 4,446 per MMBTU to reflect production costs.

Consumers present at the hearing expressed strong opposition to the proposed hike, highlighting the potential for business closures and rising unemployment

due to high gas prices. Stakeholders pointed out that existing gas prices have already forced numerous businesses to shut down, despite the fact that Pakistan sells gas to some countries for as low as \$4 per unit while purchasing it internationally for \$15.

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) chairman acknowledged the concerns of both consumers and gas companies and indicated that a final decision on gas price revisions will be made after careful consideration.

PM lauds security forces for foiling terrorist attack on Turbat naval airbase

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday appreciated the security forces for thwarting a terrorist attack on Turbat naval airbase.

Due to a prompt and effective response by the security forces, terrorists were sent to hell, thus saving the country from a huge

damage, PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

The prime minister also expressed the resolve to crush the specter of terrorism.

The entire nation was standing with their brave security forces and paid tribute to them, he added.

Pakistan hails UNSC's Gaza ceasefire resolution, urges its implementation

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has welcomed the UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in war-ravaged Gaza, emphasizing that the long-awaited resolution must be implemented.

"We call for the immediate implementation of this Security Council resolution in accordance with Article 25 of the UN Charter," Ambassador Munir Akram said Monday, when asked for his comments by APP.

Under the terms of that Charter article, UN member states agree to carry out the decisions of the 15-member Council.

"This must be a first step in halting Israel's brutal campaign in Gaza," Ambassador Akram said.

"Pakistan will continue to work actively for a just, comprehensive and durable solution through the establishment of a secure, viable, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital," he added.

Monday's Council resolution demanded an immediate ceasefire for the holy month of Ramadan, and "the urgent need to expand the flow" of aid into Gaza.

There were 14 votes in favour, with the United States abstaining.



QUETTA: Investigation Officer Federal Ombudsman Ahmed Waqas Kashi alongwith officers of SSGC listening issues of public at open kutchery at SSGC office.

QMC seeks machinery from PDMA to launch cleanliness drive in city

QUETTA (APP): Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) has seeking waste lifting machinery from Provincial Disaster Management Authority as the corporation has lack of machinery and tools to launch cleanliness drive in the city.

Talking to APP, Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said the QMC authority had been not purchased new machinery and vehicles since 1994.

He said an operation would be launched to clean the water courses and nullahs for efficient working of sewerage system so that the rain and waste water could not cause inconvenience to the public.

Under the supervision of Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, the corporation has collected over 10000 tons of trash from the city

in short period of 12 days. Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said the authority has all set to collect door-to-door garbage to make Quetta the cleanest city within two weeks.

Commissioner said the government had taking efforts to increase the waste collecting capacity of QMC by 500 tons to 1600 tons daily by out sourcing the Quetta solid waste management.

Hamza said the plan is in pipeline to operate the solid waste management in Quetta on public private partnership basis to improve sewerage system.

He said the cleanliness drives were being carried out in every area of the city on regular basis and the QMC was ensuring collection and disposal of garbage in every area of the provincial capital city including Sariyab to Nawwan Killi.