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ISLAMABAD: Former President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Rain affectees would not be left alone in time of distress: PM

PM directs concerned authorities to present comprehensive plan for relief & rehabilitation of rain affected people in province

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has categorically stated that those affected due to the recent devastating rains in Gwadar or other parts of the province would not be left alone in the time of distress at all.

He vowed to work for relief and rehabilitation of the affected people together with the Balochistan government, and the process would remain continued until each and every affected person is fully rehabilitated.

The Premier was speaking after distribution of cheques among the rain affected people and briefing conducted for him about damages caused due to rains in Gwadar, on Tuesday.

Shahbaz Sharif reached Gwadar along with Chairman NDMA, Lt. General Inam Haider Malik and other high ups from Islamabad to personally review the situation after



GWADAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed regarding the damages caused by the recent torrential rains and the relief and rescue operations carried out by the local authorities

ECP allocates reserved seats claimed by SIC to other parties

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday notified the allocation of reserved seats for women and minorities, which were claimed by PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), to other political parties.

The move came a day after the electoral watchdog rejected the Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) petition, seeking the allocation of reserved seats following a 'merger' with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for this specific purpose.

The ECP was requested to allot the seats on the basis of the inclusion of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed candidates in their party. However today, the election commission distributed the reserved seats for women and minorities among other political parties.

In the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly - according to a notification, the ECP allocated one reserved seat each to Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam Pakistan,

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The ECP - in the Sindh Assembly - allocated reserved seat for women to Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and PPP. PPP's Samita Afzal and MQM-P's Fouzia Hameed elected on reserved seats.

Furthermore, PPP's Sadhu Mal alias Surinder Valasai secured minority seat in Sindh Assembly.

The ECP allocated three reserved seats for minorities to PML-N, PPP and JUI-F - which were claimed by Sunni Ittehad Council. PML-N's Neelum Meghwar, PPP's Ramesh Kumar and JUI-F's James Iqbal were elected on the minority seats.

PTI candidates contested the elections as independents after the Supreme Court upheld the election supervisor's decision, considering its intra-party polls "unconstitutional" and revoked its claim on the electoral symbol of 'bat'.

Dar, Aurangzeb included in the race for slot of finance minister

ISLAMABAD (Online): Consultation is underway for formation of federal cabinet.

Ishaq Dar once again is included in the race for the slot of finance minister.

Sources said Musaddaq Malik and Muhammad Aurangzeb, chief executive of a private bank are also included in the race. The final decision will be made by taking stake holders into confidence. The coalition partners will also be given representation in the federal cabinet.

According to sources Nawaz Sharif is in favor of making Ishaq Dar finance minister.

Allied parties will also be included in the federal cabinet in the first phase.

Important ministry will be allocated to Abdul Aleem Khan, leader Isteqam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP). Tariq Bashir Cheema and Salik Hussain from PML-Q will also be part of cabinet. MQM has not shown its willingness to join the cabinet so far. MQM will seek approval from its coordination committee in this respect.

COAS presides over 263rd Corps Commanders' Conference

Army top brass dismayed at unsubstantiated allegations of interference in electoral process

Says allegations aimed at creating political instability; Forum expresses satisfaction over the smooth democratic transition of power in the Centre and Provinces; Reiterates to continue providing full support to govt.

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Corps Commanders' Conference on Tuesday urged the proud nation to remain positive and united, and wholeheartedly participate in the progress and development of Pakistan.

The forum noted with concern the organised misinformation and fake news being spread by certain nefarious elements to sow despondency and divisions within the society.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir presided over the 263rd Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at the General Headquarters (GHQ) an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhada (martyrs), including officers and men of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies and the citizens who have laid their lives for ensuring peace and stability in the country.

The conference resolved that terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on behalf of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan, would be dealt

with full might of the state.

The COAS directed commanders to continue consolidating the gains of efforts against terrorism and militancy.

The forum expressed concerns over continued repression of Kashmiris in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and condemned the unabated human rights violations by India. It reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue to support the Kashmiris politically, diplomatically and morally at all levels.

The forum also expressed complete solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemned serious human rights violations and war crimes being perpetrated in Gaza.

The COAS said, "The Palestinian people have unequivocal diplomatic, moral and political support of the Pakistani nation and we will continue to support the principled stance of our brethren for enduring resolution of the Palestinian issue."

The forum appreciated the efforts of civil administration, law enforcement agencies and security forces for providing all-out

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), presided over the 263rd Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at GHQ

PPP delegation assures PM of cooperation for economic stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Pakistan Peoples Party led by former President Asif Ali Zardari and party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wherein they assured the government of the party's support for the country's economic stability.

In the meeting held on Monday night, the delegation, also comprising Chief Minister of Sindh Murad Ali Shah, congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on assuming the office of the prime minister and expressed good wishes for him.

Asif Ali Zardari assured the prime minister that the PPP would stand alongside

Senate polls on April 3

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Election Commission (EC) has decided to hold Senate elections on April 3.

According to EC sources election on 48 seats of Senate will take place on April 3.

EC has worked out schedule of Senate election. The polling for Senate election will be held in national and provincial assemblies on April 3.

On April 3, twelve senators will be elected each from Sindh and Punjab, while two senators will be elected from Islamabad. Eleven new senators will be elected from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Fifty-two senators of the Senate will retire after completing their term on March 11. Twelve senators each from Punjab and Sindh and four senators from former Fata will complete their term. Similarly, 11 senators each from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and two from Islamabad will be retiring on March 11.

US expresses willingness to work with new Pak govt.

Terms Maryam's election as first woman CM Punjab a 'milestone'

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States of America (USA) on Tuesday expressed willingness to collaborate with Pakistan's new Government.

In a recent press briefing, United States Department of State Spokesperson Matthew Miller conveyed the US's readiness to engage with Pakistan's new government.

Matthew Miller highlighted the US's willingness to work closely with the newly formed Pakistani government, emphasizing the importance of advancing mutual interests through collaboration with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The spokesperson further said that appointment of Maryam Nawaz Sharif as the Chief Minister of Punjab represents a significant development in Pakistani politics. The US looks forward to the full inclusion of women in political life and views it as a positive step for Pakistan's democratic progress.



ISLAMABAD: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, call on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Facebook, Instagram, Messenger down as Meta faces worldwide outage

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Social media sites Facebook, Instagram and Messenger reportedly went down as parent company Meta faced a worldwide outage on Tuesday.

Real-time internet and social media outage and monitoring service, Downtidetector.pk, reported the Meta-owned social sites' outage across the globe around 8:16pm.

Users on Instagram were unable to view the content on the picture-sharing platform as the message "Something went wrong" appeared every time they tried to access the site.

Meanwhile, login sessions on Facebook and Messenger expired as the users found themselves logged

National economic, reconciliation plan need of hour: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that a national economic and reconciliation plan was need of the hour.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the opposition should play its constitutional role so that the country can be taken forward together.

He said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chose a path of anarchy and chaos in the country, which was directly sabotaged the process of country's economic recovery.

Modi, Putin, Amir Qatar greet Shehbaz on assuming office of PM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on swearing in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He extended his felicitations to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on his X timeline.

President of Russia Vladimir Putin on Tuesday congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on his election as the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The Russian president highlighted the friendly nature of Russia-Pakistan relations and wished Shehbaz Sharif every success in his important capacity as head of government, the Embassy of Russia in Islamabad said on its X timeline.

The Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani felicitated Shehbaz Sharif on his election and swearing-in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan for the second time.

The Amir, who sent a cable of congratulations to the prime minister, wished him success and for further development and growth of bilateral relations, according to the state-run Qatar news Agency.

PM to give dinner to allied parties on Thursday

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has invited PML-N and allied parties to dinner. PM Shehbaz Sharif will host dinner in honor of all allied parties on Thursday. Dinner will be given to PML-N and all allied parliamentary parties in PM house.

CJCS calls for strengthening collaboration among SCO states in military medicines

RAWALPINDI (Online): General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), Tuesday attended the opening session of SCO Members States Seminar being hosted by Pakistan at Rawalpindi on theme of "Challenges in Military Medicines".

The Chairman JCSC in his address highlighted that emergence of new and complex healthcare challenges, Pandemics and humanitarian crisis merit crafting of collective preparedness, response strategies and more importantly strengthening of multilateral collaboration amongst SCO nations especially in field of military medicines.



CJCS reiterated that both Pakistani nation and Pakistan Armed Forces take great pride in our partnership with SCO and are fully committed to further expand this cooperation.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Reserved seats

The ECP's decision to deny the Sunni Ittehad Council — the new home of PTI-affiliated lawmakers who won the Feb 8 polls as independent candidates — a share of the special seats reserved for women and minorities has come as a disappointment to those who believed in the fairness of the electoral process.

Even though the much-delayed ECP decision, the latest in a series of moves ostensibly aimed at keeping the PTI out of elections and parliament, was not unexpected, many had hoped that the spirit of democracy would prevail over the technicalities cited by the ECP to justify its action.

According to the ECP, the SIC could not stake a claim to a share in the reserved seats "due to having non-curable legal defects and violation of a mandatory provision of submission of party list for reserved seats which is the requirement of law". It defended its decision by pointing out that the SIC had not contested the elections for any seat in the national or provincial assemblies.

That is not all. The ECP generated more debate by allocating what many see as the SIC's share of reserved seats to other political parties. By saying that "the seats in the National Assembly shall not remain vacant", it has indirectly accepted the argument that the Lower House as well as three provincial assemblies, barring Balochistan, were incomplete when they elected the Speaker, deputy Speaker, the prime minister and the chief ministers.

According to media reports, the SIC's combined loss amounts to 77 seats in the national and provincial assemblies.

The ECP might have its own logic but its order does ignore past precedent. For instance, the Balochistan Awami Party, which did not contest the first post-merger polls in former Fata, was allowed a reserved women's seat after independents joined the party. Meanwhile, a 2018 Lahore High Court judgement held that a political party's share of reserved seats was non-transferable. The ruling had come after a Returning Officer did not accept PTI nominees for reserved seats due to a slight delay in the submission of names.

In short, the ECP has exacerbated the crisis it triggered when it denied the PTI its election symbol, again on technical grounds — a decision controversially upheld by the apex court. Like the party symbol issue, the legality of the latest ECP determination will also be decided by the superior judiciary.

Unless addressed, such debatable actions will continue to impede the growth of democracy in the country. Today, these decisions are affecting the PTI, tomorrow other parties, which, for the moment, can enjoy their share of reserved seats and see their numerical strength enhanced in the assemblies, might find themselves at the receiving end when they fall out with the powers that be.

Common ground

Arooj Waheed Dar

In the run-up to the Feb 8 polls, extensive promises were made to the public by political parties in their election manifestos and speeches. However, post-election, many individuals seem to be suffering from selective amnesia, with some backtracking from their strong stance against other parties, and others conveniently forgetting their resentment against the establishment.

Amid this air of forgetfulness, it is crucial to remind political representatives of the promises they made in their poll campaigns. Holding parties accountable for their performance is crucial to steer Pakistan towards stability and progress, and to ensure that the trust of the people is upheld, democratic principles respected, and the nation's long-term interests safeguarded.

Given our economic and social challenges, collective commitment from all political stakeholders is urgently required for transformative reforms. Since the new government is a minority dispensation, there is a real opportunity for parties to jointly develop a charter of economy, comprising at the minimum what the PML-N and PPP individually promised in their manifestos.

A comparison of their election manifestos reveals significant areas of common ground, providing a foundation for further discussion between the two parties as well as others representing political rivals. For instance, both indicate the need to create better employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, introducing a labour policy to protect the rights of informal workers, and to promote decent work. Both also

mention enhancing the focus on the IT, tourism, and smart agriculture sectors. To manage the current account deficit, their aim is to boost exports, curtail imports, and lower tariffs on raw material imports, thereby fostering growth in the manufacturing sector.

In terms of infrastructure development, the parties recognise the need for investment in transportation, with particular focus on rural development, to address regional inequalities. They understand the need to leverage CPEC's full potential for regional development. Energy sector reforms have also been promised, aimed at enhancing efficiency, promoting conservation, and increasing reliance on alternative and renewable sources of energy.

To address fiscal challenges and ensure sustainable domestic resource mobilisation, they have promised the implementation of SOE and tax reforms. Civil service reforms that emphasise meritocracy, accountability, and capacity development have also been outlined. Most importantly, both the PPP and PML-N have stressed the need to fully devolve powers to the provincial and local levels, thereby empowering local governments.

Moreover, both have pledged to provide universal healthcare and education, and to enhance the social security net through the expansion of the BISP and Ehsaas programmes. They have highlighted the need for inclusivity by promoting equal rights for marginalised segments, in particular women. Fulfilling this promise is essential to show strong resolve for good governance. Merit and experience must supersede family ties, particularly in the appoint-

ment of prominent cabinet positions.

It is important to note that these promises are not new: these political parties have been making the same promises in every election cycle, as evident from a review of their manifestos. However, their actions or apathy have frequently negated these promises.

For instance, these flag-bearers of dynastic politics persist in appointing individuals to top party and government positions based on lineage and family links, contradicting their stated commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities. Even women who are brought to the forefront to make a case for gender equality often appear to have defied merit and experience to assume their positions. Such actions not only undermine inclusivity, but also governance as a whole.

Despite repeated commitments to enact tax and SOE reforms, neither party has taken significant steps towards implementation. Even basic measures, such as integration of e-governance and the full adoption of the Single Treasury Account to improve accountability, have yet to materialise.

Most importantly, not only do the promises to establish fiscal sustainability in Pakistan remain unfulfilled, but the crisis was exacerbated through the implementation of unsustainable populist measures, such as a fixed exchange rate, inadequate tariffs, delays in going to the IMF, and so on. Having formed a coalition government against a wider public mandate, there is no excuse for the PML-N and PPP to not deliver on their common promises this time around. Pakistan cannot take any more disappointments. - Courtesy Dawn

Destined to fail?

Dr Niaz Murtaza

Destiny in social science refers to likely cause and effect links versus a pre-ordained view of fatalism. One such political link is that the quality of outcomes of a regime depends on the quality of its strategies, which depends on its team quality. I used this link to predict early in the PTI's term that it wouldn't do well given its team. As the PML-N arguably pursues narrow interests over merit in filling key posts, I fear the same now, more so as we are close to doom.

We face urgent economic and security issues plus social, political and external ones. The key post to tackle them is the prime minister's. In Shehbaz Sharif, the PML-N has opted for a drab but able manager — one who is good at running local projects rather than being a strong federal leader. The last time he cut a sorry figure in managing the economy, foreign policy and security, and was a mere appendage caught between the powerful establishment and his elder brother Nawaz Sharif. The same seems likely now.

The economy posts are the next key ones — that of the finance minister but also those of industry, investment, commerce, IT and planning. Our socioeconomic musts are fourfold: stability (most urgent), productivity, equity and sustainability. The finance minister ensures economic stability. But recent finance ministers such as Ishaq Dar and Shaukat Tarin favoured the elites and undermined macro-stability. We need a finance minister with a solid education and experience in macro-economic stability who can curb fiscal and external deficits as

well as ensure durable growth in tax and export revenues and jobs. This rules out Dar and also people like Hafeez Shaikh, who loyally implement IMF policies that neglect growth.

But stability alone doesn't result in durable growth. Growth and productivity require experts in the other ministries mentioned, who can creatively identify new investment, industrial and export avenues via a strong industrial policy, as done by the Asian Tigers. The PML-N must field strong, dynamic people with vast experience. But the trends look bad. Cutting fiscal deficits would require the party to tax and/or remove subsidies from its core elite base. Cutting external deficits and enhancing productivity would require creativity that the old guard lacks.

Ensuring equity and sustainability requires experts in ministries for social areas like climate change, poverty alleviation, health, education, population, labour and agriculture. Besides a strong industrial policy, we need strong agricultural, informal sector and labour policies as most of the poor work in these areas. The PPP has more expertise here than the PML-N, which specialises in physical projects. But even the PPP focuses on band-aids rather than root causes. It must review its cabinet decision and also appoint competent people to constitutional posts to influence policy indirectly.

The main security threats relate to the TTP, Balochistan, India and societal extremism. A role for the establishment in security policy under civilian sway can give benefits. Unlike the economy, they have

some understanding here. Nawaz Sharif, even informally, can provide the impetus for peace with India given his past forays with the BJP. Peace with India is the single change that can have ripple effects in all realms — economic, social, foreign, political and security. As president, Asif Zardari with his Baloch roots, provincial set-up and reconciliation politics, can help end the Baloch stand-off. But for all this, the establishment cannot maintain total control on security policy. A set-up that won power with establishment aid will struggle to wrest space from it. On the TTP and other extremists, the PML-N has a mixed record. It wanted curbs on jihadis but pursued peace with TTP

initially and its key leaders have close extremist ties. We badly need a new and creative foreign policy that balances our ties with China and Western states. Our Constitution and institutions lie in tatters given the political tussles of recent years. But a regime with dubious legitimacy is ill-placed to fix them.

There are then huge gaps in the competencies required to tackle our challenges. Where the coalition will have authority, it may lack capacity and vice versa. The good news from social science is that effects and outcomes can change if one changes the causes. Simply put, if the PML-N wants good outcomes after five years, it can make them more likely by ensuring greater competence today.

Otherwise, with each passing day, the path will increase the prospects of doom and another establishment-imposed set-up will fail. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Renewable Energy Policy 2006 Why to curtail wind power projects despite tariff of PKR 14.7/kWh: Atif

Independent Report

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has expressed his profound concerns that the renewable energy policy 2006 is not being implemented in letter & spirit as costlier and obsolete power projects are still being given preference — while it makes no economic sense to purchase power for the national grid from costlier plants in these times of stagflation, mounting circular debt and burgeoning balance of payments (BoP) & depleting foreign exchange reserves (FER) even further through importing furnace oil.

foreign direct investment (FDI) in energy sector; but, also inflicting financial losses on the existing wind power plants (WPP) in a number of ways: (i) return of investment (ROI) is compromised (ii) curtailment and lack of off take by the national grid is causing operational losses (iii) future investments, JVs and expansion plans are in jeopardy.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh stressed that special investment facilitation council (SIFC) has made energy as their one of the five focus areas; and, lack of enabling, facilitative and protective environment is detrimental to the cause of SIFC — for which all stakeholders of the state have unanimity including private-sector.

World Bank's Global Director wonders if master plan of water use exists in Sindh

HYDERABAD (APP): The World Bank's Global Director, Water Global Practice, Saroj Kumar Jha has said the bank through its investment always tries to bring manifestable change in the lives of the targeted communities besides improving agriculture and irrigation systems.

"Because without a master plan it will be difficult to make decisions for the water use," he underlined.

The Director observed that even the process of preparing the master plan would reveal the areas where work was needed on priority basis in order to enhance water utility for agriculture.

"We ought to complete the work of assessing the impact of the bank's projects on the lives of the people," he underscored.



QUETTA: Residents of Sariab protesting against shortage of gas by blocking the Sariab Road.



LAHORE: Regional Chairman FPCCI Zaki Ejaz presenting shield to Consul General of Turkey during his visit to FPCCI office.

Pak-Saudi collaboration in IT, Telecom to further strengthen ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the realm of Information Technology and Telecom, the collaboration between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and strong presence of Pakistan at LEAP 2024, would further strengthen bilateral ties between the two nations.

This premier technology event brings together some of the brightest minds globally, offering a dynamic platform for tech innovators, industry leaders, and experts to collaborate, explore innovations, establish partnerships, and engage with influential mentors and investors, said a news release received here on Tuesday.

In the previous year, LEAP generated over \$9 billion in business, attracting over 172,000 individuals, including global tech leaders, IT professionals, speakers, tech gurus, and investors, establishing itself as the fastest-growing technology event worldwide.

Pakistan contingent is one of the largest at this year's LEAP with 162 sqm pavilion 74 companies and over 800 delegates demonstrating a robust Pakistani business presence with promising prospects in the KSA market. These companies are showcasing solutions in AI, IoT, blockchain, cyber security, cloud solutions,

health tech, fintech, web and mobile app development, open source, e-commerce, data services and more.

PSEB and P@SHA in collaboration with Pakistan Embassy in Riyadh and other stakeholders arranged "Saudi-Pak Tech Forum" on March 3, 2024 to set the tone for LEAP.

Secretary General DCO Ms. Deemah Alyahya was the chief guest at the event.

A considerable number of prominent Saudi Government and private institutions attended the forum which provided a remarkable platform for Pakistani companies to network with Saudi counterparts, IT industry,

US-Pakistan 'Green Alliance' to improve climate, smart agriculture: CG Kristin

MULTAN (APP): US Consul General to Lahore Kristin Hawkins on Tuesday said US-Pakistan Green Alliance was an effort to improve climate, smart agriculture, food security and sustainable energy.

efficiency for residents in Multan. "USAID's partnership with Mepeco has delivered great results. We have introduced new approaches and technologies to improve customer service and to increase revenues," said Consul General Hawkins.

She expressed these remarks while inaugurating the Multan Electric Power Company's (Mepeco) Customers Facilitation Centre.

For the past 20 years, Pakistan has consistently been ranked among to 10 most vulnerable countries on the Climate Risk Index. Hawkins underscored the need for urgent action to adapt to climate change and highlighted U.S. efforts to support Pakistan through the 'Green Alliance' to address the challenges related to climate change, food security and energy.

The Facilitation Centre has been established as part of the U.S. government's ongoing assistance in Pakistan's energy sector. Since 2014, the United States has supported Mepeco in deploying more than 40,000 smart meters, helping to improve power



MULTAN: Members of Pakistan Wapda Employees Pegham Union are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Multan press club.

HESCO to facilitate issuance of new connections to commercial, Industrial zones

HYDERABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer HESCO Bashir Ahmed Gujjar said that President Farooq Shaikhani has presented an excellent constructive agenda in a meeting held on Tuesday.

In response, he directed all the Superintending Engineers to install 100 additional transformers in all commercial and industrial zones, as proposed by the Chamber.

promptly address the distribution of load on the crucial 4 to 5 feeders. HESCO Chief highlighted the achievement of rendering 1327 feeders in industrial city of Faisalabad Division (FESCO) free from load-shedding.

There exists a deficiency in the enthusiasm and commitment of the technical workforce.

Recognizing that these customers constitute the primary source of HESCO revenue, he remains dedicated to fostering positive change.

President Muhammad Farooq Shaikhani, lauded HESCO Chief as an exceptionally professional and dedicated officer and said that under his leadership, HESCO will achieve a load-shedding free status, akin to organization like FESCO, by attaining 100 percent billing.

Addressing the traders and industrialists during his visit at Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry (HCSTSI) he conveyed that, following the recommendation of President Farooq Shaikhani, HESCO will facilitate the issuance of new connections to commercial and industrial zones in Hyderabad. Furthermore, he assured that HESCO possesses an ample supply of transformers.

Additionally, he emphasized the need to replace outdated transformers and to equip them with switches that trip automatically when overloaded, ensuring the prevention of transformer bursts.

This was accomplished by segregating commercial transformers from domestic transformers. In alignment with this success, he issued directives for the implementation of a similar approach within HESCO operations.

He announced the approval of 131 new vehicles, including trolleys and cranes, in the upcoming Board Meeting.

Furthermore, he acknowledged the commendable efforts of the HCSTSI in overcoming legal obstacles related to the express feeder. Grateful for their endeavors, he anticipated that the Sindh Small Industries Corporation will soon benefit from a dedicated express feeder, thanks to such collaborative initiatives.

HESCO Chief affirmed his unwavering commitment to enhancing HESCO cooperation and addressing the concerns of both commercial and domestic customers until the final day of his service.

In response to President Farooq Shaikhani's recommendations, he announced the convening of a meeting to discuss the equitable distribution of load across feeders.

Additionally, urgent measures will be taken to

enhance operational effi-

Matter of reconciliation with establishment will be decided by PTI founder: Amin Gandapur

RAWALPINDI (Online): Chief Minister (CM) KP Ali Amin Gandapur and Aleema Khan sister of former chairman PTI met PTI founder in central Jail Adiala Tuesday. They exchanged views on political situation of KP in the meeting held in conference room of jail over one and half hour. Matter of formation of provincial cabinet also was discussed.

CM KP informed PTI founder about future strategy in the province. Security was put on high alert on the occasion of arrival of Ali Ameen Gandapur and Aleema Khan in jail. Talking to media men after meeting, CM KP said former chairman PTI is saying there should be rule of law. We will continue our work as per ideology. We will form such a system

that no one could steal mandate in future. He appealed Chief Justice of Pakistan to constitute commission on May 9 incident. Our women workers are in jail. He held those who benefitted from May 9 be held accountable. He went on to say we have left two governments for the sake of Pakistan. Imran Khan is fighting war for our children. akistan is

ours. Federal government has stolen our mandate. I will sit with opposition in province. We will not strike reconciliation with thieves of votes. We have to maintain law and order situation in the province. We have to give jobs. We will extend financial assistance to over one lac families. We will stage peaceful protest in Peshawar. We have not been given reserved seats.



PESHAWAR: Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Assembly Babar Saleem Swati meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman addressing a seminar on education and literature held at a local hotel.

13 dead and 1462 injured in 1387 road traffic crashes in Punjab

Independent Report LAHORE: The Emergency Services Department (ESD) responded to 1387 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. In these RTCs, 06 people died, whereas 1462 were injured. Out of these, 637 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 825 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals. The majority (73%) involved Motorbikes, therefore effective

enforcement of traffic laws and lane discipline are essential to reduce the increasing number of road traffic crashes. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 779 drivers, 49 underage drivers, 186 pedestrians, and 510 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 315 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 334 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Faisalabad 101 in with 113 victims and at third Gujranwala with 88 RTCs and 97 victims.

DC for ensuring maximum relief to public in Ramadan

MARDAN (APP): Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayyaz Khan Sherpao has directed the administrative officers to ensure maximum relief to the public in the purchase of food items in the Ramadan markets during the holy month. He was presiding over an important meeting held here on Tuesday regarding Ramadan Package 2024. He said that according to the instructions of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ramadan bazaars will be set up for the citizens, in which the citizens will get food items like pulses, flour, ghee and other items at cheaper prices.

Young generation is our future and we should inculcate habit of book reading in them: Baligh

Independent Report LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that Art, humanities and Literature has profound impact on the society. He expressed these views while addressing a seminar on education and literature held at a local hotel in Lahore today. Punjab Governor, Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that our young generation is our future and we should inculcate the habit of book reading in them. He said that generally

the book reading is on decline in the society but still there are people who love to read books. He further said that one should strive for continues improvement in life. He added that book reading broadens the vision of a person and develops positive character traits in him. He said that many people are doing good work in the society, they should be encouraged so that the process of improvement in life continues. He said that today's programme is also held to

appreciate the literary contribution of Jameel Jalbi. Governor Punjab said that Dr. Jameel Jalbi was a well-known intellectual, linguist, researcher, critic, columnist and educationist. Governor Punjab said that Dr. Jameel Jalbi rendered great services in the field of literature as a researcher, critic, writer and translator. He appreciated the efforts of senior journalist Wasif Nagi and other organizers in organizing the seminar for the promotion of knowledge and literature.

Governor KP chairs senate meeting of UoM, directs to reduce fees

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Tuesday chaired a senate meeting of University of Malakand (UoM) that discussed approval and legal status of varsity statutes. The meeting was attended by Vice Chancellor UoM, Dr Rasheed Ahmad and officials concerned of higher education, law, establishment and finance. The meeting discussed legal aspects of the statutes and concurred to send them to varsity's

senate subcommittee to remove legal lacunas in one month period. The participants also discussed extension of contract employees that are working in the university. The meeting was told contract employees have completed three-year period but the new appointments were stopped by election commission due to current general elections. Meeting approved six months extension of contract period and directed to ensure policy of merit while making new appointments.

Nigeban Ramadan Package launched in Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Soft launching of the Nigeban Ramadan Package took place in Bahawalpur under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa. Under this initiative, Assistant Commissioners distributed food hampers to deserving individuals in the district with their teams. The purpose of the soft launching for the

Nigeban Ramadan Package is to digitally organize data effectively. To ensure the success of the soft launching, a formal app is being used to securely store all data related to the Ramadan Package. In the Bahawalpur district, food hampers are being respectfully distributed to deserving individuals under the Nigeban Ramadan Package.

Salim Saifullah congratulates PM Shehbaz

PESHAWAR (APP): Senior politician, former federal minister Salim Saifullah Khan has congratulated the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on assuming his office and expressed the hope that under his leadership the country will overcome all challenges. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, he said that under the dynamic leadership of the Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif political and economic stability.

LHC declares non maintainable petition seeking removal Sanjarani

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has declared non maintainable the petition seeking removal of Sadiq Sanjarani from the position of chairman Senate while maintaining registrar office objection on the powers of jurisdiction of court regarding petition. The petition filed by citizen Mashkoor Hussain came up for hearing before Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan

of LHC Tuesday. Sadiq Sanjarani, Election Commission (EC) and others were made respondents in the petition. The petitioner took the plea in the petition that Sadiq Sanjarani contested election on seat of provincial assembly Balochistan and he won the election. EC issued notification of his success. Sadiq Sanjarani cannot retain two seats at a time.

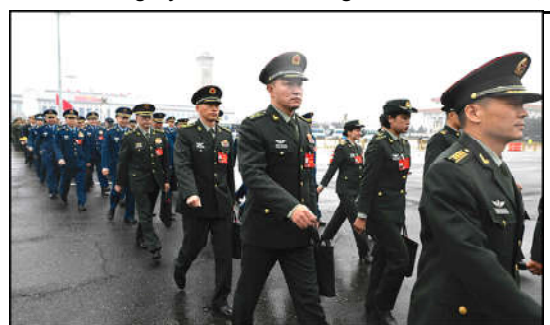
International News

World Health Organization: Child malnutrition 'particularly extreme' in north Gaza

GENEVA (Online): United Nations organisations said on Tuesday that child malnutrition levels in northern Gaza were "particularly extreme" and about three times higher than in the south of the Palestinian enclave where more aid has been available. Richard Peepker, WHO representative for Gaza and the West Bank, said that one-in-six children under two years of age were acutely malnourished in northern Gaza. "This was in January. So the situation is likely to be greater today," Peepker added, referring to when the data was recorded. UNICEF spokesperson James Elder said malnutrition rates for children under five in northern Gaza, where access to aid has been highly limited

since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas on Oct. 7, were three times higher than those in Rafah in the south. Elder said this showed that "when that trickle of aid can come in, it does make a life saving difference." At least 15 children have died over the past few days from malnutrition and dehydration at Kamal Adwan hospital in northern Gaza, the health ministry in Gaza said on Sunday. Calls for Israel to do more to address the humanitarian crisis have grown louder since the deaths of Palestinians lining up for aid in Gaza last month. Gaza health authorities said 118 people were killed, attributing the deaths to Israeli fire and calling it a massacre. Israel,

which says many people were trampled or run over, has pledged to investigate. Adding to hunger, there is a growing risk from infectious diseases, with nine-in-10 children under the age of five - around 220,000 - falling sick over the last weeks, according to Elder. "That becomes the spiral that we are so fearful of: infectious diseases, lack of food, a desperate lack of clean water and ongoing bombardment and incredibly still discussion of an offensive into Rafah, which is a city of children," Elder told reporters in Geneva, referring to Israel's stated aim of rooting out Hamas battalions it says are hiding there. "Rafah has about three quarters of a million children living there," Elder said.



Military delegation arrive for the opening session of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

China boosts defence spending as regional disputes heat up

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: China announced on Tuesday that it would boost its defence spending in 2024, as hostility over Taiwan and in the South China Sea grows. The 7.2 per cent increase, identical to last year's figure, was announced at the start of the annual meeting of the country's rubber-stamp parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC).

China will spend 1.665 trillion yuan (\$231.4 billion) on defence in 2024, according to the budget report that lays out the government's financial plans for the year ahead. China has the world's second-largest defence budget behind the United States, even though the People's Liberation Army (PLA) surpasses the US military by number of personnel.

US wants 'as many channels as possible' for Gaza aid, State Dept says

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: The United States is working to get aid into Gaza through as many channels as possible to remedy the humanitarian disaster amid Israel's war with Hamas militants, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday (March 4), describing the situation as "simply intolerable." Washington was optimistic that a new maritime route to deliver aid to Gaza could supplement current efforts to get aid into the enclave, Miller said, adding that that route was "still in the development phase."

In addition to trucks carrying aid through two border crossings in the south of Gaza, the US military, along with allied nations, has in recent days dropped aid packages into Gaza from aircraft, amid warnings much of the population is on the verge of famine. European Union members, the United States, Britain, Ukraine, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and



Czech Republic's President Petr Pavel and French President Emmanuel Macron walk past an honour guard at Prague Castle in Prague, Czech Republic.

Ships entering Yemeni waters must obtain permit: Houthi minister

CAIRO (INP) Ships will have to obtain a permit from Yemen's Houthi-controlled Maritime Affairs Authority before entering Yemeni waters, Houthi Telecommunications Minister Misfer Al-Numair said. Houthi have repeatedly launched drones and missiles against international commercial shipping in the Gulf of Aden since mid-November, saying they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians against Israel's offensive in Gaza. The near-daily attacks have forced firms into long and costly diversions around southern Africa, and

stoked fears that the Israel-Hamas war could destabilise the wider Middle East. The United States and Britain have bombed Houthi targets in response. "(We) are ready to assist requests for permits and identify ships with the Yemeni Navy, and we confirm this is out of concern for their safety," Al Masirah TV, the main television news outlet run by Houthi movement, reported Al-Numair as saying. The territorial waters affected by the Yemeni order extend halfway out into the 20-km (12-mile) wide Bab al-Mandab Strait.

US envoy says war at Lebanese-Israeli border would not be containable

Monitoring Desk BEIRUT: US Special Envoy Amos Hochstein said on Monday (Mar 4) that a truce in Gaza would not necessarily bring an automatic end to hostilities across Lebanon's southern border and he warned about the risks of an escalation of the conflict. Hochstein is visiting Beirut as part of diplomatic efforts to end four months of exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and Israel taking place in parallel to the Gaza war. It has marked the worst conflict across Lebanon's southern border since the 2006 war.

43 countries call for international probe into Navalny's death

Monitoring Desk GENEVA: More than 40 countries on Monday demanded an independent international investigation into the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny - and said President Vladimir Putin bore ultimate responsibility. European Union members, the United States, Britain, Ukraine, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and

Norway were among countries to voice outrage over Navalny's death at the UN Human Rights Council. Navalny, 47, who died in an Arctic prison colony, was laid to rest in Moscow on Friday, surrounded by crowds of defiant mourners who chanted his name. "We are outraged by the death of the Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny, for which the ultimate responsibility lies.

Ladakhi people express outrage as talks with India end without progress

NEW DELHI (INP): The much-anticipated meeting between Ladakh's Apex Body (LAB), the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), and the Indian Home Ministry ended without any tangible progress, sparking widespread anger among the people of Ladakh. New Delhi's refusal to address the fundamental demands of Ladakhis.

No Indian troops, not even in civilian clothes to remain on his island: Maldives President reaffirms

MALE (INP): Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has affirmed that no Indian military personnel, not even those in civilian clothing, would be present inside his country after May 10. Muizzu's statement comes less than a week after ostensibly an Indian civilian team, but in reality military officials, reached the Maldives to take charge of one of the three aviation platforms in the island nation, well ahead of the Mat 10 deadline agreed by the two country's for the withdrawal of Indian military personnel. Addressing a community in Baa atoll Eydhafushi during his tour across the atoll, President Muizzu stated that due to his government's success in expelling Indian troops from the country, people who spread false rumours,

are attempting to twist the situation, a news portal Edition.mv reported. "That these people [Indian military] are not departing, that they are returning after changing their uniforms into civilian clothing. We must not indulge such thoughts that instil doubts in our hearts and spread lies," the portal quoted Muizzu as saying. "There will be no Indian troops in the country come May 10. Not in uniform and not in civilian clothing. The Indian military will not be residing in this country in any form of clothing. I state this with confidence," he said. Within hours of taking oath, last year, Mizu in his inaugural address to the parliament demanded India to remove its personnel from the strategically located archipelago in the Indian Ocean.

Spanish blogger's gang rape in India sparks global outrage

NEW DELHI (Online): India is deemed highly unsafe for foreign female tourists. A Spanish blogger woman fell victim to a gang rape, exposing India's secular state to scrutiny. On March 1st, a Spanish girl was traveling on a motorcycle with her partner in the city of Jharkhand, India when she was targeted for gang rape. The Spanish couple had set up a tent in Dhanbad, a state in India, for an overnight stay when a group of seven individuals assaulted them, reports Al Jazeera. The 28-year-old Spanish travel blogger mentioned in her Instagram post that the group targeted them for violence, looted their belongings, and raped her, as reported by Hindustan Times. In another post, a companion of the affected blogger stated that she was repeatedly assaulted

with blows to the head and face with a helmet. After the gang rape, the girl was left in critical condition, Al Jazeera reports. Following the attack, a petrol pump attendant rescued both and took them to a local hospital. There has been a strong international backlash over the rape of the Spanish blogger woman. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, in India, approximately 90 cases of sexual assault are reported daily on average, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. In 2022, one case of rape against a woman was reported every 18 minutes. Last year, 31,516 incidents of sexual assault were reported. The states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of cases, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.

Japan provides grant assistance to five NGOs for development projects in Pak

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Government of Japan has decided to provide grant assistance up to USD 300,800 (equivalent to around PKR 84 million) in total to five local NGOs for development projects in Pakistan. Three out of the five projects are flood rehabilitation projects in the areas affected by the 2022 Pakistan floods.

The grant contracts were signed between His Excellency, Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and representatives of the five NGOs at the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad on March 5, 2024. The five NGOs that will implement the projects are (1) Association for Behavior & Knowledge Transformation (ABKT), (2) Fortified Services for Reform & Transformation (FSRT), (3) Actions For Human Advancement (AHAT), (4) Lok Sudhar Association and (5) Safe Hands Foundation.

ABKT will receive a USD 63,518 grant (equivalent to around PKR 17.7 million) to reconstruct three flood-damaged sus-

pension bridges in District Upper Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This project will enhance the security of school children and local community members when natural disasters such as flood occur. It will also provide a safe passage to the school children as well as the local people to reach their school safely in this area. FSRT will receive a USD 60,506 grant (equivalent to around PKR 16.8 million) to reconstruct flood-affected school building for girls' primary course in Malakand Division, District Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This project will provide school children with a safe place for learning, resulting in improving overall literacy rate of Swat, a city with one of the lowest literacy rates in Pakistan. AHAT will receive a USD 57,684 grant (equivalent to around PKR 16 million) to reconstruct a flood-affected primary and middle school in Tehsil Jampur, District Rajanpur, Punjab. This project will enhance learning environment for the children in one of the most flood-affected areas during the 2022

floods in Pakistan. Lok Sudhar Association will receive a USD 51,407 grant (equivalent to around PKR 14.3 million) to establish an ophthalmology operation theater to expand eye care facility in Havelian, District Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This facility will provide eye-related treatment to the patients in accessible and affordable way. In particular, the people will have the opportunity to access to cataract surgery for the first time in this locality. This project will lead to the improvement of the health sector in the area. Safe Hands Foundation will receive a USD 67,685 grant (equivalent to around PKR 19 million) to construct the primary-school building to promote child education in village Khaisata Gul Kalay, District Khyber in KP. The project will provide, in one of the most deserving and vulnerable areas, the school building equipped with a solar system that can accommodate about 200 primary school children including those currently studying in an open-air classroom.



ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib of Pakistan, Mr Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Saudi ambassador pledges assistance for conjoined twins in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf Al Malki Tuesday offered generous assistance for the medical treatment of conjoined twins born to economically disadvantaged families in Pakistan. He stated in a meeting with Managing Director of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) Syed Tariq Mahmood-ul-Hasan here.

Admiring the PBM's distinguished pro-poor services, the Saudi Envoy announced that conjoined children, referred by PBM, would be offered the modern medical services in a state-of-the-art Hospital in Saudi Arabia sponsored by King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Centre (KSRelief).

While expressing his gratitude to Saudi Envoy for extending such a kind aid for the poor populace of the country, the MD

marked this initiative an imperative allowing the children to enjoy healthy, normal and independent lives.

In a statement, Syed TM Hassan also requested the respected media representatives to be part of this noble cause by making us accessible to poor families with conjoined children. PBM's toll free number is 0800-666666 and www.pbm.gov.pk is its official website.

BISP utilizes social media platforms for public awareness about schemes

ISLAMABAD (APP): As a part of its efforts to provide authentic information about various pro-poor schemes, the internationally acclaimed Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is utilizing different social media platforms to facilitate existing and intending beneficiaries and counter fake information.

The BISP has earlier launched its WhatsApp channel for disseminating public awareness about its initiatives which has now over 7,000 followers.

According to an official source, the BISP had urged the existing and intending beneficiaries to follow the official WhatsApp channel of BISP to get all the valid information about the programmes.

Earlier the BISP, under the supervision of Chairperson BISP, Dr. Amjad Saqib has launched a modern call center in collaboration with the National Telecommunication Corporation for providing authentic information related to the programme and promptly addressing grievances.

The individuals can contact the call center at 080026477 to register complaints or seek information about the program.

Listing other initiatives taken by the BISP, the official source revealed that the launch of BISP Saving Scheme, Mobile Registration Centers, establishment of Endowment Fund, Digital and Financial Literacy Training for women.

NUST Career Connect attracts over 100 leading employers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Around 2500 final-year students of the National University of Sciences and Technology availed NUST Career Connect 2024 to appear in on-spot interviews with leading national and multinational companies at the university's main campus. A total of 114 companies set up their stalls at the career fair, including P&G, Loreal, Food Panda, Total Parco, English Biscuits, Packages, National Logistics Cell, Netsol Technologies, Pak Arab Refinery Limited, Jazz, Zong, Kohinoor Textile Mills, State Bank of Pakistan, and BoP to name a few.

Speaking at the event, Dr Rizwan Riaz, NUST Pro-Recto Research, Innovation and Commercialisation.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz presides over the meeting regarding Traffic Management.

CM Punjab reviews Ramadan Nigahban Relief Program

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif reviewed the distribution and monitoring of Ramadan Nigahban Relief Programme, here on Tuesday.

Presiding over a meeting, the CM said the process of delivering peoples' right to their doorsteps has begun, adding that distribution of big gifts to the people of Punjab on the occasion of Ramadan has commenced.

The meeting was briefed by the authorities concerned that a fool-proof system has been developed to ensure transparent distribution of the largest Ramadan relief package to the beneficiaries. The distribution is being monitored with the help of a live dashboard and advanced technology. A helpline has been set up which will be formally launched tomorrow. Beneficiaries will be able to register complaints through the helpline. The chief minister was apprised that data of NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority) and BISP (Benazir Income Support Programme) beneficiaries is being used for the distribution of Ramadan Nigahban relief packages.

It was further briefed that the distribution of Ramadan relief packages will officially start from 2nd of Ramadan, and will be completed by 10th of Ramadan. For the first time in the history of Punjab, Ramadan package is being delivered to every deserving person's home.

The CM directed to ensure high quality of Ramadan package items. "I will not tolerate complaints about the quality of flour, ghee, sugar and other food items," she said.



ISLAMABAD: National Logistics Corporation (NLC) in coordination with local administration recovered the last Chinese vehicle that overturned due to heavy snowfall at Khunjerab pass

Capital administration successfully achieves target to identify, enroll out of school Children: DG PIE

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Director-General of PIE, Dr Muhammad Shahid Soroya, on Tuesday successfully achieved targets to raise the number of school goers in Islamabad city where every children attaining the age of education were being enrolled with establishing evening and afternoon in formal schools.

Pakistan Institute of Education PIE DG while talking to a Private news channel said that its campaign "Zero Out-of-School Children (ZOOSC)" in Islamabad in collaboration with JICA and the Ministry of Education and Professional Training was successfully achieving its targets goals.

He said that under this campaign, more than 71,000 children have been enrolled in schools in Islamabad, bringing the number of out-of-school children in the capital to zero.

He said that the government wanted to provide education to every child in the province and in this regard, the drive had been launched.

"The government is providing all the facilities to the children free books and better environment in the educational institutions," he said.

He said that teachers

are visiting the nearby localities of their schools and prepare a list of the children and they are convincing the parents to send their children to schools.

Shahid said various techniques were being used for the success of this campaign, adding, we had converted our FD schools in evening and afternoon classes.

He also thanked everyone involved and highlighted the challenges they faced, especially in ensuring equal access to education. The success of this campaign may inspire similar efforts across Pakistan to reduce the number of children not attending school, he added.

COMSTECH, Al-Shifa Trust team conduct free cataract eye surgeries in Somalia

ISLAMABAD (APP): The eight-member dedicated medical team of COMSTECH and Al-Shifa Trust has successfully conducted more than 200 free cataract surgeries in Dalmar Hospital in Mogadishu, Somalia. According to COMSTECH, the Al-Shifa team not only performed surgeries but also provided training to doctors at Dalmar Hospital in cataract surgeries, thereby bolstering. The medical team is conducting free cataract eye surgeries

during a ten-day-long camp from March 01-10. Overall, more than 400 cataract surgeries will be performed, restoring vision and improving the lives of hundreds of people in Somalia. The free cataract eye surgery camp was announced by the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) in collaboration with Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, Rawalpindi under the special instructions.

Pak proposes int'l conference to uphold Palestinians' rights, end Gaza war

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the Islamic countries, has called for convening an International Peace Conference on Palestine, aimed at implementing UN resolutions on the restoration of Palestinians' inalienable rights to self-determination within a two-state solution.

"The international community should uphold its responsibility in halting the Israeli aggression on Gaza immediately," Ambassador Munir Akram told the UN General Assembly session which followed the U.S. veto on the Feb 20 Security Council resolution calling for "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire" in the Gaza Strip.

While deeply regretting the veto, the Pakistani envoy voiced dismay over the global community's inability to end Israeli aggression against Gaza in which 29,700 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been killed.

Ambassador Akram addressed the 193-member Assembly in his capacity as acting chairman of OIC group at the United Nations.

"Since the lunch of the aggression on Gaza and elsewhere in Palestine nearly over the past five months, the entire world has continued to follow, with growing despair, and anger, the

monumental and unending sufferings imposed on the Palestinian people in Gaza," Ambassador Akram said.

"This situation has resulted in the colossal loss of lives and wanton destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and religious sites in Gaza, due to the incessant attacks by the Israeli occupying power on the territory."

At the same time, Ambassador Akram warned against the looming risk of widespread starvation in Gaza due to insufficient food supplies and essential services, as he reiterated the call for a ceasefire to allow humanitarian supplies into Gaza.

"Notwithstanding the foregoing efforts by the various actors within the United Nations as well as members of the international community, there are ominous signs of even greater dangers ahead," he noted, referring to In UNRWA's report on the impact of Israel's recent calls to dismantle the agency and for donors to freeze their funding to it.

In this regard, he said there was an imminent threat of mass starvation in the Gaza Strip, due to inadequate food supplies and essential services for the teeming number of Palestinian in the occupied Palestinian territory.



GWADAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed regarding the damages caused by the recent torrential rains and the relief and rescue operations carried out by the local authorities in Gwadar.

PML-N leader invites Opp. to cooperate with govt for taking country out of crises

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader PML-N Qaisar Ahmed Sheikh Tuesday stressed that it is the need of the hour that opposition parties must cooperate with the government to bring the country out of difficult times.

The government is determined to provide relief to the masses in terms of gas and electricity, he said while talking to Radio Pakistan's current Affair Program.

Moreover, the government is also keen to strengthen its bilateral relations with all the neighboring countries, he added.

After his election as a Prime Minister, Mian Shehbaz Sharif in his first address highlighted some major challenges that the country is facing, he mentioned. The major challenges include balance of payment issues, trade deficit, energy shortfall and many others, he highlighted.

He further said that after the 18th amendment, the federal government distributes the funds to the provinces and left with nothing to pay the salaries and other allowances to the federal employees.

Action against traffic rules violators ongoing through E-Challan system

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the directions of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police are taking effective action against traffic rules violators through the e-challan system, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the Islamabad Capital Police suspended 260 driving licenses of e-challan defaulters, gave warnings to 178 individuals, and decided to issue legal notices to 106 defaulters.

Moreover, the Islamabad Capital Police ensured the payment of 2,462 pending e-challan from 1,508 offenders through the Driving License Management System.

Additionally, the Islamabad Capital Police have formed special police teams to ensure the dispatch and completion of challan at the registered residential addresses of drivers violating traffic laws, to ensure the smooth traffic system in the city. E-Challan offenders will be deprived of any facilities provided by the police without paying their challans. Furthermore, the vehicles of persistent E-Challan offenders are being traced through Safe City modern brief cams and Safe City cameras to fulfill legal requirements. Citizens can check their challans on the official website of Islamabad Capital Police at www.islamabadpolice.gov.pk or by entering their vehicle.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used during the extension of Park road.

SSDO applauds inclusion of trafficking charge in Rizwana child abuse case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) has applauded the recent decision by the Judicial Magistrate of Islamabad to include Section 3 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (TIP Act) in the First Information Report (FIR) related to the Rizwana child domestic labor and torture case.

The case gained notoriety in July 2023 when Rizwana, a child domestic worker, accused the wife of a judge, Soma Asim, of torture and abuse, said a news release here on Tuesday.

Rizwana reported being deprived of food and confined to a room for days. Subsequent medical examination revealed she suffered from sepsis, lung infection, and possible poisoning, highlighting the severity of the abuse.

The court's denial of bail to Ms. Asim underscores the seriousness of the case, which has sparked outrage and renewed calls for protecting vulnerable individuals, particularly child domestic workers, in Pakistan.

SSDO stands in solidarity with Rizwana and all victims of trafficking and abuse, advocating for justice and safeguarding their rights.

On February 16, a significant step towards justice was achieved when the judicial magistrate ordered the inclusion of Section 3 of the TIP Act in the FIR.

This decision came despite initial resistance from law enforcement and prosecution to pursue charges under the act.

AIOU holds seminar on Islamic Criminal Law

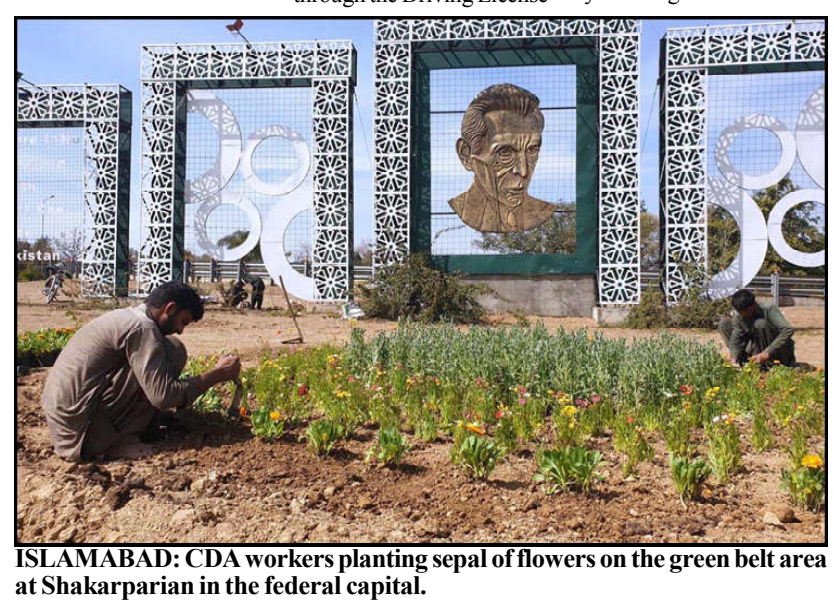
ISLAMABAD (APP): A one-day seminar on Islamic Criminal Law was held in Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in connection with the celebrations of its Golden Jubilee.

Secretary, Chief Justice of Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq was the keynote speaker. Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi hosted the event.

Faculty members and principal officers participated in the event. During his address, Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq provided detailed explanations of pre- and post-independence criminal and punishment laws. He also discussed Indian Penal Code and post-1977 era, laws related to Hudud, Qisas and Diyat, as well as the establishment and services of the Islamic Ideology Council and the Federal Sharia court.

Dr. Mushtaq said that criminal laws need to be harmonized with Islamic teachings. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi said that a conference on the objectives of Sharia will be held soon in which Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq will be specially invited to express his views.

He said the faculty has started the series of keynote addresses in Islamabad for which 100 topics were selected, of which 23 have been delivered.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers planting sepal of flowers on the green belt area at Shakarparian in the federal capital.