

Independent

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Vol. XIV No. 56 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Friday March 08, 2024, Shaban 26, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

SJC declares Justice Mazhar Naqvi as guilty of misconduct

Supreme Judicial Council opines former judge "should have been removed from the office of Judge"

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on Thursday declared Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi as guilty of misconduct and recommended for his removal from the office of judge.

SJC rendered its opinion in respect of the nine complaints against Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi under Article 200(6) of the constitution, said a press release.

It said that The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) met on 29 February 2024 and 1 March 2024. Allegations are leveled against judges of the supreme court and high courts and the same are publicized. A number of judges have expressed concern that if they respond to such allegations the same may be construed as misconduct because the

code of conduct, dated 2 September 2009 issued by the SJC, in its Article-V states that a judge should not seek publicity.

The SJC deliberated upon the matter and was of the opinion that if a reply or clarification is issued by or on behalf of a judge it does not violate Article-V. However, since concerns have been expressed by judges it was agreed that the following be added to article-V of the Code of Conduct:

"However, if an allegation is publicized against a judge he may respond to it."

Therefore, Article-V of the Code of Conduct is amended to read as under:

"Functioning as he does in full view of the public, a judge gets thereby all the publicity that is good for him. He

should not seek more. In particular, he should not engage in any public controversy, least of all on a political question, notwithstanding that it involves a question of law. However, if an allegation is publicized against a judge he may respond to it."

The press release said that SJC considered six different complaints, in chronological order, and in respect of five the opinions expressed by the members to whom it was referred, recommended that there was no substance therein, with which the SJC concurred. However, in respect of complaints submitted against a judge of the high court of Balochistan the SJC issued notice to submit his reply/explanation within fourteen days, it said.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing the participants of the dinner reception hosted by him

Ruling coalition endorses Zardari's nomination for presidency Country's economic crisis to end if we all contribute, says PM Shehbaz

Our target is to change condition of the nation and we have to present our proposals to friendly countries to attract investment; PPP would support the prime minister as he would work to steer Pakistan on the path of progress, says Asif Ali Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said Asif Ali Zardari would be elected as President of Pakistan as coalition partners had overwhelming majority in the National Assembly, Senate and provincial assemblies. Speaking at a dinner hosted in honour of leaders of allied parties, he said Asif Zardari would be the candidate of the allied parties in the presidential election on March 9.

The coalition government secured two thirds of the votes in the recent general elections and it would be reflected during the presidential election, he added.

He said the coalition federal government was

formed again with consensus and unity besides formation of Pakistan Peoples Party government in Sindh, Pakistan Muslim League(N) government in Punjab and a coalition government in Balochistan.

"We have to respect mandate of the people," he said adding, "the world is looking towards Pakistan and seeing how the new government will overcome challenges and resolve issues."

about economy were troublesome.

"Our gas and electricity circular debt had hiked to Rs five trillion. The debt of PIA had ballooned to Rs 825 billion. The annual theft of electricity amounted to Rs 500 billion."

He said these figures showed the gravity of the economic situation.

He said the government refunded Rs 65 billion to the exporters, adding the tax base should be expanded while burden on those who were already taxed, should be reduced. He pointed out that Pakistan's tax to GDP ratio was just 9.8 percent whereas this percentage was higher in other coun-

tries.

He said state owned entities were making losses of hundreds of billions of rupees and the government was paying these losses by taking more loans. He informed that Rs 1.7 trillion taxes were stuck in courts due to legal disputes, vested interests and collusion.

"We have to unite to take Pakistan out of the present economic difficulties. If we cannot take Pakistan out of this situation history will not forgive us," he remarked. "Our target is to change condition of the nation and we have to present our proposals to friendly countries to attract investment."

In his remarks, co-

chairperson of Pakistan Peoples Party Asif Ali Zardari said his party would support the prime minister as he would work to steer Pakistan on the path of progress.

He was of the view that Pakistan could make economic progress with growth in the agriculture sector. He mentioned that history was amended with the Supreme Court judgment in the reference on judicial murder of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said last time during his presidential tenure, his father Asif Zardari gave up his powers in favour of the Parliament.



Pakistan Navy contingent presenting salutation to Commander-in-Chief of Russian Federation Navy onboard PNS TABUK during Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition 2024.

PN participates in Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition-2024

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship PNS TABUK and Submarine PNS/M KHALID visited Doha, Qatar to participate in Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition (DIMDEX-24). Upon arrival, Pakistan Navy Units were received by Defence Attaché of Pakistan at Doha and Senior Officials of Qatari Emiri Naval Force (QENF). The PN mission was led by Cdre Mazhar Bashir, commander submarines.

During the visit, Mission Commander called on high level dignitaries including Commander of Qatari Emiri Naval Forces, Maj Gen Abdullah Hassan Al Sulaiti. Various high level Military and Naval leadership including Commander-In-Chief of Russian Federation Navy, Admiral Nikolay Evmenov and Turkish Fleet Commander visited PNS TABUK. During the interactions, matters of mutual interests were discussed and enhancement of bilateral ties in all spheres was reaffirmed. Taking the opportunity, Mission Com-

mander conveyed well wishes from Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf for the people of Qatar in general and Qatari Emiri Naval Forces (QENF) in particular.

Pakistan and Qatar enjoy close defence bilateral relations nurtured over the years through multitudes of naval collaborations and exercises. Visit of PN units to Doha provided an opportunity for both brotherly countries to further enhance the existing close diplomatic ties and cordial relations.

New York Police holds Pakistani heritage month

Masood Khan says it reflects growing US-Pak ties

NEW YORK (APP): The New York City Police Department (NYPD) Wednesday organized the first-ever 'Pakistan Heritage and Resolution Month' at its headquarters, with Ambassador Masood Khan congratulating over 600 Pakistani-American police officers serving the force for their dedicated work in keeping the city safe.

The NYPD is the largest and one of the oldest municipal police departments in the United States, with approximately 36,000 officers and 19,000 civilian employees. The ambassador, who was the chief guest at the largely attended event, said that the holding of 'Pakistan's Heritage & Resolution Month'

in connection with the 'Pakistan Day' carried a special significance and reflected the strength of decades-long Pak-US relations. It is the first time NYPD is organizing such a ceremony, sponsored by the Pakistani-American Law Enforcement Society and Pakistan's Consulate in New York to commemorate Pakistan's heritage and to pay tribute to Pakistani officers' contributions.

"The growing visibility and outstanding performance of Pakistani-Americans in all walks of life reflects the huge potential of our people. It is also indicative of the deepening bonds between Pakistan and the United States," said Ambassador Masood Khan.

During the hearing of the appeals a 6-member larger bench suspended decision against military courts.

The matter of military courts is of important nature. Intra court appeals be fixed for hearing in judicial week of March 18.

On December 13, SC had suspended the decision of stopping trial of civilians in military courts.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamsah Mirza calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

President Alvi appoints three judges

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday approved the appointment of a judge of Supreme Court as well as the Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court.

The president appointed Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan as Supreme Court judge who was serving as Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court.

The president approved the appointment under Article 175 A of the Constitution.

The president also approved the appointment of

senior most judge Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar as Caretaker Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court.

The president made this appointment of the caretaker Balochistan High Court chief justice in accordance with the Article 196 of the Constitution.

President Alvi also appointed senior most judge Justice Malik Shehzad Ahmed Khan as Chief Justice of Lahore High Court, in accordance with the Article 175 (A) of the Constitution.

US wants India, Pak to have 'productive, peaceful relationship'

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The United States would welcome "productive and peaceful relationship" between India and Pakistan, State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said Wednesday, but made it clear that the pace, scope, and character of any dialogue was a matter for the two countries to determine.

Miller made this statement while responding to a question from a Pakistani journalist on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message of congratulations to the newly-elected Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on taking the oath of office for his second term.

"We, of course, welcome the (Indian) prime minister's statement. The United States values its relationship with both India and Pakistan, and we want to see them have a produc-

ive and peaceful relationship," Miller told his daily news briefing.

"We would welcome productive and peaceful talks between India and Pakistan, but the pace, scope, and character of any dialogue is a matter for India and Pakistan to determine," he said in response to another question.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Modi congratulated his Pakistani counterpart Shehbaz Sharif on taking his oath on Monday. The relations between the two neighbours deteriorated in 2019 after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the state into two Union Territories in violation of international law and UN Security Council resolutions on the Kashmir dispute.

PM, CJCS exchange views on professional matters of armed forces

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamsah Mirza called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad Thursday.

He congratulated the Prime Minister for assuming his office and expressed best wishes for him.

During the meeting, views were exchanged on professional matters of the armed forces of Pakistan and the security situation.

Security forces kill 2 terrorists in separate operations

Independent Report RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed two terrorists including a ring leader in two separate operations conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on night between March 6 and 7.

The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a statement, said an intelligence based operation (IBO) was conducted in Khyber district.

During the operation, terrorist ring leader Shamrooz alias Sheenay, was killed by the security forces in exchange of fire.

In another operation conducted by the security forces in Dera Ismail Khan district, terrorist Mansoor was also successfully neutralized.

We will welcome mediation from any friendly country for resolution of Kashmir issue: FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has said India's stubbornness is major hurdle on the way to success of SAARC due to which regional connectivity stand paralyzed.

"We will welcome mediation from any friendly country for resolution of Indo-Pakistan conflict or Kashmir issue, this was said by Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during her weekly press briefing here in FO Thursday.

PM thanks world leaders for good wishes on assumption of office

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed gratitude to the world leaders for extending felicitations and prayers for him on the assumption of office.

The prime minister took to X to thank the leaders including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Iranian President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi and Kenyan President William Ruto.

"I wish to thank my brother, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of brotherly Saudi Arabia, for the warm wishes and prayers on my assumption of the office of Prime Minister," the prime

minister said. He said that the relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were deep rooted in historical bonds based on mutual respect, religious and cultural affinity and shared values.

He expressed the confidence that the fraternal bilateral ties would keep flourishing in the times to come.

"Looking forward to working closely with my brother for mutual benefit of the peoples of the two brotherly countries," he remarked. He also thanked Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Deputy Amir and Qatari Prime Minister for their messages of felicitations.

"Pakistan cherishes its brotherly ties with Qatar and I look forward to working closely with His Highness to further strengthen our exemplary bonds of friendship," he remarked.



MUZAFFRABADA: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat chanting slogans during protest at Azadi Chowk in the city, against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting at Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar



NEW YORK: Ambassador Masood Khan inaugurates the event "Pakistan Heritage and Resolution Month" being organized by New York Police Department.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Justice denied

There have been many crises in Pakistan's torturous history that remain unresolved, lacking closure mainly because the nation — particularly its institutions — failed to acknowledge the 'whole truth' of these events. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's 1977 removal in a military coup, and his subsequent hanging in 1979, are part of this list.

Both were epochal events that changed the trajectory of Pakistan's history; their after-effects still haunt the system. In this regard, the Supreme Court's observations on Wednesday, regarding Bhutto's trial, are an important milestone in the nation's legal and political history.

The apex court was hearing a reference filed by Asif Ali Zardari in 2011, when he was president, seeking the court's opinion on Bhutto's death sentence. The PPP founder had been convicted by a Lahore High Court bench of the 1974 murder of Mohammad Ahmed Khan Kasuri; the SC, in a split 4-3 decision, had upheld the LHC verdict, paving the way for the execution of Pakistan's first popularly elected prime minister.

While noting that the law does not provide a mechanism to set aside the original judgement, the Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa noted in the short order that the LHC trial and the SC appeal in Bhutto's case did "not meet the requirements of the fundamental right to a fair trial and due process". The SC's observations have validated what legal experts have been saying for decades: that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's conviction was a travesty of justice — a 'judicial murder' as his party has put it.

It can be asked why an over four-decade-old case was dusted up when blatant injustice continues to be meted out today. Perhaps revisiting the Bhutto case is relevant because of these very injustices. It shows that even popularly elected prime ministers can be humiliated, incarcerated and even sent to the gallows when the state desires it, and that the legal system can be manipulated to suit the whims of powerful forces.

Similar criticism of the judiciary has followed Imran Khan's iddat case, as well as Nawaz Sharif's run-ins with accountability courts in years past. That is why, as the chief justice observed in the short order, the judiciary should, "confront our past missteps and fallibilities with humility, in the spirit of self-accountability".

This need for internal introspection is required in all institutions: the judiciary, the establishment, as well as the political class. The SC's observations on the Bhutto trial are a confirmation of the fact that in the past, the pillars of state — guided by the doctrine of necessity — have participated in undermining the constitutional order they had sworn to protect.

Though the grave injustice done to Bhutto cannot be reversed, state institutions can pledge to not repeat the wrongs committed during this sordid chapter of Pakistan's history.

Restoration, 2024

F.S. Aijazuddin

In 1660, Charles II returned to England to reclaim his throne, after years of exile in France. This year 2024 marks the restoration of another monarchy, in Pakistan. Here, history is replayed with a local twist. Our Charles (aka Nawaz Sharif) returned after years of royal exile in the United Kingdom, only to yield the throne to his less popular younger brother Shehbaz. History, though, is replete with warnings. Charles' younger brother, later King James II, ruled only for three years before being deposed.

Pakistan has not one but two monarchies — the Sharif and the Bhutto-Zardari dynasties. Once rivals, they have decided to join, not in matrimony like the union of the Spanish royal houses of Aragon and Castile in 1469, but in an unequal, uneasy partnership. They have agreed to share the crown of thorns.

Pakistan has never been an easy country to govern, and never more so than today. It is confronted by a phalanx of problems — unbridled population growth, insufficient resources, recurring insolvency, and an archaic administrative structure. It is an indigent geriatric — too poor to live, and too indebted to die.

Soon, if PM Modi has his way (he has already vitiated the UN's role in the Jammu & Kashmir dispute, and threatens to ignore the World Bank mediation clause in the Indus Waters Treaty), we will be also afflicted with agricultural dehydration. The IWT, Punjab's five rivers, and the irrigation system bequeathed to us by the British may soon be a memory. The once fertile Punjab and Sindh, like parts of the US a century ago, could become an arid dust bowl. It is not too late to heed president Franklin D. Roosevelt's warning: "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself."

What are the new government's plans for agriculture, for commerce, industry, debt management, in fact for anything other than its own survival?

Before the recent elections which propelled them into power, neither the PML-N nor the PPP presented any plausible manifesto to voters. Today, even as coalition partners, they are in no hurry to cobble together any policy paper. They should remember: short is the period between being sworn in and being sworn at.

The Sharifs would have us believe that our economic revival would be accelerated by increased government borrowing and spending — for example, by the construction of yet more motorways.

The expansive Reichsautobahn system worked for Hitler in the 1930s. It stimulated Germany's post World War I recovery. In the 1940s, it enabled the forces of Nazi Germany to reach the borders of Austria, France, Holland and Belgium in record time.

If anyone dared to trespass our eastern borders, it would take them longer to navigate through the congestion around Lahore or Multan than to skid across our uncluttered motorways to Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Peshawar. Motorways increase mobility; they also accentuate our vulnerability.

What are our new government's priorities? And who is being tasked to define them?

Economists will remember the days when the World Bank encouraged developing countries like ours to use a Planning Commission as the fulcrum for coordinated action.

In the 46 years from 1953 to 1999, the Indian Planning Commission had 21 deputy chairpersons. (The post of chairman IPC devolved on the sitting prime minister.) In the final 15 years of its existence (1999-2014), it had only two: K.C. Pant and M.S. Ahluwalia. Pant controlled the IPC for five years, Ahluwalia for 10. He oversaw India's 11th and 12th five-year plans, covering the years 2007-2017.

In 2014, however, the newly elected PM Modi decided he would plan India's future himself. He did not need a central Planning Commission, especially after so many Indian states had matured into economic solvency. He reduced the Indian Planning Commission to rubble.

Comparably, the Planning Commission of Pakistan, in its first 46 years (1953-1999), had 16 deputy chairmen. Over the next 23 years (2000 until 2023), it had 11 DCs passing in and out of its revolving doors. Who can be expected to plan for his country when he cannot even plan his own tenure?

The 18th-century French economist Jean-Baptiste Say (founder of the world's first business school) once argued: "It is the aim of good government to stimulate production, of bad government to encourage consumption."

Pakistan's Industrial Production Index oscillated between a high of 76.5 per cent in September 2000 and an abysmal low of -45.6pc in April 2020. Our consumer spending per capita has doubled from \$655 in 1986 to \$1,392 in 2022. Like ancient Romans, we are in danger of gagging on our glutony.

The new government is approaching the IMF for yet another loan. Where will that money go? Will the new government control its weakness for conspicuous consumption? Or will it share Charles II's reputation for frivolous, fiscal laxity? -- Courtesy Dawn

Minerals economy

Umer Farooq

As the dust settles from the recent elections and the formation of government, it's clear that the previous coalition is taking the reins of power. In their limited previous term, Shehbaz Sharif and his cabinet highlighted Pakistan's mineral resources — (over)estimated at \$6 trillion — as the linchpin of the country's economic revival. The ambition aligns with the global race for green energy transition that has seen a rise in mining activities globally. However, having mineral resources does not suffice; the focus is on navigating a complex and competitive global mining landscape.

It takes decades to convert mineral deposits into a mine. Patience is key in the economic ecosystem of mining. The identification of 'critical minerals' stands at the forefront of strategic resource management. All mining-centric economies regularly update their list of critical minerals that reflects the shifting sands of economic, strategic, and technological priorities. Does Pakistan have a list of priority minerals? No, not at this point.

For Pakistan to rise in the mining sector, an essential step involves determining which minerals hold the greatest value and potential. Once that has been done, the new government will need to design a comprehensive policy to cover the entire minerals value chain. This would include i) upstream — the exploration and extraction of minerals; ii) midstream — processing and refining; and iii) downstream — manufacturing the products for the end-user. Overlooking a single piece of this chain could derail the anticipated outcomes for the entire sector.

The reliance on domestic capital is important for national prosperity; however, mining is an industry where initiatives to attract the interest of global investors are compulsory. The successful revival of the Reko Diq project shines as the country's beacon of hope in this area. Apart from that, the establishment of a new federal initiative, the Special Investment Facilitation Council, to de-risk the project investment is important; however, the settlement of the Reko Diq project through international arbitration and legislative support remains a cautionary indicator for foreign investors. It is anticipated that the SIFC will be able to prevent such events and act as a pivotal concierge service for future mining projects in the country. An enhanced mandate for the SIFC must guide both the federal and provincial regulatory regimes in terms of facilitation in this challenging area.

At the heart of every mining endeavour lies a stark reality: most projects fade away in the exploration phase, never reaching the stage of operation, let alone fruition. We are standing at the starting line. Let us value the economy of the Reko Diq project. Figures may vary, with some estimates of the project deposits at over \$100 billion — keeping today's prices in view. The project, with its promise of an aggregate turnover and exports of above \$2bn per year, 7,000 jobs during the peak construction phase, and a staggering annual output of 80 million tonnes of gold and copper concentrate, paints a picture of opportunity that invites foreign interest. This comes with a projected \$7bn infusion of — mainly foreign — investment, with over \$250m already poured into exploration and feasibility studies. These numbers don't only speak to the potential of Reko Diq project and mining, they also whisper of prosperity and invite foreign interest in other minerals.

Exaggeration and overestimation of deposits tend to bring dire consequences that can result in regional grievances. The recent discoveries of high-value minerals in Pakistan came out of Balochistan and KP — provinces at odds with the federal regime. Such overestimates fuel regional discontent. Presently, minerals account for merely 2.5pc of the country's GDP. Assertions of a leap above 5pc associated with mineral exports are misleading.

We are not at the stage where mining will bridge the import-export gap, enhance GDP, help social well-being, or fund government spending in the short term. It's a myth until we reach downstream manufacturing, a decades-long goal. We don't want to be a resource-exporting country forever; instead, we want to develop the whole value chain of minerals. Nevertheless, we must avoid turning mining hopes into another CPEC — promising but unfulfilled. For mining to significantly benefit Pakistan's economy, transparency is crucial, unlike CPEC where it is missing. For the major part, Pakistan will still rely on its agriculture and industry sector where the latter could be improved by bringing minerals development into the economic framework. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM for removing hurdles to expedite privatisation process

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday stressed for expediting the privatisation process of those State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), causing constant dent to the national exchequer, to stabilize the national economy and provide maximum relief to the common man.

"Obstacles in the process of privatisation be removed at the earliest so that the country and the nation can get rid of losses of billions of rupees and improve the economic condition," he said while chairing a high level meeting on privatisation. The prime minister also directed to take immediate steps for enhancing the capacity of departments linked with the privatisation process.

Reviewing the complete list and progress report of all the institutions involved in the privatisation process, the prime minister directed to submit the detail of actions and goals with a clear determination of time frame. He also directed the Privatization Commission and the Ministry to present pending issues related to the privatization to the cabinet soon after its formation for timely decisions as there was no room for further delay.

Shehbaz Sharif, on the proposal of handing over the power distribution companies to the provinces, directed to constitute a review committee, which would submit its recommendations to the prime minister. He made it clear that the responsibility of the privatisation process lied totally upon the Privatization Commission and the Ministry.

He also directed to remove all the bottlenecks in the process.

He also stressed to ensure transparency of the privatisation process at the institutional level and to adopt effective international standards of its monitoring.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Privatisation of State Owned Enterprises.

SECP notifies amendments in CRCs Rules 2019

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) on Thursday notified amendments in the Corporate Restructuring Companies (CRCs) Rules, 2019.

The amendments made in light of promulgation of the Corporate Restructuring Companies Act 2021, are aimed at fostering conducive environment for corporate restructuring companies, an SECP news release said on Thursday.

Corporate restructuring companies specialize in acquiring nonperforming assets (NPA) from distressed financial institutions, leveraging their expertise to efficiently manage and recover the same.

The CRC sector plays a key role in minimizing stressed assets in the banking sector through market-led solutions, easing balance sheet burdens and enhancing economic stability.

Empowering women-led businesses in Pak: USAID, UNDP, and SRSP launch groundbreaking Initiative in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): In a significant move to strengthen women-led enterprises, the United States government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP) Thursday unveiled an initiative here the other day aimed at nurturing women-owned businesses in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the merged areas.

This transformative program is set to offer interest-free microfinance loans coupled with comprehensive business management training to 2,000 women entrepreneurs, designed to cultivate a vibrant ecosystem, the initiative is dedicated to enhancing financial literacy, business acumen, and networking opportunities for women, thereby fueling the resurgence of local economies in the flood-stricken districts of Nowshera and Swat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"The launch of the microfinance initiative for women-led businesses in flood-affected districts is a testament to our collective commitment to advancing economic growth and building a brighter future for Pakistan," said Shante Moore, Consul General at the United States Consulate General in Peshawar, in a virtual address.

"This initiative is not just a reflection of our partnership but also a step forward in our shared journey towards empowerment and equality."



Ministry of Economic Affairs (MoEA) hosted the visit of the International Commercial Banking Course and the International Central Banking Course, alongside representatives from the National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) at Ministry of Economic Affairs, Islamabad.

PTCL Group steps up as Gwadar battles floods, delivering clean drinking water

Independent Report
QUETTA: In response to the devastating floods sweeping through Gwadar, Pakistan's largest telecommunications and

every day for a month to the affected communities. Torrential rains have plunged Gwadar into chaos, displacing families and leaving them desperately

of clean drinking water is delivered directly to those reeling from the disaster. Commenting on the effort, Syed Atif Raza, Chief Marketing Officer,



integrated ICT services provider, PTCL Group joined forces with Pakistan Red Crescent (PRC) to provide essential relief and deliver up to 30,000 liters of clean drinking water

short of necessities, with clean water being the most pressing concern. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, PTCL Group and PRCs have stepped up to ensure a steady supply

PTCL & Ufone 4G, said, "Access to clean water is indeed a fundamental human right, crucial for survival. PTCL Group, in collaboration with Pakistan Red Crescent.

Telenor Pakistan's first female sales trainee program Parvaaz begins

ISLAMABAD (APP): Telenor Pakistan conducted a two-day orientation bootcamp on for its newly onboarded Parvaaz female sales trainees.

Parvaaz, the industry's first-of-its-kind sales trainee program, is dedicated to cultivating diversity and inclusion within sales roles, empowering fresh female graduates to challenge conventional views of sales as a male-dominated field said a news release.

Held at the Telenor 345 headquarters, this bootcamp marks a significant milestone in Telenor Pakistan's ongoing commitment to nurturing diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

With 11 onboarded sales trainees having placements in major cities including Peshawar, Faisalabad, Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and AJK, the program aims to create a more representative workforce while tapping into fresh talent pools.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, Cap Andreas, MSC Spring-III, San Nicolas, Huang Shan-16, Cetus and Lusail, carrying Containers, Coal, Palm oil, Wheat, and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, HF Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Grain Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively. Meanwhile another edible oil carrier 'Ardmore Cherokee' also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on Tuesday. A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours.

Underground cabling project accelerates

RAWALPINDI (APP): The work on 'Underground Cabling Project' in Sadar area has been accelerated for timely completion in which power cables are being shifted to the underground wiring system. The project is aimed at getting rid of jumbling electric wires as well as to enhance beauty of the cantonment areas.

Inaugurated in January 2024, phase I of the project includes shifting electric wires to the underground system in areas including Mall Road Service Road (North), Hyder Road, Bank Road, Canning Road and partial areas of Kashmir Road.

In an interaction with APP here on Thursday, spokesman Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), Rasheed Saqib said that progress of the project was regularly being monitored by the concerned departments for its timely completion.

He informed that in Rs. 850.0 million worth mega project, IESCO was installing and commissioning the power cables, whereas RCB was executing civil work.

Baligh-ur-Rehman says: Pakistani women are talented, working shoulder to shoulder with men in every field of life

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman has said in his message on the occasion of International Women's Day that he pays tribute to the women who are contributing to the development of country in every field.

He said that Pakistani women are talented who are working shoulder to shoulder with men in every field of life. He said that our religion Islam gave rights to women in the age of Jahiliyyah when daughters were buried alive as soon as they were born. He added that example of Hazrat Khadija (RA) is before us.

He added that she was a successful business woman. He emphasized that the opportunities for education and growth should be provided to the women in the society. He added that the education of a man is the education of an individual while the education of a woman is equivalent to the education of a family.



LAHORE: World Peace Jirga Program Chairman, Rayatullah Khan (Khan Baba) along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Lahore press club.

Jirga held to resolve Gomal Zam dam area's demarcation issue

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A jirga was convened here on Thursday under the chairmanship of Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Zafarul Islam Khattak to resolve Gomal Zam dam area's demarcation issue between Wazir and Mehsud tribes.

The meeting was attended by the deputy commissioners of South Waziristan Lower, Upper districts and elders of Mehsud, Wazir and Bukri tribes. After a threeday discussion, both the tribes agreed to delineate the dam's boundaries in accordance with historical maps from the British era.

However, the Wazir committee emphasized extending the boundary beyond the British-era demarcation. The Gomal council of Mehsud and Burki asserted that the Gomal area constitutes shared land, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding their interests. They said that ownership of the land beyond the boundary of Gomal Zam Dam did not belong to the Darray Mehsud tribe, thus it could not take responsibility for the further demarcation.



MUZAFFRABADA: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat chanting slogans during protest at Azadi Chowk in the city, against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting at Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar.

SIC challenges in LHC EC move for not giving them reserved seats

LAHORE (Online): Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) has challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC) the Election Commission (EC) move for not giving them reserved seats.

Chairman SIC Sahibzada Hamid Raza has challenged the EC step for not giving them reserved seats in Punjab in LHC. Sahibzada Hamid Raza has filed petition through advocate Ishtiaq A Khan. EC and all others have been made respondents in the petition. The petitioner said in his plea that EC is neither a tribunal nor court. The reserved seats should be given to SIC in proportion to seats in the assembly. It was also said in the context of the petition that it makes no difference if SIC has contested election or otherwise. EC act is tantamount to make amendment in the constitution. EC decision is tantamount to transgressing its powers. The court should declare section 104 rule 94 of election act as against the constitution.

CJ, PHC visits blood donation camp

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Justice (CJ) Peshawar High Court Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan visited blood donation camp here on Thursday organized by Hamza Foundation.



LAHORE: Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan talking with the media persons during inauguration ceremony of Kitab Mela at Punjab University, in the Provincial Capital.

Kidnapped man killed by the kidnappers

By Adeel Ahmed
SHIKARPUR: The one of kidnapped Car Electrician Muhammad Rafiq Samejo was murdered by the kidnappers due to non payment of Ransom money to them on last night. According to reports reached here that the kidnappers had send the video of kidnapped Rafiq Samejo on Wednesday night in which his feet toes were tightened and seemed dead and later such video shared on social media (Facebook) as to spread the fear of Kidnappers with the message that they are most powerful to Police and law enforcement Agencies and can do anything at anytime without any hurdles and fear.

Conference on violent extremism concludes

PESHAWAR (APP): The three-day Countering Violent Extremism Conference, organised under the auspices of the Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, concluded its second-day sessions.

On the commencement of the second day of the three-day workshop, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr Qibla Ayaz, enlightened participants on the inclinations towards religious seminars in Pakistan. He emphasised the importance of discipline in both religious and modern sciences. He advocated for initiatives post integration, ensuring mainstreaming of the tribal areas, and the establishment of health, education, and swift justice services, as well as the enforcement of law for the sustainable peace in the region. According to him, extremist ideologies arise from deprivation and social alienation.

WASA chalks out desilting plan for all sub-divisions

FAISALABAD (APP): Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) has chalked out a month-long desilting plan for all sub-divisions to clean main drainage as well as sewerage lines in the city under 'Saaf Suthra Punjab' program. Managing Director Amir Aziz said here on Thursday.

Pakistan Army arranges educational trip for N Waziristan students

PESHAWAR (APP): As part of the '11m Tolo Dapara' (Education for All) initiative, the Pakistan Army organized a four-day educational trip for the students from schools in North Waziristan, focusing on Tehsil Ghulam Khan and Miranshah. As per the district administration on Thursday, the students embarked on a journey to discover historical landmarks in Peshawar and Abbottabad. In Peshawar, the students visited the Islamic University, Peshawar Museum and Bala Hisar Fort. Meanwhile, in Abbottabad, they toured the Pakistan Military Academy Kakul, Frontier Force Regimental Center and Shimla Hill. At Peshawar's Museum and Bala Hisar Fort, the students received insightful briefings on the historical significance of these sites, enriching their understanding of the region's heritage. Grateful for the opportunity, the students expressed their gratitude to the Pakistan Army.

International News

Modi visits Indian-occupied Kashmir for first time since special status revoked

Monitoring Desk
SRINAGAR: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said he was working to "win hearts in [occupied] Kashmir", on his first visit to the disputed region's main city since its semi-autonomy was cancelled in 2019.

Modi took pride in having cancelled the region's constitutional special status and inherited protections of land and jobs for its permanent residents. He said the former rules and "dynastic politics" had limited the region's potential. "Today, from [occupied] Kashmir I extend my greeting for the coming Ramadan to the entire country," Modi said, ahead of the holy month, expected to begin in the coming days.

Thousands of armed police and paramilitary forces were deployed, and checkpoints set up across Srinagar. Modi also remotely inaugurated a slew of development projects and government schemes for boosting agro-economy and tourism in Indian-occupied Kashmir and other parts of India.



Hezbollah supporters attend funeral of those killed in Israeli bombardment.

Angry Polish farmers protest EU rules

Monitoring Desk
WARSAW: Throwing smoke bombs and lighting fires, thousands of angry farmers demonstrated in Warsaw on Wednesday against EU regulation and cheap Ukraine imports, with police reporting that two officers had been injured and a dozen protesters detained. Some demonstrators tried to force their way past security railings onto parliament grounds, according to police. Farmers also organised tractor blockades on roads across the country.

"Behavior threatening the safety of our officers, including throwing cobblestone at them, cannot be ignored," police said on X, formerly Twitter. "A couple of police officers were injured. At the moment, a dozen people have been detained," they added. Polish farmers have been blocking border crossings with Ukraine since last month to protest at what they say is unfair competition from goods entering from Ukraine.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during a rally, as his bodyguard looks on at the Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar.

Cairo truce talks at an impasse as Ramazan looms

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Talks on a ceasefire and prisoner exchange between Israel and Hamas were at an impasse on Wednesday, as the humanitarian crisis in Gaza deepened and the Israelis pushed ahead with plans to build 3,500 settler homes in the occupied West Bank.

Negotiators from Hamas, Qatar and Egypt — but not Israel — are trying to secure a 40-day ceasefire in time for Ramadan, which begins next week. Urging the Palestinians to accept the terms on the table, President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that Israel was cooperating and "a rational offer" had been made for a ceasefire in exchange for the release of Israeli prisoners.

Turkish Red Crescent sends its biggest Gaza aid shipment yet

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Turkey's Kizilay (Red Crescent) is sending its biggest aid shipment yet to Gaza via Egypt, with a ship carrying some 3,000 tons of food, medicine and equipment leaving for the Egyptian port of Al-Arish on Thursday.

Turkey, which has harshly criticised Israel for its military offensive in Gaza and backed measures to have it tried for genocide at the World Court, has repeatedly called for a ceasefire and warned of consequences if calm cannot be achieved by the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, starting on Sunday.

Japan court rejects bid to halt active Shikoku nuclear reactor, NHK reports

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: A Japanese court rejected a complaint demanding the shutdown of Shikoku Electric Power's Ikata No.3 reactor, in the first formal ruling on the legal battle for the nuclear plant in western Japan, public broadcaster NHK reported on Thursday.

India gets its first underwater metro

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI (INP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first under-river metro tunnel in Kolkata, nearly four decades after metro services began in the country. The metro tunnel has been built under Kolkata's Hooghly River that will connect Howrah Maidan to Esplanade. Kolkata was also the first city in India to have an operational metro system, in 1984.

After long tussle, Sweden to become NATO member

Monitoring Desk
STOCKHOLM (INP): After two centuries of non-alignment and two years of torturous diplomacy, Sweden on Thursday becomes the 32nd member of NATO, a major step for a country once careful not to anger Russia.

Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson was visiting Washington where Secretary of State Antony Blinken will ceremonially receive the ratification documents after the hard-fought battle to secure the green lights needed from all NATO members. Kristersson is likely later in the day to attend the annual State of the Union address by President Joe Biden, who has been struggling to persuade the rival Republican Party to approve new aid to Ukraine.

China accuses US of using Philippines as 'pawn'

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China on Wednesday accused the United States of using the Philippines as a "pawn" in the South China Sea, as hostilities between the two Asian nations escalate over their territorial dispute in the region.

China accuses almost the entire South China Sea, brushing aside competing claims from a host of Southeast Asian nations and an international arbitration ruling that has declared its stance baseless. "China's resolve to defend its legitimate rights and interests is unwavering, and the Philippines' rights-infringing and provocative attempts will not succeed," Mao said. ASEAN, Australia reaction Southeast Asian and Australian leaders on Wednesday warned against actions that "endanger peace" in the South China Sea, following fresh confrontations between Beijing and the Philippines in contested waters.

