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PTI, PML-N break ice as Gandapur calls on Shahbaz

PM Shahbaz assures of resolution of KP's feasible demands

CM Gandapur hails positive meeting with PM, Stresses political engagement to solve political issues

Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday assured that all justified and other relevant senior officials. demands of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province would be met while keeping in view the current financial situation of the country.

Welcoming Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, the prime minister said that all the four provinces were the components of the federation and when they moved together, the country achieved progress and development.

The chief minister who called on the prime minister also briefed him on the administrative affairs of the province in detail, PM Office Media Wing said in a press

The meeting was attended by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal,

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Minister for States and Frontier Regions Amir Muqam

The prime minister stressed to sit together to resolve all issues, adding the public welfare would be the top priority of their collective efforts.

The federal government believed in working in harmony with all the provincial governments including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and would foster the strong bonds. The chief minister also expressed the resolve that the

provincial government wanted to move with good inten-

tions and was committed to play its positive role in the national development. Meanwhile Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur on Wednesday expressed satisfaction

following his first meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, highlighting its positive tone and focus on addressing public and provincial concerns.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur calls on Prime Minis-



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meet-

Visits FIA HQs

Interior Minister orders FIA to take measures to curb corruption, smuggling

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin pending promotion cases Naqvi on Wednesday should be disposed of vowed to crackdown on within thirty days, to en-

agency's efficiency. He was addressing officer after reaching Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Headquarters where he was welcomed by Di-

rector General (DG) FIA. He said corruption will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Corruption is the evil of our society, there will be zero tolerance on it. He said that FIA is a very important institution of national security and

graded and brought to international standards. The minister directed,

corruption and improve the courage officers. He said like promotion were given in every department in Punjab, In the same way, promotions should be given to eligible employees

> in FIA. The efficiency of the institution will be proved when the big fish are caught, said the interior minister adding that through effective measures, the scourge of fake medicines will also have to be eradicated from the coun-



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal chaired a meeting to bring major reforms in Planning Commission on March 13. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Planning Ministry and Members Planning Commission.

New govt to start work on five new economic corridors: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Soon after the formation of the elected government, progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), particularly the five new economic corridors, including the Corridor of Job Creation, Innovation, Green Energy and Inclusive Regional Development, has been expedited.

The newly-appointed Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, chaired an important meeting on Wednesday to initiate work on the five new corridors in the second phase of CPEC, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary Planning Awais Manzoor Sumra and senior officials of the CPEC Secretariat. During the meeting, a comprehensive briefing was given to the minister on the progress of CPEC projects, recommendations of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC), and working groups held last year.

Additionally, MoUs signed during the third Belt and Road Summit were also reviewed in

the meeting.
The Minister was updated on key projects such as ML-1, Karakoram Highway (Phase 2) D.I Khan Zhob, Karachi Circular Railway (KCR), and oth-

While reviewing the projects, the Minister directed stakeholders to expedite their implementation process without further delay. "No further hindrance in the implementation of CPEC agreements will be tolerated," remarked the Minister, while instructing stakeholders to immediately coordinate with relevant ministries for the speedy implementation of the projects.

Furthermore, the Minister directed stakeholders to submit pending PC-1s for various projects to expedite them effectively. Additionally, he instructed regular meetings on CPEC to properly monitor the

Imran foresees SL-like situation in Pakistan following 'rigged polls'

'stealing the mandate"

"My all predictions have proven true," the during an informal interaction with journalists in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, in which he reiterated that he was not engaging into talks with the current rulers to reach a "deal".

Khan, the deposed premier who was removed from power via a parliamentary vote in April 2022, said that the voters took revenge on the polling day but the "change via vote was not accepted".

PM summons SIFC Apex **Committee** today

ISLAMABAD (INP): A meeting of the apex committee of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has been called under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thurs-

According to the details, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir will also attend the Apex Committee meeting.

Apart from this, former Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and Caretaker Cabinet have also been invited to the meeting.

RAWALPINDI (INP): Slamming the 2024 nationwide general election once again, incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Ìmran han has predicted Sri Lanka-like situation in the country as the nation's hopes were shattered by

former prime minister said

"Each and everything is based on lies [...] like the election was a lie [...] the security threat was also a lie," the cricketer-turnedpolitico said, adding that the PTI was deliberately kept away from the 2024 polls.

plan to uplift tourism **Independent Report** AHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the People's Repub-

lic of China Ambassador Jiang Zaidong calls on

CM Maryam seeks

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

sought comprehensive "Punjab Tourism Plan" in seven days and ordered to undertake mapping of tourists sites across the province. The CM chaired a meeting in which Secretary Tourism gave a briefing about tourism and religious tourism here on Wednesday. Maryam Nawaz directed to undertake mapping of sites available for religious tourism.

It was agreed on the proposal to celebrate the Baisakhi festival in Punjab and CM Maryam Nawaz granted an approval in this regard. Maryam Nawaz underscored that the task to make Punjab a tourism would

accomplished. She directed to formulate a short-term and a long-term strategy for the promotion of tourism in the province.

The Sikh community and the followers of other religions coming to Punjab would be provided a tourist

Maryam directed to undertake a comprehensive planning so as to provide international level facilities to the each and every tourist visiting Punjab, adding that provision of complete security to every tourist is the first and foremost responsibility of the government. The CM directed to identify holy places for the Sikh pilgrims along with formulating a complete development

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Provincial Adviser Pervaiz Rasheed, Minister Ramesh Singh Arora, Secretary Tourism, Secretary Auqaf, Secretary Home, MD TDCP, DG Archaeology, Operations and other



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz presides over the meeting regarding tourism in Punjab Province.

PTI conspiring against Pakistan by giving a false narrative to European Union: Tarar

PTI spokespersons receiving instructions from jail to harm Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): asking it not to enter into a Federal Minister for Infor- loan agreement with the mation and Broadcasting Ataullah Tarar on Wednesday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was conspiring against Pakistan by giving a false narrative to the European Union.

The spokespersons of PTI are getting instructions from jail to harm the country, but no one will be allowed to harm the economy," he said while addressing his maiden press conference after assuming charge as Minister for Information and Broadcasting

Lashing out at the PTI leadership, the minister said its conspiratorial elements were again trying to attack the country's writing a letter to the International Monetary Fund

instructions from Adiala jail to harm Pakistan. Tarar alleged that the founder of PTI had tried to make this country default but with the grace of Allah and Shehbaz Sharif's personal interest, Pakistan entered into an agreement with the IMF.

He said now again the PTI leadership wanted to sabotage the agreement with the IMF through another letter.

loan agreement with the

spokespersons were getting

He said that the PTI

Pakistan government.

He asked the question as to in what capacity were they writing this letter to the IMF.

"Protecting the state of economy as in the past too, PTI did a heinous act by

Pakistan and the national interest is our first responsibility. Strategies and steps are being taken for revival



maintained.

The minister said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was working day and night for the improvement of the economy and daily he chaired three to four meetings on the economy

He said that the prime minister was working to end inflation and unem-

ployment in the country. The minister said on the other hand there was a po-

PM reaffirms to ensure timely implementation of **CPEC** initiatives

SLAMABAD (APP): Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday emphasised that his government would work tirelessly to ensure timely implementation of the initiatives under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He stressed that Pakistan was keen to move to the next phase of CPEC, including operationalisation of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to facilitate Chinese investment in Pa-

The prime minister was talking to Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Jiang Zaidong who called on him at the Prime Minister's House, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Dr. Ahsan Iqbal Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi and the foreign secretary also attended the meeting.

Doors of negotiations open to all: **Barrister Gohar** ISLAMABAD (INP):

PTI leader Barrister Gohar says doors of negotiations are open to all. PTI leader termed ter-

rorism a serious concern. He said that they were trying to melt the ice and move forward. He said that the government's actions are taking them to a cross-He also lamented the

ban imposed by the Punjab government on meeting the PTI founder in Adiala jail. 'It is difficult to run in such conditions but let's see what they do next" he questioned. The PTI leader also

talked about the Al-Qadir Trust hearing in Adiala Jail. He said that people like the caretaker setup were included in the cabi-

and it did not care about the national interests or integrity of Pakistan. He said Pakistan could

earn precious foreign ex-change if GSP plus status from EU continued, it would help create more job opportunities strengthen rupee as a currency.
"If Pakistan has GSP

plus status, foreign exchange will come, our exports will increase, rupee will become stable, inflation will be reduced and employ-ment opportunities will be provided", Ataullah Tarar remarked.

At the start of his press conference he assured that he would try his best to journalists.

"The doors of the Min-bal level.

see anything beyond itself, istry of Information are opened for journalists and will try to play the role of a bridge between the government and the media," he

He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had started working on a strategy to deal with the challenges faced by the economy as soon as he assumed office.

He said it was an honour that yesterday, Bloomberg magazine mentioned Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif regarding his potential for betterment of Pakistan's

The minister said that Bloomberg also termed the choice of Muhammad Aurangzeb as finance take measures for the wel- minister as the best fare of media workers and choice who as an economist had vast experience at glo-

Commander Bahrain National Guard, CJCSC discuss matters of security, defence cooperation

Independent Report RAWALPINDI: Commander Bahrain National Guard, General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, here at Joint Staff Headquarters on Wednesday.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), during the meeting matters of bilateral professional interest and further strengthening of security and defence cooperation between the two countries were dis-



security and defence cooperation between the two brotherly countries. Earlier, upon arrival at Joint Staff Headquarters, a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent presented 'Guard of Honour' to the visiting dignitary.

NA passes resolution demanding ZAB be declared national democratic hero

Wednesday passed a resolution urging the Federal Government to officially declare former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as a Shaheed and national democratic hero.

The resolution, moved by Shazia Marri, recognized that the trial and subsequent conviction of former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were a gross miscarriage of justice. The resolution sa-

Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, and the Pakistan People's Party workers who sacrificed their lives to establish this

It appreciated the determination with which President Asif Ali Zardari filed a presidential reference to reopen the case 12 Pakistan.

ISLAMABAD (APP): years ago, and Bilawal The National Assembly on Bhutto Zardari, who single-mindedly pursued

The resolution lauded the Supreme Court of Pakistan for finally acknowledging and accepting the glaring injustice meted out to Shaheed Zulfiqar Bhutto 44 years ago in its judg-

In light of the historic judgment of the court, the resolution demanded that the unjust verdict given in the Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto case must be overluted the struggles of turned. It also called for Begum Nusrat Bhutto, conferring the highest civil award, Nishan-e-Pakistan, upon Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Furthermore, the resolution demanded the establishment of the Nishan-e-Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Award for workers and activists who have fought and sacrificed their lives for true democracy in

Daily Aoice of Masse. Independent

Political faults

Constructive politics goes beyond mere agitation and protest. Unfortunately, over the past decade or so, all of Pakistan's major political parties have demonstrated a disappointing lack of vision with which they could inspire the people of this coun-

Admittedly, this is not entirely our politicians' fault: incessant interference in the democratic process has upended the rules of politics, making it so that political parties see a greater incentive in winning the favour of those pulling the strings than in putting effort into generating good ideas for public welfare that can be backed by popular support.

Considering how long this disequilibrium has been allowed to persist, it is no surprise that modern politicking in Pakistan has been reduced to 'us vs them' fights based on divisive narratives, referring to rivals with insulting epithets, rabblerousing over moral panic situations, and accusing the competition of corruption.

The PTI is often accused by its critics of triggering this decline, and not without reason. The party was initially nurtured by the establishment as a counterweight to the PML-N and PPP, and it seized power by constantly attacking and delegitimising its peers. It was fed with so much confidence that it came to believe it was above the rules of politics. It sought to tear down the fragile structure of Pakistan's fledgling democracy, perhaps aspiring to build it anew.

However, it came up short in terms of capability. By the time its crutches were taken away the party had grown too accustomed to confrontation. It fought for survival using the same selfrighteous anger it had once been encouraged to use against its rivals — only this time, it was turned on those who had been nurturing it.

In the recent elections, the party managed to achieve the unthinkable. Its credentials and mandate can no longer be denied — it is now an entity that doesn't need any external support. However, the manner in which it has wielded power in the past still gives many cause for concern. Its quick successes seem to have engendered a youthful hubris that sees it get carried away when the situation requires patience. Its supporters don't realise that change is a process, not an event. Their angry campaigns on social media only reinforce their image as a volatile crowd. In this context, the party's recent announcement of a shadow cabinet to oversee the Punjab government is an encouraging sign. It indicates that the party is maturing politically. It must do more. Another good step would be to start talking to other political parties.

The PTI should know that it is welcome as a disruptive force in the political landscape as long as it can make a distinction between disruption and outright destruction. It must learn to wield its influence responsibly.

The Operation Collateral Freedom

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President(Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



On the occasion of the World Day Against ebrated globally on March 12th, the Parisbased media watchdog, (OCF). This initiative locations.

techniques, provides in violations against the media with IT re- media freedom, emphasources through the sizing the critical need Collateral Freedom app for prompt and effective since August 2023, measures to address mirror sites on RSF's servers are currently enabling access to 100 censored media outlets.

Pakistani journalof blocked media out- and access to informalets, providing users action.

cess to content otherwise censored. Journalists can request their websites be mirrored and utilize the Collateral Freedom app for technical support, ensuring their content remains accessible despite censorship attempts. By staying informed about RSF's efforts, collabo-Cyber Censorship, cel- rating with international partners, and advocat-

ing for press freedom,

Pakistani journalists can

Reporters Sans Fron- effectively combat tiers (RSF), unveiled the online censorship and launch of Operation ensure their voices are Collateral Freedom heard. empowers over 100 me- Borders (RSF) has condia outlets in 32 coun-sistently voiced contries to bypass censor- cerns regarding restricship, marking a 20% in-tions, both official and crease from the previ- unofficial, on press and ous year. Operation media freedom in Paki-Collateral Freedom stan. In an open letter to achieves this by creat- Prime Minister Shahbaz ing mirror sites of Sharifon March 4th, RSF blocked websites, en- urgently urged the new suring constant syn- government to take imchronization with the mediate steps to restore originals and placing press freedom, signifithem in various online cantly weakened in recent years. RSF high-OCF helps the jour-nalists to adapt to the electoral process witevolution in censorship nessed a notable surge

which allows them to these issues.RSF conmirror sites hosted on demns the arbitrary the online infrastructure shutdowns of the used by RSF. So far 480 Internet and mobile services, as well as the address this critical is- rection of privatelyblocking of social media sue and honor commit- owned media outlets, platforms for political purposes, deeming such actions unacceptists grappling with cen- able in a democratic sosorship and social me- ciety and urged the dia restrictions have an government to provide opportunity to benefit an assurance that it will from RSF's Operation refrain from resorting to Collateral Freedom. these authoritarian mea-Through this initiative, sures, which undermine RSF creates mirror sites freedom of expression

underscores Pakistan's standing in media free-180 countries. Shockingly, between 2012 and 2022, 53 journalists lost their lives in Pakistan, with convictions secured for only 4% of these cases.

RSF highlights

various forms of media coercion in Pakistan, including military interference, journalist abductions by intelligence tion agencies, legislative misuse to muzzle journalists. arbitrary Reporters Without Internet shutdowns, laws. The lackluster investigations into these crimes perpetuate impunity, denying justice to victims. RSF emphasizes the urgent need for strengthened legislation to combat impunity and ensure respect for the rule of law, particularly concerning criminal activities by security services targeting journalists deemed "troublesome," such as abductions, secret detentions, and torture.

RSF underscores Pakistan's status as one of the most perilous environments for journalists, marked by extenments made by political include establishing a Safety and Security Commission for journal-Pakistan 2016, as promised by cluding those concern- trade and investment.

Party (PPP). RSF urges the government to comwomen journalists, enjournalists, repeal restrictive legislation on information rights, ensure media independence, cease arbitrary Internet and social me-

dia shutdowns, and en-

able journalists to work

the free flow of informa-

RSF emphasizes the urgency for the federal government to enact the 2021 federal law professionals without precise definitions for delay. Despite Prime Minister Sharif's public commitment

Islamabad on December 6, 2022, to establish the planned security commission, it has yet to be implemented, rendering the law ineffective. Additionally, RSF calls for the revision of sures are crucial to safeguarding the rights and safety of journalists in Pakistan.

RSF urges the insive censorship and formation ministry to dress to the newly self-censorship. Ur- cease using advertising sworn-in cabinet, the gently, RSF calls upon revenue as a tool to mathe new government to nipulate the editorial di- underscored trade and whose financial stabilparties during the elec- ity relies heavily on letoral campaign. These gal notices and state ists, as pledged by the persistent intervention progress, it's impera-Muslim in media affairs to sup-League-Nawaz (PML- press information. Jour- the perception of a foundational pillars of N), and revising the nalists must have the country's brand value governance to pave the Prevention of Electronic freedom to cover all plays a pivotal role in way for sustainable Crimes Act (PECA) topics without fear, in- attracting favorable economic growth and

RSF's assessment the Pakistan People's ing the armed forces, terrorism, and the defense of civil liberties. dom, ranking 150th out of bat harassment against This entails ensuring unbiased reporting and hind many regional force laws protecting protecting journalists counterparts and only

> several laws that en- international indices croach upon press and and rankings, spanning media freedom, includ- from soft power and ing certain clauses of economic indicators to safely while upholding thority Ordinance 2023 (PEMRA Amendment Act). These amend-

terms like "authentic information" (2023) requires revision to prevent its misuse against journalists. Additionally, Pakistan's Article 6 to eliminate Prevention of Electronic ence to "bona fide jour- as "PECA," is currently nalism." These mea- utilized to censor social must be revised to safeexpression.

In his inaugural adsworn-in cabinet, the Prime Minister rightly areas for uplifting the beleaguered state of the economy.

sector advertising. Additionally, RSF conast the primary pathway demns the military's to achieving economic tive to recognize that ment to prioritize these

Federal Minister for

economy and end to end

digitization of tax system

were the top priorities of

Headquarters and held

introductory meeting with

its members to discuss the

board's performance and

The minister stressed

The finance minister Wednesday visited Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)

documentation

the government.

future initiatives.

Regrettably, the current brand image of Pakistan languishes at its lowest, trailing befrom undue influence or marginally above wartorn nations. This dis-RSF challenges the mal performance exgovernment to review tends across various the Pakistan Electronic rule of law, legislative Media Regulatory Au- freedom, democracy, justice, and freedom of

press and media. To effectively ments purportedly com- stimulate trade and inbat disinformation but vestment, there must and draconian media on the protection of risk enabling media cen- be a concerted effort to journalists and media sorship. RSF insists on uplift Pakistan's brand image across all these fronts. This entails upholding the rule of law, "disinformation" to adhering steadfastly to prevent license with- democratic principles, drawal or outlet sus- ensuring the freedom pension. The Official and independence of Secrets Amendment Act vital institutions, and safeguarding the fundamental rights of speech, assembly, and media.

Without tangible the contentious refer- Crimes Act 2016, known improvements in these areas, mere lofty promises, impassioned media criticism and speeches, or even diligent hard work will fall guard online freedom of short in revitalizing the country's economic prospects.

Investors and trade partners seek stability, transparency, and reliability, qualities that can investment as critical only be fostered through genuine institutional reforms and unwavering commitment However, while to democratic values emphasizing hard work which include freedom of press and media.

Therefore, it's paramount for the govern-

These initiatives would

comprehensive

documentation of the

economy, and full-scale

incorporating wholesale/

retail real estate and

agriculture sectors into the

digitization is a means to

an end and implementing

tax framework, he said.

The government is considering strategies to broaden the tax base by

Aurangzeb said that

digitization.

Finance Minister says:

Documentation of

economy, digitization

top Govt priorities ISLAMABAD (APP): efficiency in tax collection.

Finance and Revenue, focus on enhancing tax Muhammad Aurangzeb collection through

said on Wednesday that improved FBR governance,

the urgent need for digital solutions are pivotal

digitizing the FBR to to modernizing our tax

enhance transparency and administration.

Commerce News

PM visits USC outlets to inspect Relief Package implementation

ISLAMABAD (APP): a historic Ramazan Relief etc for the deserving Prime Minister Shehbaz Package worth Rs 12 families. Sharif on Wednesday paid billion under which eatable He informed that

faced any issues while Benazir Income Support of Rs 2000 each. benefiting from the Programme (BISP). The prime minister package. PM Shehbaz Sharif said he had appointed

in availing the facility.

Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said the federal minister said the federal speaking on the federal speaking on the prime besides a subsidy of 20-30% on other food items government had announced such as rice, pulses, sugar

surprise visits to different Utility Stores across the Utility Stores federal capital to inspect subsidized rates during the get additional stipend the execution of the Prime holy month of Ramazan at worth Rs 10,000 each, Package.

During the visit, he interacted with the beneficiaries of the scheme and inquired whether the package, additional stipend will also be given to the and inquired whether the package.

Besides, he said under the package, additional stipend will also be given to the and inquired whether the package.

While under Kafalat programme, thousands of families from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and Balcakistan and Ba and inquired whether they families registered in will get additional amount

package. PM Snenbaz Snain Sala no made Spr He instructed the said under the federal several teams that would nav surprise visits to authorities concerned to ensure that entitled Relief Package, Rs 77 per various USC outlets to beneficiaries of the Relief kg subsidy was being given check the availability and Package faced no problem on wheat flour while Rs quality of the food items 100 per kg subsidy was adding that strict action would be taken against those involved in selling low quality items at the

LESCO detects

63,066 power

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits various special distribution points of Utility Stores Corporation set up- with regard to PM's Ramzan Relief 2024.

Jam Kamal leads trade initiative to address economic challenges ISLAMABAD (APP): In targets set by the Prime emphasized the importance

response to directives from Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, chaired meeting at the Ministry of Commerce, marking a

proactive approach to addressing current economic challenges. During the meeting, Minister Khan reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to

increasing the nation's trade volume, said a press release issued here. He emphasized the all. urgency of meeting the

FAISALABAD (APP):

Chinese Consul General

in Lahore Zhao Shiren said on Wednesday that

Chinese debt was only 13

per cent of total foreign

debt of Pakistan and its

basic objective was to

help steer the country out

of the debt trap by

Commerce & Industry

(FCCI), he said China had

never pressured Pakistan

for repayment of its loans

financial assistance.

extending necessary added.

Minister and outlined plans for implementing proactive measures. Minister Khan outlined a clear vision for the Ministry's direction over the next five years. This vision prioritizes increased trade volume, enhanced

with global standards. He emphasized the crucial role of both local and foreign investors in achieving these goals and pledged to create a more facilitating environment for

investment opportunities,

The Minister further

single and double entry

Chinese loans aimed at

steering Pakistan out of

debt trap: consul general

of measurable targets and tasked the Ministry with setting ambitious yet achievable benchmarks for growth and progress.

Recognizing the critical role of trade revitalization, Minister Khan underscored the importance strengthening relationships

and a focus on aligning with both domestic and foreign communities

> He highlighted the necessity of collaboration with stakeholders at all levels to achieve sustainable economic

by Rs.1,800 per tola

while recently the Chinese government rolled over the loan of \$2 by Rs.1,800 and was traded Rs.228,300 billion. He said that Wednesday as against its Pakistan had got excessive foreign loans sale at Rs.230,100 on the last trading day The price of 10 while its GDP was only \$350bn. "China is helping grams 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.1,544 to Pakistan to overcome its Rs.197,274 whereas that 10 financial constraints," he gram 22 karat gold decreased Rs.179,420 from Responding to a Addressing the question about issuing business community at multiple visas, Zhao said Rs180,834, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported The price of per Faisalabad Chamber of a very limited number of tola and ten gram silver multiple visas were being witnessed no change and issued in addition to the

Rs2,229.08 respectively.

business LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Food Bilal

Yaseen and Provincial Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussin along with Deputy Commissioner Rafiya Haider inspecting the prices of Edibles Items during their visit to Badami Bagh Vegetable and Fruit market.

Shafay for bringing new investments to Punjab

Minister for Industries & Trade Chaudhry Shafay Hussain on Wednesday underscored the need to bring new investment in Punjab so as to create new employment opportunities and vowed to make the province as a real trade and investment hub.

He expressed these views during his visit to Puniab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT) office here. The Board CEO Jalal Hassan briefed the minister about the nerformance of PBIT and its future line of action.

LAHORE (INP): Provincial Hussain called for arranging road shows in such countries having notential to invest here in Punjab. He said that the PBIT Board of Directors would be activated soon and such persons would be introduced in the PBIT who can play their vigorous role to bring new investment in the province.

The Provincial Minister directed the authorities concerned to persuade the solar panel companies re line of action.

Chaudhry Shafay at the local level.

PAJCCI hails by-road transportation of fruits from Pakistan to Russia PESHAWAR (APP): Pak-

Afghan Joint Chamber of for businessmen of the Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) has highly hailed transportation of fruits from Pakistan to Russia through centuries old road link between Sub-Continent and Central Asian Republics (CARs) via Afghanistan.

The news about sending of citrus in 16 trucks of National Logistic Cell (NLC) from Pakistan to valuable for country.

country and would open new vistas of trade and commerce in the region," observed Zia-ul-Haq PAJCCI Pakhtunkhwa. In a press statement issued here on Wednesday, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi said this trade route has great potential which if

Khyber

Coordinator tapped would prove very

pilferers in **181 days** LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a

total of 63,066 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) in 181 day of grand anti-power theft campaign. The LESCO spokesman told media here Wednesday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves



Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb chairing a meeting during his visit to FBR Headquarters

Gold rates dip

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold in the local market decreased was traded at Rs2,600 and

Chief Minister KP holds meeting over law, order

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief other modern equipment here that by setting a one-Minister Khyber for the police. Chief time quota, all the children Wednesday presided over the important meeting related to law and order here with all concerned authorities including Chief Secretary and Inspector General of Police.

The chief minister was briefed by the officials of the security forces on the overall law and order children of police martyrs situation in the province with challenges, future action plans, and other matters on behalf of the duota for the recruitment of children of all martyrs concerned authorities were under the Shahada Quota. also discussed.

The decision was taken to release a fund of of the Cabinet for this three billion rupees for the purchase of armored vehicles, weapons and

KARACHI: Passengers sit on the roof of a bus on

MA Jinnah Road in Provincial Capital. Pakistan

has one of the world's worst records for fatal traffic

accidents, blamed on poor roads, badly maintained

Punjab health minister

vows comprehensive

health sector improvement

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister Rafique affirmed

reforms. Under the directive aiming to address public

of Punjab Chief Minister concerns and enhance

Maryam Nawaz Sharif, service delivery.

vehicles and reckless driving.

Minister for Specialised the

Healthcare and Medical

Education Khawaja Salman

Rafique reiterated the

government's commitment

to enhancing the health

held at his office on

Wednesday, he emphasised

the inclusion of all

stakeholders in the process

to ensure effective

In a series of meetings

Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin minister announced to of martyrs waiting for Ghandapur inclusion of the heirs of recruitment under the police martyrs in the martyr quota will be able Ramadan package. He said that Rs 10.000 will be given to the heirs of police martyrs under the Ramadan package of the provincial and directed the concerned authorities to fix a one-time quota for the recruitment

> prepared for the approval purpose, the chief minister directed the meeting. It is worth mentioning

be recruited simultaneously. Children of police martyrs have been waiting for recruitment for many g o v e r n m e n t . C h i e f Minister Ali Amin Ghandapur has also taken years due to the low quota of martyrs, the meeting was told. Work should be noted decisions for the done to start the Safe City project in all the divisional

> Minister directed. The meeting also deliberated on issues A case should be related to the establishment of a security division within the police for the security of important personalities installations.

headquarters of the province, the Chief



LAHORE: At least seven people were killed and 1,129 injured in 1,096 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 492 people with serious njuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 637 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams. The data analysis showed that 605 drivers, 46 underage drivers, 155 pedestrians, and 376 passengers were among victims of the road crashes.

Police arrest two female drug smugglers

PESHAWAR (APP): Mardan City Police, led by SHO Mukadam Khan on Wednesday conducted a successful operation against drug dealers, resulting in the arrest of two female drug smugglers. The arrested individuals, identified as Shumaila and Gulfam, residents of Ternab Charsadda, were apprehended while attempting to smuggle drugs to Punjab.



Provincial Minister Specialized Health Care and Medical Education Khawaja Salman Rafeeq.

Local govt minister pledges to make 'Clean Punjab' campaign mass movement

Independent Report LAHORE: Minister for Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Punjab Zeeshan Rafique has pledged to ensured cleaning of drains every week at village level and to increase the number of cleaning staff, saying that 'Clean Punjab' [Suthra Punjab] campaign will be turned into a mass movement with the help of

He said for provision

While presiding over meeting on 'Suthra Punjab' campaign at the Civil Secretariat, he said

of better civic facilities, an

effective sanitation model

was being developed in

cleanliness campaign was going on vigorously across the province. "On the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, provision of necessary machinery was being ensured," he added.

China to launch merit, need-based scholarships for UAF students: CG

FAISALABAD (APP): Chinese Consul General Zhao Shiren has said that his country's relations with the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) would be taken to the new heights and in this context, they intended to launch a merit and needbased scholarship project for students of the university. He expressed these views during a meeting with UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Iqrar Ahmad Khan whereas deans, directors and Chinese universities alumni were also present. Zhao

Shiren said that Pakistan

and China were enjoying

time-tested relations which had strong bases on brotherhood. The both countries are collaborating with each other in energy, infrastructure, agriculture, education and other sectors to achieve common goals. He praised the UAF

leadership and faculty for university development addressing agricultural challenges. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has however opened new avenues for development, he added. Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan said that 70 teachers from the UAF had received higher education from universities in China.

PFA imposes Rs 630,000 fine

on six FBOs

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA), under the supervision of its Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid, visited 18 food points including five superstores, seven poultry shops and six chicken carrier vehicles in Samanabad and Tollinton Market.

The DG said that the food authority imposed Rs 630,000 collective fine on six food business operators (FBOs) for violating the Punjab Pure Food Regulations besides discarding 1,200kg adulterated butter, 200kg substandard desi ghee and 90kg diseased and dead chicken.

Canadian HC visits Meesaq Centre in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP):A delegation led by the Canadian Commissioner visited the Meesaq Centre in Cantt Thana here on Wednesday and received a briefing on the facilities and initiatives

at the centre. The delegation included the Director General of the National Police Bureau, Dr. Ehsan Sadiq. The Senior officers, including SSP Operations and SP CIA, welcomed the delegation, a news

Minister Health for eradication of polio

Independent Report PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting, chaired by Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah, took place on Tuesday to discuss polio, ongoing challenges, and future strategies.

The meeting included the Special Secretary of Health for Eradication, Abdul Basit, as well as the Provincial EOC Deputy Coordinator, Team Lead from the World Health Organization, and other officials.

During the meeting, the minister was briefed on the current situation of polio in the province, imminent challenges, and proposed plans for the future. Special Secretary for Polio Eradication, Abdul Basit, presented an overview of the polio

situation, addressing concerns and outlining potential strategies.

The situation of polio cases in southern regions was particularly highlighted, with a special exchange of views on the challenges faced in those areas. Minister Shah delved into the reasons behind the persistence of polio campaigns in regions such as Bannu, Lakki Marwat, and Upper and Lower Waziristan.

The meeting also addressed the security challenges faced during polio campaigns in the southern regions. Minister Shah was informed about the security concerns and issues leading to the cancellation of polio campaigns in various southern districts



LAHORE: Teachers and students of Islamia University Bahawalpur are protesting against the alleged sexual harassment in front of Press Club in the Provincial Capital.

LHC gives opportunity to govt for filing reply to SIC's plea

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday adjourned hearing of a petition against non-allocation of reserved seats to Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) till March

The court gave an opportunity to provincial and federal governments for filing written replies to the petition by the next date of hearing.

The single bench comprising Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal heard the petition filed by SIC Chairman Sahibzada Hamid Raza.

proceedings, a provincial law officer sought time for filing written reply to the petition while responding to a court query. He submitted that some members had taken oath on reserved seats. The reply will be filed to the extent of other members who had

not sworn in yet, he added. At this stage, the petitioner's counsel requested the court to issue a stay order, adding that it was an important matter.

However, the court declined the request.

International News

Putin warns the West: Russia is ready for nuclear war

the government's dedication to providing

better health facilities to the

public. Improving the

conditions of government

hospitals across Punjab

stands as a top priority on

a comprehensive report to

the chief minister after

conducting thorough visits

to government hospitals,

He pledged to present

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin warned the West on Wednesday Russia was technically ready for nuclear war and that if the U.S. sent troops to

sidered a significant escalation of the conflict. Putin, speaking just days before a March 15-17 election which is certain to give him another six years in power, said the nuclear war scenario was not "rushing" up and he saw no need for the use of nuclear

Ukraine, it would be con-

weapons in Ukraine. 'From a military-technical point of view, we are, of course, ready," Putin, 71, told Rossiya-1 television and news agency RIA in response to a question whether the country was really ready for a nuclear

Putin said the U.S. understood that if it deployed American troops on Russian territory - or to Ukraine - Russia would

"(In the U.S.) there are enough specialists in the field of Russian-American relations and in the field of strategic restraint," said Putin, the ultimate decision maker in the world's biggest nuclear power. "Therefore, I don't

think that here everything is rushing to it (nuclear confrontation), but we are ready for this.'

Putin's nuclear warning came alongside another offer for talks on Ukraine as part of a new post-Cold War demarcation of European security. The U.S. says Putin is not ready for serious talks over Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine has triggered the deepest crisis in Russia's relations with the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis treat the move as an inter- and Putin has warned several times the West risks provoking a nuclear war if sends troops to fight in Jkraine.

> Putin sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022, triggering full-scale war after eight years of conflict in eastern Ukraine between Ukrainian forces on one side and pro-Russian Ukrainians and Russian proxies on the other.

> In a U.S. election year, the West is grappling with how to support Kyiv against Russia, which now controls almost one-fifth of Ukrainian territory and is rearming much faster than the West and Ukraine.

Indian troops begin Maldives pullout after quit order

Monitoring Desk IALE: India has begun withdrawing military personnel operating surveillance aircraft in the Maldives after the new pro-China president ordered them to leave, defence authorities said on Tuesday.

An official of the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) said 25 Indian troops deployed in the southernmost atoll of Addu had left the archipelago ahead of March 10, the official start of the withdrawal agreed by both

"We can confirm that the Indian troop withdrawal is underway," the MNDF said in a statement. President Mohamed Muizzu came to power in September on a pledge to kick out Indian security personnel deployed in the Maldives to patrol its vast maritime border. The two sides had agreed to complete a withdrawal of 89 Indian troops and their support staff in the Maldives by May 10.



China says military delegation visited Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal

Monitoring Desk tary delegation recently visited the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal to discuss further cooperation in defence

issues, Beijing said on Wednesday. Beijing is seeking to build closer ties in South Asia in a push to counter its strategic rival India for

influence. Last Maldives said it had signed a "military assistance" deal with China after ordering Indian troops deployed in the small but strategically-

placed archipelago to leave. Beijing confirmed on Wednesday that a delegation had visited the country and met with pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu during a trip that also took them to Sri Lanka and Nepal from March 4 to

In all three countries, "they exchanged views on military relations and regional security issues of common concern", the Chinese military said in a statement on its official WeChat

The delegation of of

Missile hits apartment buildings in **Ūkraine's** Kryvyi Rih, 3 dead, 38 hurt Monitoring Desk rescue operations had been

KYIV: A Russian missile slammed into two apartment buildings in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih on Tuesday, killing three people and injuring at least 38, with rescue teams sifting through rubble late into the night in a search for survivors. Ten children were among the injured. Serhiy Lysak, governor of Dnipropetrovsk region, put the provisional

injury toll at 28 adults and

10 children and later said

completed "Two buildings were hit, one five storeys, one nine storeys," Lysak wrote on Telegram. "The number of injured is constantly rising as is the num-

ber of children injured.' Oleksandr Vilkul, head of the Kryvyi Rih's military administration, said at least three hits from the missiles were recorded in the city. He said at least five of the adults and one child being treated in hospital were in critical condition.

Israeli forces kill teenager, two other Palestinians in West Bank raid after deadly night **Monitoring Desk**

JENIN: Israeli forces killed two Palestinians during a raid in the occupied West Bank early on Wednesday, the official Palestinian news agency WAFA reported, bringing to five the number of Palestinians killed in different incidents within several hours. Yousef Nimer, a witness, said Israeli forces began firing at people he was sitting with outside a hospital in the city of Jenin as they were finishing Suhur, the final meal before sunrise during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Hungary summons US envoy over **Biden comments Monitoring Desk**

BUDAPEST: Hun-ga-rian government on Tuesday rejected US President Joe Biden's accusation that Prime Minister Viktor Orban was "looking for dictatorship", summoning the US ambassador over the claim. Relations between the two Nato allied countries have been frosty over the past years, as the United States has frequently criticised Hungary for its close relations with Russia, for holding up Sweden's Nato bid and over democratic backsliding.

Hezbollah attacks two Israeli bases with 100 rockets Monitoring Desk of Baalbek and the k

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Iranbacked Hezbollah said on Tuesday it launched over 100 rockets at Israel's two for a strike on the country's east that killed one person the day before.

Hamas ally Hezbollah and Israel have exchanged near-daily cross-border fire since the Gaza war erupted in October, but several Israeli strikes have recently hit Hezbollah positions further north, raising fears

of a full-blown conflict. Hezbollah launched more than 100 Katyusha rockets on Tuesday morning at two military bases in the occupied Golan Heights, the group said in a statement.

This was in response to the Israeli attacks on our people, villages and cities, most recently near the city

of a citizen", it added.
On Monday, Israeli air

strikes near Lebanon's city of Baalbek killed one permilitary bases in retaliation son. The Israeli military confirmed its jets had hit two sites belonging to Hezbollah's forces in retaliation for strikes on the occupied Golan Heights over several days.

Earlier on Tuesday, Hezbollah said its chief Seyed Hassan Nasrallah met Khalil al-Hayya, a leading member of Hamas's political bureau.

discussed They ceasefire talks for the Gaza war, as well as attacks by Hamas's regional allies to support its war efforts, the Hezbollah said in a state-

Hezbollah chief Nasrallah is due to give a televised speech on Wednesday.

US announces emergency Ukraine aid, as Poles warn of Russia threat

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON:

President Joe Biden announced an emergency \$300 million military aid shipment for Ukraine on Tuesday, as Poland's leaders visited the White House to warn of the growing threat from Rus-

The White House sidestepped Republicans in Congress, who have for months blocked a much larger package for Kyiv's desperate fight, by using money that the Pentagon had saved on recent purchases. But it warned that the new stopgap package would only last weeks, far too little to stem recent military advances by Russian President Vladimir out of ammunition in the Putin's troops as they take advantage of US paralysis.

came as Biden was preparing to host Poland's President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who came bearing the Pentagon said.

warnings that Russia's aggression will not stop at Ukraine. "This ammunition will keep Ukraine's guns firing for a period, but only a short period, White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters as he announced the aid package. Sullivan added that

the aid may only last a couple of weeks, leaving Ukraine outgunned in the face of a Russian war machine that is churning out arms and throwing troops at stalemated towns to force a breakthrough. "It is nowhere near enough to meet Ukraine's battlefield needs and it will not prevent Ukraine from running weeks to come." The ship-Intage of US paralysis. In ment would include long-range US-made HIMARS rocket systems, anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, artillery shells and small arms ammunition.

Unemployed Afghans risk death and debt in hunt for gold other unemployed men to

Greta Thunberg is removed by police officers as

she demonstrates outside the Swedish parliament

building together with a group of climate activists

Monitoring Desk YAFTAL SUFLA: Tearing off a piece of mouldy

in Stockholm, Sweden.

flatbread, Homayon gulped tea in a brief reprieve from the din of the machines he and a dozen other men were using to dig for gold on a mountainside in northeastern Afghanistan.

The 30-year-old found little work as a mechanic in nearby Faizabad city, so he banded with

try their luck carving out a living in the rocky mountains that dominate Badakhshan province.

"Five, six of us were jobless, we came here to see if we can find anything," Homayon said, as the handful of men finished their break and returned to work at the small-scale mine they had

Pakistan, China to march toward shared development, prosperity: PM

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday said Pakistan and China will march toward shared development and prosperity with joint investments in diverse

In an interview with Xinhua news agency, PM Sharif said the friendship between Pakistan and China spanned more than 70 years and has been nurtured by both countries' leadership to promote friendly relations.

countries have developed as all-weather, "Iron Broth- Highlighting Chinese moders" and have unique associations of friendship that fining China's journey to have stood the test of time.

"This friendship now must has served three terms as products by procuring

Chinese President Xi Jinping had congratulated model. Sharif on his election as prime minister of Pakistan on March 3. In his response, Sharif deeply appreciated Xi's warm message of facilitation and con-

sentiments not only for the people of Pakistan, for our friendship, but our mutual me, it's a very good start." rejuvenation, Sharif, who

achieve higher heights," he chief minister of Punjab province, stressed that Pakistan should emulate the said.

model and success story," the prime minister said, adding that generations of visionary Chinese leaders have led their people to cretinued support for Paki- ate unprecedented development miracles, lifting hun-"I deeply value his dreds of millions of people out of poverty and providing vast rural populations with access to education, He added that the two cooperation," he said. "For health, medical facilities,

and employment. The Chinese modernernization, a key term de- ization model created growth centers and sectors that produce competing

modern knowledge in science and technology, he

"Despite challenges in "It is a great success recent years, China's growth has still gone steadily compared to other countries, which is a remarkable achievement," he

Pakistan should replicate this model in the country to alleviate poverty provide jobs to the youth and encourage small and medium entrepreneurs to kickstart businesses in villages, towns and cities in sectors of agriculture, industry, information technology and on other platforms, the

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal

Minister of Interior and

Anti-Narcotics Mohsin

Naqvi visited the Ministry

of Anti-Narcotics on

nounced not to use his of-

fice in the Ministry of Anti-

Narcotics saying office in

the ministry of interior is

enough for him because of-

fices in two ministries are a

personal staff in the minis-

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Minister for Housing and

Works Mian Riaz Hussain

Pirzada Wednesday empha-

sized the importance of up-

holding the rule of law and

maintaining the integrity of

the allocation process of

government accommoda-

meeting of Estate Office, he

directed the concerned to

conduct a thorough review

of all previous allotments

to identify any instances

of illegality or irregularity

and strict action will be

taken against those found

The meeting was held

Chairing a high level

He ordered to post his

waste of resources.

On his visit, he an-

Wednesday.

Naqvi visits Ministry

of Narcotics Control

in another department. The manpower of the

Minister's Office should be

used in other necessary

places in the Ministry, said

Interior and Anti-Narcot-

given a special briefing re-

garding the affairs of the

drug eradication is the need

future of future generations

and for this purpose the

government will use all re-

the allocation process, said

Riaz Pirzada was apprised

by Director General, Estate

Office Obbaid ud Din about

the management and work-

rected to implement strong

mechanisms to prevent fu-

ture occurrences of illegal

allotments and to stream-

line the allocation process

to ensure efficiency and fair-

the government's commit-

ment to providing afford-

able housing solutions to

the federal employees and

general public while ensur-

previous ing that all transactions are

Riaz Pirzada reiterated

ing of the department.

During the meeting,

The minister also di-

a news release.

The minister said that

Mohsin Naqvi.

Ministry.

The staff of my office sources to get rid of the

Pirzada emphasizes

importance of upholding

rule of law



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif visits various special distribution points of Utility Stores Corporation set up with regard.

Federal Minister for Interior & Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting at Ministry of Narcotics Control in Islamabad.

Dar receives congratulatory messages from world FMs

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has received congratulatory messages from his counterparts of various countries on assuming his office.

Foreign Minister of Czech Republic Jan to promote cooperation Lipavsky, congratulating Ishaq Dar on his appointment as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan said Čzechia and Pakistan had long enjoyed friendly and constructive relations.

Foreign Minister of Maldives Moosa Zameer also extended congratulations saying he was confident that the bilateral rela-

Responding to his congratulatory message, Foreign Minister Dar posted on X expressed his gratitude to Moosa Zameer and said that he looked forward to working closely with him between Pakistan and Maldives.

Likewise Ukrainian FM Dmytro Kuleba congratulating Ishaq Dar on his appointment as Pakistan's 39th Foreign Minister wished him every success in his most responsible mission. "I look forward to expanding mutually beneficial bilateral and internations will continue to grow stronger under his leader-ship. tional cooperation between Ukraine and Pakistan", he added.

Shaza calls for completion of all IT projects within specified timelines

ISLAMABAD (APP): Humera Moriani, and se-State Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, on Wednesday, called for the completion of all Information Technology projects within specified timelines.

Presiding over a meeting, she directed the effisession, detailed presentacient utilization of funds tions were given on the for all projects.

She pledged efforts to of IT, the IT sector landaccelerate the promotion of the IT and Telecom sector tem, and the Ministry's and attract investments in

The meeting was at- PTA, and Universal Service tended by IT Secretary Fund also briefed the at-Hassan Nasir Jamy, Addi- tendees about their respec-

nior officials of the Minis-

partments of the Ministry

of IT, including NTC

PTA, Universal Service

Fund, and other govern-

ment entities, were present

in the meeting. During the

workings of the Ministry

scape, Telecom Ecosys-

Officials from NTC

Various subsidiary de-

try of IT.

(IHC) on Wednesday accepted the appeals for hear-

yers on March 18.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the appeals of the two accused challenging their conviction.

the stance that there was no provision of appeal in Official Secrets Act

try of narcotics control in **ECP finalizes** another department. arrangements for conducting Senate by-polls today

ISLAMABAD (APP) The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday has finalized arrangements for conducting by-elections on Thursday to fill six Senate seats left vacant by the Senators, who were elected to the National and provincial assemblies in the February 8

The ECP has already dispatched ballot papers and other polling materials to provincial assemblies of Sindh and Balochistan.

IHC seeks comments on appeals of PTI founder, Qureshi

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court ing against the sentences of PTI founder and Shah Mehmood Qureshi in cipher

The court served notices to respondents and sought arguments from law-

Earlier, the special prosecutor has objected over the appeals and adopted



practice of illegal allotments conducted in a fair and

and ensure transparency in transparent manner.

Housing and Works, chaired a high level meeting of Estate Office in Islamabad on March 13, 2024. Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, Secretary Housing and other senior officers of the ministry were also present during the meeting.

Islamabad to have a IT park; CDA given approval

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Directorate of Technology and Digitalization of Capital Development Authority (CDA) is taking several steps to provide IT facilities to the citi-

According to the details, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) board has approved the construction of an IT park on an area of 3.3 acres in Sector G-10 of Islamabad, for which a plot has also been allocated.

Further, Islamabad IT Park will be established under Public Private Partnership. The covered area of this park will cover 1 lakh square feet. In the IT Park, working space for freelancers, start-ups, software houses, library, space for exhibition of IT products, research centers, conference halls and meeting citizens of Islamabad

rooms will also be allocated.

It should be noted that private companies will bear all the costs of construction of IT Park, while after 15 years this park will be completely handed over to CDA Similarly, private companies will be able to

rent space and build IT offices in this park. This will not only increase the income of CDA but also ensure the provision of modern and quality IT facilities to the citizens of Islamabad. On this occasion, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) administration said that equipping the city of Islamabad with modern facilities is one of the top priorities of the organization so that all possible facilities can be provided to the

Meanwhile, Aabpara session.

police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Naseeb and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. Likewise, the Golra police team arrested an accused namely Saeed involved in illegally selling petrol

Earthquake jolts KP and Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): An earthquake of 5.3 magnitude on the Richter scale jolted various parts of the country on Wednesday.

Federal Minister of According to a private news channel, the National ics Mohsin Naqvi was Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC) confirmed that tremors were felt in various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the federal capital, and the adjoining of the hour to secure the

Earthquake tremors occurred in the Upper and Lower Dir, Mohmand, Buner, Orakzai and Abbottabad areas of KP.

Earthquake tremors also occurred in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

According to NSMC Islamabad, the epicenter was in the Hindu Kush region, and the depth was 130

As of now, there have been no reports of loss of life or damage to property.

SC issues written order regarding hearing on

journalists' case SLAMABAD (APP) The Supreme Court of Pa kistan on Wednesday issued written order regarding hearing of a case per-

taining to the FIA's notices to journalists on alleged anti-judiciary campaign. The four pages order issued by the top court said that the reports of FIA and police regarding attacks on ournalists are not satisfac-

tory. It directed the FIA and police to submit detailed reports again. It said that the Suoreme Court or the Registrar Office did not ask for any action against any jour nalist. The name of the judiciary was wrongly used

ICP nab 12 outlaws; drugs. weapons seized **Independent Report**

in the notices issued to jour

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) apprehended 12 outlaws including four professional beggars from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession

A public relations officer said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

police team arrested an accused namely Zeeshan Masih and recovered one liquor bottle from his pos-The Karachi company

PM hopeful of Pak-Gulf trade to surpass \$1 bn annually ISLAMABAD (APP): Bahrain Sheikh Salman bin Prime Minister Hamad Al Khalifa.

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that once the Pakistan-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Free Trade Agreement come into effect, the existing bilateral trade volume of USD 1 billion per annum had the potential to enhance manifold.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Commander of the National Guard of the Kingdom of Bahrain General Sheikh Mohammad Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa who called on him to convey the greetings of King of Bahrain Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Crown Prince enhance these relations and Prime Minister of

The prime minister warmly welcomed General Sheikh Mohammad to Pakistan and thanked the Bahrain leadership for their messages of felicitations on his re-election as prime minister, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The situation in Gaza was also discussed and both sides called for an immediate ceasefire and ensuring urgent provision of humanitarian assistance to the innocent Palestinians, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan.

The two countries had excellent defence cooperation, and his visit would even further



Guard calls on Prime Minister Muhammad

By-elections for 23 constituencies on

ISLAMABAD (APP): By-elections for 23 constituencies, comprising six national and 17 provincial assembly constituencies. would be held on April 21, said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The by-elections for many of these National and Provincial constituencies were postponed from February 8 due to various reasons, including the death of contesting candidates and candidates running for multiple seats. Additionally, some constituencies were vacated by winners of dual seats.

According to the schedule released by the Election Commission of Pakistan, by-elections will be held in six National Assembly constituencies, 12 in Punjab, two in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, two in Balochistan, and one in the

ency. Polling is being held in NA-08 Bajaur, NA-44 Dera Ismael Khan-I, NA-119 Lahore-III, NA-132 Kasur-II, NA-196 Kamber Shahdadkot-I, and NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad-I constituencies. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly comprises PK-22 Bajaur-IV and PK-91 Kohat-II constituencies, while the Balochistan Assembly includes PB-20 Khuzdar-III and PB-22 Lasbela constituencies. A by-election will be held in the Sindh constituency PS-80 Dadu-I. The elections are being held in various Punjab Assembly constituencies, including PP-22 Chakwal-Cum-Talagang, PP-32 Gujrat VI, PP-36 Wazirabad-II, PP-54 Narowal-I, PP-93 Bhakkar-V, PP-139 Sheikhpura-IV, PP-147 Lahore-III, PP-149 Lahore-V, PP-158 Lahore Sindh Assembly constitu- XIV, PP-164 Lahore-XX.

IG Punjab meets police employees and citizens **Independent Report** LAHORE: On behalf of Inspector General Police Punjab

Dr. Usman Anwar, priority measures are being taken for the welfare of police employees and solving the prob-



lems faced by them. Following this, IG Punjab met police employees and citizens at the Central Police Office. After listening to the applications submitted by the police employees and their families, the relief orders were

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar directed the DIG Welfare to provide relief on the financial assistance requests of Constable Sajjad Hussain and Ghazi Constable Ghulam Murtaza. IGP Punjab forwarded the application of Shahid Ashfaq, son of a police official for recruitment as a junior clerk on the family claim to AIG admin for necessary

IGP Punjab directed the DIG Azhar Akram to provide relief after personal hearing of Ghazi Constable Osama Umair's request for service reinstatement. IG Punjab directed DPO Gujarat to take immediate action and arrest the accused on the request of citizen Inayat Hussain. IGP directed forwarded the promotion request of 06 personnel of Lahore Police to ĈCPO Lahore and directed to take action according to merit on it, whereas Langri Adil Sarwar's request for financial support was sent to DIG Welfare for action



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja chairing a briefing on the working and projects of Ministry of **Pakistan**

Chief Commissioner, DC visit Ramzan bazaars; inspect arrangements

ISLAMABAD (APP): viewed the price lists and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Anwar-ul-Haq and Deputy Commissioner, Irfan Nawaz Memon have visited Ramzan bazaars to ensure accessible supplies for residents at subsidized

According to the ICT Spokesman, Dr Abdullah Tabassum, the Chief Commissioner emphasized the significance of these budget-friendly bazaars and issued directives to uphold government-approved prices and ensure the uninterrupted availability of essential goods, aligning with relief measures outlined by the district administration. Meanwhile, he re-

scrutinized the quality of goods offered by various vendors. Expressing concern for consumers, he emphasized the significance of adhering to the urban rate list to prevent over-

gaged with vendors to ensure the origin and quality of products sourced from different cities, underscoring the importance of consumer satisfaction.

Furthermore, he en-

On the occasion, the DC emphasized the affordability and quality, highlighting the significance of these Ramzan bazaars in

providing essential food

items at subsidized rates.

envoy calls on Vietnam **President** SLAMABAD (APP)

Ambassador of Pakistan to Vietnam, Samina Mehtab called on President of Vietnam Vo Van Thuong in Hanoi for a farewell meeting. During the call on, both sides reviewed the overall bilateral ties, with special emphasis on political relations and economic coop-

Ambassador Samina Mehtab expressed the desire of the Government of Pakistan to further strengthen bilateral ties with Vietnam in all spheres of mutual interaction. Accordng to a press release issued on Wednesday, she put forward proposals for cooperation in the fields of political ties, trade, and par liamentary exchanges.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Lawyers from various bar councils called upon Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazir Tarar, to extend congratulations on his assumption of office