

Independent

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UNSC demands immediate ceasefire in Gaza for first time

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Israel has criticized the Security Council for previous resolutions.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Independent Report

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

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

The Prime Minister said protection of media persons is the responsibility of the state. He expressed hope that the media, through objective reporting, would continue playing its role for strengthening and stabilizing democracy in the country.

The Prime Minister said fake news is a big challenge and the role of mainstream media is pivotal in

checking this menace.

He said media is the fourth pillar of the state and electronic media's role is cardinal in the development and progress of the society as well as mental and ideological training of the people.

Shehbaz Sharif further said he has assumed power at a time when the country is facing immense difficulties. He said bringing the economy back on track is the biggest challenge.

APP adds: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday said privatization of loss-making state-owned entities, institutional reforms, domestic and foreign investment and austerity were priorities of the government.

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

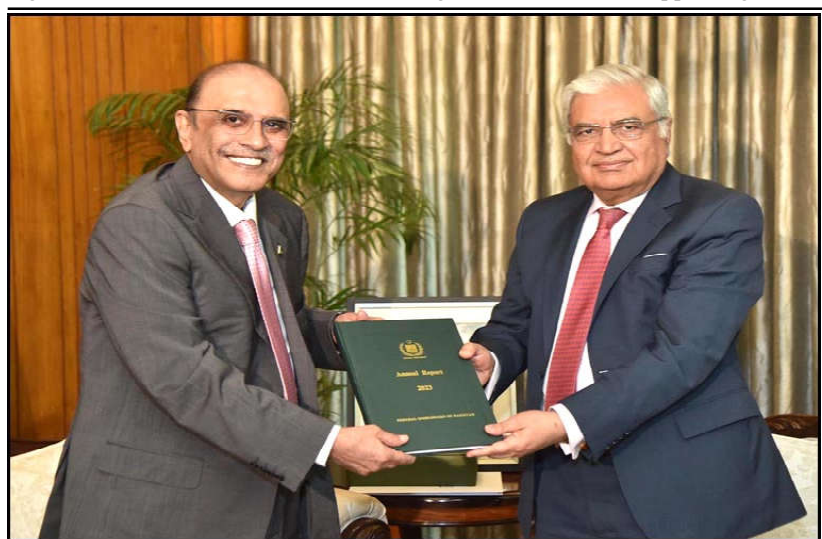
The PM said he formed the government at a time when the country was faced with immense difficulties.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

The mohtasib briefed the president about the performance and initiatives taken by the federal ombudsman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

During the course of

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

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

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

Nawaz, Maryam condole family of youth killed by kite string in Faisalabad

Independent Report

LAHORE: PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday visited the family of a young man, Asif, who died last week after his throat was slashed by a kite twine.



Both Nawaz and Maryam expressed condolences to the family for this tragic loss.

Last Saturday, Chief Minister Maryam took immediate action after the incident, ordering a province-wide crackdown on kite-flying.

Prior to visiting the deceased youth's family, Maryam convened a high-level meeting at Faisalabad International Airport, attended by MPAs, PML-N leaders and law enforcement officials.

Similar to other parts of Punjab, authorities in Faisalabad are conducting a crackdown on kite and string manufacturers.

Four terrorists killed, ex-govt official martyred in D.I.K operation

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): Four terrorists were killed and a former government official martyred in operation of the security forces against extremists.

According to details, the armed forces, CTD and police conducted joint operation against militants in Kot Kundian area of Kulachi located at Dera-Tank border.

During intense exchange of fire, four terrorists were killed while arms, explosives and other material were also recovered from their possession. A former director of agriculture department, Ahsanullah Gandapur was also martyred in fire exchange.

Fostering parliamentary diplomacy; essential for world peace: Ayaz Sadiq

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lambasting the PTI, he said sometimes they wrote a letter to the IMF, but sometimes asked the European Union to investigate the election process in Pa-



kistan. If they had any complaint, they should knock the door of the Election Commission of Pakistan or Election Tribunals, he said.

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

The minister said that American diplomat Donald Lu had called the PTI founder as a "certified liar".

He urged the PTI leaders to join mainstream politics and contribute to the

No leniency for those accused of releasing girls' objectionable photos: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday observed that the people accused of sharing objectionable pictures of women with others and similar offences do not deserve any leniency.

The remark came during the hearing of a plea seeking bail of a man, Muhammad Haseeb, who is accused of sharing objectionable pictures of a girl on social media site Facebook and her father and husband on WhatsApp.

The court rejected the bail plea, stating that such offences have become very common in the society for the reason that girls send "their objectionable pictures" to boys or friends when in a relationship, which are later shared on social platforms in case of a breakup. The court termed the sharing of private pictures a very heinous crime.

"[...] as these pictures become stigma throughout the life of girls and in many cases their family life has destroyed; the girls have also committed suicide, hence the accused committing such offences are not entitled for any leniency," the court stated in a written order.

FM reiterates Pakistan's support for Palestinian cause

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

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

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

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

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

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

Saudi ambassador calls on Minister for Power

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

During the meeting, the minister acknowledged the steadfast support of the brotherly country in all challenging situations, said a news release. Awais Leghari highlighted various investment opportunities, particularly in the transmission sector, and assured the ambassador of investor-friendly policies under the current government.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan offering Fataha at the Mausoleum of Father of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Smog country

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

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

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

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

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

Turbulent Sahel

Mohammad Ali Babakhel

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The political landscape in the Sahel has been further

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

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

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

-- Courtesy Dawn

The TikTok problem

Zarrar Khuhro

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Commerce News

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

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

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

He said that around all

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Data availability vital for better service delivery: Shaza Fatima

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

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

She said that a stable

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

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

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

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 373 points

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

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

Rupee gains one paisa against dollar

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

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

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

Ministerial Committee reviews Ramadan package

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

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

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

monitoring process were reviewed.

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

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



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

FBR to Launch Tajir Dost Scheme for Small Traders, Shopkeepers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on July 1, 2024, with the first payment due on July 15, 2024.

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

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



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

Azam assesses prices, facilities at utility store

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

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

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

Speaking to the

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

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

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shahid Rashid Butt said that the prime minister

understands the importance of the National Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) which was poised to promote investment in the country. The PM also understands the importance of cordial relations between the center and provinces and with neighboring countries and he was aware of the impact of inflation and people's worries, he added.

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

Minister visits PSRA; directs for provision of quality education

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

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

issued instructions to the authorities to form region-wise competitive registration campaigns for the registration of more schools and the unregistered schools have unnecessarily increased the fees. If there is a lack of facilities in the schools and there is a writ challenge of the government, immediate action should be taken against them. He said that private schools are also our institutions and we are providing all kinds of support to them.



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

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

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

He was talking to the delegation of the clerks' community that called on him under the headship of Mubashir Aftab Dalazak, district president of APCA from Mansehra at his office, Civil Secretariat here on Monday. The delegation congratulated the provincial adviser on taking over the portfolio of tourism and culture as well as apprised him of certain issues faced by the clerk community of Mansehra. Zahid Chanzeb listened to their grievances very patiently and assured them that they would be resolved at an appropriate level while contacting the relevant authorities on the spot to resolve some of the issues.

PHC issues detailed judgment on allocation reserved seats

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court on Monday issued a 30-page detailed judgment in the case filed by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) regarding allotment of reserved seats and rejected the petition of SIC. A five-member bench of the Peshawar High Court gave a brief verdict on March 14 while the judgment was written by Justice SM Atiq Shah.

LHC summons AG, AAG on SIC petition

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

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

Minister inaugurates SSC at UET

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

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

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



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

Appellate Tribunal approves nomination papers of Azam Swati

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

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

4.8 mln ration bags distributed, 6132 profiteers arrested

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): On the instructions of the Chief Minister Punjab, the provincial government is successfully continuing the Nighaban Ramzan package for providing relief to deserving families during the holy month of fasting and so far 4.8 million ration bags have been delivered to the needy people at their doorsteps.

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

Body of missing youth found in sewerage drain

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

ANF arrests 13 drug smugglers in 13 operations

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

PDMA releases Rs.348m for TDPs of North Waziristan

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday released an amount of Rs 348 million as monthly financial assistance (sustenance allowance) to the affected families of Operation Zarb Azab in North Waziristan who have not yet returned to their homes. Each and every verified family will receive it through SIM messaging within a day or two.

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

International News

Russia casts doubt on Islamic State responsibility for concert attack

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia on Monday challenged assertions by the United States that the Islamic State (IS) militant group orchestrated a gun attack on a concert hall outside Moscow that killed 137 people and injured 182 more, accusing Washington of covering for Ukraine. In the deadliest attack inside Russia for two decades, four men burst into the Crocus City Hall on Friday night, spraying the crowd with bullets during a concert by Soviet-era rock group Picnic. Four men, at least one a Tajik, were remanded in custody on terrorism charges. They appeared separately, led into a cage at Moscow's Basmanny district court by Federal Security Service officers. IS has claimed responsibility for the attack, a claim that the US has publicly said it believes, and the militant group has since released what it says is footage of the attack. US officials said they had warned Russia about an imminent attack earlier this month. President Vladimir Putin has not publicly mentioned the militant group in connection with the attackers, who he said had been trying to escape to Ukraine. Putin said some people on "the Ukrainian side" had been prepared to spirit the gunmen across the border. Ukraine has denied any role in the attack and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has accused Putin of seeking to divert blame for the attack by mentioning Ukraine. Russia's Foreign Minister

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

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

Israel pounds Rafah in southern Gaza despite ceasefire calls

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

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

Simon Harris set to become Ireland PM

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

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

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

North Korea says Japan PM requested summit with Kim Jong Un

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister said on Monday that Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has requested a summit with her brother, adding a meeting was unlikely without a policy shift by Tokyo.

Relations between the two countries are historically strained, including by a long-running kidnapping dispute and North Korea's banned weapons programmes, but Kishida has recently expressed a desire to improve ties, which Pyongyang has hinted it is not opposed to. Last year, Kishida said he was willing to meet Kim "without any conditions", saying Tokyo was willing to resolve all issues, including the abduction by North Korean agents of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, which remains an emotive issue in Japan. "Kishida... conveyed his intention to personally meet the President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as soon as possible," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

Kim Yo Jong — who is one of the regime's key spokespeople — had hinted last month at a possible future invitation for the Japanese leader to visit North Korea. But she said the "history of the DPRK-Japan relations gives a lesson that it is impossible to improve the bilateral relations full of distrust and misunderstanding," without a substantive policy change on Tokyo's part.

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

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: Palestinians who fled an ongoing Israeli raid of Gaza's main hospital described mass arrests and forced marches past bodies in interviews on Sunday, while the United Nations said Israel is now blocking its main agency helping Palestinians from sending food aid to the enclave's devastated north. Israel's military says it has killed more than 170 militants and detained about 480 suspects in the raid on Shifa Hospital that began Monday, calling it a blow to Hamas and other armed groups it says had regrouped there as the war nears the six-month mark. The fighting highlights the resilience of Palestinian armed groups in a heavily destroyed part of Gaza where Israeli troops have been forced to return after a similar raid in the war's earliest weeks. Kareem Ayman Hathath, who lived in a five-story building about 100 meters from the hospital, said he huddled in the kitchen for days while explosions sometimes caused the building to shake.

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



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

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

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

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

Serbians angry at Trump family deal for site of Nato bombing

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

Turkey heads to local elections as Erdogan seeks to avenge 2019 defeat

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Turks will vote next Sunday in local polls as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, buoyed by a strong showing in last year's general elections, sets his sights on winning back Istanbul. The secular opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) seized back control of the city—Turkey's economic powerhouse—in 2019 for the first time since before Erdogan ruled it as mayor in the 1990s. Those watershed

2019 elections also saw the opposition win back the capital Ankara and keep power in the crucial Aegean port city of Izmir, shattering Erdogan's image of political invincibility. Erdogan has entrusted his former environment minister Murat Kurum to run for mayor of Istanbul in the March 31 election. He is seeking to avenge the worst political defeat of his two-decade rule, when CHP arch rival Ekrem Imamoğlu took the town hall.

Faisalabad to be transformed into modern city: CM Maryam Nawaz

Independent Report
F A I S A L A B A D : Faisalabad would be transformed into a modern city by introducing an innovative mass transit system, said Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz.

Presiding over a meeting of local parliamentarians and PML-N leaders at Faisalabad Airport here on Monday, she said that the Punjab government has planned to provide hundred speedo buses in Faisalabad in addition to bringing metro bus system in this metropolis.

She said that Faisalabad was also included in 100,000 house project which would be

constructed for low income people. She said that rural and primary health centers across the province would be revamped within 6 months in addition to constructing and repairing 600 roads, 5 expressways and 3 motorways.

She said that 100 percent free medicines would be started across the province soon in addition to its home delivery. She said that all districts of the Punjab would be included in safe city program whereas this project would be launched in 18 cities within next 3 months.

She said that more than 4.8 million packets of Ramadan Negahban package were distributed so far across the province

while 3,000 motorbikes would be provided to male and female students in each district.

She said that students would also be given laptops and iPads whereas a comprehensive system of solid waste collection was being implemented in 36 districts. The government has also set a target to introduce waste management system on PP mode in all districts of the Punjab including its rural areas within next 3 months, she added.

She also condemned the killing of a youth with kite string and said that this incident was very painful which could not be ignored rather its responsible would be taken to task.



FAISALABAD: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz and PMLN Supremo Nawaz Sharif are addressing a meeting of local parliamentarians and PMLN leaders at Faisalabad Airport.

SIFC gives go ahead for establishing largest IT Park in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Standing Investment Facilitation Committee (SIFC) has given the green light to establish the country's largest IT Park in the G-10 sector of the federal capital, covering an expansive area of 3.3 acres. This landmark decision marks a significant stride forward for Pakistan's burgeoning tech landscape, promising unparalleled opportunities for innovation and progress.

Negotiations are already underway with key stakeholders such as Pakistan Software Export Board and the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication to ensure the successful execution of

the IT Park project. These collaborative efforts underscore the government's commitment to nurturing a conducive environment for technological innovation and entrepreneurship, positioning Pakistan as a regional leader in the digital arena, PTV reported on Monday.

The envisioned IT Park is poised to become a nucleus of technological advancement, boasting a comprehensive array of facilities aimed at fostering creativity and entrepreneurship. Among its features will be a state-of-the-art research center, a well-stocked library, software houses, conference rooms, dedicated work spaces for freelancers and start ups and an exhibi-

tion area for showcasing cutting-edge IT products.

The IT Park project, operating under a public-private partnership framework, holds immense promise for the country's burgeoning freelance economy. Approximately six thousand freelancers are slated to benefit from access to top-notch facilities, empowering them to contribute significantly to Pakistan's economic landscape through the provision of e-services.

Crucially, the construction of this pioneering IT hub will be financed through collaboration with private IT companies, which will also lease office spaces within the premises.

Court orders to present Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi on April 04

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad court while issuing production order in the matter of bail before arrest has ordered to present PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi on April 04.

The matter of bail before arrest in respect of PTI founder Imran Khan in 6 cases and his wife Bushra Bibi in one case came up for hearing in district and sessions court Islamabad Monday.

Additional Sessions

Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra heard the case.

The attendance of Imran Khan could not be got marked through video link on Monday despite court's orders.

Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry and Muhammad Saeed Khan Sadozai counsel for PTI founder Imran Khan appeared in the court.

Adiala jail authorities filed their reply and technical report in the court in connection with contempt of court notice.

Hindu community celebrates Holi in twin cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Hindu community in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi celebrated the spring festival of Holi.

Pakistan Hindu and Sikh Welfare Association organized special worship services at the temple and distributed parashad among the devotees. A large number of Hindu community participated in the festivities and later they threw colour at each other.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique presides over the meeting at Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department.

ICCPO issued guidelines regarding complaints against police officials

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has issued new guidelines regarding complaints against Islamabad Capital Police officials, a public relations officer said.

He said that, according to the issued guidelines, if any Dolphin Force personnel, checkpoint staff, or traffic police officials exceed their authority, solicit bribes, or demand gratuity during checking, citizens should immediately call 1715.

If you have any photographic or video evidence, also upload it im-

mediately on the "ICT-15" app. All these complaints will be monitored by the Accountability Unit under the supervision of the AIG Investigation, ensuring strict accountability of Islamabad Capital Police.

The purpose of this action is to ensure rigorous enforcement of accountability measures and timely resolution of citizens' issues.

Moreover, the Islamabad Capital Police is taking comprehensive measures to protect the lives and property of citizens. Citizens should report any emergencies or suspicious activity on emergency helpline "Pucar-15" or via "ICT-15" app.

AIOU to establish a state-of-the-art campus in Mardan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will establish a state of the art campus in Mardan. In this regard, Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood called on Mayor of Mardan, Hamayatullah Mayar, and Additional Deputy Commissioner, Naik Mohammad Khan.

While giving a detailed briefing on the educational services of the university, Dr. Nasir said that if AIOU could get land at a suitable place in Mardan, the University will build a state-of-the-art campus of the university, which will provide a lot of convenience to the students of Mardan.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan, Alfred Grannas calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Khalid Maqbool vows to play proactive role for improving education in Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Monday said that federal government will play proactive role for improvement of education sector in Sindh with an aim of creating job opportunities for the youth.

The minister while talking to media persons during visit of Pakistan Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSI) Laboratory Complex Karachi said that a large chunk of country's population was consisted of youth and ministry of Science and Technology was ready to take measures in coordination with the provincial government for training the youth in skills

required in the global market.

All the organizations working under the ambit of MoST as well as higher education institutions will start technical courses for secondary and higher secondary students having proficiency in subjects of English and Mathematics, he said and added that after the skill building the trained students will be able to acquire jobs around the world.

"It will not be brain drain but actually it will be brain train" as they will be able to practically contribute in development of the country, he said and elaborated that highly skilled workers from Pakistan will not only send precious foreign exchange to the homeland but they

will also get the first hand knowledge of latest developments in different fields.

Stressing the need of unified efforts to deal with challenges confronted by the country Khalid Maqbool said that we may steer the nation out of crisis if every stakeholder prioritize state over political or individual motives.

We have to set our direction towards an inclusive and participatory democratic approach by going into the masses for strengthening the democratic system in the country, he opined and added that his party was playing a constructive role to bring democratic stability in the country.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui visits PCSIR Laboratories Complex.

Pakistan selected to lead training of African countries on Mosquito identification

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan based on its wealth of data and expertise has been preferred to lead the International Exchange Program Anopheles stephensi Africa - South Asia familiarization Program.

The Directorate of Malaria Control (DoMC), Ministry of National Health Services has been selected for the exchange program under which it will host a training and capacity building program of nine African countries for Anopheles stephensi surveillance and control, a senior DoMC official told APP. He said, "As you know that historically south-Asia and parts of the Middle East, has been endemic to Anopheles stephensi an efficient vector of malaria that has gained notoriety because of

its spread to number of African countries since 2013, particularly in Djibouti, Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan." He added that the biggest threat posed by this range expansion was that this mosquito was able to flourish in urban environments, thus representing a paradigm shift in malaria epidemiology from being a primarily rural disease in Africa to potentially also infecting millions of city dwellers across Africa.

However, based on decades of experience in surveillance and control of this mosquito, both India and Pakistan were asked to share their experience with malaria control colleagues in Africa offers major benefit for control programmes in Africa to rapidly improve preparedness and response activities.

Mohsin Naqvi greets Hindu community on Holi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotic Control, Mohsin Naqvi on Monday sent greetings to the Hindu community on the festival of Holi.

"Happy Holi to the Hindu community living in Pakistan" he wrote in his message and said that Holi is the festival of colors and colors always last only with love.

He said that the festival of Holi is a wonderful occasion to unite hearts and spread love and harmony because today's society is suffering from hatred and ugliness.

He said that one should put aside mutual bitterness and join in the joy of this colorful festival.

He further said that the festival of Holi promotes feelings of brotherhood and goodwill and celebrating joyous festivals together promotes love and relationships.

All minorities including the Hindu community are equal citizens of Pakistan, Mohsen Naqvi added.

ICP will collaborate with ZARRA alert for missing children recovery

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, a delegation from Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Agency (ZARRA) visited the Central Police Office Islamabad. Senior officers of Islamabad Capital Police, DG ZARRA alert, and representatives of social organization Roshni were present at the occasion.

During the meeting, it was decided to initiate an awareness campaign to provide more information to citizens about the ZARRA alert. Additionally, awareness material will be available for the citizens visiting police stations of Islamabad. The aim of all these measures is the recovery and guidance of missing and abducted children.

Moreover, following the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has taken special measures in the federal capital to re-

cover missing and abducted children.

While utilizing this new digital platform, resolving the issues of missing and abducted children is among the top priorities of Islamabad Capital Police. In this regard, Islamabad Capital Police will take effective measures to combat crimes against children and ensure that those involved are brought to justice.



ISLAMABAD: Senior officers of Islamabad Capital Police, DG ZARRA alert, and representatives of social organization Roshni were present at the occasion.

PM, German envoy discuss relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Germany Alfred Grannas called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday and discussed matters of mutual interest. The prime minister thanked German Chancellor Olaf Scholz for sending a congratulatory message to him on his reelection.

The prime minister emphasized that Pakistan deeply valued its longstanding ties with Germany and considered it an important partner in Europe.

While noting the positive trajectory of bilateral ties, the prime minister expressed the desire to expand existing level of bilateral trade and investment,

stating that there was great potential for enhanced German investments in Pakistan.

The prime minister welcomed the German side's initiative to send a business delegation to visit Pakistan soon and assured the German Ambassador that the delegation would be facilitated in every way to ensure a successful visit.

He also extended an invitation to the German Chancellor to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

The ambassador assured the prime minister that Germany was keen to work closely with Pakistan to strengthen bilateral ties, especially in trade and investment.

President emphasises increasing eco, cultural ties with Cote d'Ivoire

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday said that Pakistan enjoyed cordial relations with Cote d'Ivoire and underscored the need to enhance economic and cultural ties with the West African nation for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

The president said this while talking to the Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Cote d'Ivoire Mahmood Akhtar

Mahmood who called on him at Aiywan-e-Sadr.

During the meeting, the president asked the ambassador-designate to explore opportunities for advancing trade and economic relations with Cote d'Ivoire. He said that there was great potential to increase the exports of Pakistani rice, medical and surgical equipment, pharmaceutical products and sports goods to Cote d'Ivoire.

MoITT introduces standardized quality test to ensure job opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) has introduced a standardized quality test in all universities across Pakistan to enhance job opportunities for fresh graduates.

An official from the Ministry of IT said that this decision aims to revamp IT education in collaboration with various entities, including the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the National Computing Accreditation Council, the Examination Testing Council, the Pakistan Software Export Board, and the Pakistan Software Houses Association.

Students who suc-

cessfully pass the test will be eligible for job opportunities through the Industry Placement Program.

He said, funds will be allocated to support special industry courses in universities, with the goal of preparing students to meet current industry trends and demands.

The official explained that the National Computing Accreditation Council will consider the pass rate of students to determine a university's rating and the permissible enrollment of IT students.

He said that Pakistani universities currently produce 20,000 to 22,000 IT graduates annually, but only 2,000 of them manage to secure employment.



ISLAMABAD: Country Director of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Gier T. Tonstol calls on Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

Drive on Railway safety, prohibited items in full swing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways awareness campaign was in full swing in order to raise public knowledge of the dangers of trespassing, crossing railroad tracks, and carrying forbidden objects like gas cylinders, guns without a license, cartridges, drugs, and daggers.

The campaign was launched on the directives of Minister for Railways Shahid Ashraf Tarar and Secretary Syed Mazhar Ali Shah which will not help the department to control accidents but also win the confidence of the passengers of the rail" an official told APP.

The official said, "Pakistan Railways will use all the social media platforms including print, electronic media, twitter, Facebook, poster and pamphlets to create an awareness among the citizens about a safe train journey."

He said the department has also asked all the divisional superintendents to ensure checking of luggage of passengers at entry points with scanners, metal detectors and walkthrough

gates.

He said Pakistan Railways had always given importance to the safety of citizens and its passengers.

"It has been directed to discourage and stop those passengers who are carrying prohibited products. It is suggested to install emergency doors and auto-lock doors in coaches in case of any emergency," he added.

The official urged the citizens to stop at the level crossing before crossing the track, look on both sides of the track and wait for the train to pass if any train was coming.

He said that double whistle boards had been provided at most of level crossings where train drivers were bound to play horn to warn the road users about train arrival. To a question, he said, "Pakistan Railways has converted approximately 181 un-manned level crossings to manned level crossings across the country, out of 550 identified by the department over the entire railway network in over one year."