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PM Shahbaz says Terrorism trans-national threat, instrumentalised by enemies to stymie Pak progress, development

Chairs a high level emergency meeting; Orders to conduct joint investigation of Besham terrorist attack; Army vows to take all-out measures for safety of Chinese citizens in Pakistan; COAS reiterates the resolve of armed forces to eliminate the scourge of terrorism afflicting the country

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday instructed to conduct a thorough joint investigation of the Besham terrorist attack on Chinese nationals working on Dasu Hydel Power Project, utilizing all resources of the state.

The prime minister offering deepest condolences to the families of the innocent victims of the attack assured that the perpetrators of this barbaric act would be brought to justice swiftly.

Chairing a high level emergency meeting in the aftermath of Besham terrorist attack on Chinese nationals, the prime minister appreciated the alacrity

with which law enforcement agencies and locals responded to the attack, saving many precious lives which could have been lost.

The meeting was attended by the Federal Ministers, Chief of the Army Staff, Chief Ministers, Chief Secretaries and Inspector Generals of Police of respective provinces, a PM Office press release said.

The meeting discussed in detail the heinous attack on innocent civilians working on a development project, meant to contribute to energy and water security of Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif underscored the enduring bond of brotherhood between the people of Pakistan and

China and conveyed that the whole nation was saddened by the loss of Chinese lives.

He stated, "Terrorism is a trans-national threat that has been instrumentalized by the enemies of Pakistan to stymie Pakistan's progress and development. The acts targeting Pakistan-China friendship are particularly aimed at creating mistrust between the two iron brothers". Participants of the meeting expressed resolute commitment to completely rooting out terrorism from this country.

The participants expressed serious concerns over sanctuaries available

to terrorists across the borders and emphasized upon the need for a regional approach for countering terrorism.

During the meeting, the COAS reiterated the resolve of armed forces to eliminate the scourge of terrorism afflicting the country. COAS stated that the nation had steadfastly fought the war on terror for the last two decades and had defeated the nefarious designs of Pakistan's adversaries.

Noting the recent surge in terrorist incidents, COAS remarked that the enemies of Pakistan had once again underestimated the resilience and grit of the

State and the people of Pakistan.

He said, "we shall fight terrorism till every terrorist casting an evil eye on Pakistan, its people and their guests, is eliminated; we shall not leave any stone unturned to ensure that every foreign citizen, especially the Chinese nationals, contributing to the prosperity of Pakistan, is safe and secure in Pakistan. We shall fight terrorism with all our might, to the very end." The meeting concluded with the participants reiterating resolve to comprehensively combat terrorism employing all resources available to the state.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level security meeting.

US warns Pakistan of sanctions risk over Iran gas pipeline project

Declared that it does not support the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project going forward

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has declared that it does not support the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project going forward and cautioned Islamabad about the risk of sanctions in doing business with Tehran.

The Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline, known as the Peace Pipeline, is a long-term project between Tehran and Islamabad, and has faced delays and funding challenges for several years.

Pakistan and Iran had signed a five-year trade plan in August 2023 and set a bilateral trade target at \$5 billion. Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik said this week that his country was seeking a US sanctions

waiver for the gas pipeline from Iran.

During his daily news briefing in Washington on Tuesday, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said "We always advise everyone that doing business with Iran runs the risk of touching upon and coming in contact with our sanctions, and would advise everyone to consider that very carefully."

"We do not support this pipeline going forward," the spokesperson added, saying that Donald Lu, the State Department's top official for South and Central Asia, had said as much to a congressional panel last week.

Washington has condemned a suicide bombing

that killed five Chinese nationals working on a dam project in Pakistan, saying no country should have to suffer "acts of terror."

"We condemn the attack on a convoy of PRC [People's Republic of China] engineers in Pakistan," Matthew Miller said and added

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of life and injuries sustained, and share our heartfelt condolences with those affected by the attack. The Pakistani people have suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists, and I'll note that PRC nationals in Pakistan have also been the victims of terrorist attacks, and no country should suffer the acts of terror."



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari meeting with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Jiang Zaidong, to offer his condolences over the killing of Chinese citizens in Bisham, at the Chinese Embassy.

Visits Chinese Embassy 'Shangla attack criminals will be brought to justice', President assures Chinese envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday visited the Embassy of People's Republic of China and offered condolences, on behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, over the killing of Chinese citizens in a terrorist attack in Bisham.

He strongly condemned yesterday's terrorist attack, saying that the Pakistani nation shared the grief of the Chinese people.

He said that the people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with the Chinese people in this hour of grief.

Upon his arrival, the president was received by Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong. The Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also present on the occasion,

President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the president said that enemies in the region couldn't accept the fact that Pakistan and China were further strengthening their bilateral ties.

He assured the Chinese ambassador that the criminals involved in the gruesome act would be apprehended and brought to justice. He further said that all necessary measures would be taken to ensure the security of the Chinese citizens working on various projects in Pakistan.

The Chinese ambassador thanked the president for personally visiting the embassy to offer condolences. He appreciated that Pakistanis from all walks of life had condemned the terrorist attack.

hours in the federal capital.

The development took place after the bar associations and legal experts called for a probe into the letter. The sources said that the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan met the CJP and discussed the matter.

After the meeting, AGP, while talking to journalists, said that the matter is serious and it should be probed.

SC holds full court meeting on IHC judges' letter alleging spy agencies 'interference'

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: A full court meeting of the Supreme Court judges was held in the federal capital to deliberate on a letter written by the six Islamabad High Court judges about the alleged interference of spy agencies in the judiciary.

The Supreme Court judges including Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa attended the huddle that lasted for over two

Seven candidates secure unopposed victory in Punjab Senate race

LAHORE (APP): Ahad Khan Cheema, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Hamid Khan, and four others have secured victory unopposed in the seven general seats of the Senate from Punjab.

As per details shared by a spokesperson of the Provincial Election Commissioner of Punjab, 12 candidates were in the race for the seven general seats of the Senate from Punjab. However, after the withdrawal of nomination papers by five candidates, only seven candidates remained in contention, resulting in all seven candidates technically winning without competition.

Among them, five candidates from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and two candidates from the Sunni Ittehad Council emerged victorious without contest.

Pervaiz Rashid, Nasir Mahmood, Ahad Khan Cheema, and Muhammad Tallal Badar of the PML-N clinched success. Similarly, Mohsin Naqvi, backed by the government alliance, also triumphed.

Raja Nasir Abbas and Hamid Khan Advocate likewise secured victory unopposed.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the special meeting regarding Health Reforms in province.

CM Punjab approves field hospital, clinic-on-wheels project

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has decided to launch a field hospital and clinic-on-wheels project under the revolutionary programme soon.

She presided over the 5th meeting on health reforms in a span of one month here on Wednesday in which approval to such an important project was granted, along with reconstituting health system and reviewing ongoing health projects. The CM also accorded approval to undertaking revamping of field hospitals should be available in such areas. Ultrasound, laboratory test, medicines, initial medical check-up, examination of mother & child facilities would be available in the

field hospitals. CM apprised that launching of 32 field hospitals would be undertaken next month. 200 clinic on wheels would be established for the residents of semi urban and katchi abadies.

Doctors, LHV and vaccinators would be available in the clinic on wheels along with ultrasound facilities.

The medicines of hepatitis, TB and cardiac ailments would be provided to the patients at their doorstep. She directed to ensure 100 percent transparency in the purchase and provision of medicines adding that availability of doctors in every hospital should be ensured all the time.

to undertake revamping of the projects and ordered to immediately issue Rs. 16 billion to undertake upgradation of the hospitals. She underscored that bringing improvements and reforms in the health sector is foremost priority, adding that if any issue arises in the health sector development projects then it should be appraised to her immediately. "we would ensure provision of quality health facilities at any cost" she said. Where BHUs, RHCs are not available then field hospitals should be available in such areas. Ultrasound, laboratory test, medicines, initial medical check-up, examination of mother & child facilities would be available in the

PHC rules in favour of PPP, PMLN on reserved seats

Monitoring Desk
PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court on Wednesday ruled in favour of the PMLN and other opposition parties in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province over the issue of reserved seats.

PTI-led government in KP was trying to block the oath of some of the opposition members elected on reserved seats. Consequently, PPP, PMLN and JUIF filed petitions with the PHC. The PHC - which earlier this month dismissed PTI's petition against the ECP decision to allot dozens of reserved seats to PMLN, JUIF, and PPP - granted the petitions by PPP and PMLN and JUIF in its short order.

SC restrains FIA from arrests of journalists

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Wednesday restrained the FIA from arrests of journalists till the next hearing of the case.

"Is it the violation of the law?", Chief Justice of Pakistan asked. "This notice has been under section 160 of the Criminal Procedure Code, it is a notice prior to registration of the FIR," CJP said. "This notice can be served to me tomorrow, why you presume that they will register the FIR. At a time, an officer after comes under heavy pressure from above, issues notice but not registers an FIR, or arrest the person. In this notice they could also summon someone as a witness," CJP said.

"When you show us something illegal than we can declare it void, we will

not declare a legal act as null and void," chief justice said.

"It is necessary to provide complete details of the case with the notice," Barrister Salahuddin argued. "I will be informed of the reason first, if I am being summoned to the police station," he said.

"You are saying the FIR has been compulsory before being summoned. The officer may call you for verification of facts before registration of the FIR," chief justice said.

Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan said that registration of the FIR comes first and summon after it. "Do you want notice under section 157, instead of section 160," he asked. "The notice can be served after registration of the FIR," Barrister Salahuddin said.

All possible steps to be taken to root out scourge of terrorism: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday reiterated the commitment of the government that all possible steps would be taken to root out the scourge of terrorism from the soil of the motherland.

Addressing a press conference after a high level meeting on security chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, He said that Prime Minister expressed the firm re-



solve to eliminate terrorism and make Pakistan a peaceful state.

Tarar said that all the participants of the meeting were on the same page regarding ensuring security for all.

He said today's high level meeting was attended by Federal Ministers, Chief of Army Staff, Chief Ministers of all four provinces, Chief Secretaries, Inspector Generals of the provinces, Chief Secretaries and IGs of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Attaullah Tarar said that the meeting had the consensus that an integrated strategy should be adopted to wipe out terrorism from this country.

"A message of unity was given to the nation today that all units are on the same page with the Federation", he informed the media. All were on the same page on the integrity and national interest of Pakistan, he said

Fazal announces boycott of by-polls, schedule for nationwide rallies

ISLAMABAD (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUIF) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has announced boycotting the by-elections to be held on April 21. In a video message, Maulana Fazlur Rehman said the JUIF rejected the results of the February 8 elections and now it would also boycott the by-elections. "We will struggle to establish a real Islamic welfare and democratic state. Workers seek Allah's help and start working from now," the JUIF chief said.

He said in 2018 elections, people's right to vote was robbed while in the 2024 elections, people's right to vote was killed. "We reject the [Feb 8] poll results. We have to go to people. We will take them in confidence and unite

No attempt to undermine China-Pakistan cooperation will succeed: Jian

BEIJING (APP): China has categorically stated that no attempt to undermine China-Pakistan cooperation will succeed.

During regular news briefing in Beijing, in response to a question about a terrorist attack causing casualties of five Chinese citizens in Pakistan, spokesperson foreign ministry Lin Jian said China opposes all forms of terrorism, firmly supports Pakistan in fighting terrorism.

He said China will work with Pakistan with even stronger commitment to do everything possible to protect the safety and security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan.

PTI nominates Marwat for PAC chairmanship

PESHAWAR (INP): Ali Muhammad Khan, a prominent leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has announced the nomination of Sher Fazl Marwat for the chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). Emphasizing the significance of the PAC chairmanship as an opposition privilege, Khan asserted that it is not within the government's authority to dictate who leads the committee. He dismissed any notion of factionalism within PTI, stating that despite internal discussions and differences, the party remains united under the leadership of Imran Khan.



ISLAMABAD: NCRC Chairperson collaborates with Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan to elevate child rights agenda and boost Pakistan's Global Image.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

New terror wave

A string of deadly terrorist attacks over the past few days — with the bombing in KP's Bisham area on Tuesday being the latest atrocity — drives home the grim point that Pakistan is in the midst of a multidimensional terrorist insurgency.

Meanwhile in Turbat, Baloch separatist militants attacked the PNS Siddique naval base on Monday night. An FC trooper was martyred in the incident. Last week, security forces had thwarted a terrorist attack, also carried out by Baloch militants, on the Gwadar Port Authority Complex.

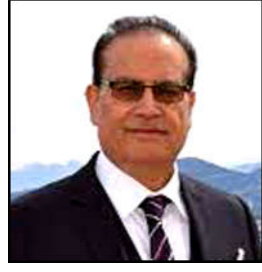
Beijing's reaction has been firm, with the Chinese embassy demanding the Pakistani state take "practical and effective measures" to protect its nationals here. China has come to this country's aid at difficult times, and invested in Pakistan when few others were willing to.

If malign foreign actors are involved in subterfuge, diplomatic channels need to be used to communicate to them that their facilitation of terrorist violence will be exposed before the international community.

"Six Judges' Allegations: Yet Challenges in Substantiation..."

By Qamar Bashir

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



In a remarkable development, six judges of the Islamabad High Court have penned a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council underscoring deeply troubling allegations of blatant, aggressive, and intimidating interference by the executive branch in both lower and higher judiciary affairs.

The noteworthy aspect of this situation is the decision to make the letter public. With decades of experience in government circles, it's clear that officials, including judges, are obligated to maintain confidentiality in their official correspondence.

Whether the letter was leaked without the consent of the Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Commission, or the six judges who wrote it, re-

ports of confidentiality, especially in legal proceedings. The relevant Article V of the Judicial Code of Conduct stresses that judges should avoid engaging in public controversies, particularly political ones, to uphold the integrity of their position.

Typically, matters concerning the Supreme Court are communicated to the public through its public relations department, often pertaining to administrative issues or clarifications on court actions. However, in this instance, the letter addressed to the Supreme Judicial Council on March 25, 2024, was made public the following day, March 26, 2024.

By revealing allegations of interference by intelligence agencies, the judges aimed to highlight potential threats to judicial integrity. They likely hoped that public scrutiny would compel authorities to address the issue promptly and reinforce the importance of judicial independence.

However, making internal correspondence public carries risks, including undermining confidentiality and inviting political or legal repercussions. Depending on how the allegations are perceived, it could also affect public confidence.

Utilizing advanced encryption methods, secure networks, and anonymous tools, they conceal their identities and activities, making it challenging for outsiders to intercept or attribute their actions.

operations provide plausible deniability. This makes proving their involvement in suppressed and intimidating activities exceptionally difficult, necessitating thorough investigation and forensic analysis to uncover any traces of their involvement.

Therefore, handling allegations of interference and intimidation by spying agencies in the absence of concrete evidence presents a significant challenge for the Supreme Judicial Council. However, despite the difficulty in proving such allegations, the Council may still take appropriate steps to address the situation and uphold the integrity of the judiciary.

Evidently, in the absence of direct evidence, the Council will have to rely on witness testimonies and corroboration from multiple sources to substantiate the allegations. Witness testimonies, especially from the judges themselves and other individuals who may have been subjected to intimidation or interference, can provide valuable insights into the nature and extent of the alleged actions.

Moreover, given the gravity of the situation, it may be necessary for the Supreme Judicial Council to collaborate with other relevant institutions, such as law enforcement agencies or independent investigative bodies, to ensure a comprehensive and transparent investigation.

Any attempts to obstruct or undermine the investigation must be met with swift and decisive action to uphold the rule of law and protect the judiciary from undue influence or intimidation.

The Council may enlist the help of independent experts or investigative agencies to conduct forensic analysis or investigations into any suspicious activities or incidents reported by the judges.

Although direct evidence may be scarce, expert analysis of circumstantial evidence or patterns of behavior may reveal potential links to interference or intimidation tactics.

SJC may provide strong protections for whistleblowers who come forward with information about interference or intimidation. SJC can encourage individuals with knowledge of such actions to step forward and provide valuable testimony.

Ensuring confidentiality and protection from retaliation can help overcome barriers to reporting. In cases where traditional investigative methods may not yield sufficient evidence, the Council could consider establishing a public inquiry or commission with broad powers to investigate the allegations thoroughly.

Ultimately, the Supreme Judicial Council's response to these allegations will be a crucial test of the judiciary's independence and its ability to uphold the rule of law in the face of external pressures.

It is essential for the Council to demonstrate its commitment to justice, accountability, and the protection of judicial independence by thoroughly investigating these allegations and holding accountable those responsible for any wrongdoing.

Failure to do so would not only undermine public trust in the judiciary but also jeopardize the foundations of democracy and the rule of law in Pakistan.

Regardless of the outcome of the investigation, the Council can implement measures to enhance judicial integrity and resilience against potential interference in the future. This may include strengthening security protocols, providing training on identifying and responding to intimidation tactics, and promoting a culture of transparency and accountability within the judiciary.

Commerce News

Awais Leghari vows to combat electricity theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmed Leghari, on Wednesday, expressed his unwavering resolve to combat electricity theft across all DISCOS.

Addressing the Chairmen and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Power Distribution Companies (Discos) via video link, he underscored the urgent need to address electricity theft.

During the event, the discussion primarily focused on combating electricity theft, which the Minister described as a form of economic terrorism severely impacting the country's economy.

officials to harness technology and innovation in their endeavors to eradicate power theft, aiming to minimize indiscriminate power outages, particularly affecting consumers who diligently pay their bills.

Leghari called for the removal of all obstacles hindering efforts to prevent electricity theft and warned that employees and officers involved in such illegal activities would face firm and decisive action.

He reiterated that there would be no political interference in the campaign against electricity theft, emphasizing decisions based on merit for a

transparent and impartial approach.

The Minister instructed all Discos to establish modern customer service centers nationwide and appoint competent officers to ensure the timely resolution of customer complaints.

He stressed the importance of kindness towards consumers and emphasized a policy where the "customer is always right."

He mandated the management of Distribution Companies (Discos) to maintain up-to-date financial records diligently and compile detailed information regarding the company's assets.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari addresses the CEOs and Chairmen of DISCOS via video link.

Ahsan discusses cooperation in export-oriented production with Turkish envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal discussed matters related to bilateral interests including cooperation in the field of export-oriented industrial production with the Turkish ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Mehmet Paçacı.

The discussion took place during a visit by the Turkish envoy to the minister's office, after he congratulated Ahsan Iqbal

on assuming charge of the ministry, a news release said on Wednesday. During the meeting, the minister shared that Pakistan and Türkiye could explore areas where both countries could benefit from each other's strengths, including joint production of export items to third countries, as well as cultural cooperation in arts and media.

He urged the idea of seeking Turkish assistance to set up an industry in

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for exporting items to Europe. Since labor costs in Pakistan were cheaper than in Türkiye, he said, such a joint venture would benefit both countries.

Pakistan and Türkiye have a long history of warm friendship, and both countries have stood by each other during disasters, such as floods and earthquakes. The minister appreciated the support extended by Türkiye.

Minister stresses tapping growth potential of mineral-rich areas

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Mines and Minerals Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani renewed the commitment to foster unrestricted progress within the Mines Department, aimed at benefiting the people of Punjab. Acknowledging the challenges that led to significant losses within the department, he emphasized tapping potential for growth and development in the mineral-rich tribal areas of southern Punjab.

benefits of underground mineral resources. He announced a shift towards a merit-based approach and promised that all leases would be publicly advertised, guaranteeing fairness and accountability. He highlighted the significance of pink salt (Himalayan salt) as a valuable national asset. Efforts to strengthen field offices and expedite recruitment processes are identified as crucial steps to streamline official operations and prevent delays, he said and expressed confidence in achieving this year's revenue generation targets.



Country Lead Digital Transformation GSMA, Saira Faisal called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja in Islamabad.

LCCI advocates for business-friendly taxation system

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Wednesday expressed reservations over 'Tajir Dost Scheme 2024' under SRO 420 and advocated for business-friendly taxation system to pave way for economic development, besides formulating all the economic policies in consultation with the stakeholders.

Mahmood Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt and a large number of businessmen were also present. Kashif Anwar expressed reservations over the SRO 420 under which 'Tajir Dost Scheme 2024' has been introduced, citing that the businessmen, who are outside the tax net and never filed a tax return, are asked to deposit advance tax every month under this scheme which is not viable as the shopkeepers would have to remain associated with the tax lawyers.

Pakistan's exports to US decrease by 10% in 8 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United States (US) witnessed a decrease of 10.38 per cent during the first eight months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to US were recorded at US \$3,626.141 million during July-February (2023-24) against exports of US \$4,046.337 million during July-February (2022-23), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to US came down by 10.97 per cent from \$476.804 million in February 2023, against the exports of \$424.497 million in February 2024.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to US also decreased by 6.89 per cent during February 2024 as compared to the exports of \$455.944 million in January 2024, the SBP data revealed.

Commerce Minister leads session on future planning

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, conducted an in-house presentation on Wednesday to evaluate the government's future plans within the Ministry of Commerce to attain sustainable economic growth and development.

The presentation focused on key areas of development and strategies to moving forward, besides a comprehensive review was undertaken to ensure alignment with the ministry's objectives, said a press release issued by the Ministry of commerce.

Brazilian Envoy urges Pakistan to join BRICS to become part of global economy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ambassador of Brazil to Pakistan, Olyntho Vieira has urged Pakistan to join international multilateral forum BRICS for becoming part of the global economy. He said, "Pakistan is a big market in terms of its population which can play an important role in BRICS and promote trade with these countries."

Brazilian Ambassador was speaking during a call on meeting with President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Secretary General UBG, FPCCI Zafar Bakhtawari. Olyntho Vieira said

that the BRICs have an important role in the future global economy and with it, South-South cooperation will also grow and international multilateralism will be strengthened.

He said that Pakistan was the largest market in terms of population in the Islamic world, which was important because of its geo-Strategic location and there was a need to strengthen the trade relations between Brazil and Pakistan.

The Envoy said that Pakistan and Brazil have vast trade and cooperation opportunities in technology and fruits.

China has over 850 million 5G users

ISLAMABAD (APP): Data from the China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) shows that, as of the end of February China's largest wireless carriers, have a total of 1.746 billion mobile phone users, of which 851 million use 5G, China Media Group reported.

The cumulative traffic of China's mobile internet reached 48.76 billion gigabytes in the last 12 months, which translates to a 16.6 percent year on year increase.

The communication industry was stable in the first two months of this year, and the total volume of telecommunications services maintained double-digit growth.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Minerals Sardar Sher Gorchani presides over the meeting of the department.

CM stresses for modern house infrastructure in urban peripheries

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur Wednesday said that housing infrastructure development in accordance with the contemporary requirements especially at the urban periphery is much needed.

He was addressing an important meeting regarding housing sector development held here at Chief Minister's House, with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair.

Important matters related to public and private-sectors new housing schemes came under discussion.

Provincial Minister Arshad Aiyub and Fazal Hakeem, Tehsil Chairman Mathra Inaam Ullah Khan, Administrative Secretaries of concerned department, Commissioner Peshawar, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

He said that his government, alongside taking other priority initiatives, was also committed for infrastructure and urban development, promoting investment and ease of doing business in the province. "Incumbent provincial government will not only encourage private-sector investment in the province but will also

extend its all-out support to investors interested in investment here". He remarked and directed the quarters concerned to take pragmatic steps for attracting and facilitating private-sector investment in the province.

Necessary amendments in the relevant legal framework be proposed for simplifying the entire process of investment so that maximum private investment could be attracted towards province, he directed.

He said that all these efforts would bring about positive change in the lifestyle of people by promoting conducive environment.



GILGIT: Secretary Home Gilgit-Baltistan Ali Asghar and Inspector General of Police Gilgit-Baltistan Afzal Mehmood Butt briefs members of the Women's Caucus of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly regarding Falak Noor case.

Minister for eliminating corruption, ensuring merit in govt offices

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru on Wednesday categorically said that the establishment of a just system based on justice and elimination of corruption is our priority.

"Solving people's problems is most important for us, so the officers should go to the field to solve people's problems".

He was addressing a meeting of officers of all provincial and federal departments in the conference room of Deputy Commissioner Mardan along with the elected members of the provincial assembly from Mardan district. Besides Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayaz Khan Sherpao, provincial assembly members Abdul Salam Afridi, Iftikhar Ali Mashwani, Tufail Anjum, Amir Farzand Khan, Tariq Mehmood Ariani, Zarshad Khan and ADC Samiur Rehman attended the meeting.

2nd meeting of KP cabinet on March 28

PESHAWAR (APP): The second meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet would be held on March 28 at 8:30 p.m. at the Chief Minister house, said a notification of the Establishment and Administration department.

The meeting would be chaired by the CM Ali Amin Gandapur while the cabinet members including 15 ministers, five advisors and three special assistants along with all the administrative secretaries have been requested to attend the meeting.

ATC extends interim bail of PTI founder in 3 cases till March 28

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder in three cases related to attacks on Jinnah House, Askari Tower, and the torching of Shadman Police station until March 28.

The court directed jail authorities to ensure the attendance of PTI founder through a video link on the next hearing.

Meeting to discuss reforms in Health Dept soon: Qasim Shah

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah held a meeting with a delegation from UNICEF at his office here on Wednesday.

The delegation, led by the Chief of UNICEF Peshawar Office, Radoslaw Rzechak was comprising of Dr. Inamullah, Health Specialist, Aien Khan Afridi, Nutrition Specialist, and Dr. Kamran Qureshi, Immunisation Officer.

During the meeting, the provincial minister expressed the need to form a team of health donors to ensure that reforms in the Health Department adhere to international standards.

He also mentioned that a meeting with donors and implementing partners with the Health Department would be convened soon to discuss future reforms in health and ongoing changes within the department.

He emphasized that the doors of his office were always open for donors and partners.

The delegation briefed the minister about ongoing projects in the province under UNICEF's cooperation.

They briefed him about the support provided to the Health Department so far.

It was informed that UNICEF is currently running two major health and nutrition programs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

LG&CD dept, SNG agree to prepare new models of solid waste management in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Department and the British agency Sub-National Governance (SNG) have agreed to employ SNG program in preparing new models of solid waste management in Punjab. In this regard, the annual working of the ongoing projects under collaboration of local government and sub-national governance was reviewed in the meeting chaired by Special Secretary LG&CD Asia Gul here on Wednesday.

Matt Clancy, Annual Review Lead from British High Commission Islamabad, Governance Advisor Naveed Aziz, Economist Tufail Khan and Program Officer Amala Najeb also participated.

During the meeting, it was decided to increase cooperation in more fields based on the annual performance. The team lead of British High Commission presented the agenda regarding the annual performance of SNG.

Special Secretary Asia Gul pledged that revenue generation plans will be prepared for other local governments on the pattern of Rahim Yar Khan. She emphasized that there is a need to take substantial measures regarding the self-reliance of local governments.

The parties also agreed to seek technical assistance on local government collection rights rules, budget and other regulations.

Special Secretary directed that two members from the SNG should be included in the Technical Working Group. She expressed satisfaction that the financial management system has been successfully implemented in local governments with the technical support of SNG.



LAHORE: Members of civil society are protesting against Israel's aggression on Palestine.

PHC directs KP Assembly speakers to administer oath to members on reserved seats

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Wednesday directed Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly to administer oath to the members on reserved seats and allow them to sign the roll of members in terms of articles, 65, 255 of the constitution.

In short decision, written by Justice S.M. Attique Shah, the speaker was also directed to allow and facilitate the members in casting their votes in the upcoming senate election scheduled for April 02, 2024. Earlier, the PHC reserved its decision on the petitions of oath taking of the members elected on reserved seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

A two-member bench comprising Justice S.M. Attique Shah and Justice Shakeel Ahmed heard the petitions of the elected members of People's Party, PML-N and JUIF on reserved seats.

JKLF strongly condemns attack in Bisham

MIRPUR (APP): The US-based acting Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF-Yasin Malik) Raja Muzaffar on Wednesday vehemently denounced the recent suicide attack in Bisham that resulted in the tragic deaths of at least six individuals, including five Chinese workers.

In a press statement issued from Dallas, Muzaffar expressed profound shock and sorrow, extending solidarity to both China and Pakistan in the wake of the appalling acts of terrorism and violence.

"It is deeply concerning and condemnable that Chinese and Pakistani individuals in Pakistan have been targeted by acts of terrorism. The people of Jammu and Kashmir State stand in solidarity with the victims and their families," emphasized Muzaffar, underscoring the urgent need for collective condemnation and unity against such attacks.

18th IATF meeting held at ANF Headquarters

RAWALPINDI (APP): 18th Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) meeting on the increasing trend of drugs in educational institutions and anti-narcotics measures was held here at Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Headquarters.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Major General, Abdul Moeed, Director General of ANF, in which senior officers of federal and provincial law enforcement agencies, intelligence setup and related government departments participated.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the supply of drugs in educational institutions and the measures taken by the management of the institutions to combat it.

A comprehensive briefing was given on the agenda by the representatives of the agencies and the departments concerned, in which the root causes of the problem and the gaps in the implementation of the policy were highlighted, while at the same time, the ways forward were also discussed. ANF presented a comprehensive plan for drug-free educational institutions which was discussed in the meeting. All the stakeholders agreed that concerted efforts should be made and a collective campaign should be launched to deal with the issue.

International News

18 Gazans die trying to collect airdropped aid

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Twelve people drowned and at least six were killed in stampedes trying to recover aid airdropped into Gaza, local authorities said on Tuesday.

The deaths occurred in the north of the besieged territory on Monday, with people rushing to collect packages dropped from planes along Gaza's Mediterranean coast.

The UN humanitarian office called on Tuesday for Israel to revoke a ban on food deliveries to northern Gaza from the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, saying people there were facing a "cruel death by famine".

Israel had earlier said it would stop working with UNRWA in Gaza, accusing the aid agency of perpetuating conflict. The agency said Israel told it that it would no longer approve its food convoys to north Gaza. Four such requests were denied since March 21, it said.

"The decision must be revoked," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) spokesperson Jens Laerke told a UN briefing in Geneva. "You cannot claim to adhere to these international provisions of law when you block UNRWA food convoys."

A UN-backed report this month said famine was imminent and likely to occur by May in northern Gaza. James Elder, spokesperson for the UN children's

agency Unicef in Gaza, described seeing "paper thin" children in a hospital in northern Gaza and incubators full of underweight babies from malnourished mothers.

"Tens of thousands of people crowd the streets," he told the same briefing, describing his latest visit to the north on Monday. "They make that universal signal of hand to mouth desperately asking and seeking for food."

"Life-saving aid is being obstructed. Lives are being lost. I saw children whose malnutrition state was so severe, skeletal," he said. Other aid agencies also deliver food parcels to northern Gaza, although UNRWA is the biggest provider.



Palestinians gather on a beach as they collect aid dropped by an airplane, amid the ongoing Israeli bombardment of the northern Gaza Strip.

Russia blames Ukraine, US for Moscow attack

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: The director of Russia's most powerful security agency said on Tuesday that he believed Ukraine, along with the United States and Britain, were involved in the attack on a concert hall just outside Moscow that killed at least 139 people.

Ukraine, which has repeatedly denied any link with Friday's attack, dismissed the Russian accusations as lies. Britain said they were "utter nonsense".

"We believe that the action was prepared by both the Islamist radicals themselves and was facilitated by Western special services," Alexander Bortnikov, director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), said on television.

"The special services of Ukraine are directly related to this," Bortnikov said, adding Kyiv had helped prepare radicals at an unidentified location in the Middle East.

When asked by Russian reporters if Ukraine and its allies, the United States and Britain, were involved in the attack on the concert hall, Bortnikov said: "We think that's the case. In any case, we are now talking about the texture that we have. This is general information."

Bortnikov, 72, who has served as head of the FSB since 2008, said Russia had yet to identify those who specifically ordered the deadliest attack inside Russia for two decades, but said that retaliatory measures would be taken. He offered no specific evidence for the claims, which hardliners in Moscow could use to justify an escalation of the war in Ukraine and to explain how Russian security services failed to prevent the attack.

Indonesia's losing candidates urge court to disqualify president-elect

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Indonesia's losing presidential candidates laid out their court challenge on Wednesday to last month's election, accusing the state of interference and urging a poll re-run and disqualification of the winner, Prabowo Subianto.

Former governors Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo said the resounding victory of Defence Minister Prabowo was helped by pressure on regional officials from a partisan administration and President Joko Widodo, with social aid used as a tool to ensure just one outcome. Anies said the election showed the world's third-largest democracy was at risk of sliding back towards its authoritarian past, and warned it could set a bad precedent.

"This practice will be perceived as normal, a habit," he told the Constitutional Court. The outgoing administration of Jokowi, as the president is widely known, has rejected accusations of election interference. Prabowo received nearly 60% of the votes, helped by the tacit backing of hugely popular former rival Jokowi.

He promised to maintain his predecessor's agenda of refurbishing infrastructure, adding jobs and developing downstream industries to better exploit Indonesia's vast mineral resources. Anies received a quarter of the vote and the third-placed Ganjar Pranowo took 16%. Challenges to election outcomes are typical in Indonesia and the court is expected to hand down its decision on April 22. Anies' team urged the court to disqualify Prabowo from the ballot, as a beneficiary of unfair practices, asking it to order Jokowi to keep neutral in any re-run of the election.



Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena and China's Premier Li Qiang during bilateral talks in Beijing.

Sri Lanka PM says China to develop strategic infrastructure

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Sri Lanka's prime minister said on Wednesday that China has pledged to develop the island nation's strategic deep sea port and the capital's airport after talks with his counterpart in Beijing.

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said China — the island's biggest bilateral creditor — would "assist" Sri Lanka's restructuring of external debt, a key condition to maintaining a \$2.9 billion IMF bailout. Beijing's position on debt restructuring has not been made public, but Sri Lankan officials have said China was reluctant to take a haircut on its loans but could extend the tenure and adjust interest rates.

Sri Lanka in 2022 ran out of foreign exchange to finance essential imports and declared a sovereign default on its \$46 billion foreign debt.

In Beijing, Dutch PM raises cyberespionage with China's Xi

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said he had discussed an incident of cyberespionage the Netherlands has blamed on the Chinese state during talks with President Xi Jinping on Wednesday.

Chinese state-backed cyber spies gained access to a Dutch military network last year, the intelligence agency MIVD said last month, calling it part of a trend of Chinese political espionage against the Netherlands and its allies.

It was the first time the Dutch publicly attributed cyberespionage to China, as national security tensions grow between the two countries. They are also in a confrontation over restrictions of exports of high-tech semiconductor equipment made by Dutch giant ASML to China.

Beijing routinely denies allegations of cyberespionage and says it opposes all forms of cyberattack.

US and British officials on Monday filed charges, imposed sanctions and accused Beijing.

Ukraine's president replaces a top security official

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has replaced one of the country's top security officials in a reshuffle that comes as the war has dragged into a third year.

Zelenskyy dismissed Oleksii Danilov, who served as secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, thanking him for his service in a video address late Tuesday.

7 Lebanese and an Israeli killed in an exchange of fire along the Lebanon-Israel border

Monitoring Desk
HEBBARIYE: An Israeli airstrike on a paramedics center linked to a Lebanese Sunni Muslim group in south Lebanon killed seven of its members early Wednesday and triggered a rocket attack from Lebanon that killed one person in northern Israel, officials said. The strike on the village of Hebbariye came after a day of airstrikes and rocket attacks between Israel's military and Lebanon's Hezbollah group.

Over 63,000 people dead or missing on migration routes

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: At least 63,285 people have perished or disappeared on migration routes around the world between 2014 and 2023, with most deaths caused by drowning, the UN migration agency said on Tuesday. A report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on its Missing Migrants Project showed that the majority of deaths and disappearances — 28,854 — occurred in the Mediter-ranean, followed by Africa and Asia. Nearly 60 per cent of deaths documented were linked to drowning, and more than one third of those identified were from countries in conflict, including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria and Ethiopia. IOM's data showed that the deadliest year for migrants in the last decade was 2023, when it recorded 8,541 deaths in part due to a sharp increase of fatalities in the Mediterranean.

Israel asks US to reschedule scrapped meeting on Rafah offensive plans

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Israel has asked to reschedule a meeting with US officials to discuss its military plans in Gaza's southern city of Rafah, a US official said on Wednesday, days after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu abruptly scrapped the planned talks.

Netanyahu called off a planned visit to Washington by a senior Israeli delegation after the US allowed passage of a Gaza ceasefire resolution at the United Nations on Monday, in a move that appeared to reflect growing US frustration with the Israeli premier. US officials said the Biden administration was perplexed by the Israeli cancellation and considered it an overreaction to the Security Council resolution, insisting there had been no change in policy.

On Wednesday, a US official said Netanyahu's office "has said they'd like to reschedule the meeting dedicated to Rafah. We are now working with them to set a convenient date."

PM reaffirms Pakistan's firm support to global efforts for peace, stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated Pakistan's firm support to global efforts for peace and stability without compromising on the security of its people, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Addressing an Iftar dinner hosted in honour of the members of the diplomatic corps at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the prime minister said 'as a peace loving nation, Pakistan desires peace with all and enmity with none'.

He reaffirmed that his government would follow this message of the founding fathers of the country.

The prime minister further said that constitution of Pakistan guaranteed equal rights to all citizens without any distinction.

To translate it into reality, different policies had been enacted and every community in Pakistan had the complete freedom to profess their faith and practice their religion, he added.

The prime minister also spelled out the priorities of the government and said that after conclusion of peaceful general elections, progress and prosperity of the people of Pakistan were at heart of the government's agenda.

They had a development oriented agenda to turn around the economic trajectory, he said, adding the government would strive to bring reforms, forge global partnership for shared development and attract foreign investment. He said that country's foreign robust policy continued to support global efforts for peace and stability. The prime minister further reiterated



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr. Qibla Ayaz along with others cutting ribbon at the opening ceremony of Quran Exhibition of Manuscripts organized by Cultural Consulate Embassy of I.R. Iran Islamabad and Iran Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies in collaboration with Safa Gold Mall.

Exhibition of rare, ancient manuscripts of Holy Quran inaugurated

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the blessed occasion of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, the three-day long exhibition of the rare and ancient manuscripts of the Holy Quran was inaugurated here at Safa Gold Mall on Wednesday. Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr Qibla Ayaz formally inaugurated the exhibition, organized by Iranian Embassy and Iran Pakistan Persian Research Center. The Chairman CCI appreciated the cultural initiative and described the enthusiastic participation of people in the exhibition of Quranic manuscripts as a manifestation of the long-standing friendship between the people of Iran and Pakistan.

He said Holy Qur'an is an essential axis for the

Final four candidates for Islamabad Senate polls unveiled

ISLAMABAD (APP): The returning officer revealed the final list of four candidates for the Senate elections from Islamabad.

The elections will be held for one general seat and one technocrat seat of the Senate on April 2.

Farzand Hussain Shah from Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) and Rana Mehmood ul Hassan from Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) are the candidates for the general seat. Ishaq Dar from PML-N and Raja Ansar Mehmood from Sunni Ittehad Council are vying for the technocrat seat from the federal capital.

Voting for the elections is scheduled to take place from 9 am to 4 pm, in the National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies in next month.

Steering Committee on 5Es Framework holds maiden meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Empowerment. The National Economic Council (NEC) approved the framework last year in June, following which the Planning Ministry expedited its implementation of the multi-pronged strategy to turnaround Pakistan and put it on a sustained growth trajectory.

The Committee decided to hold a One-Day "consultative workshop" after Eid-ul-Fitr in which officials from all the ministries and relevant stakeholders would be invited for deliberations to implement the framework, a news release said. Among others, the meeting was attended by senior officials of federal and provincial ministries and divisions.

The 5Es framework is centred on five key pillars including Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment and Climate Change, Energy and Infrastructure, Equity and



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal chairs the first Steering Committee meeting to implement 5Es development framework.

KPK Governor extends congratulation to Jam as fed commerce minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a gesture of support and goodwill, Haji Ghulam Ali, the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday congratulated Jam Kamal Khan as newly appointed Federal Minister for Commerce, highlighting the significant challenges amidst Pakistan's economic landscape.

Governor Ghulam Ali emphasized Jam Kamal's pivotal role in navigating economic complexities and fostering trade relations to spur growth, said a press release issued here.

Jam Kamal Khan acknowledging the task's magnitude, expressed commitment to revitalizing the commerce sector through collaboration and innovation. The collaboration between federal and provincial authorities signifies a collective resolve to address economic imperatives for sustained growth and prosperity in Pakistan, Jam Kamal said. The Governor invited the federal minister to visit KPK and engage with the business community.



ISLAMABAD: Governor KPK, Haji Ghulam Ali calls on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan.

Dr Abrar says: Over 2.6 mln out-of-school children in Pakistan question mark on education system

ISLAMABAD (APP): All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association (APPSCA), Central President Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain on Wednesday said there were more than two million and six hundred thousand children out of schools in the country, which is a big question mark on our education system. The government should take concrete steps to bring the out-of-school children to schools, whereas the role of private education sector was above all for the educational development, social and economic improvement of the country, Malik Abrar said in a news release.

The Association central president was addressing the first meeting of the newly elected central executive body. The first meeting of the newly elected central executive body of the Association was held here at the head office of the association.

ANF Academy organizes workshop on anti-money laundering, counter financing of terrorism

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Academy here on Wednesday organized a three-day Workshop/Seminar on Anti Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism.

53 Investigation Officers and Public Prosecutors from ANF and sister law enforcement agencies benefited from the Workshop/Seminar. Chief Instructor ANF Academy Sahib Khan highlighted the importance of the workshop.

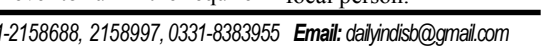
The experts from relevant stakeholders on Anti Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism, including Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), FATF Secretariat and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad were invited as guest speakers.

Honorable Commandant, ANF Academy Brigadier Ghazi Kamal Kiani graced the closing ceremony on the final day of the workshop/seminar.

Commandant ANF Academy appreciated the earnest efforts of ANF Academy to provide a platform for capacity building on money laundering and terrorism financing related issues relevant to various stakeholders.

He also highlighted Pakistan's efforts at policy, procedural and operational level to fulfill the requirements of FATF.

He underscored the importance of ANF as a vital link in "National Integrated Approach" being a key member of various national forums on money laundering and terrorism financing. As the task is multi sectoral endeavor, ANF is actively engaged with all stakeholders namely MoI, NACTA, FATF Secretariat, FMU, Police, FIA, NAB, CTD and FBR for information sharing, cooperation and provision of data through a desk involving a dedicated focal person.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi addressing seminar on Act for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace in 2010 organized under the aegis of Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA).

Federal Ombudsman says: Protection against Harassment of Women Act 2010 to ensure living without fear, discrimination

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has said that the Parliament adopted an Act for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace in 2010 with a view to implementing the relevant provisions in the Constitution and ensuring equal opportunity for men and women and the right to earn a livelihood without fear or any discrimination.

He was inaugurating a Webinar on Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace, organized under the aegis of Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), here Wednesday. It was attended by the members of the AOA besides the human rights practitioners and activists in addition to the members of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) and the Forum of Pakistan's Ombudsmen (FPO).

Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, who is also the President of the 47-member strong Asian Ombudsman Association, said that the Constitution of Pakistan upholds the principle of equality and dignity along with explicitly prohibiting gender discrimination in all spheres of national life. He further stated that the enactment of the relevant law against harassment in 2010 was followed by two more Acts of the Parliament in 2020 and 2022 respectively, expanding the scope of its legal provision to include men, women and transgenders alike. Enforcement of the Women's Property Rights was also brought within the purview of these legislative provisions, he added. He said that the Webinar is intended



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique presides over the meeting regarding Health Insurance Program working group at Department of Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education.

Ambassador highlights booming bilateral ties between Pak, Ethiopia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan in Ethiopia Atif Sharif has praised Pakistan's cordial relations with Ethiopia and shared that opening of Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad, inauguration of direct flights and rising trade flows were signs of booming bilateral relationship.

The ambassador underscored the historical significance of Pakistan Day and paid tribute to the founding fathers of the country.

He also reiterated Pakistan's principled support for right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir and Palestine facing brutal occupation.

He expressed these views during an Iftar-dinner reception which was held to celebrate the 84th National Day of Pakistan at the Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa, a press release, on Wednesday, said.

Over 170 guests including Ambassadors from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Kuwait, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Oman, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Chile, Finland, Spain, New Zealand and deputies Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad, inauguration of direct flights and rising trade flows were signs of booming bilateral relationship.

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Over 170 guests including Ambassadors from

CM Punjab launches safety wire guard campaign

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif launched Safety Wire Guard installation campaign to save the citizens from the bloody string under the "Safe Punjab" program, here on Wednesday.

The CM launched the campaign at Police Khidmat Markaz Abshar and directed the traffic police to ensure implementation on the Safety Wire installation. She distributed safety wires among the citizens to save them from the hazards of metal string and directed motor bike riders not to remove safety wire guard from their motorcycles.

The CM also visited the Abshar Khidmat Markaz, inspected various counters and reviewed the self-operating system. She met with the citizens present at the Abshar Khidmat Markaz and inquired from them about the provision of facilities.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Ammara Athar gave a briefing to the CM about the safety wires. She apprised that crackdown against the persons involved in the bloody metal string sport and kite-flying is ongoing. The CM was informed during the briefing that challans would not be imposed due to absence of safety wires on the motor bikes as it is highly essential for the protection of people.

Former Senator Pervez Rasheed, MPA Sania Ashiq, IG Police, CCPO, AIG Traffic and other officials were also present.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz has ordered for creating a new department for anti-narcotics, while chairing a review meeting on Department of Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control. She also ordered for clearing backlog of registration number plates of motor vehicles.

The CM said, "All resourceful people who are not paying tax currently should be brought into the tax net." She added, "Tax on houses needs to be rationalised." She directed the authorities concerned to prepare an assessment report on the difference of property tax due to mismatch in the properties' rental values and the DC rates.

Senior Minister reviews foreign funded projects

LAHORE: Senior Provincial Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that on the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, strict monitoring of development projects would be undertaken along with reviewing quality, speed and transparency for timely completion of these projects after every three months.

Chairing a meeting of Planning & Development Board here, she reviewed the progress on those development projects being executed through foreign financial assistance. Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman apprised the meeting that 11 development projects through the World Bank's financial assistance and eight through Asian Development Bank (ADB) fiscal assistance are underway in the Punjab province.

Senior Provincial Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb while addressing the meeting stated that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed to ensure emergency care in the Basic Health Centres along with provision of ECG and other medical facilities. Mariyum Aurangzeb added that the CM also aspires to further improve and enhance bilateral cooperation with the World Bank, ADB and other donor agencies.

Under the leadership of the CM, she said, Punjab would become more developed as well as prosperous through excellent planning and coordination. She called for expediting the pace of work to ensure implementation for the establishment of Social Economic Registry for the provision of statistics.



RAWALPINDI: President Ex-Serviceman Society General (Retd) Abdul Qayyum Malik is holding a press conference at Rawalpindi Press Club.

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