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Country's economic crisis to end if we all contribute, says PM Shehbaz

Ruling coalition endorses Zardari's nomination for presidency

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has affirmed his government's commitment to steer the country out of the current economic crisis through collaboration with all coalition parties. Speaking at a dinner given in honour of coalition parties and parliamentarians in Islamabad tonight, he emphasized the importance of the coalition government and stressed the need to honor the mandate bestowed by the people of the country.

Highlighting the sig-

nificant challenges confronting Pakistan, he likened them to the towering Himalayas but expressed confidence that with firm dedication and sincerity, these challenges can be tackled effectively.

All allied parties — including Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) — part of the coalition government in the Centre have agreed to support the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) nominee Asif Ali Zardari in the presidential election scheduled for March 9

(Saturday). The development came during a dinner hosted by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at his official residence in Islamabad for the representatives belonging to the allied parties.

The Istehkam-e-Pakistan (IPP), and other smaller parties are also part of the coalition government led by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). "Asif Zardari is the joint candidate for the slot of president. All allies will jointly make efforts to find out solutions to the crisis

[facing the country]," said PM Shehbaz while addressing the participants during the gathering.

The premier said Zardari will be elected as the president of the country in the next two to three days. PM Shehbaz said PML-N along with allied parties has secured a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, noting that he respected the mandate of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed independent candidates in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing parliamentarians at a banquet in Islamabad.

Sindh Assembly passes resolution to declare ZA Bhutto 'National Democratic Hero'

Resolution demands "Nishan-e-Zulfikar Ali Bhutto" for political workers who rendered sacrifices for democracy; Sindh CM tables resolution seeking "Shaheed" title for ZA Bhutto

KARACHI (Agencies): The Sindh Assembly on Thursday unanimously passed a resolution to declare the late former prime minister and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto a "National Democratic Hero", following a landmark opinion of the Supreme Court on the late premier's trial, sentence, and execution.

The provincial assembly, during a session today, unanimously welcomed the historical opinion of the top court in the presidential reference filed by former presi-

dent Asif Ali Zardari, seeking to revisit the death sentence of the first elected prime minister of Pakistan — ZA Bhutto.

A resolution was tabled by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah during today's session which stated the Supreme Court's opinion a "significant" move by acknowledging that "justice and a fair trial were not granted to Bhutto — who had been sentenced to death 45 years ago — in accordance with the constitution."

"This ruling highlights the importance of

upholding the principles of justice and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their status, are entitled to a fair trial by the Constitution.

It serves as a reminder of the need to address past injustices and uphold the rule of law in the pursuit of justice, and accountability," it stated.

The resolution also endorsed the "sacrifices of Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who sacrificed their lives to seek justice against the cold-blooded judicial murder of

Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto."

It also demanded the Sindh government to approach the Centre to declare ZA Bhutto a "National Democratic Hero" besides, "officially declaring Bhutto a Shaheed (martyr)."

Subsequently, it also demanded the provincial government to award political workers, and activists "Nishan-e-Zulfikar Ali Bhutto" for rendering sacrifices through their lives for democracy.

Speaking on the floor of the assembly, CM Shah stressed necessary amendments to

the concerned laws to avoid such "atrocities" in the future after the top court also admitted "flaws" in the Bhutto case which led to his death sentence.

He reiterated the demand, as per the resolution he tabled, to declare the late PPP founder a national democratic hero.

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Muhammad Farooq endorsed the resolution and emphasised that "democratic personalities should be given sentences on the basis of concrete evidence, not by force".



CM Murad Ali Shah tables the resolution to declare late PPP founder ZA Bhutto 'National Democratic Hero' in Sindh Assembly.

SJC declares Justice Mazhar Naqvi as guilty of misconduct

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

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

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

It said that The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) met on 29 February 2024 and 1 March 2024.

Allegations are leveled against judges of the supreme court and high courts and the same are publicized. A number of judges have expressed concern that

if they respond to such allegations the same may be construed as misconduct because the code of conduct, dated 2 September 2009 issued by the SJC, in its Article-V states that a judge should not seek publicity.

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

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

PM thanks world leaders for good wishes on assumption of office

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed gratitude to the world leaders for extending felicitations and prayers for him on the assumption of office. The prime minister took to X to thank the leaders including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Iranian President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi and Kenyan President William Ruto.

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

President Alvi appoints three judges

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

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

The president approved the appointment under Article 175 A of the Constitution. The president also approved the appointment of senior most judge Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar as Caretaker Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court.

The president made this appointment of the caretaker Balochistan High Court chief justice in accordance with the Article 196 of the Constitution. President Alvi also appointed senior most judge Justice Malik Shehzad Ahmed Khan as Chief Justice of Lahore High Court.

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

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

Miller made this statement while responding to a question from a Pakistani journalist on

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message of congratulations to the newly-elected Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on taking the oath of office for his second term.

"We, of course, welcome the (Indian) prime minister's statement. The United States values its relationship with both India and Pakistan, and we want to see them have a productive and peaceful relationship," Miller told his daily news briefing.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Ambassador of Iran, Reza Moghadam during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

Efforts afoot to strengthen city's infrastructure: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Deputy Mayor Karachi, Salman Abdullah Murad, Dil Muhammad and mayor Karachi special representative for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi were also present on the occasion.

He emphasized the importance of providing entertainment facilities like indoor games, cycling, and horseback riding in major parks.

The mayor also highlighted the presence of horses in Safari Park, which was initially considered a leisure activity for the elite but was now accessible to the general public.

Additionally, he mentioned the introduction of new lions and Puma, and the ongoing work to decorate and renovate existing parks throughout Karachi.

He said this after inaugurating internal roads, restaurants, horse riding, cafe, and a shooting range in Safari Park.

Barrister Murtaza said that the Pakistan Peoples Party had promised to revive Karachi's prosperity, and Bilawal Bhutto's vision was the progress of the city.

Significant developmental projects had begun in the city after the formation of the Sindh government, he added

Coalition govt will look to revive country's economy: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Thursday that the coalition government will look to revive the country's economy. Expressing his thoughts, the former foreign minister said: "Asif Ali Zardari will be the first civilian to become the country's president for a second term." Bhutto-Zardari resolved to "accomplish the mission" of the charter of the economy by joining hands with the allies.

"This time around, we will have more success than before," he added.

Nisar Khuhro, Mehtab Dahar, two others sworn in as MPA

KARACHI (APP): PPP Sindh president Nisar Ahmed Khuhro, former provincial Minister Jam Mehtab Dahar and two other members elected on reserved seats have sworn in as member of the Sindh Assembly here in assembly session held here on Thursday. Speaker Syed Awaiz Qadir Shah taken oath from the newly elected members.

Nisar Khuhro sworn in as MPA for 8th time after he was declared as returned candidate PS 15 Meero Khan by Election Commission of Pakistan.

PPP plans to hold celebrations of Zardari's win in Mar 9 Presidential elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Thursday decided to invite party workers to Lahore on March 9 to celebrate the expected victory of PPP co-chairman Asif Zardari in Presidential elections against his rival Mehmoood Khan Achakzai.



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

PM, CJCS exchange views on professional matters of armed forces

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamsah Mirza called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad Thursday. He congratulated the Prime Minister for assuming his office and expressed best wishes for him.

During the meeting, views were exchanged on professional matters of the armed forces of Pakistan and the security situation. Meanwhile former care taker Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani called on Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif Thursday.

PM appreciated the services rendered by Jilil Abbas Jilani as care taker foreign minister.

ZAB case should be taught as case study in law institutions: Kiara

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party leader Qamar Zaman Kiara on Thursday said that the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) case should be taught as a case study in law institutions.

He said this while paying tribute to the former Prime Minister of Pakistan ZAB at his hanging place, Old Jail after the Supreme Court of Pakistan reserved opinion on the presidential reference against his 'judicial murder' death sentence awarded to ZAB last day.

Kiara said that the SC by admitting the mistake in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's trial, had set a new precedent.

He said that ZAB's murder was "murder of Pakistan" and correction of that decision of sheer injustice by the apex court was a positive development.

Kiara said despite his judicial murder long ago Bhutto was still alive in the hearts of people. The top court today confirmed that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was sent to gallows in revenge.



KARACHI: Inspector General Police (IGP) Sindh, Dr. Riffat Mukhtar Raja presides over a high-level meeting regarding the control of law and order situation during the Holy month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak held at CPO Headquarters in Karachi.



LARKANA: Chief Justice of Sindh High Court Mr. Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi administering the oath to newly elected office bearers of High Court Bar Association on late last night.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Justice denied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Restoration, 2024

F.S. Aijazuddin

In 1660, Charles II returned to England to reclaim his throne, after years of exile in France.

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

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

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

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

destroys its soil destroys itself."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the 46 years from 1953 to 1999, the Indian Planning Commission had 21 deputy chairpersons. (The post of chairman IPC

devolved on the sitting prime minister.) In the final 15 years of its existence (1999-2014), it had only two: K.C. Pant and M.S. Ahluwalia. Pant controlled the IPC for five years, Ahluwalia for 10. He oversaw India's 11th and 12th five-year plans, covering the years 2007-2017.

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

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

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

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

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

Minerals economy

Umer Farooq

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

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

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

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

At the heart of every mining endeavour lies a stark reality: most projects fade away in the exploration phase, never reaching the stage of operation, let alone fruition. We are standing at the starting line. Let us value the economy of the Reko Diq project. Figures may vary, with some estimates of the project deposits at over \$100 billion — keeping today's prices in view. The project, with its promise of an aggregate turnover and exports of above \$2bn per year, 7,000 jobs during the peak construction phase, and a staggering annual output of 80 million tonnes of gold and copper concentrate, paints a picture of opportunity that invites

foreign interest. This comes with a projected \$7bn infusion of — mainly foreign — investment, with over \$250m already poured into exploration and feasibility studies. These numbers don't only speak to the potential of Reko Diq project and mining, they also whisper of prosperity and invite foreign interest in other minerals.

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

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

Commerce News

PM for removing hurdles to expedite privatisation process

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

"Obstacles in the process of privatisation be removed at the earliest so that the country and the

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

Reviewing the complete list and progress report of all the institutions involved in the privatisation process, the prime minister directed to submit the detail of actions

and goals with a clear determination of time frame. He also directed the Privatization Commission and the Ministry to present pending issues related to the privatization to the cabinet soon after its formation for timely decisions as there was no room for further delay.

Shehbaz Sharif, on the proposal of handing over the power distribution companies to the provinces, directed to constitute a review committee, which would

submit its recommendations to the prime minister. He made it clear that the responsibility of the privatisation process lied totally upon the Privatization Commission and the Ministry.

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

of clean drinking water is delivered directly to those reeling from the disaster.

Commenting on the effort, Syed Atif Raza, Chief Marketing Officer,



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

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

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

SECP notifies amendments in CRCs Rules 2019

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

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

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

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

Telenor Pakistan's first female sales trainee program Parvaaz begins

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

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

Held at the Telenor

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

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

This transformative program is set to offer

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

"The launch of the microfinance initiative for

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

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

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

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

Underground cabling project accelerates

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

Inaugurated in January 2024, phase I of the project includes shifting electric wires to the underground system in areas including Mall Road Service Road (North),

Hyder Road, Bank Road, Canning Road and partial areas of Kashmir Road.

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

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

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

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

He said that Pakistani women are talented who are working shoulder to shoulder with men in every field of life. He said that our religion Islam gave rights to women in the age of Jahiliyyah when

daughters were buried alive as soon as they were born. He added that example of Hazrat Khadija (RA) is before us.

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

Governor Punjab said

that as chancellor he has formed the Consortium on Women Empowerment in Universities with the aim of helping the government to formulate policies to educate and empower women and bring them into the mainstream of development. He said that empowered women are a source of positive change and play an important role in the development of society. He said that the purpose of celebrating this day is to salute all those courageous women who are contributing positively.



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

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

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

The meeting was attended by the deputy commissioners of South Waziristan Lower, Upper districts and elders of Mehsud, Wazir and Bukki tribes.

After a three-day discussion, both the tribes agreed to delineate the dam's boundaries in

accordance with historical maps from the British era. However, the Wazir committee emphasized extending the boundary beyond the British-era demarcation.

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

CJ Sindh Visited Session Court Shikarpur

Independent Report
SHIKARPUR: Chief Justice of Sindh Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi visited the District and Session Court Shikarpur on Thursday here and inaugurated the Library and Dispensary in its premises.

On the occasion, the District and Session Judge Manomal Khagajia and other Judges welcomed the Chief Justice of Sindh Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi for visiting District Session Court Shikarpur.

The CJ Sindh planted the tree in the Session Court Shikarpur accompanied with District and Session Judge Shikarpur

WASA chalks out desilting plan for all sub-divisions

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



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

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

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

Chairman SIC Sahibzada Hamid Raza has challenged the EC step for not giving them reserved seats in Punjab in LHC.

Sahibzada Hamid Raza has filed petition through advocate Ishtiaq A Khan. EC and all others have been made respondents in the petition. The petitioner

said in his plea that EC is neither a tribunal nor court. The reserved seats should be given to SIC in proportion to seats in the assembly. It was also said in the context of the petition that it makes no difference if SIC has contested election or otherwise. EC act is tantamount to make amendment in the constitution. EC decision is tantamount to transgressing its powers. The court should declare section 104 rule 94 of election act as against the constitution.

CJ, PHC visits blood donation camp

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

The chief justice also met the lawyers who donated blood. "I myself will donate blood and will come again after a while," the CJ said. A camp has been set up in the High Court for blood donation for thalassemia-affected children wherein a large number of lawyers visited.

Kidnapped man killed by the kidnappers

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

Conference on violent extremism concludes

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

On the commencement of the second day of the three-day workshop, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr Qibla Ayaz, enlightened participants on the inclinations towards religious seminars in Pakistan.

He emphasised the importance of discipline in both religious and modern sciences.

He advocated for initiatives post integration, ensuring mainstreaming of the tribal areas, and the establishment of health, education, and swift justice services, as well as the enforcement of law for the sustainable peace in the region.

According to him, extremist ideologies arise from deprivation and social alienation.

Project Director of Pir Roshan Institute North Waziristan, Dr Jamil Ahmed Chitrali stressed the need for fostering patience, tolerance, and reasoned dialogue within society.

Governor greets UET students for academic success

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali Thursday congratulated the students, parents, faculty members who achieved academic success in his address to the Annual Convocation-2024 of the University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar here.

Engineering education should be compatible with domestic and international industry and engineering and technology has made society faster, more integrated and made human life easier, Haji Ghulam Ali said.

He said young people keep their access to modern sciences including engineering, technology

and to deal with the challenges of the present era, there is a need for practical research in engineering, technology and other modern sciences.

Modern research in all fields can lead to progress, Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali said, adding, all educated youth, including the engineering department, are the bright future of the nation. Haji Ghulam Ali said that our youth are not less capable in any field than the youth of other countries.

At the end, the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali also held a meeting with the students in joy and appreciated them for their academic success.



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

Pakistan Army arranges educational trip for N Waziristan students

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

International News

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

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

Modi's government stripped the Muslim-majority territory of its special constitutional status nearly five years ago, splitting the former state into two territories directly ruled from New Delhi.

The move, widely welcomed across India, angered many in the densely militarised territory.

"I am working hard to win your hearts, and my attempt to keep winning your hearts will continue," the Hindu nationalist leader said at a public rally in Srinagar.

Modi also remotely

inaugurated a slew of development projects and government schemes for boosting agro-economy and tourism in Indian-occupied Kashmir and other parts of India.

The projects included new infrastructure around the revered Muslim shrine of Hazratbal in the city.

The visit comes ahead of India's national elections due by May, the first since the region lost its autonomy. The last local elections in Indian-occupied Kashmir were held in 2014.

Modi's government claims New Delhi's direct rule of Indian-occupied Kashmir brought about a new era of "peace and development", but critics and many residents say it heralded a drastic curtailment of civil liberties and press freedom.



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

After long tussle, Sweden to become NATO member

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

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson was visiting Washington where Secretary of State Antony Blinken will ceremonially receive the ratification documents after the hard-fought battle to secure the green lights needed from all NATO members.

Kristersson is likely later in the day to attend the annual State of the Union address by President Joe Biden, who has been struggling to persuade the rival Republican Party to approve new aid to Ukraine.

Sweden's blue and golden-yellow flag is expected to be hoisted on Monday at the Brussels headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance.

Russia has vowed "countermeasures" over Sweden's entry into NATO, especially if the alliance's troops and assets deploy in the country.

Sweden and Finland, while both militarily intertwined with the United States and members of the European Union, have historically steered clear of officially joining NATO, formed in the Cold War to unite against the Soviet Union.

Turning page on non-alignment - Sweden has not been involved in a war, including World War II, since the Napoleonic conflicts of the early 19th century.



Hezbollah supporters attend funeral of those killed in Israeli bombardment.

Hezbollah holds funeral for Israeli strike victims

Monitoring Desk
HOULA: Hezbollah on Wednesday held a funeral in southern Lebanon for two of its fighters and a woman, all members of the same family, who were killed in an Israeli strike the day before.

A photographer saw hundreds of people turning up for the funeral in Houla, near the border with Israel that has seen deadly exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and Israeli forces since the start of the Gaza crisis. Tuesday's strike killed a man and his son who were initially identified as civilian victims but later claimed by Hezbollah as fighters "martyred in battle". During the funeral, the coffins of Hassan Hussein, his wife Ruwaida Mustafa who was also killed in the same strike, and their 25-year-old son, Ali Hussein, were draped with the Hezbollah flag, the photographer said.

Cairo truce talks at an impasse as Ramazan looms

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

Negotiators from Hamas, Qatar and Egypt — but not Israel — are trying to secure a 40-day ceasefire in time for Ramadan, which begins next week.

Urging the Palestinians to accept the terms on the table, President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that Israel was cooperating and "a rational offer" had been made for a ceasefire in exchange for the release of Israeli prisoners.

Although Hamas is taking part, officials said a ceasefire must be in place before Israeli prisoners are freed, Israeli forces must leave Gaza and all Gazans must be able to return home they have fled. A source had earlier said Israel was staying away from the Cairo talks because Hamas refused to provide a list of prisoners who are still alive. Health officials in Gaza said the number of people confirmed killed in Israel's offensive had now passed 30,700. It reported 86 deaths in the past 24 hours and witnesses said the Israeli bombardments continued in parts of Khan Yunis.

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

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

The Oita District Court's ruling against the local residents worried about natural disaster risks allows the 30-year-old, 890-megawatt active reactor to continue operating.

Shikoku Electric had faced two court injunctions to stop the reactor in 2017 and 2020.

India gets its first underwater metro

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

Angry Polish farmers protest EU rules

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

"Behavior threatening the safety of our officers, including throwing cobblestone at them, cannot be ignored," police said on X, formerly Twitter. "A couple of police officers were injured. At the moment, a dozen people have been detained," they added.

Polish farmers have been blocking border crossings with Ukraine since last month to protest at what they say is unfair competition from goods entering from Ukraine.

Turkish Red Crescent sends its biggest Gaza aid shipment yet

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

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

China accuses US of using Philippines as 'pawn'

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

Manila summoned a Chinese representative on Tuesday after it said China Coast Guard vessels caused two collisions with Philippine boats and water cannoned one of them during a resupply mission.

China said it "took control measures" against Philippine ships' "illegal intrusion" into waters it claims, as well as accusing a Philippine ship of "intentionally" ramming a Chinese one.

"China urges the United States not to use the Philippines as a pawn to stir up trouble in the South China Sea," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told reporters when asked about the United States' condemnation of China's actions as "provocative". "The Philippines should not let itself be at the mercy of the United States," she added.

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

Murad announces Rs 22.5bn Ramzan package to help 60 per cent population of Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has announced a Ramzan package worth Rs 22.5 billion aimed at supporting 60 per cent of the population, particularly those who earn a minimum wage of between Rs 32,000 to Rs 35,000 per month. The targeted families will receive Rs 5000 cash each through banks. The mechanism for this will be announced within the next two days. Meanwhile, the CM directed all the divisional commissioners to start a crackdown against the hoarders and profiteers from today and report him. He took these decisions while presiding over a meeting regarding the Ramzan package and other arrangements, including price control. The meeting was attended by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, IG Police Riffat

Mukhtar, Secretary Finance Kazim Jatoi, Secretary Agriculture Aijaz Shah, Secretary Food Nasir Abbas Soomro, Adl IG Karachi Khadim Rind, Commissioner Karachi Saleem Rajput, all deputy commissioner of Karachi, representatives of KE and SSGC and other concerned. During a briefing to the chief minister, Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam informed that there were 4.5 million deserving families in the province who were earning between Rs 32,000 to Rs 35,000 per month or less. The CM said that these families constituted 60 per cent of the population, and he has decided to provide them with a Ramzan package of Rs 5,000 cash each. The total subsidy amount for this initiative is expected to be Rs 22.5 billion. The chief minister mentioned that a similar package worth Rs 15.5

billion was provided during the last Ramzan. Murad Ali Shah instructed the chief secretary to determine the number of eligible families to ensure that no one is left behind. He also directed him to talk to the banks to distribute the allocated Rs 22.5 billion. The Chief Minister directed all the divisional commissioners to start a crackdown against the profiteers and hoarders. "You have to maintain not only the price of the commodities and edibles but ensure a balance between demand and supply so that prices could remain under control. CM Shah instructed Commissioner Karachi Saleem Rajput to send his representatives - an Assistant Commissioner and a Mukhtiar - to be present at the time of the auction of vegetables and fruits at Subzi mandi and issue prices accordingly.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over the meeting on the Ramadan package and price control, at CM House in Karachi.

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

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has said Indian stubbornness is major hurdle on the way to success of SAARC due to which regional connectivity stand paralyzed. "We will welcome mediation from any friendly country for resolution of Indo-Pakistan conflict or Kashmir issue, this was said by Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch during her weekly press briefing here in FO Thursday. She said the presidents of China, Iran Tajak and Turkey have congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on assumption of office of prime minister. Prime ministers of Malaysia, Palestine, Afghanistan, Amir Qatar have

also congratulated PM Shehbaz Sharif. Indian PM Nerinder Modi sent message of congratulations to PM Shehbaz Sharif on social media. The cabinet has not been formed so far. The foreign policy will be evolved afterwards. As the world celebrates International Women's Day tomorrow, we would like to remember the strong women of Kashmir who have faced the brunt of Indian atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They have endured widespread devastation and confronted obstacles that impede their access to essential needs and their capacity to lead a dignified life.

Karachi medal with cash reward to be given to those rendered significant services for Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Karachi Metropolitan Corporation - KMC's General Council in a meeting on Thursday unanimously endorsed a resolution to honor those who have rendered significant services for Karachi with "Karachi medal with cash reward". The general meeting of the council of KMC was held in the council hall of the KMC head office under the chairmanship of Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab. Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad also participated in the meeting. During the meeting a total of four different resolutions were approved while one resolution presented was deferred till the next meeting. The resolutions which were passed unanimously

include the awarding of "Karachi medal with cash reward" to those who have rendered significant services for Karachi, renovation of the KMC parks and the installation of solar system and the tribute to the services of former member of Sindh Assembly Shaheed Abdullah Murad with praying for his forgiveness. A resolution passed by majority vote in the meeting included the approval to collect tax/fee on animals brought for sale in all cattle markets held in Karachi on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha 2024, while resolution about KMC hospitals up-gradation under public private partnership was deferred till the next meeting of the Council.

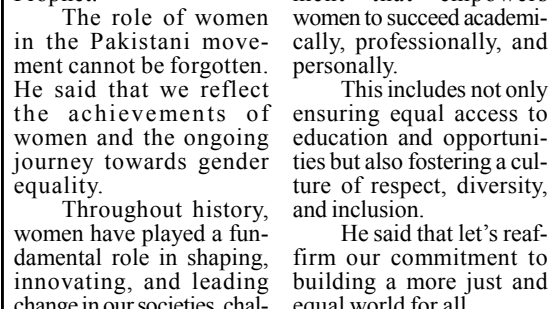


JAMSHORO: VC LUMHS Prof, Ikram Din Ujjan during visit stall during a ceremony to mark International Women's Day organized by LUMHS.

LUMHS holds seminar on International Women's day

HYDERABAD (APP): The Director Academics Liaquat University of Medical Health Sciences, Jamshoro on Thursday conducted a seminar on International Women's Day. On this occasion, LUMHS Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Ikram Din Ujjan said that our religion has given a high position to women. If we look at our history, first of all, we see the personality of Hazrat Khadija Al-Kubra, and how she helped the Holy Prophet. The role of women in the Pakistani movement cannot be forgotten. He said that we reflect the achievements of women and the ongoing journey towards gender equality. Throughout history, women have played a fundamental role in shaping, innovating, and leading change in our societies, chal-

lenging expectations, and breaking down barriers. However, despite progress, we have maintained gender gaps in various aspects of our lives, with women facing unequal opportunities, discrimination, and violence. It is imperative that we collectively address these challenges and work to create a more inclusive and just society. As a university community, we have a responsibility to foster an environment that empowers women to succeed academically, professionally, and personally. This includes not only ensuring equal access to education and opportunities but also fostering a culture of respect, diversity, and inclusion. He said that let's reaffirm our commitment to building a more just and equal world for all.



KARACHI: Women workers of Aircraft Maintenance at Sky Wings Flight Academy on the eve of International Women's Day, in the Provincial Capital.

Bilawal voices concern over missing of 14 fishermen

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday expressed deep concern over reportedly missing of 14 fishermen following a boat capsized in the open sea near Thatta, Bilawal, in a statement issued by the Media Cell of Bilawal House, urged the authorities concerned to urgently mobilize all available resources for the rescue of the missing fishermen. "My thoughts are with the affected families during this distressing time, and I fervently hope for the safe return of the missing fishermen to their homes," he added.

DIG Larkana Region takes notice of kidnapping

LARKANA (APP): DIG Larkana Atif Nasir has taken serious notice of the kidnapping of Mazda cleaner Muhammad Gola and injury to driver Abdul Haq Gola in Tehsil Tangwani Police Station of Kashmir District and has sought a report from SSP Kashmir. DIG Larkana said that the accused involved in the incident including the recovery of the kidnapped cleaner should be arrested.

Rangers arrest drug trafficking suspects

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police, in a joint intelligence based operation in Baldia Town Mawach Goth, arrested two wanted suspects, Attaullah and Adnan Khan, involved in drug trafficking and street crimes. According to the Rangers spokesperson on Thursday, the apprehension of the suspects led to the recovery of two pistols along with ammunition, drugs, police T-shirts, and fake police cards. Suspect Attaullah is the ringleader of an inter-provincial drug smuggling group, sourcing drugs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and distributing them in various areas of Karachi through accomplices like Adnan Khan and other underage individuals.

DAO ensures prompt retirement benefits

MIRPURKHAS (APP): District Accounts Officer Mirpur Khas, Naeem Liaqat Didar said on the instructions of the Accountant General Sindh, government employees retiring in the same month will receive 65% of their basic salary promptly. According to detail, this initiative aims to prevent financial challenges for retirees while the announcement came during his address at the monthly open court held in his office on Thursday. He highlighted the establishment of various facilities in the office, including the GP Fund Facilitation Cell, Pension Facilitation Cell, and RD Section, under a one-window system.

According to detail, this initiative aims to prevent financial challenges for retirees while the announcement came during his address at the monthly open court held in his office on Thursday. He highlighted the establishment of various facilities in the office, including the GP Fund Facilitation Cell, Pension Facilitation Cell, and RD Section, under a one-window system.

PM announces Rs 7.5 billion Ramazan relief package for poor people

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday announced a historic subsidy based Ramazan relief package 2024 of Rs 7.5 billion for the poor and middle classes. He was chairing a high level meeting on Prime Minister's Ramazan Relief Package and Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Ishaq Dar, Ahad Cheema, Shiza Fatima Khawaja, Romina Khurshid Alam and high ranking officials attended the meeting. The PM was given a detailed briefing on the Ramazan relief package. During Ramazan ul Mubarak, under the package more than 39.6 million families will be provided

edible goods on lower rates. Under the Benazir Income Support Programme, 88 percent of the eligible families will be given 19 edible items including flour, rice, pulses, ghee, cooking oil, sugar, sherbet and milk on lower than market rates. The rate of subsidy on these goods would be 30 percent which was more than the inflation rate. Subsidy of Rs 77 per kilo would be given on the 20 kilogramme flour bag and Rs 70 subsidy on every kilogramme of ghee. The Prime Minister's Ramazan relief package would be distributed among the needy families through 4775 utility stores across the country and the supply would continue till the end of Ramazan.



GARHI KHUDA BUX: Sindh Chief Minister, Murad Ali Shah along with others talks with media persons after showering rose petals and offer Fateha on the graves of Martyred Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Martyred Zulfikar Ali Bhutto held at Bhutto Mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bux.

Level playing field for all fertilizer manufacturers to encourage new investments, efficiency

LARKANA (APP): DIG Larkana Atif Nasir has taken serious notice of the kidnapping of Mazda cleaner Muhammad Gola and injury to driver Abdul Haq Gola in Tehsil Tangwani Police Station of Kashmir District and has sought a report from SSP Kashmir. DIG Larkana said that the accused involved in the incident including the recovery of the kidnapped cleaner should be arrested.

around 200 percent, the manufacturers on Mari network (FFC and Fatima) are still receiving gas on the subsidized price of PKR 580/mbtu. This discriminatory gas pricing in the industry has led to multiple prices in the market and will not help the Government achieve its fiscal objectives," he highlighted. The urea prices of FFBL, Engro Fertilizers and Fauji Fertilizer Company Ltd now stand at PKR 5,489 per bag, PKR 4,649 per bag and PKR 3,767 per bag, respectively. This price discrepancy has created an opportunity for the middlemen to profiteer by PKR 80 - 100 billion. A homogenous gas price will create a level-playing field for all fertilizer manufacturers in terms of input costs and help stabilize urea prices in the country.

DC lauds central jail Mirpurkhas reform initiatives

MIRPURKHAS (APP): Divisional Commissioner Faisal Ahmad Uqeli praised on Thursday the Central Jail Mirpurkhas administration's efforts in prisoner reformation, assuring continued support from both divisional and district administrations.

According to detail, he expressed appreciation for the positive steps taken by the administration of Central Jail Mirpurkhas towards the reformation of prisoners. He assured that both divisional and district administrations would uphold and continue the reformation program during his visit to the Central Jail.

Accompanied by Senior Superintendent Shahabuddin Siddiqui, Uqeli conducted an extensive inspection of various facilities within the jail premises; including the CCTV control room, school, and teaching center, computer, and electrician classes.



HYDERABAD: Police officials are restoring baton charge and arrest protesters during the protest demonstration of Jeay Sindh Mahaz for acceptance of their demands, at Hyderabad press club.

Academics talk on integrating sustainability into higher education at SMIU

KARACHI (APP): The distinguished academicians of Pakistan, Russia, USA and UK have shown their concerns on decreasing natural resources and increasing consumption of natural resources including natural gas, water and growing population. Speaking at a session on "Integrating Sustainability into Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities from the Perspective of Academicians" at Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU), they said the sustainability was much needed at all levels in for development. They suggested that each and every one should

contribute in sustainability in his/her field individually and collectively and sustainability must be made a part of curriculum of higher education also. Former Vice-Chancellor and present Pro-Vice Chancellor of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro Dr. Muhammad Aslam Uqali said that the resources we are using are no more sustainable and using these on the cost of our future generation. He said development has the cast to pay, as developing our countries we are not considering how we can provide sustainability to our re-

sources. He further said that we are looking to reuse and recycle the waste materials, but Germany has now gone to the zero waste. Dr. Uqali further said they believe that universities are agents of change, and these are producing human resources to the society, therefore, for sustainability capacity building trainings need to youth for sustainability. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro, ECO Science Foundation said people need to be educated about sustainability and they need to know what are the factors affecting our environment and what the skills and technologies.

DG Custom Valuation visits FPCCI Review time should be reduced & valuations updated: Atif Ikram

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that during the visit of Director General of Custom Valuation to FPCCI Head Office in Karachi, it has been agreed, in principle, to work together to reduce review time from 30 days to as low as possible to facilitate country's trade

production and exports; whereas, any delay in custom valuation results in unfair and undue demurrages and detention charges to the importers. These are financial costs and losses which can be avoided through better liaison between customs department and the business community, he added.



and industrial production - which is the cornerstone of any economy to create jobs, generate revenues and achieve economic growth. The business community would like to see review time vis-à-vis custom valuation come down to 7 days and we will make it part of FPCCI's proposals for the federal budget 2024 - 25 as well, he added. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh explained that fluctuations in custom valuation results in volatility and uncertainty in the industrial planning,

FPCCI Chief noted that technological advancements have changed the landscape of shipping and customs through digitalization; therefore, the need for upfront payments have also subsided globally. We demand customs department to look into the matter and provide relief to the business community of the liquidity blockages in these times where access to finance is severely restricted in Pakistan due to 22 percent key policy rate, he added.



KARACHI: Members of All Pakistan Clerks Association are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Karachi press club.

Experts, progressive farmers propose investment in seed research

HYDERABAD (APP): The experts and progressive farmers have proposed investment in seed development, research on new varieties, and monitoring of seeds. The experts expressed these thoughts while addressing the Farmers' Day organized by Seed Production and Development Center (SPDC) of Sindh Agriculture University, held at SAU Senate Hall, on Thursday. Highlighting the increase in poverty due to insufficient agricultural productivity, Pro Vice-Chancel-

lor Dr. Jan Mohammad Marri emphasized the necessity of providing farmers with better seeds, modern technology, and improved marketing access for better agriculture. Director General of Agriculture Research Sindh, Dr. Noor Mohammad Baloch mentioned the increased responsibilities of Sindh Agriculture University, Agriculture Research Sindh, Nuclear Institute of Agriculture, and the private sector for certified seeds following the inefficiency of Sindh Seed Corporation.

Kundi claims MQM to support Zardari in presidential election

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Faisal Karim Kundi has claimed that Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) would support Asif Ali Zardari in the presidential election. Addressing a joint press conference with PPP's Nadeem Afzal Khan here on Thursday, he expressed the confidence that Asif Zardari would secure over 400 votes in the election scheduled for March 9 (Saturday). Faisal Karim Kundi termed the recent alliance between Maulana Fazl ur Rehman and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) an unusual political collaboration. Maulana Fazl's electoral mandate was allegedly stolen in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but he was contesting election results in Sindh and Balochistan.

Six robbers held with arms after separate encounters

KARACHI (INP): Six robbers were held with arms and other valuables after separate police encounters in different localities of the metropolis on Thursday. According to details, the first encounter took place in Landhi No 3 where two robbers Shaukat and Naseeb were injured and held with arms after exchange of fire with police. Another robber was injured and held with arms, cell phone and cash in fire exchange in Sachal. Near Liaqatabad railway crossing a robber identified as Saddam was injured and held after an encounter.

TTP operatives arrested from Karachi's Kemari

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in a joint search operation on Thursday arrested two Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) operatives from Karachi. As per CTD, the joint Intelligence-Based Operation was carried out in different areas of Kemari. During the operation, the details of the suspects were verified through the Talash App device. During the operation, two TTP operatives Jameel and Ameer Hatim were taken into custody. The CTD spokesperson said the arrested were wanted in several heinous crimes. Earlier in January, Karachi police and Rangers conducted a joint targeted intelligence-based operation (IBO) and arrested a most wanted terrorist of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militant from Ittehad Town.