

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

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Have to obtain at least 33 votes in today's session for election: Sarfraz Bugti named new Chief Minister Balochistan unopposed; likely to be elected today

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Member Provincial Assembly from Dera Bugti, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has been named unopposed as the Chief Minister Balochistan on Friday.

The nomination of Sarfraz Bugti as Chief Minister was made by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) central leadership after consultation with the parliamentary members and coalition partners, as confirmed by the sources.

No other candidate submitted nomination papers except him, confirmed the Secretary Balochistan Assembly, Tahir Shah Kakar on Friday evening. The Secretary Assembly said that Mr. Bugti has

to secure at least 33 votes in the today's session to be elected as Chief Minister.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti was elected as the MPA on February 8, 2024 from PB-10, Dera Bugti. He would be formally elected as Chief Minister in the session of provincial assembly summoned at 11:00 AM today (Saturday).

Earlier, he submitted his nomination papers for the Chief Minister-ship in the provincial assembly secretary at the same afternoon.

At the outset, four nomination papers were submitted in the assembly for CM-ship of Sarfraz Bugti. The members of assembly belonging to PPP and PML-N were included

in the proposers and seconders in the nomination papers.

They were included: Nawab Sanauallah Zehri, Nawab Changez Marri, Sardar Sarfraz Chakar Domki, Mir Asim Kurd, Mir Zahoor Buledi, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, S.M Patrick.

As per the agenda issued by the Provincial Assembly secretariat, the members of provincial assembly would elect any of the members as Chief Minister.

It may be mentioned here that Mir Sarfraz Bugti has served as the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs after his election from Dera Bugti in 2013.



QUETTA: Unopposed elected Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti talking to media persons. PPP Provincial President, Changez Jamali, Nawab Sanauallah Zehri, Ali Madad Jatak and others are also present.

Ayaz elected NA Speaker, Mustafa Dy Speaker

ISLAMABAD (Online): Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has been sworn-in as the Speaker of National Assembly.

Outgoing Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf administered the oath to him. Ghulam Mustafa Shah won the election for Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly on Friday, defeating Junaid Khan.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq won the election to the office of National Assembly by securing 199 votes.

The candidate of Sunni Ittehad Council Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar bagged 91 votes.

After assuming the seat, Speaker National Assembly expressed his gratitude to the leaders and members of PML-N, PPP, MQM, PML (Q), IPP and Balochistan Awami Party for reposing confidence in him.

He assured he will take forward the proceedings of the house in accordance

with the rules and regulations.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the members will be given full opportunity to express their opinion on the floor of the house.

He said the doors of his office will always remain open to all the members.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said difference of opinion and criticism is essence of democracy, stressing, however, that it should be directed towards reforms and betterment of the country.

The Speaker noted that the current political tension is not in the interest of the country, emphasizing the need for building national consensus and a joint strategy to address the problems faced by the country.

He said both the treasury and opposition members are part of this house and it will be his effort to take them along.

Nawaz seeks Maulana Fazl's support for election of PM, President

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Nawaz Sharif on Friday visited the house of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazalur Rehman to seek his support for the election of the prime minister and the President.

He also requested Maulana Fazalur Rehman to join the government.

Some seasoned politicians of the PML-N and JUI including Ahsan Iqbal, Ishaq Dar, Rana Sanauallah, Khawaja Saad Rafiq and Maulana Ghafoor Hydari also participated in the meeting.

Apart from this, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali and Noor Alam Khan also attended the meeting.

BA session to be held today

Independent Report
QUETTA: The session of Balochistan Assembly is scheduled to be held at 11:00 AM today (Saturday).

The newly elected Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai would preside over the session.

As per the agenda of proceedings issued by the provincial assembly's secretariat on Friday, the newly elected members of assembly (if any) would take oath of the membership.

Moreover, the provincial assembly would elect the Chief Minister from any of the members under the constitution's article 130 (3)94 may be read along with the rule No. 15 of the Rules and Regulations of Balochistan Provincial Assembly 1974.

In addition to this, any member of the provincial assembly would table a motion for declaring the provincial assembly chamber (Hall) as the polling station for the Presidential Elections.

Three killed in rain-related incidents in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): At least three children were killed and one other sustained injuries as the roof of a house collapsed due to torrential rains in Kharan district of Balochistan.

According to PTV, the teams of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority, in coordination with the National Highway Authority, are fully operationalized on highways and at different points and sites to keep roads open with heavy machinery.

The Pakistan Army, FC Balochistan, and other departments are engaged in rescue and relief operations in the rain-hit areas and the dewatering of urban flood water from houses in Gwadar, Jiwani, Surbandar, and Ormara.

Pakistan Army and FC Balochistan, in collaboration with local administration, have been continuing relief operations in flood-affected areas of Gwadar, Jiwani, and Subandar.

Teams of doctors have been deployed in free medical camps to provide immediate health facilities to the affected.

Bugti pledges to resolve all issues of Balochistan through dialogue

Chief Minister-candidate thanks PPP's central and provincial leadership; vows to take all coalition partners along

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)-nominated Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has made a pledge to resolve all issues being confronted by the province through dialogue justice because the PPP believes in dialogue.

He also pledged to take all coalition partners in the future provincial government along, and so the opposition.

He said that the concept of democratic is not possible without opposition.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti was speaking to the media per-

sons as he reached along with the provincial president of PPP Balochistan, Mir Changez Khan Jamali and other party leaders including former Chief Minister, Nawab Sanauallah Zehri, Mir Ali Madad Jatak and others, for submission of the nomination papers in provincial assembly on Friday afternoon.

Sarfraz Bugti thanked the provincial and central leadership of PPP for nominating him for slot of Chief Minister.

He particularly thanked the central leaders Ashif Ali Zardari, Bilawal

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ISLAMABAD: PML-N Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif held a meeting with JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman and discuss political situation of country.

Ali Amin Gandapur elected 16th KP CM by two-third majority

PESHAWAR (APP): Ali Amin Gandapur, an independent member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, backed by Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) on Friday elected the 19th Chief Minister of the province by a two-thirds majority. Ali Amin Gandapur bagged 90 votes, while opposition nominee Ibadullah secured 16 votes under an open division of MPAs.

JUIF boycotted the election process. The meeting of the provincial assembly, which started one-and-a-half hours late on Friday, was held under the chairmanship of the newly elected Speaker Babar Saleem Swati.

The speaker told the House that four MPs Ali Amin Gandapur, Hisham Inamullah, Zariq Khan and Ibadullah had submitted their nomination papers for

the election of the Chief Minister yesterday, which were found to be valid, but the incumbents, Zariq Khan and Hisham Inamullah, later withdrew their nomination papers.

The speaker announced the results and declared that a total 108 members participated in the election of the Chief Minister. Ibadullah had the support of five members of the PPP, two of the PTIP and nine members of the PMLN, securing a total of sixteen votes. The number of members supported by PTI was 92, but Ali Amin Gandapur got 90 votes. In an unanticipated move, ANP member of assembly Arbab Usman participated in the voting process by refusing to accept the party president's decision and went to the lobby with the opposition and voted for Ibadullah.



PESHAWAR: Ali Amin Gandapur speaks on the assembly floor after being elected as Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, at KPK Assembly in Peshawar.

IHC awards jail sentence to DC, SSP ICT in contempt case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday awarded six month imprisonment sentence to Deputy Commissioner ICT Irfan Nawaz Memon while four month to SSP Operations Malik Jameel Zafar in a contempt of court case for issuance of MPO orders against Shahryar Khan Afridi.

The court also announced two month jail sentence to SHO Margalla Police Station Nasir Mehmood in the same case and, however, discharged SP Farooq Buttar from the charges.

The court suspended the sentences of the accused for one month and said that they would be sent to Adiala Jail if they failed to file the appeals against their convictions

within the said time. IHC's Justice Babar Sattar pronounced the 73 pages verdict which was earlier reserved.

The court also imposed Rs.100,000 fine against the each accused and ordered to distribute the amount among the affectees of MPO orders.

The court said that the amount was not a compensation to the petitioners rather it was just symbolic step. The order said that the executive powers were associated with the elected representatives of public and state would use these powers through them.

It said the three accused belong to bureaucracy who could use the powers only in limits of law

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ISLAMABAD: Raja Pervez Ashraf administered the oath from Sardar Ayaz Sadiq as Speaker National Assembly.

Governor asks concerned authorities to pay much focus on draining out of rain water from affected areas

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has asked the concerned authorities including Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and administration to pay much focus on draining and pumping out of the rain water from affected areas in Gwadar, Turbat and other areas of the province.

The Governor expressed concern over the critical situation in Gwadar, Turbat and other areas due to torrential rains.

He said that the situa-

tion has turned worse in Gwadar, Turbat and adjoining areas, therefore, there is a dire need to drain out the rain water from affected areas at the earliest.

He said that we could be able to shift the affected people to the safer places and provide relief to them after ensuring draining out of the rain water from rain affected areas.

The Governor expressed satisfaction over performance of PDMA, district administration as well as other federal and provincial government departments so far, and add-

ing he stressed to expedite the relief activities further. He praised the cooperation of Sindh government for provision of necessary machinery and other relief goods, and said that it is appreciable.

The Governor directed the concerned quarters to ensure presence of medical and paramedical staff in the rain affected parts of the province.

He also exhorted the volunteers and social activists to play their wholehearted part for safety of the women and children in the affected parts.



ISLAMABAD: A view of farewell ceremony organized at the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in honor of the Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi.

Rescue & relief activities continues: Situation in Gwadar critical due to torrential rains: DG PDMA

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Director General Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Jahanzaib Khan has stated that situation is critical in Gwadar due to torrential rains.

However, the rescue and relief activities are continued in the rain hit areas of Gwadar, maintained Director General PDMA

while speaking to the media persons on Friday. He said that 187 millimeter rain was recorded during last two days. The efforts are continued to drain out the rain water in the port city, he added.

The DG said that PDMA is taking part in the rescue and relief operation

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ECP announces Senate seat voting in Balochistan for March 14

QUETTA (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday declared that the voting for the three vacant Senate seats from Balochistan will take place on March 14, 2024, within the premises of the Balochistan Assembly.

The Senate seats from Balochistan have become vacant due to the resignation of Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Prince Ahmad Umar

Ahmadzai and Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari.

Muhammad Farid Afridi, serving as the Provincial Election Commissioner of Balochistan, has been designated as the returning officer for the Senate elections slated for March 14th.

As per the timetable, the Returning Officer is-

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SJC completes proceedings against Mazhar Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on Friday completed proceedings in Justice (retired) Mazhar Ali Naqvi's 'misconduct' case.

SJC headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Qazi Faez Isa recorded statements of all the witnesses in the case. The SJC will forward its recommendations to the President of Pakistan.

My lord statements of all the witnesses have been recorded, the additional attorney general of Pakistan said in the hearing. After the confirmation from the AAGP, the CJP said a letter was received from the former SC judge regarding skipping the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) proceedings.

Bugti visits Nawab Sanauallah's residence

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) nominated candidate for the slot of Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti visited the residence of Member Provincial Assembly and Chief of Jhalawan, Nawab Sanauallah Zehri here on Friday.

During the course of meeting, also present the leader of PPP and former Chief Minister, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo and others. They discussed about the matters about formation of government in Balochistan.



QUETTA: Director PDMA Amanullah Rind meeting with Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Khan Kakar.

ECP fixes March 9 for presidential election

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday announced the schedule for the presidential election to be held on March 9.

According to the schedule, the candidates may submit their nomination papers for the presidential office, until Saturday noon in Islamabad and four provincial capitals—Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar,

and Quetta.

Nomination papers will undergo scrutiny by the Returning Officer in Islamabad by 10 am on Monday (March 4). Candidates have the option to withdraw their nomination papers before the Returning Officer in Islamabad until noon on Tuesday, (March 5).

On the same day, the list of candidates will be made public.

JUI-F sticks to its guns on not becoming part of govt: Haideri

ISLAMABAD (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader Abdul Ghafoor Haideri said on Friday that his party was sticking to its guns on not becoming part of the coalition government.

Speaking exclusively with a private television channel, Haideri said: "Even Nawaz Sharif has not asked the JUI-F to change its narrative. Maulana Fazlur Rehman has addressed his concerns

during his meeting with Nawaz Sharif." "The final decision whether to agree with the talks with the PML-N or not will be decided following the consultations," Haideri said.

Separately, PML-N senior leader Rana Sanauallah said that the country faces severe hardships. Expressing his thoughts, the former interior minister said: "Maulana Fazlur Rehman is not angry at me.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai and Provincial Secretary for Information Imran Khan presenting appreciation certificate to Director General Public Relation Muhammad Noor Khetran.

Celebrating Japanese National Day: Governor Sindh extended felicitations to Japanese people on National Day

Independent Report
KARACHI: Mr. Hattori Masaru, Consul-General of Japan in Karachi, hosted a National Day Reception on February 28th to commemorate the 64th birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito. Around 500 guests from diverse backgrounds, including diplomats, prominent politicians and government officials dignified the event with their presence.

Chief Guest of the event, Governor Sindh H.E. Mr. Kamran Tessori, graced the occasion and extended felicitations to the Japanese people on their National Day. In his address, Consul General Mr. HATTORI

National Day reception in Karachi. He emphasized the rich history of diplomatic relations between Japan and Pakistan and highlighted recent initiatives aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation.

Mr. HATTORI underscored Japan's commitment to working closely with the newly elected government of Pakistan to strengthen ties and foster mutual development.

Mr. HATTORI highlighted Japan's long-lasting contributions to Pakistan's economy and emphasized school renovations and healthcare facility expansions in Sindh and Balochistan provinces, re-



welcomed the distinguished guests and expressed his pleasure in hosting his first

fecting the commitment to uplifting vulnerable communities.

30% surge in targeted ransomware attacks on cyber devices registered globally: Kaspersky

PESHAWAR (APP): Targeted ransomware groups have grown in numbers and are notorious for attacking governments, specific high-profile organizations or selective group of people within an organization.

Ransomware is a type of malware (malicious software) that prevents or limits IT device users from accessing their system, either by locking the system's screen or by locking the users' files until a ransom is paid, explains a press statement issued here on Friday by Kaspersky, a global cybersecurity and digital privacy company.

An in-depth research by experts show a surge in the number of targeted ransomware groups globally by 30% from 2022 to 2023, it added. In a recent research Kaspersky had shared that cyber threats in Pakistan has increased by 17% in 2023 as compared to 2022.

Targeted ransomware groups are very

persistent and have a huge appetite for extortion. For example, if a victim refuses to pay ransom, the cybercriminals often threaten to make the stolen data public, the statement added. In some cases, these cybercriminals also filed GDPR or SEC complaints in certain regions against the victim organizations for breaking data protection laws," comments Maher Yamout, Senior Security Researcher at Kaspersky.

Similar to regular businesses, targeted ransomware groups hire cybercriminals as employees to run extensive and intelligent operations to launch increasingly sophisticated targeted ransomware attacks.

Kaspersky researchers closely monitored about 60 targeted ransomware groups in 2023, compared to about 46 groups in 2022, and discovered incidents that indicated collaboration between targeted ransomware groups.

VC of UoT chairs 19th meeting of ASRB

Independent Report
QUETTA: Vice Chancellor, University of Turbat (UoT) Prof. Dr. Jan Muhammad chaired the 19th meeting of Advanced Studies and Research Board (ASRB) of UoT at the

mission, evaluation reports and Viva reports, meeting minutes of Graduate Admission Committee (GAC), approval of the result of Doctoral Qualifying Examinations (DQE), FGRC meeting minutes of the In-



video conference room of the University, Friday.

stitute of Balochi Language and Culture (IBLC) and Faculty of Science, Engineering, and IT.

The meeting was attended by the Deans, Director IBLC, Director QEC, Director ORIC, Controller of Examinations, and other members of the ASRB.

AJK observes World Civil Defense Day with renewed resolve

MIRPUR (APP): Like the rest of the world, International Civil Defense Day was also observed in Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Friday with the renewal of the pledge to frustrate every threat of the enemies of the motherland and remain shoulder to shoulder with the valiant armed forces of Pakistan in peace and war, when required.

Special ceremonies were held to mark the Day in all 10 districts of AJK, including the capital city of Muzaffarabad, as well as Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimbher, Rawalakot, and other stations under the auspices of the AJK Civil Defense Department to observe the day. In Mirpur, a major ceremony to observe the day was held under the auspices of the local Civil Defense

Department with the coordination of the District Administration.

"The commemoration of International Civil Defense Day every year renews the entry into force of the ICDI's constitution as an inter-governmental organization in 1972 with the two major objectives of serving for the safety and security of the masses both in peace and war times in case of any eventuality, besides other nation-building institutions", said speakers while addressing the ceremony held here on Friday to mark the day. Besides the civil defense volunteers, the volunteers of the popular 1122 rescue service, workers of the PWD, Highways, Electricity, Information, Health, and Education departments.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai in a group photo with Officers and Staff of Public Relations Department.

Huawei unveils comprehensive suite of intelligent solutions

ISLAMABAD (APP): During the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2024, Huawei announced a series of groundbreaking intelligent solutions to advance digitalization in various industries in the Middle East and Central Asia.

The company showcased its commitment to innovation and sustainability with a host of solutions designed to transform industries and enterprises worldwide said a news received here on Friday.

Li Peng, Huawei's Corporate Senior Vice President and President of ICT Sales & Service, said: "From the information age to the digitalization age, each transformation has brought huge possibilities. Now, we're entering an intelligent world, and the best

way to predict the future will be to create it. Huawei will double our efforts to offer more intelligent digital infrastructure products and solutions that accelerate the intelligent transformation of industries. We will work hard to be a reliable partner for others on this journey."

Particularly revolutionary is Huawei's Intelligent Factory Solution which is a significant step towards creating a better, greener, and smarter future. The IFS aims to enhance product R&D, production, and operation management through digital technology integration thereby revolutionizing manufacturing enterprises by providing intelligent products and solutions covering the entire value chain. By leveraging

technological innovation and industry expertise, Huawei aims to accelerate product development, improve production efficiency, and ensure sustainable enterprise operations.

From manufacturing and electric power to education and beyond, Huawei's new launches signify the start of a new era of intelligence, efficiency, and environmental consciousness, setting the stage for a brighter and smarter future.

In line with its commitment to digital transformation across various sectors, Huawei also unveiled the Intelligent Distribution Solution (IDS) focused on accelerating electric power intelligence. Collaborating with ecosystem partners, Huawei addressed challenges such as high line loss and poor reliability in the electric power industry. IDS enables systematic digitalization, transitioning electric power enterprises to open and evolvable architectures supported by cloud-edge-device technology. By successfully implementing IDS, Huawei is contributing to the global advancement of electric power intelligence, offering solutions to enhance efficiency and reliability.

Furthering its dedication to intelligent infrastructure, Huawei introduced the Smart Classroom 3.0 Solution during a session themed around accelerating education intelligence, fostering an intelligent and interactive teaching environment.

Ahsan says: Pak progress depends on political leadership

ISLAMABAD (APP): PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal said on Friday that it is the responsibility of political parties to work for the progress, prosperity, and development of the country.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he asked opposition parties to join hands for the country's prosperity, emphasizing mutual respect and cooperation the path to progress.

Highlighting the achievements of his government in the past, he mentioned the restoration of pace in the country and the end of load-shedding adding that no single party can resolve the current crisis.

Pak envoy presents credentials to President of Cabo Verde

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan Saima Maymunah Sayed on Friday presented her diplomatic credentials to President of Cabo Verde Jose Maria Neves at the Palais Presidenciel at Mindelo. During the meeting, they discussed trade engagement, pending agreements, and training for the diplomats of Cabo Verde, according to the embassy's press release.

During her visit to the city, the ambassador also held a meeting at the Northern Chamber of Commerce in Mindelo.

Rescue-1122 provided services to 150,507 people in February

LAHORE (APP): The provincial monitoring officer informed a review meeting on Friday that Rescue-1122 provided services to 150,507 people and responded to 155,558 emergencies across the province in February 2024.

He said that out of 155,558 emergencies, 103,443 medical emergencies, 33,863 were road traffic accidents, 3,868 delivery cases, 2,966 crime incidents, 1,909 fire incidents, 1,584 occupational injuries, 665 animal rescue, 38 drowning incidents, 25 structural collapses and 7,197 miscellaneous operations in Punjab.

He also said that 341 people died in 33,863 road traffic crashes in Punjab during the last month. Majority of traffic accidents 6,763 occurred in Lahore in which 38 people died. Similarly, 2,549 accidents took place in Faisalabad, 2,107 in Multan, 1,835 in Gujranwala, 1,286 in Sheikhupura, and 1,211 in Rawalpindi while the remaining 18,112 accidents took place in 30 districts of Punjab.



QUETTA: Residents of Kili Deba are holding protest demonstration against Israeli cruel and inhumane acts and express unity with the innocent people of Palestine, at Quetta press club.

NBF, PAL forge strategic alliance for book distribution

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Book Foundation (NBF) and Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) on Friday inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to revolutionize the distribution and marketing of literary works.

The agreement was signed at the Academy of Literature headquarters, sets the stage for enhanced accessibility to the Academy's publications through the extensive distribution network of the National Book Foundation.

The ceremony was attended by Dr. Najeeba Arif, Chairperson of the Academy of Literature, and Dr. Raja Mazhar Hameed, Managing Director of the National Book Foundation.

Dr. Najeeba Arif emphasized the significance of the agreement, foreseeing a

future marked by fruitful collaboration. The terms of the accord were characterized as fair and mutually beneficial.

She shed light on the Academy's core objectives, centered around promoting Pakistani literature, language, and the welfare of literary figures.

She highlighted the Academy's pivotal role in internationalizing Pakistani literature and writers, aiming to showcase the positive facets of Pakistan globally.

Dr. Najeeba Arif stressed the importance of literature in shaping a positive identity for Pakistan, both nationally and internationally.

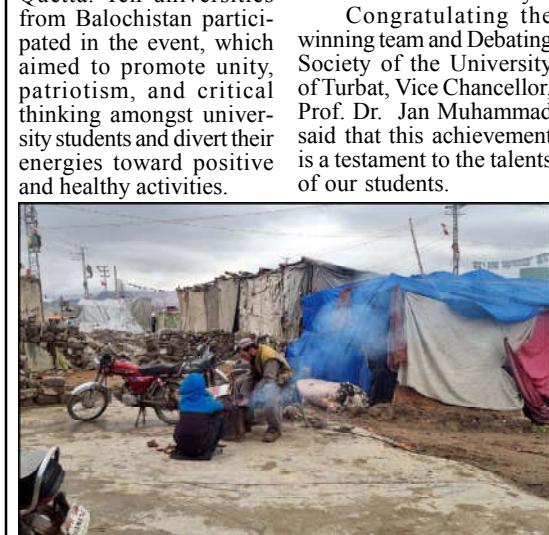
Expressing gratitude, Dr. Raja Mazhar Hameed extended assurances of wholehearted cooperation with the Academy of Literature.

UoT debating team secured third position in PUDC 2023-2024

Independent Report
TURBAT: The University of Turbat's team secured the third position in the Regional Round of the Pakistan Universities Debating Championship (PUDC) 2023-2024, competing in the English debate category. The Regional Round of PUDC was organized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) at Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering & Management Sciences (BUITEMS), Quetta. Ten universities from Balochistan participated in the event, which aimed to promote unity, patriotism, and critical thinking amongst university students and divert their energies toward positive and healthy activities.

Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar distributed prizes, shields, and certificates among the organizers and participants. The University of Turbat's team comprising of Mr. Mairaj and Ms. Iqra from the Political Science Department, and Ms. Javaria from the English Department showcased remarkable debating skills in the event. The winning team was awarded with certificates and a prize of Rs. 60,000, as well as a shield for the University.

Congratulating the winning team and Debating Society of the University of Turbat, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Jan Muhammad said that this achievement is a testament to the talents of our students.



QUETTA: People warm their hands on bone-fire to save themselves from cold waves during the winter season.

Bugti pledges..

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Bhutto Zardari, Faryal Talpur and others in this regard.

He said that he is going to submit his nomination papers for the CM-ship.

To a query, he said that his party believes in resolving issues through dialogue and as such any of the issues being confronted would be resolved through dialogue.

He also said that the employment and livelihood would be provided to the unemployed youth of the province. It would be our responsibility to stop violence in the province, he added.

Sarfraz Bugti also said that we would also go for reconciliation.

Earlier, the PPP's provincial president said that party leadership has nominated Mir Sarfraz Bugti for CM-ship of Balochistan for he and other leaders are thankful to them.

He said that we are bound to the party's decision, and would serve the province like "Jiala".

The PPP leader and former Chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Zehri said that we accept the party's decision (regarding nomination of Sarfraz Bugti for CM-ship) from core of our heart and would extend full cooperation to him.

Situation..

Continued from page 1

along with Pak Army, Navy, district administration and other institutions in Gwadar.

He informed that the people affected due to water have been shifted to the safer places in Gwadar.

To a query, DG PDMA said that rains would remain continued in the province during next couple of days.

The alert letters have been issued to the concerned district administration for tackling any emergent situation, he mentioned adding that we are in close coordination with the respective Deputy Commissioners.

While on the other hand, the control room is fully functional in the PDMA Quetta.

Earlier, as per the report shared by PDMA with media, more than 140 houses were completely or partially damaged during rains in Gwadar.

ECP..

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sued a public notice on March 1, with candidates scheduled to submit their nomination papers on March 2 and 3, from 08:30 a.m. to 04:30 p.m.

As outlined in the schedule, the list of nominees will be released on March 3. The Returning Officer is responsible for managing the candidates' nominations. The deadline for scrutinizing nomination papers is March 5, while the deadline for lodging appeals against the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers is March 7, 2024.

Pakistan's embassy in UAE launch book on Pak nuclear deterrence

ABU DHABI (APP): Pakistan embassy to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) organized an event on Friday to launch a book "The Security Imperative - Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence and Diplomacy", authored by Ambassador Zamir Akram, Pakistan's former Permanent Representative to United Nations in Geneva and Conference on Disarmament.

of diplomatic corps, academia and think tanks attended the event.

Speaking at the event, Pakistan's ambassador to the UAE, Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi appreciated book's contribution in highlighting Pakistan's security imperatives in the context of South Asia's strategic stability and need to maintain a credible minimum deterrence.

Ambassador Akram is an illustrious diplomat and has served at various multilateral and bilateral diplomatic assignments during his career spanning over more than three decades.

Ambassador Zamir Akram underscored that Pakistan's pursuit for nuclear deterrence stemmed from urgent security concerns rather than aspirations for prestige or great power status.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah meets American Ambassador Donald Blome at CM House.

Commissioner reviews arrangements finalized for PSL matches

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak here on Friday reviewed all the arrangements finalized for Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 matches.

Chairing a meeting he directed the authorities concerned to make best possible arrangements for PSL matches which would start from March 2 and continue till March 10 at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Engr. Aamir Khattak said that Rawalpindi would host nine matches of PSL, adding out of them, three would be day and six would be night matches.

In view of security, the Food Street at Double Road, closed on Feb 28 would be reopened on March 11.

He instructed the authorities to finalize foolproof security and other

arrangements for the security of the national and international players and the spectators.

The citizens should cooperate with the administration and the law enforcement agencies for the sake of national interest, he added. There should be no compromise in PSL arrangements, Engineer Aamir Khattak directed and informed that the road patch work on Double Road and Cricket Stadium had been completed.

All the street lights on the routes were also repaired. Foolproof security arrangements had been completed by the District Administration Rawalpindi, Engr. Aamir Khattak said.

5500 security personnel would perform their duty during the matches, the commissioner informed.



QUETTA: Provincial Coordinator MNCH Dr. Gull Sabeen sending the items for rain-affected people of various areas of Balochistan.

IHC awards jail..

Continued from page 1

for the protection of fundamental rights. These powers couldn't be used against citizens as weapons, the court said.

The verdict said that it also couldn't be happened that the officials violate the court orders and commit contempt. It said that apparently the MPO orders issued by administration in Islamabad and other parts of the country after May 2023 were comparable and seemed as the state policy.

The court said that there was need of further investigation in line of this policy which should be conducted under the supervision of executive. The copy of this judgment should be sent to the Prime Minister who would ensure that the state would use its powers only through the elected representatives.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon and SSP Operations Malik Jameel Zafar have filed intra court appeals against their convictions to Islamabad High Court (IHC).

Memon has stated in his appeal that he has issued MPO orders against

the petitioners in May 2023 on the information shared by SSP Operations. The IHC declared the detention orders of the petitioners as illegal on June 2, 2023. After this, the district administration Rawalpindi has issued several MPO orders which has no connection with deputy commissioner ICT.

He said that the single member bench didn't initiate any contempt of court proceeding against district administration of Rawalpindi. Irfan Memon further said that PTI founder was arrested on August 5, 2023 and on August 8, DC Islamabad issued detention orders on the basis of report of special branch. He said that contempt of court proceeding was started against him on issuance of 8 August's orders. He produced all record before the court while Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Special Branch also endorsed his statement in their reports before court.

He said that the single member bench ignored all statements and record, and convicted him in contempt case. He prayed the court set aside the judgment of single member bench and release him from the charges.

CORRIGENDUM

with reference to advertisement PRQ No.1443/16-02-2024 Published in newspapers dated 17-02-2024, wherein the quantity of said items are reduced from 100 to 50 quantity and also the date of opening will be at 07 march 2024 on the timing already published in the newspapers

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Ayaz pledges to conduct affairs of NA in accordance to constitution

ISLAMABAD (APP): Newly elected Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, pledged on Friday to conduct the affairs of the House in accordance with the constitution and the law.

Soon after being elected as Speaker of the Upper House of the Parliament for the third time, he expressed gratitude to his leader, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, for nominating him again, as well as to the President of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Mian Shabbaz Sharif, and his party colleagues for their trust in him.

He also thanked former President Asif Ali Zardari and the Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, for their support. He expressed gratitude to the leaders and members of other political parties in the assembly for their confidence in him.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq extended special thanks to the voters and supporters of his

constituency, NA-120, whose valuable votes enabled him to achieve this position. He also acknowledged the participation of Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar in the democratic process.

Highlighting the importance of both the government and the opposition in the assembly, Ayaz Sadiq said that the assembly is incomplete without their participation. He urged all members to refrain from personal criticism and emphasized the need for everyone to play their role in advancing democratic practices. Addressing the media, he stressed the significance of their role in completing the parliamentary process and ensuring transparency.

He underscored the importance of free media for a functioning assembly. Ayaz Sadiq reiterated that Pakistan's progress lies in the collective efforts of its people and called for unity in advancing the country's development.

He urged everyone to

come together to propel democratic process and contribute to Pakistan's prosperity. Malik Amir Dogar of the Sunni Ittehad Council congratulated Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for his election as Speaker for the third time. He alleged that rigging had occurred in the election. Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, the outgoing Speaker of the National Assembly, in his farewell address, said it was a historic moment of his life to have administered the oath to the members.

He added, "This House is a source of power for the people." He further said it was the responsibility of the members to find a solution to the problems the country was facing through mutual consultation. "People's eyes are on you. Your every action should be in the national interest," Ashraf suggested, adding that the responsibility of upholding the constitution rested on the members who have been appointed by the nation as guarantors.



ISLAMABAD: To Takeshi, Charge d'Affaires Embassy of Japan in Pakistan, together with Neven Syed, Director Sogetsu Ikebana Study Group, viewing Japanese Ikebana exhibition titled "Mughal Architecture Through the eyes of Sogetsu Ikebana".

COMSTECH, Huawei join hands to elevate cybersecurity proficiency of OIC nations

ISLAMABAD (APP): COMSTECH and Huawei have joined hands to elevate the cybersecurity proficiency of OIC nations, focusing on areas like security management, security incident response, vulnerability management, and staying abreast of emerging security technologies and requirements.

This partnership is reiterated during the high level meetings held at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain, said a message received here.

Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and Advisor COMSTECH, Dr. Syed Khurshid Hasnain met with the Cyber security and Privacy Protection team at the Mobile World Congress to chart out the future of the strategic collaboration.

COMSTECH, the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation

of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Huawei Technologies Pakistan recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to bolster national cybersecurity awareness and fortify the capabilities of OIC member states in cybersecurity.

COMSTECH's core mandate revolves around fostering cooperation among OIC Member States in science and technology. It aims to bolster capabilities through training in emerging areas, implementing OIC resolutions, and developing programs to enhance scientific capabilities for socio-economic development and rapid industrialization.

Set against the background of an increasingly interconnected world, securing systems and data has never been more crucial, as has the development of regulations, policies and capacity to manage the

same. Cutting-edge technologies like AI, quantum computing, and cloud infrastructures are rapidly evolving, presenting both unprecedented opportunities and complex cybersecurity challenges at the intersection of technology and policy.

The collaboration between COMSTECH and Huawei aims to elevate the cybersecurity proficiency of OIC nations, focusing on areas like security management, security incident response, vulnerability management, and staying abreast of emerging security technologies and requirements.

Huawei, renowned for its digital transformation, networking, and communication technologies globally, recognizes the pivotal role of the digital economy in fostering economic growth and sustainable development.



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest Prof Farhat Mujtaba awarding winning trophy of English Drama competition to students held at Margalla College F-7/4.

Notorious dacoit gang busted; booty of Rs 4.8 mn recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police Anti Robbery and Dacoity Unit (ARDU) police team arrested three wanted members of a notorious dacoit gang involved in numerous activities and recovered cash, batteries and truck worth Rs 4.8 million from their possession.

Following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police have intensified their crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate crime from the city, according to a press release issued here.

The Anti-Robbery and Dacoity Unit (ARDU) police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending three wanted members of a notorious dacoit gang in-

volving in numerous dacoit activities in various areas of Islamabad. The accused were identified as Javed, Anar Gul and Umair Khan.

The police team also recovered cash, batteries and a truck worth Rs 4.8 million from their possession. The cases were registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

Senior police officers directed the police officials for an effective crackdown against the accused involved in criminal activities and ensured the safety of lives and property of citizens on priority basis.

The citizens are urged to cooperate with the police and report any suspicious individuals or activities through the emergency helpline "Pucar-15" or at "ICT-15" mobile application.

CDA, PITB sign agreement for digitisation of official record

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) Friday signed an agreement to digitise all office working of the authority.

Under the agreement, a modern property management system will be introduced to computerise the property record of the citizens. According to the details, the e-office will be established as per the agreement between the Capital Development Authority and PITB. In order to ensure transparency in all information related to the property, it is possible to get rid of record tampering, including record missing or record leaking and the land or property record can also be saved in a modern way, an official of the CDA said.

"Besides, the aim of this initiative is to empower the Capital Development Authority (CDA) by equipping it with modern tools and technology in the realm of 'smart governance', the official said.

He said that by using the latest tools, the Capital Development Authority aims to enhance its decision-making process and ultimately achieve e-empowerment for the authority so that all citizens and applicants can be facilitated for speedy processing of their allotment.



ISLAMABAD: SAPM Jawad Sohrab Malik inaugurates the first ever Protectorate of Emigrants Office in the Capital City of Islamabad.

SAPM inaugurates the first-ever protectorate to promote legal migration

ISLAMABAD (Online): In a momentous occasion that signifies Pakistan's commitment to promoting safe and legal migration, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Jawad Sohrab Malik inaugurated the first-ever Protectorate of Emigrants Office here Friday. This initiative not only underscores the government's dedication to ensuring the welfare of its citizens seeking employment abroad but also positions Islamabad as a focal point for international collaboration on labor and

migration issues. The inauguration of the Islamabad Protectorate Office, closely following the recent opening of two protectorate offices in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), in Bagh and Rawalakot, further amplifies the government's efforts in streamlining migration services across the country.

These steps are reflective of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development's ongoing mission to facilitate the journey of Pakistani workers abroad, ensuring their rights

and well-being are prioritized at every stage.

During the ceremony, the SAPM highlighted the strategic importance of establishing the Protectorate in Islamabad, a city that hosts numerous international organizations, including labor and migration entities as well as foreign embassies.

"The inauguration of the Islamabad Protectorate Office is not just a milestone for our capital but a testament to Pakistan's resolve in championing the causes of safe and legal migration globally," Malik remarked.

DG stresses Civil-defense awareness, culture training to manage natural calamities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General of Civil Defense Niaz Muhammad Khan Friday stressed media for creating more awareness among the people about Civil Defense and to prepare volunteers and students who can help in case of any natural calamities.

In an exclusive interview with PTV news channel, on eve of world Defense day highlight the achievements of national disaster-prevention services and to raise awareness about importance of self-defense.

Civil defense training is a must for every man and woman, he said, adding, in

order to save their own lives and the lives of others. Civil Defense is the best organization for the service of the people, he said, adding, our volunteer training programs are free of cost where interested citizens specially youth can actively participate.

He demanded of the provincial and center government for equipping the volunteers with the needed facilities so they could perform their tasks more efficiently. Civil Defense staff and volunteers can took part in firefighting and first aid programs, he mentioned.

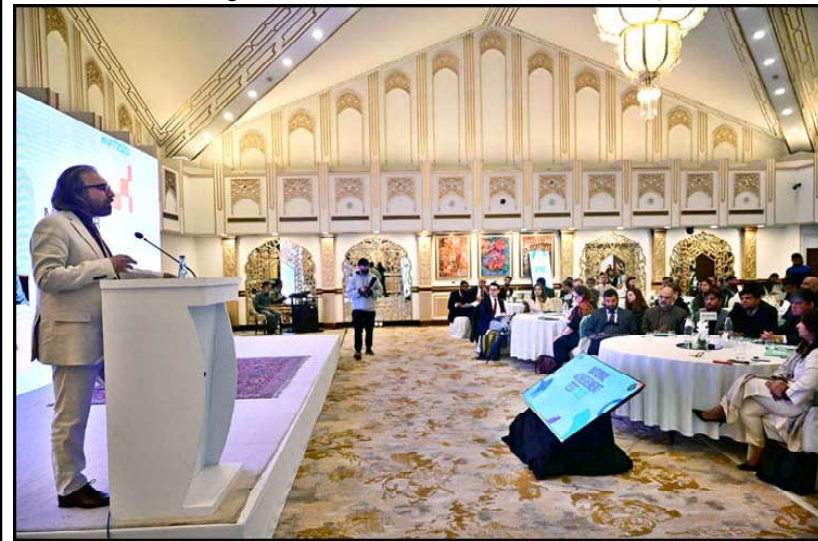
PTI wants to derail democracy: Atta Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Attaullah Tarar of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz alleged on Friday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's leadership wanted to derail democracy in the country.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he claimed that the PTI leadership had targeted defense institutions on May 9.

He further asserted that in 2018, the PTI government came into power through rigging.

Tarar also congratulated the newly elected Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary (MoFEPT) Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry addressing during the launching ceremony of National Achievement Test 2023 Assessing the Learning Environment organized by Pakistan Institute of Education.

Wet weather to continue; authorities on alert to avert damages

ISLAMABAD (APP): Heavy rain, with heavy snowfall over the hilly areas, lashed most parts of the country including the federal capital, as per forecast of weather experts, and continued since Thursday night with occasional gaps, turning the weather cold.

The heavy rainfall has not only suspended the daily life in various parts of the country especially in Sindh and Balochistan provinces but also causing inconvenience to the travelers.

In the federal capital, the rain of moderate to heavy intensity started during the midnight and continued till present (4:00 pm) with gaps. Considering the intensity of rainfall during this spell, the authorities have declared rain emergency in rain-hit areas of Sindh and Balochistan to avert mishaps.



ISLAMABAD: Lady Health Workers on the way under cover of umbrella to protect from rain while visiting home to home to administer polio drops to children at Tarlahi during anti polio campaign.

Court orders for medical examination of journalist

ISLAMABAD (APP): A local court on Friday ordered for medical examination of Journalist Asad Ali Toor, who was currently in custody of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

Judicial Magistrate, Muhammad Shabbir heard the application seeking medical examination of the said journalist.

The petitioner's lawyer adopted the stance that his client was observing hunger strike in custody of the FIA and prayed the court to shift him to the hospital.

However, the FIA officials informed the court that the petitioner was healthy and not having any sort of strike.

PDMA predicts snowfall, rain in Murree, Galiyat

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has predicted heavy snowfall and rain in Murree and Galiyat over the next few days, said its Director General Imran Qureshi. Talking to a private news channel, Qureshi urged the local administration to ensure safety measures to mitigate any potential risks. DG PDMA further appealed to tourists to cooperate with the administration during this time.

Saudi embassy, PBM join hands for Ramadan ration distribution, orphan care

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Saudi Embassy on Friday agreed to collaborate with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) to distribute ration bags during Ramadan ul Mubarak and take responsibility for the care of 100 orphans supported by Pakistan Sweet Home, with formal documentation to follow soon.

Managing Director of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Syed Tariq Mahmood Al-Hassan, visited the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad upon a special invitation from the Saudi Ambassador, Nawaf Al-Maliki.

The Saudi Ambassador warmly welcomed him during the visit. He congratulated Syed Tariq Mahmood Al-Hassan on assuming the position of Managing Director of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal.

In the meeting, the Managing Director of Bait-ul-Mal and the Saudi Ambassador reached an agreement to collaborate on initiatives within Pakistan's social sectors. The Saudi Ambassador assured the Managing Director of Bait-ul-Mal of seeking further cooperation for additional social projects in the coun-

try.

Previously, Saudi relief agencies and other social organizations from Saudi Arabia have collaborated with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal on numerous projects aimed at the welfare of the needy and vulnerable individuals. The Saudi Embassy in Islamabad has consistently maintained positive and fruitful cooperation with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal. The Managing Director of Bait-ul-Mal recognized the Saudi Arabian government's particular focus on global social sectors. He highlighted the enduring support between the two brotherly nations during challenging periods, emphasizing Saudi Arabia's continual prioritization of Pakistan's economy and social well-being. This commitment underscores the mutual trust shared between the two countries.

The Managing Director of Bait-ul-Mal acknowledged Saudi Arabia's keen interest in global social sectors. He emphasized the enduring support and prioritization of Pakistan's economy and social welfare by the two nations, reflecting mutual trust.



ISLAMABAD: Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Syed Tariq Mahmood-Ul-Hassan exchanging views with H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al Maliki Royal Saudi Arabia Ambassador in Pakistan.

Pakistan growing startup ecosystem driving innovation, entrepreneurship: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan in Czech Republic Ayesha Ali has said that Pakistan's growing startup ecosystem was driving innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in areas of e-commerce, fintech, and health technology.

The ambassador, in her address at a webinar on "IT Landscape of Pakistan" said that Pakistan was known for its vibrant IT outsourcing industry, offering cost-effective solutions in software development, digital marketing, and customer support, said a press release received on Friday.

The webinar was organised by the Embassy of Pakistan in Prague in collaboration with Czech Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Code District, a Lahore-based private software house, and attended by more than 50 companies, both from Pakistan and Czech Republic.

The ambassador said that Pakistan had become a preferred destination for IT

outsourcing services.

Ambassador Ayesha said that on the other hand, the Czech Republic was renowned for its advanced IT infrastructure, research and development capabilities, and expertise in areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and data analytics. By leveraging their respective strengths, Pakistan and the Czech Republic can explore opportunities for collaboration in several key areas, the envoy emphasised. On behalf of software houses from Pakistan, a presentation highlighting product and service range being offered to outsiders was given by CEO Code District, Ashar Samdani. From the Czech side, presentations were delivered by Miroslav Hazer, Director External Relations, Czech Confederation of Industries, Eva Rybkova, Chairperson of Czech Pakistan Business Council at the Czech Chambers of Commerce and Ahsan Aslam, Czech-Pakistan Chambers of Commerce.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belgium to Pakistan Charles Delonge and wife of French Ambassador Camelia Galey looks a photograph during photographic exhibition of Ferrante Ferranti at the Embassy of France, in the Federal Capital.

Ex-Ambassador highlights growing ties between Brazil, Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Ambassador Pedro Luis Rodriguez highlighted the growing relationship between Brazil and Pakistan, emphasizing significant strides made in fostering cooperation despite geographical distance.

In a special interview with PTV on Friday, he acknowledged the proactive measures taken by the Pakistani Embassy in Brazil, with both countries eager to explore various avenues of collaboration.

He praised the efforts of the Pakistan Embassy in Brazil for their role in bridging the gap between the business communities of Brazil and Pakistan.

Rodriguez underscored Brazil's expertise in agriculture and livestock

industries, noting a recent mission from Pakistan to procure cattle breeds tracing their lineage back to the region. Brazil's historical experience with food security and subsequent technological advancements in agriculture reflects Brazil's willingness to share its expertise with Pakistan to bolster food security efforts. Rodriguez emphasized the importance of leveraging technology and expertise to meet the food needs of growing populations, both domestically and through exports. Being the representative of Compo Brasil Fertilizantes Ltd (Brazil), he said that he was in discussions with Fongro Corporate Farming aimed at exploring opportunities for collaboration.

Saturday March 02, 2024

Starting over

The four provincial assemblies and the National Assembly have now been sworn in.

Though rigging allegations and various election-related irregularities and illegalities have cast a dark shadow, these assemblies will represent the people as they oversee the next chapter of this country's governance. There is no sugar-coating the fact that there are immense challenges before them, the realities of which will begin to dawn as the dust from the post-election chaos begins to settle.

The country is socially and politically fractured, its institutions in crisis, its coffers nearly empty, and its economy in a tailspin. The compact between its people and the state appears broken, its administrative apparatus seems to be malfunctioning, and its judiciary has never seemed as helpless as before.

Dependent on liquidity and capital injections from foreign lenders, Pakistan is in the unenviable position of being just a few missteps away from catastrophe. Yet if there is one thing the country has demonstrated time and again, it is that its people's will to endure is unconquerable. The citizenry will continue to hope that the men and women sworn in over the past week can steer the country back to stability and, hopefully, prosperity. Having taken their seats in their respective assemblies, they must now demonstrate that they are ready for the responsibility entrusted to them. The fate of millions depends on what path they take forward.

Given the difficult situation, both the government and opposition must resolve that their decisions will prioritise the public good over anything else. The government benches must realise that the public mood is extremely sensitive due to the unprecedented hardships the nation has suffered over the past two years. It must get to work at once on ameliorating economic conditions. The opposition benches must realise that they will need to constructively guide the government, especially towards achieving common goals. The question of legitimacy cannot be abandoned. Those who feel they were robbed of their mandate must continue their fight. They owe it not just to their voters but also to Pakistan's struggling democracy that they pursue the righting of the wrongs committed against it.

However, the focus of all stakeholders should remain on what future they want for the people of Pakistan. Lawmakers should use their presence in the assemblies to advance their legislative agenda and ensure that present and past mistakes are not repeated in the future. Much has been learned from political misjudgements of the past decade.

The time has come for the political leadership to demonstrate it is ready to move on. Parliament remains the most important forum through which a political negotiation on what tomorrow should look like for the millions who call Pakistan home can be held. Let the politicians figure out a way forward.

Faisal Bari

For a city this dynamic — it is the hub of commercial and business activity in the country — and for a city this size, Karachi's infrastructure is poor.

This is not just a problem for the people of Karachi; it should be of concern to every citizen in the country as Karachi generates a lot of business and commercial activity that fuels the rest of Pakistan too. The road network is quite broken, the transport infrastructure is not good or adequate, the water supply is poor, and water drainage is bad. A spell of rainfall of six to eight millimetres was enough to cause major hurdles for transportation for a good 24 hours and some parts of the city were flooded.

But the people of Karachi are extremely enterprising. They get on with doing what they need to and find ways and means to get by. The city keeps moving. Whether it is because they are self-reliant or whether they

have given up on the government, or both, or one because of the other, they move on, and the dynamism of the city and its people clearly comes through.

I have lived in Islamabad and mainly Lahore for most of my working life. Recently, I got a chance to spend a month in Karachi thanks to an invitation to be visiting faculty in February at the AKU-IED. A month was enough to fall for Karachi's charms.

Karachi is definitely more diverse in ethnic, religious and linguistic terms than Lahore. Maybe this explains why people are less interested in finding out who you are or where you are from. Female friends tell me that people stare at you a lot less in Karachi than in Lahore. There are sub-groups in Karachi and in-group and out-group issues are more significant here in many organisations, but for general interaction, across society, these matter less and allow more personal space to individuals.

Karachi diary

I felt that service culture and orientation is a lot higher in Karachi as well, compared to other parts of the country. From interacting with office staff to talking to sales/service personnel in shops and restaurants to dealing with people supplying all sorts of services, there is a higher level of professionalism and professional interaction. This was a welcome change from the laid-back attitudes I was used to in Lahore.

Services are not only better quality, they seemed to be a bit cheaper in Karachi too. I do not have a large enough pricing base here to go beyond my experience though. Could it be that keener competition is having an impact on quality and pricing? The Karachi market is bigger and more competitive for most services.

And, Lahoris will not be happy with me for saying this, but it applies to food as well. There is more variety in the types of cuisine available, and the quality/ price trade-off is

much better in Karachi than in other cities of Pakistan. This might have a connection with the size of the market and the competition issue as well. There is also a large middle-tier of restaurants that cater to middle-income groups. The price/ quality trade-off is quite good in this category.

Karachi has its very rich residents, of course. Being the business and commercial hub, the amount of wealth the top-income tier has is clearly significant. But the rich in Karachi are not as 'flashy' as they are in Lahore.

We do not see as many luxury cars, the houses are not as extravagant, and even dress and personal accessories, in public spaces at least, are not as 'in your face'. Is this a remnant of the fears about the law-and-order situation in the city, or are there deeper differences due to Karachi being a more multicultural and metropolitan city?

The sense of security in most people is still fragile and memories of a

different Karachi are not forgotten. The number of armed guards across the city must be a record, even in per capita terms, in the country. Mobile snatching and mugging has definitely been internalised by the people here.

Every person has a personal or secondary incident to tell in this regard. Some people carry two mobiles, some carry just a simple mobile so that the replacement cost is not high. People have stories where muggers have been 'nice' and have taken cash and phones but not the cards in the wallet. For some Karachiites, it has become a 'rite of passage'. What all human beings are capable of normalising!

Public spaces have a lot more women than in most other cities. But, interestingly, you see a lot fewer women driving motorcycles/ scooters in Karachi than in Lahore. Is this linked to law-and-order insecurities or is there another explanation? 'Women on wheels' type

of programmes might be needed to get a critical mass going.

There is definitely more philanthropy, and institutionalised philanthropy in Karachi than in Lahore or Islamabad. On every street you see boards for trusts and foundations doing something or the other in areas of education, health, food and/or social welfare. It is no wonder that a number of people mentioned that Karachi is a 'ghareeb parwar' city. It would be wonderful if a sociologist is able to study this phenomenon and come up with some explanations. And it is something residents of other cities could learn from. What a lovely, vibrant and diverse city Karachi is. There is always a lot going on in the city. If federal and provincial government could focus a bit more on the infrastructure and transportation provision, the heart of Pakistan would be able to pump a lot more life and activity for not just the residents of the city, but for the entire country. -- Courtesy Dawn

Dr Ayesha Razzaque

While Pakistan was still counting votes and figuring out who won these elections, Dubai was hosting the three-day World Governments Summit 2024 from February 12 to 14.

Speakers included heads of governments and international organizations, and leaders from business, media, and academia. The sessions covered a variety of areas, including government acceleration & transformation, development & future economies, future societies & education, sustainability, urbanization & global health. Also among them was artificial intelligence (AI) & the next frontiers.

On the latter theme, invited speakers included some of the most influential people in AI today. Key among them on Day 1 of the summit was Jensen Huang, the founder and CEO of NVIDIA which has a near monopoly on making the chips, Graphics Processing Units (GPUs), that are orders of magnitude more efficient (in terms of speed and power consumption) at accelerating the kind of computations needed for gam-

ing PCs, cryptocurrency mining rigs and AI applications.

In the current AI gold rush, if big-, medium- and small-tech companies are prospecting for gold, NVIDIA is the one selling all of them shovels. The session was hosted by UAE Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications H E Omar Sultan Alolaim.

The overarching theme of Huang's session was the democratization of AI. While AI is receiving increasing attention in Pakistan's policy circles and is seeing matching excitement on the domestic tech startup scene, this aspect of AI still receives far too little coverage. Huang's perspective is that most of the foundation models from big- and not-so-big tech companies making headlines for the last year are trained (developed) on 'Western' data and mostly English language text. A country and society's data codifies its language, culture, history, and societal intelligence and that will extend to AI models trained on it.

The Industrial Revolution was a transformation of raw materials into finished products, enabled early on

by the conversion of energy trapped in fossil fuels to steam and later to electrons moving through copper wires ('electricity'). The computer/internet revolution was powered by the invention of the microprocessor CPU which accelerated the transmission and processing of information. Now, the AI revolution, powered by the GPU which has accelerated computations by a factor of a million, is transforming data into intelligence that can be nearly instantly transmitted across the globe.

Other countries will not produce foundation models for the world's many countries, societies, and languages. Many countries now have data protection laws that make it difficult to impossible for national data to cross national borders which makes it hard for one country to develop comprehensive AI models for communities other than their own. That is why countries and communities need to become active participants in developing their own AI models.

So, what will that take? Huang's session at the WGS was also enlightening because he broke it down in quantitative terms. The

most elementary prerequisite for building artificial intelligence is the conversion of non-electronic literature, knowledge, and data to, and the collection of, electronic data.

This will require building out the internet and traditional data centers. Huang estimated the current install base of data centers at around \$1 trillion and that this will grow to about \$2 trillion in the next few years. When I heard that figure, my immediate thought was, 'What slice of that spending can a country like ours afford?' These new data centers will have to be built specifically to support AI workloads — which means they will have a lot more GPUs than previous ones.

NVIDIA's current generation top-of-the-line GPU for data centers is the H100 and a single one is priced at around \$30,000. Its next-generation GPU, the H200, is expected to be priced between \$25,000 and \$40,000, the range of a family sedan in Pakistan.

Facebook is using batches of 16,000 GPUs or more to train a single iteration of a Generative AI (GenAI) model which takes about one month. The ballpark figure for only one

such data center is around \$1 billion today. That is more than many IMF tranches Pakistan received in recent years and have kept it borderline solvent.

Data centres for AI workloads are also much more power-hungry and require two to three times the power of existing data centers. How many such data centres will we be able to afford? They say freedom is not free, and neither is the democratization of AI. Not being left out of the next technical revolution will require investments that are massive by our GDP's standard.

LeCun said that the current generation of GenAI models is being trained on "all the public data" available on the internet and yet, the models so produced are still not perfect. Do we even have enough data to train large language models in our local languages? The amount of published content in, electronic and non-electronic forms, of our local languages must pale in comparison to what is available in English. Without the infrastructure and requisite data, our technology sector will likely be confined to fine-tuning existing foundation models (in English) which will have limited impact in a country

where most of the population lacks the level of command over English to adequately express themselves to make a GenAI model do their bidding.

A few weeks ago, just before the elections, the PTI produced an audio address of Imran Khan delivering key messages to voters probably using key talking points and voice samples from past media appearances as input, and it seemed everyone temporarily lost their minds.

On the regulatory side, are the powers that be ready to put GenAI tools in the hands of everyone? It has been more than a decade since the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority embarked on an expensive and ongoing quest to develop the perfect internet traffic monitoring and censorship tools. Is a country that is in the habit of shutting down cell phone service, banning virtual private networks, and blocking or throttling Twitter for days on end ready for what widespread access to GenAI platforms might bring? I hope and pray that the AI revolution does not become the latest one in which we are relegated to end users of other people's labour. -- Courtesy TheNews

Resolving conflicts

Nikhath Sattar

More battles are fought within and between kith and kin, than between states and sworn enemies. It is a fact that the harmony that should ideally exist in families is often wrecked, mostly by petty but

also major issues such as inheritance, financial and marriage-related matters. Frequently, it is a mere difference of opinion that leads to family disputes, with parties refusing to understand and tolerate the diversity of views.

Disputes within families almost always lead to unhappiness, a disturbed life and grief over time. While matrimonial disputes occur frequently in our society, fights between siblings, children (mainly sons) and parents and close relatives too are common. Brothers have been known to break off ties with each other, and others either stop communication or play out a cold war that is both un-

healthy and painful, especially if the children of the warring parties are involved. Battles of ego, perceived slights and third-party gossip abound. Friends are prone to fighting over minor issues and too often a blossoming or fruitful relationship is laid to rest, because of minor misunderstandings.

Conflicts among people, including loved ones, are natural. Humans need to recognise their cause and manage them accordingly. If families are too often ripped apart by internal fighting, the angst and resentment of unresolved conflicts spills over to the larger society. Families are the building blocks of society and each is reflective of the other. Families need to develop the insight, wisdom and

willingness to address internal issues as they arise, before letting them become major battles. In both cases, it is important for an individual or a group of individuals to be able to play the part of mediator and settle controversies as they arise.

The ideal situation should be that the parties themselves recognise that their current relationship is unsound and harmful to themselves and their families and resolve their differences through dialogue and compassionate discussion. But where they feel that support of a third party is required, they may request a friend or an outsider to mediate. Mediation is highly recommended in Islam, as a desirable means of creating a peaceful environment and harmony among people.

The Quran and various ahadith underscore the necessity of making peace between people, particularly within families. "If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of God; but if it complies then make peace between them with justice and be fair: for God loves those who are fair (and just)" (49:9). Note the stress on justice and fairness. If anyone of the parties

is the aggressor, it would be unjust to make a compromise in his favour: indeed, he must be brought to understand the consequences of his transgression. And once he has realised his error, peace must be established in a fair manner. The parties must be reconciled in a way that yields a win-win situation for all, with no one having to give up

his legitimate right. If the weaker party is forced to give in, this would merely incite the aggressor to become even more intolerant and could lead to continued arguments.

Breaking off relationships between families is considered by God to be a deplorable act. Kinship is to be revered and upheld. Increasing intolerance in society, however, is causing families to split up, with close relatives unwilling even to face each other. Such a situation requires intervention by others who might be sensitive to the issues at hand and whom the parties trust.

Various strategies can be used effectively to resolve familial conflicts. The mediator should be patient, neutral, tactful and diplomatic and willing to facilitate dialogue as long as necessary. Reconciliation (sulh) is of prime importance and the parties concerned need to be reminded of the desirability in God's eyes of forgiveness and brother/sisterhood.

Even if a major injury has been caused, it is best, in God's eyes, to forgive and give up one's right to fight back (42:40). Similarly, avoiding a quarrel is best. According to a hadith (Sunan Daud), the Prophet (PBUH) said that a house in paradise is assured for one who avoids quarrelling even if he is in the right.

On the other hand, renouncing one's rights continuously in order to establish peace would go against the principles of justice, equity and fairness, qualities that the Quran has insisted upon. Such an attitude will merely increase the unjust acts of the aggressor who will become more emboldened. As Hazrat Ali has said: "The deservicer to ihsan (goodness) is exercising it in the wrong place." -- Courtesy Dawn

Ruling class normal

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Pakistan is on fire, and not in a good way. Interrelated demographic, ecological and economic crises are escalating. The incoming government owes its 'success' to the establishment and is considered illegitimate by large segments of the population, especially young people and the ethnic peripheries.

The PML-N and PPP will claim otherwise, but the widespread perception that the 'new' dispensation is effectively PDM 2.0 speaks for itself. The 'new' ruling coalition only symbolises the depth of our political crisis.

Given our own house is on fire, it is unsurprising that we have largely ignored the heroic political act by a US Air Force officer, Aaron Bushnell, who set himself ablaze in front of the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C. to protest the genocide in Palestine.

Bushnell's last words before his act of self-immolation were: "This is what our ruling class has decided is normal." Indeed, gruesome state-sponsored violence against oppressed peoples is routine in our world, from Palestine to Balochistan, Kurdistan to Senegal, and Burma to Yemen. The corporate media obliterated the histories of such peoples; state terror is called 'self-defence' while everything is legitimated if it happens in the name of 'national security'.

It is not just acute cases of systemic oppression that get muted. In Pakistan, even a hopelessly rigged election can metamorphose into a 'national security threat'.

After Feb 8, the caretaker government (read: establishment) has imposed a blanket ban on the social media site X. The post-poll rigging carried out to bring PDM 2.0 into existence was being ex-

posed with so much irrefutable evidence that our holy guardians decided it was time to do away with the niceties entirely.

This has been followed by dire warnings to journalists who transgress the boundaries of what is considered acceptable reporting, culminating in the arrest of Asad Toor by the FIA. In a nutshell, this is what, to paraphrase Bushnell's immortal words, Pakistan's militarised ruling class has decided is normal.

The PPP and PML-N continue to call themselves principled defenders of democratic principles but have remained mum about all of this. We should not be surprised. Long before Imran Khan and the PTI came to power in 2018, it was a PML-N government with Nawaz Sharif in the prime minister's office that introduced a parliamentary bill which made the notorious Peca into law. That was in 2015.

The very term 'ruling class' demands a reckoning with the fact that our predicament is beyond singular regimes, that things will not just get better because one segment of the bourgeoisie has replaced another in government. This is particularly true in our own context where virtually all bourgeois parties compete with one another for the establishment's favour — look no further than the PPP putting up Sarfaraz Bugti and Jamal Raisani in Balochistan. Speaking of which, has anyone in government bothered to provide relief to Gwadar, which is currently drowning due to torrential rain?

For those who still think that PDM 2.0 is an unqualified improvement upon Imran Khan and the PTI, it is worth noting that Joe Biden — who so many celebrated when he defeated Donald Trump in

the 2020 US presidential election — is, by current estimates, expected to lose to Trump in the election this year. Simply put, the evidence does not prove that the supposedly more 'liberal' (read: centre-right) segments of the ruling class resolve the inherent contradictions of contemporary capitalism and there-by red-uu-uce the appeal of their far-right competitors.

Anyone who actually cares about the mass of people in whose name all ruling class-ese act would be focusing on creating a pop-ular political narrative that does not leave us to 'choose' bet-w-eeen the centre right and far right. One can and should condemn the way the PTI has politicised young people in the digital age, but arm-chair criticism leads back only to the status quo of establishment-dominated musical chairs. Refusal to acknowledge even the possibility that those who have experienced state repression since April 2022 may coalesce around a new politics means, in effect, reinforcing the ruling class normal.

Bushnell chose his sensational act of sacrifice because the Israeli war machine and its backers, including Genocide Joe, continue to act unpunished, even in the face of online dissent at a global scale. For now, Trump is likely to be the major beneficiary of the disjoint between popular sentiment and the established institutional order.

Unless there is a wilful commitment to creating a substantive alternative on the left of the political spectrum, however far down the line, those who seek to draw attention to the fires engulfing humanity and nature will have only one option: to literally set themselves on fire. -- Courtesy Dawn

Punjab Governor says: Auditor General's Dept vital role in improving transparency, governance

Independent Report
LAHORE: A delegation led by Deputy Auditor General (Central) Tariq Bashir Chatha met Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore.

Faryal Magsi and Audit Officer (Admin) Syed Nafees Ahmed. Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab, Muhammad Balighur Rehman, said that the Auditor General's Department has an important role in improving transparency and governance in government departments. He said those departments that are not being audited for any reason should be made part of the audit system. Governor Punjab said that the use of modern technology including management information system is indispensable for

increasing the efficiency of the institution. Deputy Auditor General (Central), Tariq Bashir Chatha, told Punjab Governor in detail about the steps taken to improve the institution. He said that Auditor General's organization will review the legal organization requirements and make a strategy to include those departments in the audit system which are not being audited for any reason. He told the Punjab Governor that staff trainings are being conducted in the institution on a regular basis.



SEHWAN: Devotees playing Dhammal during 772 URS celebrations of Hazrat Usman Marwandi alias Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (RA) at Sehwan Sharif.

Punjab Ombudsman's 100% performance extends Rs 22bn benefit to govt, complainants

VEHARI (APP): Punjab Ombudsman's 100 percent performance in the year 2023 translated into an over Rs 22 billion benefit to the government and the complainants, said Advisor to Punjab Ombudsman in Vehari.

Office by making full use of Information Technology facilities and tools, and resolving problems of overseas Pakistanis on priority.

In a statement issued here Friday, Qazi Muhammad Ashfaq Qureshi said that Punjab Ombudsman Major (Retired) Azam Suleman Khan has submitted the annual performance report of the Ombudsman Office for the year 2023 to the Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rahman and the Governor has commended the Punjab Ombudsman on extending relief to the people on their complaints against provincial departments.

He further stated that writing decisions in Urdu language also drew commendation, making them easily comprehensible by ordinary complainants.

Ashfaq Qureshi said the Governor has also appreciated the Punjab Ombudsman on the digitalization of operations to improve complainants' reach to the Mohtasib

The Advisor said that all the 35139 complaints the Punjab Ombudsman office received in the year 2023 were resolved that translated into benefit worth Rs 22.504 billion to the government and complainants. He explained that 26,229 Kanal state land and private property, all worth Rs 15.834 billion was retrieved in the wake of enforcement of Ombudsman's decisions while financial benefit extended to the complainants was calculated at Rs 6.669 billion in 2023.

IGP discusses admin, professional steps about police working

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar chaired a meeting of the police executive board at Central Police Office here on Friday and discussed administrative and professional matters related to working of the police field formations.

ordered that proposals should be finalised and presented in the next meeting for taking a decision. He said the supervisory officers should complete all ongoing projects within the stipulated time line under personal supervision.

Senior officers presented suggestions and recommendations regarding administrative and policy issues. In the executive board meeting, various issues including Punjab Mounted Police Force, inclusion of Band Staff in Telecommunication Wing and Welfare initiatives were discussed.

Additional IG South Punjab, MD Punjab Safe Cities Authority participated through video link while Additional IG Special Branch Zulfiqar Hameed, Additional IG Punjab Sultan Ahmed Chaudhry, Additional IG Welfare Muhammad Riaz Nazir Gara, Additional IG CTD Waseem Sial, Commandant Punjab Constabulary, Imran Arshad, Additional IGP PHP Rao Abdul Karim, Additional IG Traffic,



FAISALABAD: Kashif Raza Awan, Additional Deputy Commissioner is leading a rally to mark International Civil Defence Day at Zilla Council Chowk.



PESHAWAR: Director General Audit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahzad Naeem presenting annual Audit Report of 34 Department for the year 2023-24 to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

KP opposition leader felicitates new KP speaker, Dy speaker, CM; assures support to House

PESHAWAR (APP): Leader of Opposition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Ibadullah on Friday congratulated the newly elected provincial assembly speaker Babar Saleem Swati, deputy speaker Suraiya Bibi and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

He assured full support in running the affairs of the House according to Pakhtun tradition, constitution and law. He deplored the incident during the first two-day of the assembly and said, "I complained that what happened in the House for two days was

very sad as the whole world witnessed how a respectable female member was abused and humiliated by throwing shoes and bottles at her."

Meanwhile, PTI supporters in the gallery interrupted the leader of opposition Ibadullah. The speaker warned the workers to listen to the assembly proceedings with patience, otherwise they would be expelled from the visitors' galleries.

Continuing his speech, the opposition leader said that every political party in the country faced victimization in the electoral history of

Pakistan. Ibadullah assured full cooperation to the provincial government for the betterment of this province, and called for united measures to provide relief to disasters including terrorists, floods, earthquakes affected people of KP. He pledged to support the government's efforts to fulfill all the promises made to the people of the tribal districts. "The youth should no more be misled. We have to work jointly for the betterment of the province under common responsibility and beyond political affiliation."

KPIC, TIP joins hands to promote good governance

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) and Transparency International-Pakistan (TIP) on Friday joined hands to promote good governance.

Chief Information Commissioner KPIC and Kashif Ali Sheikh, Executive Director, TIP-Pakistan in presence of other senior officers of the organizations.

Under the MoU, both the organizations will collaboratively work in mass awareness regarding Right to Information Act (RTI) and training of Public Information Officers (PIOs) for the smooth flow of public information.

Both the institutions look forward to a fruitful partnership that will promote citizen integration into public affairs.

The MoU was signed by Farah Hamid Khan,



Baba Ali Rehman, a retired Naib Qasid of Lahore High Court, award a certificate to a trainee of the Federal Judicial Academy.

US, Sindh govt complete Sindh Basic Education Program

KARACHI (APP): The United States, in partnership with the Sindh government, celebrated the successful completion of the Sindh Basic Education Program (SBEP) at a ceremony at High School Damba Village.

Ali Shah and Sindh Secretary School Education and Literacy Department Dr. Shereen Mustafa attended the closing ceremony highlighting the successes of the multi-faceted program. "High quality basic education positions every child for success, and we firmly believe that it is one of the best investments we can make in any country," Ambassador Blome said. "Let's continue to expand access to education, prioritize learning, and scale these reforms across Sindh and all of Pakistan so that all children can thrive."

The SBEP, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), invested \$159.2 million to build 106 schools and strengthen the education sector throughout the province. U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome, former Minister for Sindh Education and Literacy Department Syed Sardar

Vocational center starts career counseling session in Larkana

LARKANA (APP): Brilliant Institute of Information Technology & Vocational Training Centre, in collaboration with the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Human Resource, Research & Development Board, organized a comprehensive career counseling session aimed at enhancing the career development prospects of trainees enrolled in Phase-XV of skill development training. The event, held at Brilliant Institute of Information Technology &

Vocational Training Centre Larkana, witnessed the participation of esteemed guests including Mr. Allah Dino Khuhro, District Monitoring Coordinator by BBSHRDB, who delivered an insightful address elucidating the vision and mission of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed regarding BBSHRDB. Khuhro also provided valuable insights into various methodologies available to trainees post-course completion.

CM pays surprise visit to low-lying areas, New Secretariat

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah started his Friday morning with surprise visits to check dewater machinery in the low-lying areas and the attendance of officers at the New Secretariat.

The Chief Minister of Sindh recently visited low-lying areas in District South, including underpasses, Khaliquzaman Road, Aiwan-e-Saddar Road, the road between Sindh Secretariat and High Court, II Chundrigar Road, and other areas.

During his visit, he noticed that in some areas, the machinery of the water board and other suction

machines were not installed. As a result, he directed Commissioner Karachi to ensure that the machinery was deployed and to report back to him. The Chief Minister paid a visit to the New Secretariat and was welcomed by the Chief Secretary, Dr Fakhre Alam. During his tour, Murad Ali noticed that some secretaries were absent from their offices at 9:30 a.m.



LAHORE: Deputy Auditor General (Central) Tariq Bashir Chatha presenting the Accounts and Audit Report of the Punjab Government for the year 2023-24 to Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

IGP discusses admin, professional steps about police working

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar chaired a meeting of the police executive board at Central Police Office here on Friday and discussed administrative and professional matters related to working of the police field formations.

reviewed progress of various development projects, welfare measures of the force. The IGP ordered that proposals should be finalised and presented in the next meeting for taking a decision. He said the supervisory officers should complete all ongoing projects within the stipulated time line under personal supervision.

Senior officers presented suggestions and recommendations regarding administrative and policy issues. In the executive board meeting, various issues including Punjab Mounted Police Force, inclusion of Band Staff in Telecommunication Wing and Welfare initiatives were discussed.

Additional IG South Punjab, MD Punjab Safe Cities Authority participated through video link while Additional IG Special Branch Zulfiqar Hameed, Additional IG Punjab Sultan Ahmed Chaudhry.

Sindh Police holds meeting to address rain emergency, ensuring public safety

KARACHI (APP): Under the chairmanship of Inspector General Police (IGP) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, a high-level meeting was convened to tackle the escalating rain emergency and to reinforce peace and security measures. Attended by key officials including Additional IGP Welfare and Works, DIGPs of CTD, Special Branch, Welfare, Establishment, RRF, IT, South and AIGPs, the meeting aimed to strategize responses to the pressing challenges posed by the

rainfall. Additional IGP Karachi and Zonal DIGPs Karachi and Rangers officers joined the deliberations via video conferencing.

The IGP Sindh emphasized the imperative for cohesive collaboration among officers, the Sindh government, and local administrations to effectively address the rain crisis. Instructions were issued for heightened visibility of police and traffic personnel on the streets during adverse weather conditions.



PESHAWAR: Ombudsperson KP Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Ms. Rakhshanda Naaz addressing during One-day seminar on the "Findings of the Gender Analysis of Health and Education Sector Plans".

3 injured in jubilant firing, 2 held after CPO notice

FAISALABAD (APP): Three people including two minor children sustained multiple injuries due to jubilant firing while the police arrested two accused after the City Police Officer (CPO) took notice. A police spokesman said here on Friday that Muhammad Iqbal of Jameel Town, Ghulam Muhammad Abad, 5-year-old Ibrahim of Tariq Town, Kokianwala, and 6-year-old Fatima of Najaf Colony received bullet injuries as some people resorted to firing into the air during different functions and ceremonies.

'Eat Safe Kids Campaign' launched across Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority, in collaboration with the School Education Department and Special Education Department, Friday launched a province-wide 'Eat Safe Kids Campaign' in private and public schools to promote nutritious eating habits from childhood.

Muhammad Asim Javaid, Secretary School Education Muhammad Ahsan Waheed, Additional Secretary School Saba Adil, Additional Secretary Special Education Khadija-tul-Kubra, Special Education DG Anna Munir and Additional Director Generals of PFA.

The 'Eat Safe Kids Campaign' consisted of various interactive activities, workshops, and educational materials to engage children and make learning about healthy eating fun. Children will learn about the importance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins in their diet.

Minister says: Pharma industry should focus on Africa, Central Asia & Afghanistan to boost exports

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr. Nadeem Jan has said that despite the short time, he made strenuous efforts to bring reforms in the health sector. He said several steps were taken, including the digitization of DRAP, a new policy for the prices of medicines, and the search for new markets to

promote exports. Talking to President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and other members of chamber during his visit to ICCI on Friday, he said that Pakistan's pharma sector has the potential to expand the country's exports. The industry should focus on exports to countries in Central Asia, Africa, and

Afghanistan. Dr Nadeem Jan said that it was his mission to bring reforms in the health sector. He said that he worked day and night for the country's pride he took practical steps to increase pharma exports for the betterment of the economy and took the Pharma Park project forward. He said that this project is of key importance to the industry. This project will promote

the pharma industry. He said that the business community should play its full role in the health sector. The services of the business community for the poor and backward people in hospitals should be exemplary. He said that philanthropists and investors in society should cooperate with the government in providing healthcare facilities to poor patients.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi inaugurating the building Materials Exhibition and Conference organizers by the Institute of Architects of Pakistan at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



SARGODHA: Vice Chancellor University of Sargodha Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas visiting different stalls during Research Arena Exhibition held at University of Sargodha.

Pakistan needs to tap into \$4.92 trillion D-8 market: Atif

Independent Report
KARACHI: Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has represented Pakistan in the all-influential General Assembly meeting of D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (D-8 CCI). He apprised that the meeting was also attended by Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Nigeria. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh expressed his vision that Pakistan must tap into the export market of D-8 countries with a combined GDP of \$4.92 trillion; and, tapping into these markets has the potential to correct Pakistan's regional trade deficit for a number of reasons: (i) Pakistan has friendly ties with the D-8 members (ii) we have geographical contiguity or land-based access with some member countries (iii) land-based routes can be used for transshipment (iv) shipment to these countries takes lesser time and costs (v) with intra D-8 trade at merely 5 percent, there are

low-hanging fruits to be grabbed in a short-span of time. FPCCI Chief informed that General Assembly meeting of D-8 CCI discussed in detail roadmap and strategy for intra-alliance trade promotion; plan of activities for next three years; arbitration system; D-8 Preferential Trade Agreement (D-8 PTA); visa-related issues; transportation costs; value chain economic fruits; regional connectivity; currency swap agreement; barter trade and D-8 Halal Exposition in Indonesia. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh noted that the D-8 bloc represents more than 5 percent of global GDP, which makes the alliance a significant one for the D-8 countries in particular and the entire region in general. He explained that only if we can capture the D-8 market in value-added textiles; IT & ITES services; sports goods; rice, fruits & vegetables.

Diplomats from various countries appreciates business opportunities with Pakistan

KARACHI (APP): Diplomats of Germany, China and Oman while crediting the performance of the caretaker government and security agencies for holding peaceful election, expressed hope that democracy will strengthen in Pakistan, the future of Pakistan is, however, in the hands of the youth. They were talking to journalists at a dinner hosted by prominent businessman and Honorary Consul of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire Fazal Karim Dadabhy in honor of Dr. Rudiger Lotz, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany at Dadabhy residence and was attended by former caretaker provincial information minister Ahmed Shah, Mohammad Iqbal Memon, Home Secretary, diplomats from Iran, Qatar, Thailand, Arif Suleiman, Dr. Mohammad

Altamash, Kaleem Farooqi, Farooq Afzal, MPA Barrister Halar Wasan, famous anchor Rida Saifee, Urooj Malik, businessmen, industrialists and notables of the city. The Consul General of Germany added that trade between Pakistan and Germany is strong and balance is in favor of Pakistan, however, it needs to be further improved. The volume of mutual trade is 4 billion Euros and will expand further. Consul General of the people's Republic of China Yang Yundong said that China is a close friend of Pakistan. There will be no difference which political party is in power, he expressed his best wishes to the new government. Consul General of the Sultanate of Oman Engineer Sami Abdullah Salim Al-Khajari said that there were many opportunities for trade.



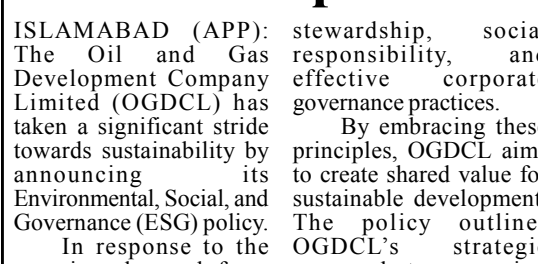
FAISALABAD: A farmer busy in a field in the city.

Pak welcomes resumption of CASA-1000 activities in Afghanistan by WB

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Government of Pakistan has welcomed the recent announcement by the World Bank that, among other initiatives in support of the people of Afghanistan related to its "Approach 3.0", the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project ("CASA-1000") in Afghanistan will be resumed.

The request was made in December by all three neighboring countries participating in the project. "This announcement marks a significant step forward in the region's commitment to energy collaboration," said a news release issued here on Friday.

As a result, the Government of Pakistan is pleased to announce it has joined the other neighboring countries—the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan—in signing a Joint Declaration to thank the World Bank for its timely response in approving the "ring-fenced" resumption of construction in Afghanistan.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor hold umbrella as displaying fruits on his pushcart attraction for customers at a road during rain.

OGDCL rolls out its ESG policy to promote sustainable practices

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has taken a significant stride towards sustainability by announcing its Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) policy. In response to the growing demand from investors and stakeholders for transparency and accountability in ESG factors, OGDCL's Board of Directors released its comprehensive ESG policy statement on February 27, 2024, said a news release. The OGDCL ESG policy underscores the company's commitment to environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and effective corporate governance practices. By embracing these principles, OGDCL aims to create shared value for sustainable development. The policy outlines OGDCL's strategic approach to managing environmental impacts, fostering social inclusivity, and upholding high standards of corporate governance. OGDCL view the ESG Policy as a crucial first step in embracing more sustainable practices and becoming a responsible, adaptable, and resilient organization.

Weekly inflation up by 1.27 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.27 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on February 29, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 319.30 points as compared to 315.31 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the

Pakistan's pearls, precious stones see 47% increase in China's Market in 2023

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's pearls and precious stones saw a 47% increase in exports from Pakistan to China in 2023, signaling not only the growing demand for these natural beauties in the Chinese market but also the potential of Pakistan's mining and gemstone industry. Karim Jan, a Pakistani gem and jewelry exporter to China, told China Economic Net that Pakistan's northern and northwestern areas were rich in mineral resources,

boasting gems like vibrant topaz, deep red rubies, green emeralds, and sapphires. Extracting these gems is a delicate process, relying on the skilled hands and age-old techniques of local miners and artisans. Pakistan can further improve by utilizing Chinese skills. "As Chinese consumers increasingly seek out rare and high-quality gemstones, Pakistani gems, known for their unparalleled beauty and craftsmanship, are finding a prominent place in this competitive landscape. The reciprocal nature of this growing trade relationship promises a mutually beneficial future for both nations, with Pakistani gems shining brightly in the vast Chinese market," he stated. According to sources from Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan's Pearls and Precious Stones exported to China crossed \$4.34 million in 2023, whereas last year it was \$2.95 million.

1st Pakistan Financial Literacy Week from March 4

KARACHI (APP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will organize 1st edition of Pakistan Financial Literacy Week 2024 under the theme of "Digital Bankari- fori aur asaan" from March 04 to 08, 2024. Governor State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmad will inaugurate Pakistan Financial Literacy Week (PFLW) 2024 on Monday, March 04, 2024 at SBP Karachi, said a statement issued here. Activities of Pakistan Financial Literacy Week will continue till March 08, 2024 and will comprise of both on-ground and virtual activities for participation across the country. During the week, commercial banks and SBP field offices will hold 150 Financial Literacy Camps in 60 cities across the country.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, Clemens Schulte, APL Qingdao, Maritime Gisela, Al-Fuwairit and African Baza, carrying Containers, Palm oil, LNG and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Elengy Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Friday. Meanwhile another ship 'Eagle' scheduled to load/offload Rice is also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day. A total of twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, APL Qingdao, Clemens Schulte, Sunny Bay, Chemroad Aqua and Dravin left the Port on today morning, while four more ships, Fast, Maritime Gisela, Xin Han Tong and Chemtrans Baltic are expected to sail on same day. Cargo volume of 236,341 tonnes, comprising 201,430 tonnes imports cargo and 34,911 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,697 Containers (1,574 TEUs Imports).

CPI inflation decelerates to 23.1 % in February

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation came down to 23.1 percent during the month of February 2024 as compared to 28.3 percent recorded during January 2023, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Friday. According to PBS data, the CPI based inflation during the same month of last year was recorded at 31.5%. On month-on-month basis, no change observed in February 2024 as compared to an increase of 1.8% in the previous month and an increase of 4.3% in February 2023. The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) inflation on YoY increased to 30.4% in February 2024 as compared to an increase of 36.2% a month earlier and 33.6% in February 2023.

Gold rates up by Rs.1,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola 24 karat gold increased by Rs1,100 and was sold at Rs 216,800 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs 215,700 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs943 to Rs185,871 from Rs184,928 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs170,382 from Rs169,517, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs2,570 and Rs2,203.36 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$10 to \$2,067 from \$2,057, the Association reported.

UK delegation visit LCCI, hold B2B meetings with Pak counterparts

LAHORE (APP): A 40-member UK delegation visited the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) here on Friday and had B2B meetings with their Pakistani counterparts. Regional Trade & Development Advisor, British High Commission, Islamabad Fabian Hartwell was heading the delegation. LCCI President Kashif Anwar warmly welcomed the delegation and presented the address of welcome. President Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Nasir Awan, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, former President Shahid Hassan Sheikh and Executive Committee Members were also present on the occasion. Head of UK delegation said that British High Commission wants to introduce UK's commercial buyers to Pakistani market to promote the mutual trade. Fabian Hartwell said that due to numerous reasons, the bilateral trade remained level for a number of years. He said that as a trade development advisor, his mandate is to develop trade and help Pakistan to grow its export to UK and to other countries. He said that trade is the only tool which can be used to eradicate poverty, create jobs and better the image of the country. He said that one of the purposes of our visit to this beautiful country is to find cheap quality products which can be exported to UK. We are very hopeful that this visit will enhance the bilateral trade between Pakistan and UK besides successfully changing the perception of Pakistan. LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that being the premier business support organization of the country, LCCI has always accorded great importance in cementing good working relations with the private sector.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, Clemens Schulte, APL Qingdao, Maritime Gisela, Al-Fuwairit and African Baza, carrying Containers, Palm oil, LNG and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Elengy Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Friday. Meanwhile another ship 'Eagle' scheduled to load/offload Rice is also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day. A total of twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, APL Qingdao, Clemens Schulte, Sunny Bay, Chemroad Aqua and Dravin left the Port on today morning, while four more ships, Fast, Maritime Gisela, Xin Han Tong and Chemtrans Baltic are expected to sail on same day. Cargo volume of 236,341 tonnes, comprising 201,430 tonnes imports cargo and 34,911 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,697 Containers (1,574 TEUs Imports).

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More than 100 killed while seeking aid in Gaza, overall death toll passes 30,000

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Gaza health authorities said Israeli forces on Thursday (Feb 29) shot dead more than 100 Palestinians as they waited for an aid delivery, but Israel blamed the deaths on crowds that surrounded aid trucks, saying victims had been trampled or run over.

At least 112 people were killed and more than 280 wounded in the incident near Gaza City, Palestinian health officials said. The loss of civilian lives was the biggest in weeks. Hamas said the incident could jeopardise talks in Qatar aimed at securing a ceasefire and the release of Israeli hostages it is holding. When asked if he thought it would complicate the talks, US President Joe Biden said: "I know it will." Medics said they could not cope with

the flood of serious injuries, which came on the day the death toll in nearly five months of war passed 30,000, according to Palestinian health authorities.

Israel disputed the account provided by officials in Hamas-run Gaza, which has been bombarded by Israeli forces for months in a war that began after the Palestinian militant group's deadly rampage in southern Israel on Oct 7. Its military said the trucks were operated by private contractors as part of an aid operation that it had been overseeing for the past four nights.

One Israeli official said there had been two incidents, hundreds of metres apart, in the first of which dozens were killed or injured as they tried to take aid from the trucks and were trampled

or run over.

He said there was a second, subsequent incident as the trucks moved off. Some people in the crowd approached troops who felt under threat and opened fire, killing an unknown number in a "limited response", he said. He dismissed the casualty toll given by Gaza authorities but gave no figure himself. In a later briefing, Israel Defense Forces spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari also said dozens had been trampled to death or injured in a fight to take supplies off the trucks. He said tanks escorting the trucks had subsequently fired warning shots to disperse the crowd and backed away when events began to get out of hand. "No IDF strike was conducted towards the aid convoy," he said.



Palestinians transport casualties following Israeli fire on people waiting for aid in Gaza City.

Five countries pledge personnel for Haiti security mission, UN says

Monitoring Desk

UNITED NATIONS: The Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin and Chad have formally notified the United Nations of their intent to contribute personnel to an international force to help Haitian national police fight armed gangs, a UN spokesman said on Thursday.

Contributions of \$10.8 million have also been deposited into a trust fund to support the multinational security support mission, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters, adding that further pledges of \$78 million had also been made.

The United Nations Security Council

authorised in October a foreign security mission to Haiti, a year after the Caribbean country asked for help to fight violent gangs that have largely overrun its capital Port-au-Prince.

The 15-member council's resolution requires countries to inform UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres of their participation in the security mission. While approved by the Security Council, the mission is not a UN operation.

The response to Haiti's request for help was delayed due to a struggle to find a country willing to lead a security assistance mission.

Russia ready to hand over crash victims' bodies to Ukraine, RIA says

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia is ready to hand over to Ukraine the bodies of the victims of a January military plane crash, the RIA news agency cited Russian human rights official Tatyana Moskalkova as saying on Friday.

Moscow accuses Kyiv of downing the Ilyushin Il-76 plane in Russia's Belgorod region and killing 74 people on board, including 65 captured Ukrainian soldiers en route to be swapped for Russian prisoners of war.

It has not presented evidence.

Three shot dead at US dental clinic

CALIFORNIA (INP): A manhunt was launched by police in the California city of El Cajon on Thursday after a shooting at a dentist's office left one dead and two injured, local media reported.

Police in the town, about 20 miles (30 kilometers) outside of San Diego, said on social media they were searching for an "armed and dangerous" 29-year-old suspect who fled the scene after the attack, which they described as "an active shooter event."

Bangladeshi leader says a shopping mall that caught fire had no emergency exits

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: A six-story shopping mall that caught fire in the Bangladeshi capital had no fire exits, the country's prime minister said Friday, as the death toll climbed to at least 46 and rescuers continued to search for more victims.

The fire started late Thursday in a restaurant on the first floor of the Green Cozy Cottage Shopping Mall in downtown Dhaka.

More than a dozen firefighting units were deployed.

Firefighters rescued survivors and pulled out bodies, and by early Friday, at least 43 people were confirmed dead. Three injured people died later, said Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen. He said the toll could rise further as at least a dozen critically injured people were being treated in two state-run hospitals.

Bangladesh building fire kills 46, injures dozens

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: A massive fire in Bangladesh that raged through a six-storey building home to restaurants where many families with children were dining has killed at least 46 people and injured dozens, the health minister said on Friday.

Fire authorities said a gas leak or a stove could have caused Thursday's blaze in the capital, which spread quickly after breaking out in a biryani restaurant, and was only brought under control following two hours of effort by 13 units of firefighters.

Hospitals were treating 22 people with burns, Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen told reporters. "All 22 people [...] are in critical condition," Sen, himself a well-known physician, said after a visit to the

Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"We are trying our best to save their lives," he said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed shock and sorrow at the incident, ordering swift treatment for the injured.

She urged adherence to construction rules and regulations, including requirements for essential safety features such as fire exits and ventilation systems to prevent such tragedies in the future. One survivor, Mohammad Altaf, recounted his narrow escape from the blaze that killed two colleagues. "I went to the kitchen, broke a window and jumped to save myself," he told reporters, adding that a cashier and server who urged people to leave during the first moments had died later.

South Korea's Yoon says better Japan ties helping deter North Korea threat

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said on Friday improved ties with Japan were helping to combat threats from Pyongyang's weapons developments and called for help from the international community to bring about unification with North Korea. Under Yoon's conservative administration, Seoul has sought better ties with Tokyo which have been fraught with historical baggage for years at a time of China's growing influence and North Korea's growing missile and nuclear programs. During a ceremony to mark an independence holiday, Yoon said next year would be the 60th anniversary of normalised diplomatic relations with Japan and he hoped it could be a chance for the bilateral relationship to reach a "higher level."

"Now, South Korea and Japan are working to-

gether to overcome the painful past and moving toward a 'new world,'" he said in a speech to commemorate the formation of an independence movement against Japan's 1910-1945 occupation of Korea. "The security cooperation between the two countries against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats has been strengthened further," he added.

During his speech, Yoon said that Seoul would need international help for any prospect of unification with North Korea.

"Unification is a challenging task that we cannot accomplish alone. The international community must pool its strength in a responsible manner," he said. Yoon's comments come after the North's leader Kim Jong Un in January called South Korea a "primary foe" and said unification was no longer possible.

Britain's Galloway wins parliament seat with Gaza agenda, vows to take on Labour

Monitoring Desk

LONDON: Veteran left-wing political maverick George Galloway was elected as the new lawmaker for the English town of Rochdale on Friday, vowing to be a thorn in the side for the opposition Labour Party over Gaza before a national election it is tipped to win.

After running a pro-Palestinian campaign, Galloway won over many of Rochdale's Muslim community by attacking both Labour and Britain's governing Conservatives for supporting Israel in its war against Hamas, making a foreign conflict the major issue - unusual in a by-election where local concerns usually dominate.

Elected to parliament for the seventh time, Galloway will be an irritant to Labour, a party he once belonged to before being ejected for criticising then-prime minister Tony Blair over the Iraq war.

His victory underlines the divisions in Britain over

the Israel-Hamas war, which is in its fifth month and has brought protesters onto British streets in support of both sides.

More than 30,000 people have been killed during Israel's military campaign in Gaza, Palestinian health authorities say. This follows an attack by Hamas militants in southern Israel on Oct 7, when Israel says 1,200 people were killed and 253 taken hostage.

British lawmakers have faced threats to do more to bring an end to the fighting in Gaza and with the national election later this year, Galloway's return to parliament will be short-lived but explosive.

"Keir Starmer and Rishi Sunak are two cheeks of the same backside and they both got well and truly shocked tonight here in Rochdale," Galloway said in his victory speech. A heckler challenging him on his climate change credentials was drowned out by supporters chanting "Galloway".

Proposal to cool earth by blocking sun withdrawn

Monitoring Desk

NAIROBI: UN delegates on Thursday withdrew a motion calling for more research into technologies that aim to fight climate change by reflecting the sun's rays back into space, amid concerns about health and environmental risks.

Some who opposed the draft resolution at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) were also worried that the use of solar radiation modification (SRM) might let big polluters off the hook, organisations watching the debate said.

Switzerland and Monaco first tabled the resolution on examining the geoeconomic technology in December and it was discussed during this week's assembly in Nairobi.

The original version called for the convening of an expert group that would produce a report examining SRM's possible applications, risks and ethical considerations.

One of the best known proposals for using it involves blasting sulphur dioxide — a coolant — into

the higher reaches of the atmosphere.

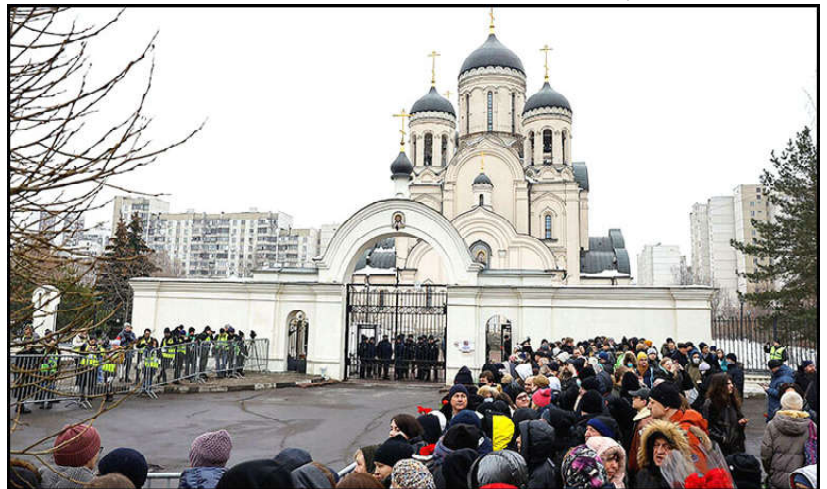
There are only a handful of small SRM projects in operation. Some scientists say SRM could be made available when necessary to avert climate tipping points.

Critics are worried about possible impacts on weather patterns and agriculture, especially in poorer countries. They also fear SRM could serve as an excuse to delay cutbacks on greenhouse gas emissions.

After going through six revisions over the past two weeks, the resolution was withdrawn on Thursday.

Robin Poll, a spokesperson for Switzerland's Federal Office for the Environment, said countries disagreed on how to facilitate better access to information on SRM and "if the gathering of information should only focus on risk and uncertainties or could as well include potential benefits".

"We regret that UNEA couldn't come to a conclusion on this important matter.



People gather outside the Soothe My Sorrows church as they wait for a funeral service and a farewell ceremony for Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny in Moscow, Russia.

Iran election: Ruler Khamenei seeks big turnout amid discontent

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Iranians voted for a new parliament on Friday in an election seen as a test of the clerical establishment's legitimacy at a time of growing frustration over economic woes and restrictions on political and social freedoms. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has called voting a religious duty, was the first to cast his vote in Iran. "Vote as soon as possible ... today the eyes of Iran's friends and ill-wishers are on the results. Make friends happy and disappear enemies," Khamenei said on state television.

The election is the first formal measure of public opinion since anti-government protests in 2022-23 spiralled into some of the worst political turmoil since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iran's rulers need a high turnout to repair their legitimacy, badly damaged by the

unrest. But official surveys suggest only about 41% of eligible Iranians will vote. Turnout hit a record low of 42.5% in the 2020 parliamentary election, while about 62% of voters participated in 2016.

State TV, portraying a general enthusiastic mood with live coverage from across Iran interspersed with patriotic songs, aired footage of people braving snow to vote in some towns and villages. Several people told state TV that they were voting "to make the supreme leader happy". Over 15,000 candidates were running for the 290-seat parliament. Partial results may appear on Saturday. Activists and opposition groups were distributing the hashtags #VOTEorNoVote and #ElectionCircus widely on the social media platform X, arguing that a high turnout would legitimise the Islamic Republic.

US Supreme Court to hear Trump's immunity claim

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court agreed on Wednesday to hear Donald Trump's claim that as a former president he is immune from prosecution, further delaying his trial on charges of conspiring to overturn the 2020 election. Trump had been scheduled to go on trial in Washington on March 4, but the nation's highest court scheduled arguments in the high-stakes case for the week of April 22 and said "Trump's federal election interference trial would remain on hold for now."

On the same day, a judge in the state of Illinois ordered the former president stricken off the state's primary ballot for his role in the January 6 Capitol riot.

Today, both Trump and incumbent President Joe Biden are due to pay dueling visits to the US-Mexico border Thursday as they try to win over voters on immigration.

Indian farmers' stir: Haryana police threatens protesters with cancellation of passports & visas

CHANDIGARH (INP):

In what comes as a strict action against the ongoing farmers' protest, the police authorities in Haryana have announced that they have initiated the process to cancel passports and visas of those individuals who were allegedly involved in breaking barricades or causing disturbances at the Punjab border during the recent agitation.

Since February 13, farmers mostly from Punjab have been protesting at established camps at the Khanauri and Shambhu points along the Punjab-Haryana border. The farmers are slated to decide whether they will resume their march and move towards Delhi.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte attend a ceremony of signing an agreement on security cooperation and long-term support between Ukraine and Netherlands, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

Polish farmers take grain protests to Lithuanian border

Monitoring Desk

WARSAW: Polish farmers protested on the border with Lithuania on Friday against what they say are imports of Ukrainian grain through the Baltic country, something Vilnius denies. Small groups waving Polish flags and carrying banners joined customs officials checking trucks coming over the frontier at the Budzisko crossing but did not attempt to block the route.

Farmers across Europe have been protesting for weeks against constraints placed on them by EU regulations meant to tackle climate change, as

well as rising costs and what they say is unfair competition from outside the EU, particularly Ukraine.

The EU has waived quotas and duties on imports from Ukraine after Russia's invasion in 2022, angering farmers from neighbouring Poland, Hungary and Slovakia who say it undercuts their prices.

Polish farmers argue that some Ukrainian grain which is brought to Lithuania is later re-exported to other countries as European grain.

"Today's protest is taking place to draw attention to this uncontrolled inflow of grain into the EU

US House okays bill to avert shutdown

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The Republican-controlled US House of Representatives on Thursday approved a bill to avert a partial government shutdown, sending the measure to the Democratic-majority Senate less than two days before funding for some federal agencies runs out.

Two-hundred and seven Democrats joined 113 Republicans in a 320-99 vote to approve the short-term stopgap measure, which would extend by one week federal funding that expires at 0500 GMT on Saturday and set a March 22 funding deadline for other government

Drones, snake robot enter wrecked Japan nuclear reactor

TOKYO (INP): Japan sent on Thursday two mini-drones and a "snake-shaped robot" into one of three nuclear reactors at the Fukushima plant crippled by a tsunami in 2011, the facility's operator said.

The gadgets were deployed in preparation for the removal of hundreds of tonnes of highly radioactive fuel and rubble, a risky operation expected to take decades. "We sent two drones yesterday and two today", in addition to the "snake-shaped robot" on Thursday, a spokesman for Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO) told.



George Galloway, leader of the Workers Party of Britain, speaks after winning the Rochdale Parliamentary by-election, at his campaign headquarters, in Rochdale, near Manchester, Britain.

Alvi for enhanced cooperation between audit institutions of Pakistan, Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday called for increasing cooperation between the supreme audit institutions of Pakistan and Azerbaijan for sharing best auditing practices to enhance transparency and financial accountability.

The president, talking to the visiting Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Vugar Gulmammadov who called on him, said that public sector accounting was a critical component of financial management within government organizations that helped ensure transparency and accountability in government spending.

Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP), Muhammad Ajmal Gondal and officials of AGP also attended the meeting, a President House press release said.

Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan (CAA), Vugar Gulmammadov, briefed the president about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Supreme Audit Institution of Azerbaijan, CAA, and the Supreme Audit Institution of Pakistan, AGP, for peer reviews of public accounts. He said that the MoU would help deepen friendly relations between the two countries.

The president lauded the signing of the MoU between AGP and CAA, adding that it would increase cooperation between two countries in the field of Public Sector Auditing.

He added that cooperation between CAA and AGP would be mutually beneficial for both the countries.

He also appreciated AGP's role in carrying out peer reviews of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of Azerbaijan.

Talking to the delegation, President Alvi said that Pakistan accorded special importance to its relations with Azerbaijan, which were based on common faith, shared history, and people-to-people contacts.

He stated that promoting cultural exchanges and strengthening cooperation in the cultural and economic fields was vital for fostering understanding and mutually beneficial development between the two brotherly nations.

He termed the cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan "pivotal for promoting peace, stability, development in the region".

The president also felicitated President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan on his re-election in the presidential election held on February 7, 2024 and hoped that the bilateral relations between the two countries would further strengthen during his tenure.

He termed the cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan "pivotal for promoting peace, stability, development in the region".



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan, Vugar Gulmammadov, along with his delegation called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

PML-N, MQM-P reach agreement on coalition govt

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) on Friday signed an agreement to vote for the coalition candidates in the elections for the prime minister and speaker.

PML-N's Ahsan Iqbal and MQM-P's Mustafa signed the agreements after talks between the two parties held at Ishaq Dar's chamber in the National Assembly.

Both parties have signed the agreement carrying the MQM's demands for solution to the problems of Karachi and amendment to the local bodies act.

According to the agreement, the constitutional amendment will be the priority of the government.

After reaching the agreement, the MQM will sit on the government benches and support the PML-N in the elections for the prime minister and speaker.

Talking to the media after signing the agreement, PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal said that both parties had signed the memorandum to empower the people and shift the power to the masses.

"The objective of our agreement is to solve the problems at the doorstep of the people. We will jointly struggle to achieve this objective. We will also try to evolve consensus over this draft the national level," he added.

According to the details of the agreement, local bodies system, Karachi's problems and constitutional amendments will be the party of the agreement.

"MQM will sit on government benches instead of opposition," as per the agreement copy signed by the leaders from both sides.

In return, the Muttahida will support PML-N in the elections for the prime minister and speaker.

CM-designate directs DC to ensure draining of water from residential areas of Gwadar

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister-designate Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed the Deputy Commissioner Gwadar to ensure speedy draining of rain water from the residential areas of Gwadar city.

The Chief Minister-designate was speaking to Deputy Commissioner Gwadar, Aurangzeb Badini over telephone on Friday.

The Deputy Commissioner Gwadar apprised Mir Sarfraz Bugti about the situation in Gwadar due to the torrential rains there.

He also directed to resolve the issue immediately by mobilizing all available resources.

The Chief Minister-designate also announced that he would visit Gwadar city soon.

It may be mentioned here that Gwadar city was badly affected due to the continuous rains for last few days.

Most of the city areas are inundated in the rain water creating a miserable situation.

Solangi lauds performance of Parl. Affairs Ministry during caretaker set up

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi Friday appreciated the performance and cooperation of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs during the caretaker government's tenure.

This he said while speaking at a farewell ceremony organized in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in his honour.

The minister said with the grace of Allah Almighty, the democratic process was going on in the country.

Murtaza Solangi said he had been reiterating the commitment of the government since the first day that the elections would be held at time schedule given by Election Commission of Pakistan.

"The caretaker government organized timely elections and today new assemblies have come into being in the country", Murtaza Solangi maintained.

Democracy could not succeed without people's participation, Murtaza Solangi said and expressed the hope that the new government would meet the expectations of the people.

He said as the Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, it was an honour for him to participate in the meetings of the Parliament.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti in a meeting with Provincial Ameer JUI Maulana Abdul Wasid during visit to his residence. MPAs Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Mir Asim Kurd Gailu, Ali Madad Jattak are also present on the occasion.

Deputy chairman Senate directs NDMA, PDMA Balochistan to expedite relief efforts in Gwadar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate, Mirza Muhammad Afridi on Friday directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan to expedite relief and rehabilitation efforts in the flood-hit Gwadar with core focus on extending assistance to the deserving victims.

National Party (NP)'s Senator Muhammad Tahir Bizinjo on a public attention notice raised the issue of calamity-hit Gwadar that has been recently ravaged by torrential rains causing flooding in the entire port city.

Senator Tahir Bizinjo said that the coastal areas of the country particularly Balochistan have been badly impacted by the recent heavy rains and left Gwadar submerged under rainwater including houses, businesses, public property and infrastructure.

He alleged that the relief and rehabilitation efforts were slow and accused the NDMA, PDMA Balochistan and district administration of poor performance and conduct in the disaster-hit area.

He also raised his concerns pertaining to looting of relief money, resources and relief items to be sent for the flood victims of Gwadar and alleged that the relief assistance would not reach the genuine victims or impacted population.

The Senator mentioned that as per his sources, there was already shortage of food items leading to epidemics break out in the impacted areas. He vehemently demanded the quarters concerned to ensure provision of relief items to the impacted population and make proper measures in this regard.

Bugti meets Maulana Wasey; discusses political situation

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister-designate Mir Sarfraz Bugti visited the residence of provincial Ameer of Jamiat Ulema-E-Islam (JUI) Maulana Abdul Wasey here on Friday.

Also accompanied with him were the members of provincial assembly, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Mir Asim Kurd, Ali Madad Jattak, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani and Agha Shakeel Durrani.

During the meeting, members of assembly Muhammad Younus Zehri, Zaid Reki and Asghar Tareen were also present.

During the course of meeting, the overall situation of the province including political was discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that we would work together for development of province and welfare of masses.

He said that he is desirous of taking all along for resolving the issues.

Shehbaz felicitates Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister-designate Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday congratulated Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for winning the election of Speaker National Assembly with a thumping majority.

In a statement, Shehbaz Sharif who is the President Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), said that Ayaz Sadiq has set a unique example of victory as Speaker NA for the third time, adding that he is an experienced and senior politician.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai meeting with Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Governor directs Utilizing all resources to ensure gas supply to Kuchlak

QUETTA (APP): Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar on Friday directed the concerned department to utilize all available resources to ensure uninterrupted supply of needle gas to the people of Kuchlak and surrounding areas and to solve public problems on priority basis.

He expressed these views while talking to Deputy General Manager, Sui Southern Gas Company Farooq, who called on him at Governor House Quetta. Political and social representatives of Kuchlak and its adjoining areas were also present on this occasion.

During the meeting, the delegation apprised the Governor about the difficulties faced by the people regarding the gas load shedding in Kuchlak.

The Governor directed the officials of Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) to immediately end the series of unannounced load shedding and in case of necessity, inform the public in advance.

ATC confirms interim bail of PTI founder in 4 cases

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday confirmed interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder in four cases related to May-9 violence and others.

The court confirmed the interim bail in cases of attack on police outside Zaman Park, murder of PTI activist Zille Shah, torching of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz office in Model Town and a container at Kalma Chowk, subject to furnishing of surety bonds of Rs 500,000. ATC Judge Arshad Javed heard the bail petitions of the PTI founder and announced the verdict on completion of arguments by the parties.

The counsel for the PTI founder had requested the court to confirm the bail of his client in the cases, during the proceedings.

However, Special Prosecutor Rana Shakil argued that the PTI founder was the main accused in May-9 cases.

Bizenjo greets Sarfraz Bugti on his election as CM Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The former Chief Minister and leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has congratulated Mir Sarfraz Bugti on his unopposed election as Chief Minister Balochistan.

In a felicitation message issued here on Friday, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo thanked the leadership of PPP on selection of Mir Sarfraz Bugti as Chief Minister.

Mr. Bizenjo expressed the hope that Sarfraz Bugti would play his part in resolving the burning issues of the province.

JUI boycotts election of NA speaker and deputy speaker

ISLAMABAD (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam of Maulana Fazlur Rahman opted to boycott the election of speaker and deputy speaker in the National Assembly on Friday.

Talking to a private television channel, Shahida Akhtar Ali said their party's strategy is crystal clear as they will not take part in any election process in the National Assembly.



QUETTA: MPA Mir Shoaib Noshewani meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

PTI calls NA Speaker, Dy without reserved seats allocation unconstitutional

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson termed the election of Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Prime Minister from the fake incomplete National Assembly without the allocation of the reserved seats for women and minorities as unconstitutional. Reacting over the election of the NA Speaker and Deputy Speaker sans allocation of the reserved seats, PTI Spokesperson stated that the speaker and deputy speaker elected with the help of the mandate thieves would not have any constitutional status.

He said that the constitution was trampled under their feet one again by electing NA speaker from a fake incomplete National Assembly, as they reached the house fraudulently after stealing public mandate.

PTI Spokesperson categorically stated that according to Article 51 of the Constitution, the House cannot be completed without the allocation of the reserved seats for women and minorities as per the proportion to the representation of each political party in the National Assembly.

He recalled that a total of 23 PTI backed members were being deprived of their constitutional right of the reserved seats under a nefarious scheme; however, PTI Spokesperson that the nation would not succeed any such malicious plot come what may. He went on to say that the group of mandate thieves unlawfully occupying the august house was cognizant of the fact.



QUETTA: A view of accumulated rain water on imdad chowk after rain in Provincial Capital.

Aneeq Ahmed says: Delegation of Muslim countries should talk to Israeli PM for ceasefire

ISLAMABAD (Online): A delegation of important Muslim countries under the flag of OIC should talk to the Israeli Prime Minister for an immediate ceasefire. Important countries like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Qatar, Egypt, Pakistan will have to play a key role.

This was said by the Minister of Religious Affairs, Aneeq Ahmed, during a meeting with the Palestinian Ambassador Ahmad Rabaei. Matters of mutual interest and the situation in Palestine were discussed between the two leaders. The religious affairs minister said that Pakistan and Palestine have brotherly relations.

Pakistan will continue to provide moral and diplomatic support to its Palestinian brothers. Pakistan is the first country to support the Palestinian movement and will always continue to do so.

The Muslim Ummah can reach a solution to the Palestine problem by being united. A delegation of important Muslim countries under the flag of OIC should talk to the Israeli Prime Minister for an immediate ceasefire. Important countries like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Qatar, Egypt, Pakistan will have to play a key role. We have to work together to restore the concept of Ummah. The rulers of all major Islamic countries will have to pledge allegiance to the House of Allah. Ahmed Rabaei, the Palestinian ambassador posted in Pakistan, said that the love of the people of Pakistan for Palestine dates back to the creation of Pakistan. We thank Pakistan for its support and solidarity with Palestine in the context of Israeli aggression. 70% of those killed in Israeli aggression are children and women, whose number is more than 21 thousand. More than 20,000 buildings in Gaza have been demolished by the Israeli occupying forces.

Saudi Arabia gifts 100 tons dates to Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is delighted to offer 100 tons of dates to its Pakistani brethren in a gesture of goodwill.

Following the recommendation of leadership of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Saudi government has extended a heartfelt gift to the people of Pakistan continuing its annual tradition during a ceremony held here at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia.

Ambassador Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, along with Abdullah Al-Baqami, Director of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (Ksrelief), handed over the consignment to the government of Pakistan.

This generous donation is intended for distribution among the Pakistani community during the holy month of Ramadan.

Edhi Naval Services team starts rescue operation in Gwadar

QUETTA (APP): The Edhi Naval Services team led by in-charge Dr. Abdul Hakeem Lasi has reached Gwadar on the directive of the Head of Edhi Foundation Faisal Edhi to start a rescue operation in the area.

According to a statement issued here, the recent rains in several areas of Gwadar have caused havoc and several houses have been damaged and people are living there under the open sky.



QUETTA: Regional Head Federal Ombudsman Ghulam Sarwor Brohi, Director Dur Muhammad Rind and Deputy Registrar Ameer Muhammad Rind during their visit to NADRA office Pishin.

Senator annoyed over shortage of medicines

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Danesh Kumar of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) on Friday expressed his deep concern over the shortage of medicine at National Institute of Rehabilitation and Medicine (NIRM).

At his calling attention notice at the sixth meeting of the 355th Senate Session here, the Senator said it was the matter of poor masses but the bureaucracy in the Ministry of National Health, Services, Regulations and Coordination turned its deaf ear to the issue that was pending for the past ten days.

Senator Kumar said the poor people were unable to buy medicines in the prevailing skyrocketing inflation that had crushed the low-income groups of society.



Pakistan Navy Workers during Rescue efforts at flood affected areas of Gawadar.

MPA Ubaidullah vows to improve living standard of people in PB-44

QUETTA (APP): A young newly elected Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Ubaidullah Gorgege said that he would use all his abilities to lay development nets in his constituency PB-44 and improve the living standards of the people.

He expressed these views while talking to media after the Assembly session.

Mir Ubaidullah Gorgege said that nationalists were elected from my constituency in the last two terms and they were still claiming that PB-44 was their stronghold but they did not pay any attention to this constituency and people during their periods that is why the zealous people here rejected them in the general elections of February 8.

He further said that Sariab was an ancient area of Quetta, which was deprived of basic facilities of life, besides health, education, drinking water, the people here were also protesting for gas and electricity.

Those who took the funds in the name of the development of Sariab increased their personal properties as witnessed by the people of Sariab themselves, he said.