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GWADAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed regarding the damages caused by the recent torrential rains and the relief and rescue operations carried out by the local authorities

Shahbaz Sharif gets briefing on recent rains, relief operation from NDMA: Rain affectees would not be left alone in time of distress, asserts Prime Minister

PM directs concerned authorities to present comprehensive plan for relief & rehabilitation of rain affected people in province; vows to work with Government of Balochistan together; announces to pay Rs. 2 million each to heirs of those died in rain-related mishaps; Rs. 7,50,000 & Rs. 350,000 to be paid to those whose houses collapsed damaged & partially

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has categorically stated that those affected due to the recent devastating rains in Gwadar or other parts of the province would not be left alone in the time of distress at all.

He vowed to work for relief and rehabilitation of the affected people together with the Balochistan government, and the process would remain continued until each and every

affected person is fully rehabilitated. The Premier was speaking after distribution of cheques among the rain affected people and briefing conducted for him about damages caused due to rains in Gwadar, on Tuesday.

Shahbaz Sharif reached Gwadar along with Chairman NDMA, Lt. General Inam Haider Malik and other high ups from Islamabad to personally review the situation after rains and ongoing relief activities in Gwadar.

Also present on the occasion were the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, Members of National Assembly, Attaullah Tarar, Jam Kamal Khan and Malik Shah Gorgaji, provincial President of PML-N, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Member Provincial Assembly, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman besides other concerned high ups.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister di-

rected the concerned authorities to present comprehensive plan for relief and rehabilitation of the rain affected people.

He also directed to present report of detailed review of the damages caused to private property and rehabilitation of the affected communication infrastructure.

In addition to this, the Prime Minister directed to prepare system to determine well before the natu-

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COAS presides over 263rd Corps Commanders' Conference

Army top brass dismayed at unsubstantiated allegations of interference in electoral process

Says allegations aimed at creating political instability; Forum expresses satisfaction over the smooth democratic transition of power in the Centre and Provinces; Reiterates to continue providing full support to govt.

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Corps Commanders' Conference on Tuesday urged the proud nation to remain positive and united, and wholeheartedly participate in the progress and development of Pakistan.

The forum noted with concern the organised misinformation and fake news being spread by certain nefarious elements to sow despondency and divisions within the society.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir presided over the 263rd Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at the General Headquarters (GHQ) an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhada (martyrs), including officers and men of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies

and the citizens who have laid their lives for ensuring peace and stability in the country.

The conference resolved that terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on behalf of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan, would be dealt with full might of the state.

The COAS directed commanders to continue consolidating the gains of efforts against terrorism

and militancy. The forum expressed concerns over continued repression of Kashmiris in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and condemned the unabated human rights violations by India.

It reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue to support the Kashmiris politically, diplomatically and morally at all levels.

The forum also ex-

pressed complete solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemned serious human rights violations and war crimes being perpetrated in Gaza.

The COAS said, "The Palestinian people have unequivocal diplomatic, moral and political support of the Pakistani nation and we will continue to support the principled stance of our

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RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), presided over the 263rd Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at GHQ

Wholehearted cooperation assured by federal Government too: Compensation of losses caused due to rains to be done, assures CM Balochistan

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that compensation of the losses caused due to the heavy rains in Gwadar would be made. He said that the federal government has also assured wholehearted cooperation in process of rehabilitation.

He said that the step would remain continued till rehabilitation of the routine life.

The Chief Minister was speaking on occasion of the briefing during visit to Gwadar along with the Prime Minister, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and later speaking to the rain affected people on

Tuesday. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the affected people of Gwadar are focus of our attention.

He thanked the Prime Minister for visiting Gwadar and expressing solidarity with the affected people.

He believed that the federal and provincial governments would complete the process of rehabilitation of rain affected people in shortest possible time.

He said that the recent torrential rains caused devastations at large scale.

He said that it was his first priority to provide relief and rehabilitation to the affected people after assuming the office of Chief

Minister. The Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also expressed solidarity with the affected people of Gwadar and asked the provincial government and party's senior leadership to take solid steps for them in the difficult time.

He was also appreciative of the role played by Pak Army and civil administration for rescuing people and saving their lives.

He noted with contentment that the routine life has started restoring as a result of the relief activities carried out by the senior

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PPP delegation assures PM of cooperation for economic stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Pakistan Peoples Party led by former President Asif Ali Zardari and party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wherein they assured the government of the party's support for the country's economic stability.

In the meeting held on Monday night, the delegation, also comprising Chief Minister of Sindh Murad Ali Shah, congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on assuming the office of the prime minister and expressed good wishes for him.

Asif Ali Zardari assured the prime minister that the PPP would stand alongside

the government to achieve the economic stability, progress and prosperity of the country.

Prime Minister Shehbaz thanked Allah Almighty as well as the people of Pakistan for giving him another opportunity to serve Pakistan.

He also expressed gratitude to the coalition parties in the parliament for reposing trust in him, reiterating his resolve to work tirelessly for the country's progress and prosperity.

Senator Ishaq Dar, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar and former Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi also attended the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Former President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Facebook, Instagram, Messenger down as Meta faces worldwide outage

QUETTA: Social media sites Facebook, Instagram and Messenger reportedly went down as parent company Meta faced a worldwide outage on Tuesday.

Real-time internet and social media outage and monitoring service, Downtocheck.pk, reported that the Meta-owned social sites' outage across the globe around 8:16pm.

Users on Instagram were unable to view the content on the picture-sharing platform as the message "Something went wrong" appeared every time they tried to access the site.

Meanwhile, login sessions on Facebook and Messenger expired as the users found themselves logged out of the apps.

They were "unable to log in" again as a pop-up saying "an unexpected error occurred" appeared while trying to access Facebook.

As per Downtocheck, as many as 353,256 Facebook inaccessibility reports were received by 8:20pm.

Meanwhile, cybersecurity and internet governance monitor, NetBlocks also confirmed social media suspension.

"Meta platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and Threads are currently experiencing outages related to login sessions in multiple countries; incident not related to country-level internet disruptions or filtering," NetBlocks wrote on X, formerly Twitter.



GWADAR: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting to review situation arises after recent rains and rehabilitation activities

CM pays second official visit to rain-hit Gwadar

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti paid second visit to Gwadar city on Tuesday during one week and after assuming his office. The Member National Assembly, Malik Shah Gorgaji, provincial President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail and Member Provincial Assembly, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani were also accompanied by the Chief Minister.

He was welcomed by the Member Provincial Assembly from Gwadar, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Commissioner Makran Division, Saeed Ahmed Umrani, Deputy Commissioner Gwadar, Major (Retd) Aurangzaib Badini and Director General PDMA, Jahanzaib Khan.

Senate polls on April 3

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Election Commission (EC) has decided to hold Senate elections on April 3.

According to EC sources election on 48 seats of Senate will take place on April 3.

EC has worked out schedule of Senate election. The polling for Senate election will be held in national and provincial assemblies on April 3.

On April 3, twelve senators will be elected each from Sindh and Punjab, while two senators will be elected from Islamabad. Eleven new senators will become part of upper house each from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Modi, Putin, Amir Qatar greet Shehbaz on assuming office of PM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on swearing in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He extended his felicitations to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on his X timeline.

President of Russia Vladimir Putin on Tuesday congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on his election as the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The Russian president highlighted the friendly nature of Russia-Pakistan relations and wished Shehbaz Sharif every success in his im-

portant capacity as head of government, the Embassy of Russia in Islamabad said on its X timeline.

The Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani felicitated Shehbaz Sharif on his election and swearing-in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan for the second time.

The Amir, who sent a cable of congratulations to the prime minister, wished him success and for further development and growth of bilateral relations, according to the state-run Qatar news Agency.

Shutter down strike observed on call of PkMAP in Quetta

Independent Report

QUETTA: The shutter down strike was observed against alleged raid at residence of Chairman Pashtoonkhaw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Mehmood Khan Achakzai, in different parts of the metropolis on Tuesday.

As a result of shutter down, the shops and business concerns remained closed in main city and various other areas of the metropolis.

The call of shutter down strike was given by the PkMAP as a mark of protest against alleged raid at resi-



dence of the party's chairman and arrest of a gunman. Following strike, the flow of traffic also remained less in the main areas of Quetta city.

PM Shahbaz Sharif visits Gwadar; reviews post-rain situation; relief

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif visited the rain-hit district of Gwadar on Tuesday.

He reached the port city by a special airplane. He was accompanied by the Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lt. General Inam Haider Malik, leader of PML-N and Member National Assembly, Atta Tarar, Sardar Yaqoob Khan Nasar, besides other high ups.

Upon his arrival at Gwadar airport, the Prime Minister was welcomed by the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, provincial President of PML-N, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Member National Assembly, Malik Shah Gorgaji, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan besides other high ups.

Matthew Miller highlighted the US's willingness to work closely with the newly formed Paki-

BA session likely to be conducted on March 8

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly's session is expected to be held at 11:00 AM on March 8. This was announced in an official notification issued here by the Balochistan's Provincial Assembly secretariat on Tuesday. According to the notification, the newly elected members of assembly would take oath in the assembly's session.



ISLAMABAD: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, call on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aitwan-e-Sadr.

US expresses willingness to work with new Pak govt.

Terms Maryam's election as first woman CM Punjab a 'milestone'

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States of America (USA) on Tuesday expressed willingness to collaborate with Pakistan's new Government.

In a recent press briefing, United States Department of State Spokesperson Matthew Miller conveyed the US's readiness to engage with Pakistan's new government.

Matthew Miller highlighted the US's willingness to work closely with the newly formed Paki-

stani government, emphasizing the importance of advancing mutual interests through collaboration with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The spokesperson further said that appointment of Maryam Nawaz Sharif as the Chief Minister of Punjab represents a significant development in Pakistani politics. The US looks forward to the full inclusion of women in political life and views it as a positive step for Pakistan's democratic progress.

BNP to support Achakzai in Presidential elections

Independent Report

QUETTA: The senior Vice President of Balochistan National Party (BNP), Sajid Tareen Advocate has stated that BNP has decided to support the Chairman Pashtoonkhaw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Mehmood Khan Achakzai in the upcoming presidential election. Sajid Tareen

was addressing a hurriedly called press conference here at the Quetta press club on Tuesday. He also strongly condemned the raid and arrest of the Chairman PkMAP.

He criticized the alleged rigging in the recent general elections and charged that the provincial assembly was purchased by making bid on February 8.

CJCS calls for strengthening collaboration among SCO states in military medicines

RAWALPINDI (Online): SCO Members States Seminar being hosted by Pakistan at Rawalpindi on in his address highlighted that emergence of new and complex healthcare chal-



Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), Tuesday attended the opening session of theme of "Challenges in Military Medicines". The Chairman JCSC

lenges, Pandemics and humanitarian crisis merit crafting of collective preparedness, response strategies and more importantly strengthening of multilateral collaboration amongst SCO nations especially in field of military medicines. JCSC reiterated that both Pakistani nation and Pakistan Armed Forces take great pride in our partnership with SCO and are fully committed to further expand this cooperation. He expressed his gratitude to SCO for affording this platform for dialogue and cooperation; and the delegates from partner countries for their whole hearted attendance.

ECP allocates reserved seats claimed by SIC to other parties

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday notified the allocation of reserved seats for women and minorities, which were claimed by PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), to other political parties. The move came a day after the electoral watchdog rejected the Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) petition, seeking the allocation of reserved seats following a 'merger' with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for this specific purpose. The ECP was requested to allot the seats on the basis of the inclusion of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed candidates in their party. However today, the election commission distributed the reserved seats for women and minorities among other political parties. In the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly - according to a notification, the ECP allocated one reserved seat each to Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Pakistan, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pa-

kistan People's Party (PPP). The ECP - in the Sindh Assembly - allocated reserved seat for women to Muttaahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and PPP. PPP's Samita Afzal and MQM-P's Fouzia Hameed elected on reserved seats. Furthermore, PPP's Sadhu Mal alias Surinder Valasai secured minority seat in Sindh Assembly. The ECP allocated three reserved seats for minorities to PML-N, PPP and JUI-F - which were claimed by Sunni Ittehad Council. PML-N's Neelam Meghwar, PPP's Ramesh Kumar and JUI-F's James Iqbal were elected on the minority seats. PTI candidates contested the elections as independents after the Supreme Court upheld the election supervisor's decision, considering its intra-party polls "unconstitutional" and revoked its claim on the electoral symbol of 'bat'. As per the Constitution, the reserved seats are allocated to the political parties on the basis of the

number of their lawmakers elected on the general seats. For their allocation, the ECP had already received the priority list of candidates from the parties before the Feb 8 polls. The situation this year is different from the previous elections as the largest group of lawmakers are independents, who cannot have the reserved seats. There are a total of 346 reserved seats for women - 60 in the NA and 66, 29, 26, and 11 in the provincial legislatures of Punjab, Sindh, K-P, and Balochistan. Similarly, there are 10 reserved seats for minorities in the lower house. Besides, there are eight, nine and three reserved seats for minorities in the Punjab Sindh, and Balochistan assemblies. Sunni Ittehad Council, in its letter, stated that 86 independent candidates of the National Assembly had joined his party, adding that 107 independents of Punjab Assembly, 90 of K-P Assembly and nine independent members of Sindh Assembly now garnered the support of the SIC.

PM to give dinner to allied parties on Thursday

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Shrif has invited PML-N and allied parties to dinner. PM Shehbaz Shrif will host dinner in honor of all allied parties on Thursday. Dinner will be given to PML-N and all allied parliamentary parties in PM house.

Senator hails PM visit to calamity-hit Gwadar district

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Awami Party Senator Kauda Babar has hailed the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the calamity-stricken district of Gwadar. In a statement issued here on Monday, the senator said Prime Minister's visit to Gwadar, shortly after taking oath of his office, is commendable. "The PM must announce a special package for the rain-hit areas of the port city. The federal government, besides restoration of daily routine life in the district, shall waive off utility bills," the senator urged. He further called upon the federal government to declare Gwadar city tax-free zone.

Glimpses of PM Shahbaz Sharif's visit of Gwadar



ISLAMABAD: President BNP Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal and Mir Kabir Muhammadshahi exchanging views on political situation

Army top brass dismayed...

Continued from page 1
brethren for enduring resolution of the Palestinian issue. The forum appreciated the efforts of civil administration, law enforcement agencies and security forces for providing all-out assistance during the general elections in the light of the Election Commission of Pakistan's guidelines for creating a safe & secure environment for the electoral process, despite overwhelming odds. The conference noted that the Armed Forces of Pakistan at a great peril to their primary responsibility, provided security environment for the conduct of General Elections-24 as per the given mandate, and had nothing to do with the electoral process. However, the forum expressed dismay that some vested small segments of polity and media, especially social media, had been maligning the Armed Forces of Pakistan with unsubstantiated allegations of interference, which was highly deplorable. "It's unfortunate that rather than focusing on real issues such as good governance, economic recovery, political stability and public well-being, entire focus of such vested elements is on creating political instability and uncertainty by attempting to scapegoat others for their own failings," it added. The forum emphasised that due legal processes be followed with evidence and proof rather than resorting to unconstitutional and uncalled for baseless political rhetoric and emotional outbursts. It noted with satisfaction the smooth democratic transition of power at the Centre and provinces, hoping that the post elections environment would bring in desired political and economic stability resulting into peace and prosperity for the people. The forum expressed

that it strongly believed that democratic consolidation was the way forward for the country. The conference affirmed that the military leadership was cognizant of the full spectrum of the challenges and threats, and "it remains committed to shoulder its constitutionally mandated responsibilities with support of the resilient people of Pakistan". The forum reiterated to continue providing full support to the government in combating security threats and uplifting the socioeconomic growth in the country, including wholehearted assistance in curbing all illegal activities including smuggling, hoarding, electricity theft, implementation of One Document Regime and respectable & safe repatriation of all illegal foreigners. In line with the prime minister's resolve, the forum committed that planners, instigators, abettors and perpetrators and desecrators of Shuhada monuments and attackers of military installations on 9th May, would certainly be brought to justice under the relevant provisions of the law and Constitution. In that regard, it added, malicious efforts to create distortions, confusion and disinformation were absolutely futile and only part of an organised campaign being launched for narrow political interests, to blur the abhorrent activities that took place. The participants affirmed that the Pakistan Army would continue defending and serving the nation in every possible way in its journey towards enduring stability, prosperity and security. The COAS stressed on field commanders to continue maintaining high standards of professionalism, operational preparedness and motivation during operations and achieving excellence during training of the formations.

Compensation of losses caused....

Continued from page 1
officers of provincial government. However, the process would remain continued till complete rehabilitation of the affectees, Mir Sarfraz Bugti maintained. He said that the affected people should not consider themselves alone in hard time. He assured that the government would mobilize all available resources for rehabilitation of the affectees. Also present on the occasion were the members of national and provincial assemblies, Speaker Baluchistan Assembly, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, besides other high ups. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister also met the affected families and inquired about the relief work continued there. He also distributed relief goods among them.

PTI submits resolution in NA demanding release of Imran, other party leaders

ISLAMABAD (INP): The PTI has submitted a resolution in the National Assembly calling for the immediate release of party founder Imran Khan. The resolution has signatures of all PTI-backed lawmakers. It demands that all the "illegal" first information reports registered against Imran, be quashed and that he be immediately released. It alleges that all the cases against the PTI founder were lodged on the basis of "political re-

Rain affectees would not be left....

Continued from page 1
role and services rendered by Pak Army, Navy, Coast Guards, NDMA, PDMA and local administration for provision of timely relief to the affected people in Gwadar. He asked the Chief Minister to officially encourage and commend the services of all those who served the cause of humanity. It may be mentioned here that it was the first visit of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to anywhere after assuming his office.

venge" and with the aim of keeping the ex-premier away from the public eye. "The unfair use of law should immediately be stopped," the resolution says. It also demands the release of incarcerated PTI leaders including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi, Ijaz Chaudhry and others. The resolution further demands that journalists Imran Riaz Khan and Asad Toor should be immediately set free.

PAKISTAN RAILWAYS Divisional Office, Quetta

OPEN BID AUCTION OF SHOPS, AGRICULTURE LAND & NURSERIES OVER PAKISTAN RAILWAYS, QUETTA DIVISION.

Pakistan Railways intends to hold open auction of shops, agricultural land and nurseries. The detail of land lease auction is as under:

S. No.	Date of auction	Purposes.	Location	Period.	Participation fee	Bid Security money.	Venue of auction
1	25.03.2024	50 Nos New shops	Near Railway Station, Kuchlak	5+5 Years	Rs. 5000/- (non-refundable)	Rs. 100000/-	DS Office, Quetta
2	26.03.2024	03 Nos New Shops	Joint Road, Quetta	5+5 Years	Rs. 10000/- (non-refundable)	Rs. 150000/-	-do-
3	27.03.2024	04 Nos Agricultural Plots	Quetta, Gulistan, Bostan, Sibi	3+2 Years	Rs. 5000/- (non-refundable)	Rs. 50000/-	-do-
4	28.03.2024	02 Nos Nurseries	Airport Road, Quetta	3+2 Years	Rs. 5000/- (non-refundable)	Rs. 50000/-	-do-
5	30.03.2024	06 Nos Old Shops	Chakir Khan Road, Sibi	5+5 Years	Rs. 10000/- (non-refundable)	Rs. 150000/-	AEN Office, Sibi

- Open auction will be conducted for above noted Railway land as per period mentioned as per prevailing policy.
- Bid security money in shape of Cash Deposit Receipt (CDR) from Scheduled Bank in the name of Divisional Accounts Officer, Pakistan Railways, Quetta will be deposited by the bidder/participant for each bid for item. The bid security money will be returned/refunded to un-successful bidders and will be adjusted in payable of successful bidder. In case successful bidder does not deposit the payables, the bid security shall be forfeited. No bidder will be allowed to participate in auction without CDR of bid security.
- The Railway Authority reserves the right to accept or reject the bidder bids without assigning any reasons.
- Auction forms can be obtained from the Office of the Divisional Office, Pakistan Railways, Quetta.
- Other terms & conditions will be mentioned in auction forms.

For Divisional Superintendent PAK Railways, Quetta PID(Q)266/23

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Japan provides grant assistance to five NGOs for development projects in Pak

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Government of Japan has decided to provide grant assistance up to USD 300,800 (equivalent to around PKR 84 million) in total to five local NGOs for development projects in Pakistan. Three out of the five projects are flood rehabilitation projects in the areas affected by the 2022 Pakistan floods.

The grant contracts were signed between His Excellency, Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and representatives of the five NGOs at the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad on March 5, 2024. The five NGOs that will implement the projects are (1) Association for Behavior & Knowledge Transformation (ABKT), (2) Fortified Services for Reforms & Transformation (FSRT), (3) Actions For Human Advancement (AHAT), (4) Lok Sudhar Association and (5) Safe Hands Foundation.

ABKT will receive a USD 63,518 grant (equivalent to around PKR 17.7 million) to reconstruct three flood-damaged sus-

pension bridges in District Upper Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This project will enhance the security of school children and local community members when natural disasters such as flood occur. It will also provide a safe passage to the school children as well as the local people to reach their school safely in this area. FSRT will receive a USD 60,506 grant (equivalent to around PKR 16.8 million) to reconstruct flood-affected school building for girls' primary course in Malakand Division, District Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This project will provide school children with a safe place for learning, resulting in improving overall literacy rate of Swat, a city with one of the lowest literacy rates in Pakistan. AHAT will receive a USD 57,684 grant (equivalent to around PKR 16 million) to reconstruct a flood-affected primary and middle school in Tehsil Jampur, District Rajanpur, Punjab. This project will enhance learning environment for the children in one of the most flood-affected areas during the 2022

floods in Pakistan. Lok Sudhar Association will receive a USD 51,407 grant (equivalent to around PKR 14.3 million) to establish an ophthalmology operation theater to expand eye care facility in Havelian, District Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This facility will provide eye-related treatment to the patients in accessible and affordable way. In particular, the people will have the opportunity to access to cataract surgery for the first time in this locality. This project will lead to the improvement of the health sector in the area. Safe Hands Foundation will receive a USD 67,685 grant (equivalent to around PKR 19 million) to construct the primary-school building to promote child education in village Khaista Gul Kalay, District Khyber in KP. The project will provide, in one of the most deserving and vulnerable areas, the school building equipped with a solar system that can accommodate about 200 primary school children including those currently studying in an open-air classroom.



ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib of Pakistan, Mr Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Saudi ambassador pledges assistance for conjoined twins in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf Al Maliki Tuesday offered generous assistance for the medical treatment of conjoined twins born to economically disadvantaged families in Pakistan. He stated in a meeting with Managing Director of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) Syed Tariq Mahmood-ul-Hassan here.

Admiring the PBM's distinguished pro-poor ser-

VICES, the Saudi Envoy announced that conjoined children, referred by PBM, would be offered the modern medical services in a state-of-the-art Hospital in Saudi Arabia sponsored by King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Centre (KSrelief).

While expressing his gratitude to Saudi Envoy for extending such a kind aid for the poor populace of the country, the MD

marked this initiative an imperative allowing the children to enjoy healthy, normal and independent lives.

In a statement, Syed TM Hassan also requested the respected media representatives to be part of this noble cause by making us accessible to poor families with conjoined children. PBM's toll free number is 0800-66666 and www.pbm.gov.pk is its official website.

Samana developers teams up with DHA for Pakistan projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Samana Developers, a leading real estate company in Dubai, has signed joint venture agreements with Defence Housing Authority (DHA) to develop mixed-use projects in various DHAs across the country, focusing on DHA Islamabad and DHA City Karachi.

The agreements were signed on the sidelines of the busy International Property Show Dubai between Imran Farooq, CEO of Samana Developers, and Brigadier Muqem Ahmed Subhani, Director Joint Ventures Cell at Defence Housing Authority, along with the presence of high officials from both sides.

The partnership marks the commencement of a new era of luxury developments across Pakistan.

The parties will delve into the feasibility and potential of transformative projects, covering a spectrum of developments, from infrastructure to entertainment arenas, hospitality hubs, and residential complexes.

Simultaneously, Samana Developers initiated a strategic partnership with Pakistan Defence Officers Housing Authority City Karachi (DCK).

This Joint Venture, also inked at the International Property Show, centres around exploring and

developing mixed-use entities within DHA City Karachi.

DHA City Karachi joint venture was led by Brig Syed Imran Naqvi (Retd), Executive Director Special Projects at DHA City Karachi, and Imran Farooq, CEO of Samana Developers, focuses on evaluating a substantial 7.4-acre land bank in the Healthcare District of DHA City Karachi, with an aim to bring forth residential and commercial projects aligned with the developmental vision of DHA City Karachi.

Imran Farooq, CEO of Samana Developers, while expressing excitement about this significant milestone, commented: "Our entry into Pakistan's real estate market is a landmark moment. We are eager to contribute our expertise and resources to the development of high-quality projects in Pakistan, starting from Islamabad and Karachi, and setting new benchmarks for quality and innovation in Pakistan."

Samana Developers envisions these partnerships as a catalyst for sustainable urban development in Pakistan.

The commitment to exploring and developing mixed-use entities underscores a dedication to creating communities that seamlessly blend residential, commercial, and recreational spaces.



ISLAMABAD: Volunteers distribute free food among deserving people at Jannah Super area.

BISP utilizes social media platforms for public awareness about schemes

ISLAMABAD (APP): As a part of its efforts to provide authentic information about various pro-poor schemes, the internationally acclaimed Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is utilizing different social media platforms to facilitate existing and intending beneficiaries and counter fake information.

The BISP has earlier launched its Whatsapp channel for disseminating public awareness about its initiatives which has now over 7,000 followers.

According to an official source, the BISP had urged the existing and intending beneficiaries to follow the official Whatsapp channel of BISP to get all the valid information about the programmes.

Earlier the BISP, under the supervision of Chairperson BISP, Dr. Aamjad Saqib has launched a modern call center in collaboration with the National Telecommunication Corporation for providing authentic information related to the programme and promptly addressing grievances.

The individuals can contact the call center at 080026477 to register complaints or seek information about the program.

Listing other initiatives taken by the BISP, the official source revealed that the launch of BISP Saving Scheme, Mobile Registration Centers, establishment of Endowment Fund, Digital and Financial Literacy Training for women.

NUST Career Connect attracts over 100 leading employers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Around 2500 final-year students of the National University of Sciences and Technology availed NUST Career Connect 2024 to appear in on-spot interviews with leading national and multinational companies at the university's main campus. A total of 114 companies set up their stalls at the career fair, including P&G, Loreal, Food Panda, Total Parco, English Biscuits Manufactures, Packages, National Logistics Cell, Netsol Technologies, Pak Arab Refinery Limited, Jazz, Zong, Kohinoor Textile Mills, State Bank of Pakistan, and BoP to name a few. Speaking at the event, Dr Rizwan Riaz, NUST Pro-Research, Innovation and Commercialisation.



ISLAMABAD: Participants of singing competition pose for group photo at IMCG F11/3.

PML-N leader invites Opp. to cooperate with govt for taking country out of crises

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader PML-N Qaisar Ahmed Sheikh Tuesday stressed that it is the need of the hour that opposition parties must cooperate with the government to bring the country out of difficult times.

The government is determined to provide relief to the masses in terms of gas and electricity, he said while talking to Radio Pakistan's current Affairs Program.

Moreover, the government is also keen to strengthen its bilateral relations with all the neighboring countries, he added.

After his election as a Prime Minister, Mian

Shehbaz Sharif in his first address highlighted some major challenges that the country is facing, he mentioned.

The major challenges include balance of payment issues, trade deficit, energy shortfall and many others, he highlighted.

He further said that after the 18th amendment, the federal government distributes the funds to the provinces and left with nothing to pay the salaries and other allowances to the federal employees.

The main focus of the incumbent government will be to revive the economy and bring it back on the right track, he said.

Modi's visit to IoK an attempt to deflect attention away from real issue: Wani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prominent Hurriyat leader and vice chairman Jammu and Kashmir National Front (JKNF) has termed the Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to occupied Kashmir as an attempt to deflect world attention away from the real issue.

In a statement issued here Tuesday, Wani said that the Indian Prime Minister's visit has nothing to do with Kashmir, but the purpose of holding large-scale public gatherings for Modi in Kashmir was meant to boost up prospects for his party's success in the upcoming general elections.

He said that it was quite unfortunate that the man who's hands were soaked with the blood of Kashmiri and Indian Muslims was being projected as

a hero by the Indian establishment.

Reiterating his party's full support to the APHC's call for a complete strike on Thursday, the APHC leader appealed the Kashmiri people to observe complete strike on the day to expose Indian government's nefarious designs in the region.

Urging the Indian government to stop this senseless game of peddling lies to achieve its political agenda, Wani said that Indian leaders must realize that in this digital era they can no longer hide their lives or conceal anything about Kashmir from the outer world.

Kashmiris, he said, have neither accepted the India's control of their motherland in the past nor do they accept the authoritarian measures the Modi

government has taken on and after 5th August 2019.

"Kashmir is a UN recognized disputed territory and it will remain as so until the issue is resolved as per the UNSC resolutions", he said, adding that the Modi and his party's divisive agenda was bound to fail in Kashmir.

Reiterating the Kashmiris' persistent demand for the settlement of the Kashmir dispute, Wani said that it was high time that the Indian government should realize that it can not do away with the Kashmir issue simply by changing the region's demography, its political landscape, choking the voices of dissent, banning legitimate political voices and caging political leaders who dare to speak and call spade a spade.



ISLAMABAD: National Logistics Corporation (NLC) in coordination with local administration recovered the last Chinese vehicle that overturned due to heavy snowfall at Khunjerab pass

Capital administration successfully achieves target to identify, enroll out of school Children: DG PIE

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Director-General of PIE, Dr Muhammad Shahid Soroya, on Tuesday successfully achieved targets to raise the number of school goers in Islamabad city where every children attaining the age of education were being enrolled with establishing evening and afternoon in formal schools.

Pakistan Institute of Education PIE DG while talking to a Private news channel said that his campaign "Zero Out-of-School Children (ZOOSC)" in Islamabad in collaboration with JICA and the Ministry of Education and Professional Training was successfully achieving its targets.

He said that under this campaign, more than 71,000 children have been enrolled in schools in Islamabad, bringing the number of out-of-school children in the capital to zero.

He said that the government wanted to provide education to every child in the province and in this regard, the drive had been launched.

"The government is providing all the facilities to the children free books and better environment in the educational institutions," he said.

He said that teachers

are visiting the nearby localities of their schools and prepare a list of the children and they are convincing the parents to send their children to schools.

Shahid said various techniques were being used for the success of this campaign, adding, we had converted our FD schools in evening and afternoon classes.

He also thanked everyone involved and highlighted the challenges they faced, especially in ensuring equal access to education. The success of this campaign may inspire similar efforts across Pakistan to reduce the number of children not attending school, he added.

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Action against traffic rules violators ongoing through E-Challan system

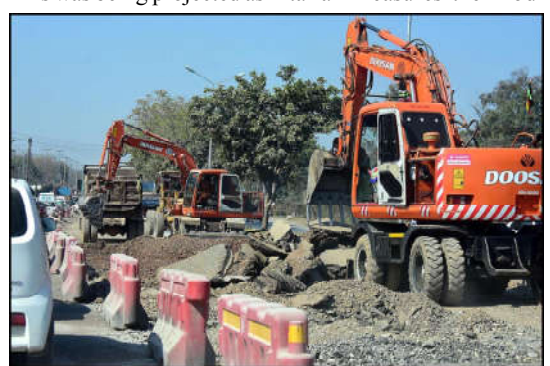
Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the directions of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police are taking effective action against traffic rules violators through the e-challan system, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the Islamabad Capital Police suspended 260 driving licenses of e-challan defaulters, gave warnings to 178 individuals, and decided to issue legal notices to 106 defaulters.

Moreover, the Islamabad Capital Police ensured the payment of 2,462 pending e-challan from 1,508 offenders through the Driving License

Management System.

Additionally, the Islamabad Capital Police have formed special police teams to ensure the dispatch and completion of challan at the registered residential addresses of drivers violating traffic laws, to ensure the smooth traffic system in the city. E-Challan offenders will be deprived of any facilities provided by the police without paying their challans. Furthermore, the vehicles of persistent E-Challan offenders are being traced through Safe City modern brief cams and Safe City cameras to fulfill legal requirements. Citizens can check their challans on the official website of Islamabad Capital Police at www.islamabadpolice.gov.pk or by entering their vehicle.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used during the extension of Park road.

SSDO applauds inclusion of trafficking charge in Rizwana child abuse case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) has applauded the recent decision by the Judicial Magistrate of Islamabad to include Section 3 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (TIP Act) in the First Information Report (FIR) related to the Rizwana child domestic labor and torture case.

The case gained notoriety in July 2023 when Rizwana, a child domestic worker, accused the wife of a judge, Sonia Asim, of torture and abuse, said a news release here on Tuesday.

Rizwana reported being deprived of food and confined to a room for days. Subsequent medical examination revealed she suffered from sepsis, lung infection, and possible poisoning,

highlighting the severity of the abuse.

The court's denial of bail to Ms. Asim underscores the seriousness of the case, which has sparked outrage and renewed calls for protecting vulnerable individuals, particularly child domestic workers, in Pakistan.

SSDO stands in solidarity with Rizwana and all victims of trafficking and abuse, advocating for justice and safeguarding their rights.

On February 16, a significant step towards justice was achieved when the judicial magistrate ordered the inclusion of Section 3 of the TIP Act in the FIR.

This decision came despite initial resistance from law enforcement and prosecution to pursue charges under the act.

AIOU holds seminar on Islamic Criminal Law

ISLAMABAD (APP): A one-day seminar on Islamic Criminal Law was held in Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in connection with the celebrations of its Golden Jubilee.

Secretary, Chief Justice of Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq was the keynote speaker. Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi hosted the event.

Faculty members and principal officers participated in the event. During his address, Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq provided detailed explanations of pre- and post-independence criminal and punishment laws. He also discussed Indian Penal Code and post-1977 era, laws related to Hudud, Qisas and Diyat, as well as the establishment and services of the Islamic Ideology Council and the Federal Sharia court.

Dr. Mushtaq said that criminal laws need to be harmonized with Islamic teachings. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi said that a conference on the objectives of Sharia will be held soon in which Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq will be specially invited to express his views.

He said the faculty has started the series of keynote addresses in Islamabad for which 100 topics were selected, of which 23 have been delivered.

COMSTECH, Al-Shifa Trust team conduct free cataract eye surgeries in Somalia

ISLAMABAD (APP): The eight-member dedicated medical team of COMSTECH and Al-Shifa Trust has successfully conducted more than 200 free cataract surgeries at Dalmar Hospital in Mogadishu, Somalia. According to COMSTECH, the Al-Shifa team not only performed surgeries but also provided training to doctors at Dalmar Hospital in cataract surgeries, thereby bolstering the medical team is conducting free cataract eye

surgeries during a ten-day-long camp from March 01-10. Overall, more than 400 cataract surgeries will be performed, restoring vision and improving the lives of hundreds of people in Somalia. The free cataract eye surgery camp was announced by the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) in collaboration with Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, Rawalpindi under the special instructions.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers planting sepal of flowers on the green belt area at Shakarparian in the federal capital.

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Reserved seats

The ECP's decision to deny the Sunni Ittehad Council — the new home of PTI-affiliated lawmakers who won the Feb 8 polls as independent candidates — a share of the special seats reserved for women and minorities has come as a disappointment to those who believed in the fairness of the electoral process.

Even though the much-delayed ECP decision, the latest in a series of moves ostensibly aimed at keeping the PTI out of elections and parliament, was not unexpected, many had hoped that the spirit of democracy would prevail over the technicalities cited by the ECP to justify its action.

According to the ECP, the SIC could not stake a claim to a share in the reserved seats "due to having non-curable legal defects and violation of a mandatory provision of submission of party list for reserved seats which is the requirement of law". It defended its decision by pointing out that the SIC had not contested the elections for any seat in the national or provincial assemblies.

That is not all. The ECP generated more debate by allocating what many see as the SIC's share of reserved seats to other political parties. By saying that "the seats in the National Assembly shall not remain vacant", it has indirectly accepted the argument that the Lower House as well as three provincial assemblies, barring Balochistan, were incomplete when they elected the Speaker, deputy Speaker, the prime minister and the chief ministers.

According to media reports, the SIC's combined loss amounts to 77 seats in the national and provincial assemblies.

The ECP might have its own logic but its order does ignore past precedent. For instance, the Balochistan Awami Party, which did not contest the first post-merger polls in former Fata, was allowed a reserved women's seat after independents joined the party. Meanwhile, a 2018 Lahore High Court judgement held that a political party's share of reserved seats was non-transferable. The ruling had come after a Returning Officer did not accept PTI nominees for reserved seats due to a slight delay in the submission of names.

In short, the ECP has exacerbated the crisis it triggered when it denied the PTI its election symbol, again on technical grounds — a decision controversially upheld by the apex court. Like the party symbol issue, the legality of the latest ECP determination will also be decided by the superior judiciary.

Unless addressed, such debatable actions will continue to impede the growth of democracy in the country. Today, these decisions are affecting the PTI; tomorrow other parties, which, for the moment, can enjoy their share of reserved seats and see their numerical strength enhanced in the assemblies, might find themselves at the receiving end when they fall out with the powers that be.

Abbas Nasir

Against the backdrop of dark clouds, there have also been hints of a silver lining and these have come in the form of patriarchal Pakistan's incredible women excelling in all spheres such as activism-human rights and politics, providing outstanding examples of dedication to duty.

As the PPP was coming in for criticism for naming a brand new entrant to the party as chief minister of Balochistan, whose claim to fame is his total endorsement of the state's security policy in the gravely wounded province, a Baloch daughter was doing herself and her people proud.

Yes, while the PPP was enabling the non-civilian partner in the current hybrid system to gain the upper hand in Balochistan and party leader Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari was said to be making his way to Quetta for the oath-taking of 'my chief minister' to join the movers and shakers of provincial politics,

the tears of the rain-ravaged, waterlogged population of Gwadar were being wiped by a young woman called Mahrang Baloch.

She was wading through knee-deep water in the narrow lanes of Gwadar bastis to inquire after those who remain waterlogged even after three days of flash floods. Those at the helm were busy in their power games in Quetta and Islamabad-Rawalpindi.

Despite the chokehold being applied on the social media platform and access to it frustratingly inconsistent, someone remarked on X that Mahrang Baloch is the opposition that the new Balochistan government will need to confront, and not that sitting across the aisle from it in the assembly hall.

As Ms Baloch demonstrated during her recent march to and sit-in in Islamabad, her support and legitimacy come from her moral charisma rather than anything else. She is a reminder why the state needs to engage with those holding an opinion different from it

and attempt to win them over with deeds rather than trying to eliminate them under a hammerhead. A clear-headed young woman not shying away from saying what is right in a largely patriarchal and oppressive society and one who has the courage to march hundreds of kilometres from Turbat to the federal capital to be heard.

It is a tragedy for the state that it chose not to hear her and also used the office of caretaker prime minister not to apply a healing touch but to cast aspersions and question the legitimacy of her cause. She appeared taller than those who sought to diminish her.

The other woman of note is Maryam Nawaz Sharif. She has taken over as Punjab's — in fact, the country's — first woman chief minister. While there may be many question marks over the electoral win of her party, she was off to a flying start after her election in the Punjab Assembly.

Seeing the speeches of her two male counterparts in Sindh and KP af-

ter their election as provincial chief executives, it was clear that neither had done as much homework — one of them had done none at all — as she did for her maiden speech. I would have liked her speech to have been written and delivered with a tad more brevity but that is the only criticism.

Let's see how much of her proposed agenda Ms Sharif is able to implement. Her party's fate hinges on that. With her father's counsel perpetually with her and the support of the federal government, with her uncle as prime minister, a foregone conclusion, she will have only herself to blame if she does not succeed. There can be no denying the PTI is now challenging PML-N in its power base of Punjab just as the PML-N challenged PPP in the early 1990s onwards, more or less eliminating the latter from the province in the 2013 elections. So, all eyes will be on her. Her energy and determination will be her major assets.

While on Punjab,

surely, one would be remiss in not mentioning the young police officer ASP Syeda Sheherbano Naqvi who saved a woman, surrounded by an angry mob, from certain harm, by her courage and steel nerves. Wish more officers would display such dedication to public service and commitment to doing their job. Kudos to her. But it must also be said that she is now left alone to do what she does best: her job. Who doesn't know how desperate we are for feel-good factors and none better than heroic deeds to provide these.

Let's not overdo it though. While there was so much positive to focus on women, there was an appalling incident in the KP Assembly which cannot be condemned enough. On its inaugural day, PML-N MPA Sobia Shahid walked into the assembly hall, waving a wristwatch at the members and PTI supporters alike.

This was provocative no doubt as she was using the Toshakhana case to mock PTI sup-

porters. But what followed was what no man has ever faced in any assembly in recent times. She was bombarded with shoes, water bottles, cigarette packs from the galleries. This was not all. She was subjected to verbal abuse and given the vilest of sobriquets that I am too ashamed to repeat. This should be unacceptable but it isn't as the chief minister, too, did not condemn the incident or apologise for it.

It can't be stressed enough that the examples mentioned in the piece at the beginning are no more than tiny hints of a silver lining given what our women have to face at the hands of so many of our men every day.

While we are lauding women and their resilience, it would be in order to mention Dr Yasmin Rashid, Aliya Hamza, Sanam Javed and others like them who remain incarcerated for their beliefs whether you agree with them or not. And this when those who have openly violated their oath of office and shrugged aside the Constitution are thriving in freedom. -- Courtesy Dawn

Women define leadership

Legacy of the caretakers

Muhammad Amir Rana

The formation of the new governments at the centre and in the provinces has arguably been completed under strict cyber surveillance, coupled with the silencing of dissenting voices. The political landscape is still in a state of flux, with uncertainty and dissatisfaction regarding the election results. The hope is that this will somehow help cultivate long-awaited stability in the country, which is essential for economic recovery. It is still being determined what wonders the PML-N-led coalition government can perform that the country's longest-serving caretaker set-up did not attempt.

The caretaker government was an 'extension' of the Pakistan Democratic Movement coalition government, as the establishment deployed it to ensure the continuity of reforms under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and fulfil its restructuring commitments with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The last PDM government had ensured through its cabinet decision that the caretaker govern-

ment would continue pursuing the agenda it had crafted with the help of the establishment.

The carefully chosen caretakers, who enjoyed the unwavering support of institutions, beyond the reach of any elected government, may have set a precedent that the new coalition government will struggle to match. As chief of army staff, Gen Asim Munir had indicated the future government may not have unfettered control in running the state. He had outlined the future political trajectory and foreign policy while addressing students from various universities just weeks before the general elections, emphasising, according to reports, that a five-year term does not grant a licence to misgovern, and urging the youth to elect representatives cautiously, free from monetary or propaganda influence, including social media.

However, the caretakers themselves ruled with an iron fist, making critical policy decisions with no regard for their constitutional limits. Whether the caretakers achieved their desired stability remains in question. In a social media

thread, senior journalist Benazir Shah recalled the unconstitutional and extralegal measures taken by the federal and Punjab caretakers, arguing they strengthened the hybrid system at democracy's expense. Conscientious political leaders and opinion-makers raised similar concerns, but their observations were conveniently ignored by their own parties, likely due to their thirst for power. Notably, the caretakers failed to fulfil their core mandate of assisting the Election Commission of Pakistan in ensuring free and fair elections.

All the administrative or policy decisions the caretakers have taken can be reversed, but their major offence was providing full support to the establishment in tightening its control and adopting a more hard-line approach to dealing with dissent in the country, whether from political, nationalist parties, civil society, or the media. YouTuber Asad Ali Toor was the latest victim of this approach. The caretakers strengthened the notion of impunity for the security agencies and crafted arguments in their support.

Slightly different

from past caretaker set-ups, the last caretakers came from a background of juggling opinions and provided full support in strengthening the establishment's doctrine of zero tolerance. This approach was not only exhibited in the political domain but also in dealing with the issues of Afghan refugees and Baloch missing persons. They were seen to help the establishment craft arguments to eliminate mediating forces between the state and insurgents or hard-line nationalists. They vocally argued that nationalist political actors facilitated the insurgents, and their attitude heavily impacted the Baloch and Pakhtun nationalist parties, who are still protesting against alleged election rigging. The underlying approach was to recognise the perceived enemy and deal with them with full force.

This approach prevented state institutions from negotiating with Dr Mahrang Baloch, who led the missing persons protest sit-in in Islamabad. This was a missed opportunity for the state to open a door for reconciliation and begin healing the

wounds of the Baloch people. It is expected that state institutions will continue their so-called 'zero tolerance' approach with the help of their cronies, leaving no room for the reconciliation necessary for meaningful engagement with nationalists and civil society.

The problem with the 'zero-tolerance doctrine', also referred to as the 'doctrine of strength', is that while it may silence opposition, it cannot offer long-lasting solutions to problems such as the insurgency in Balochistan, the banned Treek-i-Taliban Pakistan and its terrorist affiliates, and the lack of social and political cohesion between the country's power centres and peripheries. A nation's internal strength does not rely on suppression but on a strong social contract built by including all stakeholders.

Additionally, the 'doctrine of strength' is ineffective in addressing external affairs and economic recovery, which require flexibility and adaptation to ground realities. This was evident during the caretaker government's tenure, where they demonstrated

considerable flexibility in securing deals with the IMF and loan rollovers from China and the Gulf countries.

Though the caretakers are leaving behind multiple challenges for the new government, it remains to be seen how much confidence the establishment will bestow upon the new government to silence its critics. Internal cohesion, civil liberties, a free media, and democracy would not be the new government's priority, and it will leave it to the establishment to deal with it in its own way. Securing deals with the IMF and economic recovery will be the new prime minister's priority. Inflation and interest rates have reached their peak, leaving the new government with little choice but to accept a new IMF programme on harsh terms. One possible solution for the new government would be to follow the governance model established by the caretakers. This would involve visiting campuses and offering explanations and justifications for the state institutions' positions on various issues, ranging from defence to the economy. -- Courtesy Dawn

Common ground

Arooj Waheed Dar

In the run-up to the Feb 8 polls, extensive promises were made to the public by political parties in their election manifestos and speeches. However, post-election, many individuals seem to be suffering from selective amnesia, with some backtracking from their strong stance against other parties, and others conveniently forgetting their resentment against the establishment.

Amid this air of forgetfulness, it is crucial to remind political representatives of the promises they made in their poll campaigns. Holding parties accountable for their performance is crucial to steer Pakistan towards stability and progress, and to ensure that the trust of the people is upheld, democratic principles respected, and the nation's long-term interests safeguarded.

Given our economic and social challenges, collective commitment from all political stakeholders is urgently required for transformative reforms. Since the new government is a minority dispensation, there is a real opportunity for parties to jointly develop a charter of economy, comprising at the minimum what the PML-N and PPP individually promised in their manifestos.

A comparison of their election manifestos reveals significant areas of common ground, providing a foundation for further discussion between the two parties as well as others representing political rivals. For instance, both indicate the need to create better employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, introducing a labour policy to protect the rights of informal workers, and to promote decent work. Both also

mention enhancing the focus on the IT, tourism, and smart agriculture sectors. To manage the current account deficit, their aim is to boost exports, curtail imports, and lower tariffs on raw material imports, thereby fostering growth in the manufacturing sector.

In terms of infrastructure development, the parties recognise the need for investment in transportation, with particular focus on rural development, to address regional inequalities. They understand the need to leverage CPEC's full potential for regional development. Energy sector reforms have also been promised, aimed at enhancing efficiency, promoting conservation, and increasing reliance on alternative and renewable sources of energy.

To address fiscal challenges and ensure sustainable domestic resource mobilisation, they have promised the implementation of SOE and tax reforms. Civil service reforms that emphasise meritocracy, accountability, and capacity development have also been outlined. Most importantly, both the PPP and PML-N have stressed the need to fully devolve powers to the provincial and local levels, thereby empowering local governments.

Moreover, both have pledged to provide universal healthcare and education, and to enhance the social security net through the expansion of the BISP and Ehsaas programmes. They have highlighted the need for inclusivity by promoting equal rights for marginalised segments, in particular women. Fulfilling this promise is essential to show strong resolve for good governance. Merit and experience must supersede family ties, particularly in the appointment of prominent cabinet positions.

It is important to note that these promises are not new; these political parties have been making the same promises in every election cycle, as evident from a review of their manifestos. However, their actions or apathy have frequently negated these promises.

For instance, these flag-bearers of dynastic politics persist in appointing individuals to top party and government positions based on lineage and family links, contradicting their stated commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities. Even women who are brought to the forefront to make a case for gender equality often appear to have defied merit and experience to assume their positions. Such actions not only undermine inclusivity, but also governance as a whole.

Despite repeated commitments to enact tax and SOE reforms, neither party has taken significant steps towards implementation. Even basic measures, such as integration of e-governance and the full adoption of the Single Treasury Account to improve accountability, have yet to materialise.

Most importantly, not only do the promises to establish fiscal sustainability in Pakistan remain unfulfilled, but the crisis was exacerbated through the implementation of unsustainable populist measures, such as a fixed exchange rate, inadequate tariffs, delays in going to the IMF, and so on.

Having formed a coalition government against a wider public mandate, there is no excuse for the PML-N and PPP to not deliver on their common promises this time around. Pakistan cannot take any more dis-appointments. -- Courtesy Dawn

Destined to fail?

Dr Niaz Murtaza

Destiny in social science refers to likely cause and effect links versus a pre-ordained view of fatalism. One such political link is that the quality of outcomes of a regime depends on the quality of its strategies, which depends on its team quality. I used this link to predict early in the PTI's term that it wouldn't do well given its team. As the PML-N arguably pursues narrow interests over merit in filling key posts, I fear the same now, more so as we are close to doom.

We face urgent economic and security issues plus social, political and external ones. The key post to tackle them is the prime minister's. In Shehbaz Sharif, the PML-N has opted for a drab but able manager — one who is good at running local projects rather than being a strong federal leader. The last time he cut a sorry figure in managing the economy, foreign policy and security, and was a mere appendage caught between the powerful establishment and his elder brother Nawaz Sharif. The same seems likely now.

The economy posts are the next key ones — that of the finance minister but also those of industry, investment, commerce, IT and planning. Our socioeconomic musts are fourfold: stability (most urgent), productivity, equity and sustainability. The finance minister ensures economic stability. But recent finance ministers such as Ishaq Dar and Shaukat Tarin favoured the elites and undermined macro-stability. We need a finance minister with a solid education and experience in macro-economic stability who can curb fiscal and external deficits as well as ensure durable

growth in tax and export revenues and jobs. This rules out Dar and also people like Hafeez Shaikh, who loyally implement IMF policies that neglect growth.

But stability alone doesn't result in durable growth. Growth and productivity require experts in the other ministries mentioned, who can creatively identify new investment, industrial and export avenues via a strong industrial policy, as done by the Asian Tigers. The PML-N must field strong, dynamic people with vast experience. But the trends look bad. Cutting fiscal deficits would require the party to tax and/or remove subsidies from its core elite base. Cutting external deficits and enhancing productivity would require creativity that the old guard lacks. Thus, all key economic aims appear tough to achieve.

Ensuring equity and sustainability requires experts in ministries for social areas like climate change, poverty alleviation, health, education, population, labour and agriculture. Besides a strong industrial policy, we need strong agricultural, informal sector and labour policies as most of the poor work in these areas. The PPP has more expertise here than the PML-N, which specialises in physical projects. But even the PPP focuses on band-aids rather than root causes. It must review its cabinet decision and also appoint competent people to influential policy indirectly.

The main security threats relate to the TTP, Balochistan, India and societal extremism. A role for the establishment in security policy under civilian sway can give benefits. Unlike the economy,

they have some understanding here. Nawaz Sharif, even informally, can provide the impetus for peace with India given his past forays with the BJP. Peace with India is the single change that can have ripple effects in all realms — economic, social, foreign, political and security. As president, Asif Zardari with his Baloch roots, provincial set-up and reconciliation politics, can help end the Baloch stand-off. But for all this, the establishment cannot maintain total control on security policy. A set-up that won power with establishment aid will struggle to wrest space from it. On the TTP and other extremists, the PML-N has a mixed record. It wanted curbs on jihadis but pursued peace with TTP

initially and its key leaders have close extremist ties.

We badly need a new and creative foreign policy that balances our ties with China and Western states. Our Constitution and institutions lie in tatters given the political tussles of recent years. But a regime with dubious legitimacy is ill-placed to fix them.

There are then huge gaps in the competence required to tackle our challenges. Where the coalition will have authority, it may lack capacity and vice versa. The good news from social science is that effects and outcomes can change if one changes the causes. Simply put, if the PML-N wants good outcomes after five years, it can make them more likely by ensuring greater competence today.

Otherwise, with each passing day, the path will increase the prospects of doom and another establishment-imposed set-up will fail. -- Courtesy Dawn

Governor KP chairs senate meeting of UoM, directs to reduce fees

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Tuesday chaired a senate meeting of University of Malakand (UoM) that discussed approval and legal status of varsity statutes.

The meeting was attended by Vice Chancellor UoM, Dr Rasheed Ahmad and officials concerned of higher education, law, establishment and finance.

The meeting discussed legal aspects of the statutes and concurred to send them to varsity's senate subcommittee to remove legal lacunas in one month period.

The participants also discussed extension of contract employees that are working in the university. The meeting was told

contract employees have completed three-year period but the new appointments were stopped by election commission due to current general elections.

Meeting approved six months extension of contract period and directed to ensure policy of merit while making new appointments.

Addressing the meeting, the Governor directed UoM administration to reduce fees and stressed faculty to improve capacity of students keeping in view international standard of education. He said that education must be compatible to contemporary standard adding it would help students to effectively meet challenges of existing scenario.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz presides over the meeting regarding Traffic Management.

Matter of reconciliation with establishment will be decided by PTI founder: Amin Gandapur

RAWALPINDI (Online): Chief Minister (CM) KP Ali Amin Gandapur and Aleema Khan sister of former chairman PTI met PTI founder in central Jail Adiala Tuesday.

They exchanged views on political situation of KP in the meeting held in conference room of jail over one and half hour.

Matter of formation of provincial cabinet also was discussed.

CM KP informed PTI founder about future strategy in the province.

Security was put on high alert on the occasion of arrival of Ali Ameen Gandapur and Aleema Khan in jail.

Talking to media men after meeting, CM KP said former chairman PTI is saying there should be rule of law. We will continue our work as per ideology. We will form such a system that no one could steal mandate in future.

He appealed Chief Justice of Pakistan to constitute commission on May 9 incident. Our

LHC declares non maintainable petition seeking removal Sanjarani

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has declared non maintainable the petition seeking removal of Sadiq Sanjarani from the position of chairman Senate while maintaining registrar office objection on the powers of jurisdiction of court regarding petition.

The petitioner filed by citizen Mashkoor Hussain came up for hearing before Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan of LHC Tuesday.

Sadiq Sanjarani, Election Commission (EC) and others were made respondents in the petition.

The petitioner took the plea in the petition that Sadiq Sanjarani contested election on seat of

provincial assembly Balochistan and he won the election. EC issued notification of his success. Sadiq Sanjarani cannot retain two seats at a time.

Sadiq Sanjarani is working as chairman Senate illegally.

The petitioner requested that EC should order to declare Sadiq Sanjarani seat as senator vacant and restrain him from working as chairman Senate. The court while maintaining registrar office objection on the court's powers of jurisdiction in respect of the petition seeking removal of Sadiq Sanjarani from post of chairman Senate declared the petition non maintainable.



LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usaman Anwar listening to the problems of Police employees and their families at Central Police Office.

CM reviews Ramadan Nigahban Relief Program

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif reviewed the distribution and monitoring of Ramadan Nigahban Relief Programme, here on Tuesday.

Presiding over a meeting, the CM said the process of delivering peoples' right to their doorsteps has begun, adding that distribution of big gifts to the people of Punjab on the occasion of Ramadan has commenced.

The meeting was briefed by the authorities concerned that a fool-proof system has been

developed to ensure transparent distribution of the largest Ramadan relief package to the beneficiaries. The distribution is being monitored with the help of a live dashboard and advanced technology. A helpline has been set up which will be formally launched tomorrow. Beneficiaries will be able to register complaints through the helpline. The chief minister was apprised that data of NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority) and BISP (Benazir Income Support Programme) beneficiaries is

being used for the distribution of Ramadan Nigahban relief packages. It was further briefed that the distribution of Ramadan relief packages will officially start from 2nd of Ramadan, and will be completed by 10th of Ramadan. For the first time in the history of Punjab, Ramadan package is being delivered to every deserving person's home.

The CM directed to ensure high quality of Ramadan package items. "I will not tolerate complaints about the quality of flour, ghee, sugar and other food items," she said.



PESHAWAR: Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Saleem Swati meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

Young generation is our future and we should inculcate habit of book reading in them: Baligh

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that Art, humanities and Literature has profound impact on the society. He expressed these views while addressing a seminar on education and literature held at a local hotel in Lahore today.

Punjab Governor, Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that our young generation is our future and we should inculcate the habit of book reading in them. He said that generally the book reading is on decline in the society but still there are

people who love to read books.

He further said that one should strive for continuous improvement in life. He added that book reading broadens the vision of a person and develops positive character traits in him. He said that many people are doing good work in the society, they should be encouraged so that the process of improvement in life continues.

He said that today's programme is also held to appreciate the literary contribution of Jameel Jalbi. Governor Punjab said that Dr. Jameel Jalbi was a well-known intellectual,



PESHAWAR: Activists of Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) are holding protest rally against the raid on the house of Mahmood Khan Achakzai, Chairman of the PKMAP, at Peshawar press club.

PPPP is voice of poor segment: Shazia Marri

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party Parliamentary Central Information Secretary Shazia Marri on Tuesday said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari raised issues of the people in national assembly.

While addressing a press conference at Bilawal House Media Cell, she said that there had been a lot of political activity in Pakistan for the past few days. Shazia Marri said that the members of the National Assembly were waiting to be sworn in after the notifications.

Stressing the need for talks, she said that the PPP was read for talks for the welfare of the people.

She said that Bilawal Bhutto had said important things in his address on the

floor of the house. Bilawal Bhutto's speech was very balanced one.

Speaking about protest in assembly, she said that the protest was everyone's right but the manner in which the floor of the house was insulted was disappointing.

Marri said that the august forum should be used to solve people's problems. The solution to every problem was not in the privatization of institutions.

The PPPP leader said that the performance of FBR was quite poor and time had come to improve it. The priority of Pakistan People's Party was to solve the problems of the working class and the people, she added.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman addressing a seminar on education and literature held at a local hotel.

13 dead and 1462 injured in 1387 road traffic crashes in Punjab

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Emergency Services Department (ESD) responded to 1387 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. In these RTCs, 06 people died, whereas 1462 were injured. Out of these, 637 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 825 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals.

The majority (73%) involved Motorbikes, therefore effective

enforcement of traffic laws and lane discipline are essential to reduce the increasing number of road traffic crashes.

Furthermore, the analysis showed those 779 drivers, 49 underage drivers, 186 pedestrians, and 510 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 315 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 334 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Faisalabad 101 with 113 victims and at third Gujranwala with 88 RTCs and 97 victims.

CM takes notice of BBA student's killing

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah took notice of the killing of a BBA student Larib here on Tuesday.

He directed the IGP Sindh to arrest the killers of Larib immediately and present an immediate report of the incident to him.

The CM said that there was no room for such incidents and students were our valuable assets.

He directed to increase police pickets and patrols in areas where robbery incidents were high. The chief minister said that the rise in muggings was a cause of concern. He said, "I want atmosphere of peace and order to be maintained in the city."

Trees to be planted in city to control environmental pollution: Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab Tuesday said that climate change was a big challenge for the world including Pakistan; trees would be planted in the city to control environmental pollution.

He said this while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Eco Street project launched by PSO at the Pakistan State Oil head office in Clifton.

He said that PSO ECO Street, sustainable plastic road initiative not only beautified our city but also demonstrated environmental responsibility and community engagement.

"We applaud PSO's commitment to sustainability, fostering a greener urban landscape, and inspiring other corporate entities to invest

in our community's development, we will make this city developed together," he said.

On this occasion, PPP Parliamentary leader in the city council Najmi Alam, Deputy Parliamentary leader Dil Muhammad, Special Representative of Mayor Karachi for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, Managing Director/CEO, PSO Syed Muhammad Taha and others were also present.

The Mayor said that in parallel with the road construction, PSO ECO STREET had committed to a comprehensive beautification of the surrounding area.

The project included the reconstruction and renovation of road median, walkways, transforming them into welcoming spaces for the pedestrians.

Nigehban Ramadan Package launched in Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Soft launching of the Nigehban Ramadan Package took place in Bahawalpur under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa. Under this initiative, Assistant Commissioners distributed food hampers to deserving individuals in the district with their teams.

The purpose of the soft launching for the Nigehban Ramadan Package is to digitally organize data effectively. To ensure the success of the soft launching, a formal app is being used to securely store all data related to the Ramadan

Package. In the Bahawalpur district, food hampers are being respectfully distributed to deserving individuals under the Nigehban Ramadan Package. It was mentioned that food hampers in the Bahawalpur district will be distributed to 256,133 families under the package. The food hampers include high-quality items such as 2 kg rice, 2 kg ghee, 2 kg sugar, 2 kg flour, and 10 kg wheat. Officials from the Punjab Food Authority, Livestock, Food Department, and Industry Department will ensure the quality and specified quantity of items. Through a special calendar formed in this regard.

Commissioner Sukkur chairs meeting of public welfare services

SUKKUR (APP): Divisional Commissioner Sukkur, Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi chaired a meeting with Regional Director and other officers of Social Welfare Department at his office on Tuesday.

The meeting focused on improvement and extension of public services being provided by the Social welfare department to the elderly citizens, orphans, differently abled persons and transgender.

In this regard, the

performance of different offices of Social Welfare department was discussed and new potentially viable developmental projects/schemes were discussed to bring majority of socially marginalized people into the fold of public services.

The divisional commissioner reiterated that extended and improved public services to the marginalized segments of society can improve their quality of life and help them to be integrated with this society at large.

BRT makes record commutation of 3,45,000 persons in single day

PESHAWAR (APP): Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) made a record commutation of 3,45,000 passengers in a single day on March 4, 2024 by providing travelling facility in its long fleet of buses.

According to a press release issued here on Tuesday, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Trans Peshawar, Dr. Tariq Usman said the figure of around 3,50,000 is largest number of travelers in a single day. The subsidy provided by BRT is

maximum in comparison with such relief provided in other transport services of the country, he added.

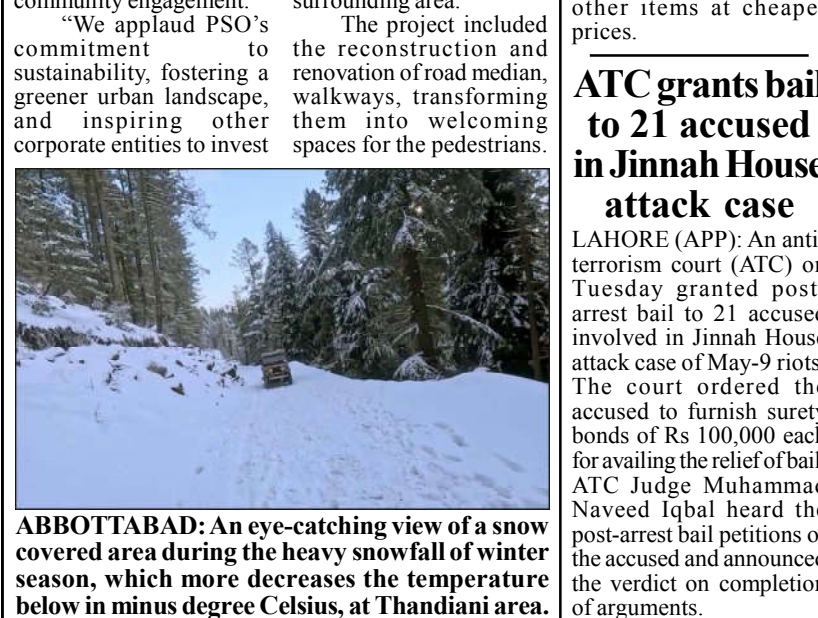
Currently, he said, 15 routes are operational in Peshawar and people residing in almost all the nook and corners of the city can avail free and safe travelling facility.

Zu Peshawar has so far achieved around five international awards because of its better travelling facility for male, female and even transgender community.

Salim Saifullah congratulates PM Shehbaz

PESHAWAR (APP): Senior politician, former federal minister Salim Saifullah Khan has congratulated the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on assuming his office and expressed the hope that under his leadership the country will overcome all challenges.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, he said that under the dynamic leadership of the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif political and economic stability.



ABBOTTABAD: An eye-catching view of a snow covered area during the heavy snowfall of winter season, which more decreases the temperature below in minus degree Celsius, at Thandiani area.

Pak-Saudi collaboration in IT, Telecom to further strengthen ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the realm of Information Technology and Telecom, the collaboration between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and strong presence of Pakistan at LEAP 2024, would further strengthen bilateral ties between the two nations.

This premier technology event brings together some of the brightest minds globally, offering a dynamic platform for tech innovators, industry leaders, and experts to collaborate, explore innovations, establish partnerships, and engage with influential mentors and investors, said a news release received here on Tuesday.

In the previous year, LEAP generated over \$9 billion in business, attracting over 172,000 individuals, including global tech leaders, IT professionals, speakers,

tech gurus, and investors, establishing itself as the fastest-growing technology event worldwide.

Pakistan contingent is one of the largest at this year's LEAP with 162 sqm pavilion 74 companies and over 800 delegates demonstrating a robust Pakistani business presence with promising prospects in the KSA market. These companies are showcasing solutions in AI, IoT, blockchain, cyber security, cloud solutions, health tech, fintech, web and mobile app development, open source, e-commerce, data services and more.

PSEB and P@SHA in collaboration with Pakistan Embassy in Riyadh and other stakeholders arranged "Saudi-Pak Tech Forum" on March 3, 2024 to set the tone for LEAP.

Secretary General DCO Ms. Deemah Alyahya was the chief guest at the event.

A considerable number of prominent Saudi Government and private institutions attended the forum which provided a remarkable platform for Pakistani companies to network with Saudi counterparts, IT industry, government institutions, and IT associations ahead of LEAP to create an additional pool of prospects & valuable business leads.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO PSEB Ms. Aisha Moriani reiterated the need for both the nations to collaborate and build upon the success of Pakistani companies at LEAP 2023. Pakistan views this as a timely opportunity to showcase its IT/TeS companies.

on the international trade platform and expand business in the Middle East market, particularly in Saudi Arabia, which is undergoing transformation with its Vision 2030.



QUETTA: PML-N MPA Haji Wali Muhammad Noorzai meeting with QESCO Chief Executive Officer Shafaqat Ali regarding electricity problems in PB-41 area.

ZTBL provided Rs29.5 bln to 300,000 farmers in 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited has disbursed Rs93 billion among 300,000 farmers across the country during 2023 and it remained major participant in Prime Minister Kissan Package by disbursing Rs29.5 billion in 2022, especially for farm mechanization and flood affected areas. The bank is maintaining its position as largest supplier of institutional agricultural credit on account of efficient fund management, effective recycling of bank's recovery proceeds and proper administrative and financial controls, said a press release issued by the bank on Tuesday.

The six decades of ZTBL history has witnessed highest ever profit before tax of Rs17,606 million (Rs. 7,458 million in 2022), with after tax profit of Rs10,984 million (Rs5,123 million in 2022) in 2023 with earning per-share at Rs2.10 in 2023 as compared to Rs0.97 in 2022. Besides, the ZTBL

has also improved its Capital Adequacy Ratio to 37.76% which is well above the State Bank of Pakistan requirement of 11.50%.

The role of ZTBL in promotion of agriculture sector has helped agriculture sector of the country contributing 22.9% in GDP, employing nearly 37.4% of labor force and a base for other industries which is surely the backbone of country's economy. To serve the banking needs of farmers, ZTBL strategic presence is characterized at rural, under served and unbanked areas, covering 482 locations nationwide with branch network of 501 branches. On advisory front, ZTBL reaches at doorstep of farmers through its Mobile Van Service and arrangement of Zarai Baithaks. Meanwhile, the bank has introduced financing schemes considering the needs of the subsistence farmers aiming to their empowerment which will result.



QUETTA: Residents of Sariab protesting against shortage of gas by blocking the Sariab Road.

Pakistan's share in textiles is only 18.06 bln dollars: Dr Tanveer Hussain

FAISALABAD (APP): Textile and clothing of the world is the 5th largest commodity of about 958 billion dollars but Pakistan's share is only 18.06 billion dollars in this sector, said Rector National Textile University Faisalabad (NTUF) Prof. Dr. Tanveer Hussain.

Addressing the inaugural session of two-day 3rd International Conference on "Knowledge-based Textiles (ICKT-2024)" at NTUF here on Tuesday, he said, "Our economy is currently struggling," and gave critical steps that needs to be adopted for future socioeconomic development of the country.

He said, "We should focus on industrialization and our policy makers should prioritize value-added products and reduction in imports in addition to encouraging local production."

is moving towards sustainability, textile circularity & recycling. "Hence, we should also concentrate on it for greater national interest. The application of artificial intelligence in textile clothing must remain in consideration if we want to compete with rest of the world," he added.

Chairing the inaugural session, Engineer Prof. Dr. Yasir Nawab Director/Dean Faculty of School of Engineering & Technology NTUF said, "We have collaborated with academia, community, industry and government in addition to putting all our efforts together to make an impact through knowledge-based textiles."

Among these included banana fabric.

Islamic relief delegation visits RCCI

RAWALPINDI (APP): A delegation of Islamic Relief Pakistan visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) here on Tuesday.

According to the RCCI spokesman, the delegation gave a detailed briefing on its project "Women Aligned Sustainable Youth-Centered Livelihood Action" (WASYLA) in the semi-urban areas of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Quetta.

The aim of the project was to uplift the most vulnerable groups of society including poor women, people with disabilities, older people, and unemployed youth affected by urban poverty through the Poverty Graduation Approach.

President RCCI Saqib Rafiq, on the occasion, assured all kinds of support and assistance from the chamber platform for their project, "WASYLA". Representatives from the Islamic Relief including Said Usman.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 225 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 225.68 points, a negative change of 0.34 percent, closing at 65,726.04 points against 65,951.73 points the previous trading day.

A total of 396,598,408 shares valuing Rs16,591 billion were traded during the day as compared to 472,862,687 shares valuing Rs 16,282 billion the last day.

Some 350 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 134 of them recorded gains and 202 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 14 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 39,721,000 shares at Rs 5.50 per share, Pak Refinery with 34,045,456 shares with 28.96 per share and PTCL with 24,851,077 shares at Rs 12.22 per share.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 252.16 per share price.



QUETTA: Teams of Balochistan Food Authority inspecting the various items and milk during their inspection in Quetta city.



LAHORE: Regional Chairman FPCCI Zaki Ejaz presenting shield to Consul General of Turkey during his visit to FPCCI office.

Renewable Energy Policy 2006 Why to curtail wind power projects despite tariff of PKR 14.7/kWh: Atif

Independent Report

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has expressed his profound concerns that the renewable energy policy 2006 is not being implemented in letter & spirit as costlier and obsolete power projects are still being given preference - while it makes no economic sense to purchase power for the national grid from costlier plants in these times of stagflation, mounting circular debt and burgeoning balance of payments (BoP) & depleting foreign exchange reserves (FER) even further through importing furnace oil.

FPCCI Chief noted that this phenomenon is not only discouraging for foreign direct investment (FDI) in energy sector; but, also inflicting financial losses on the existing wind power plants (WPP) in a

number of ways: (i) return of investment (ROI) is compromised (ii) curtailment and lack of off take by the national grid is causing operational losses (iii) future investments, JVs and expansion plans are in jeopardy.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh stressed that special investment facilitation council (SIFC) has made energy as their one of the five focus areas; and, lack of enabling, facilitative and protective environment is detrimental to the cause of SIFC - for which all stakeholders of the state have unanimity including private-sector.

Mr. Fawad Jawed, Convener of FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Renewable Energy, maintained that affordable, clean and green renewable energy generated through wind power in Pakistan provides clean energy.

KE, VISA join hands to power digital innovation

ISLAMABAD (APP): K-Electric, the pioneering force in the energy sector, and VISA, a world leader in digital payments on Tuesday signed an MoU to chart the digital payments future of Pakistan.

The signing event signals a long-term partnership aimed at providing customers with an efficient and seamless digital experience, said a press release issued here.

By using the innovative technology of QR codes, KE has improved overall customer

experience and streamlined operations.

A partnership between KE and VISA promoting digital payments saw the campaign increasing bill payments via QR by up to 4 times, indicating strong customer reception.

Chief Distribution Officer at KE, Fawad Ali Gilani, stated on this occasion, "As KE and VISA embark on this strategic alliance, the collaboration is poised to bring about transformative changes.



HYDERABAD: Village girls walking through wheat crop in the catchment area of the city.

Pak offers opportunities for investment in diverse fields: Faisal Tirmizi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to UAE Faisal Niaz Tirmizi said that having more than 60% of its about 250 million population below the age of 30, Pakistan offered immense opportunities for investments in diverse fields. The ambassador, addressing the Business Opportunities Conference in Dubai, said that the UAE's investors with rich experiences in construction could avail enormous investment avenues in Pakistan's real estate and infrastructure sector.

The conference was held at Habtoor Palace Dubai, which was attended by more than 100 businessmen from UAE and Pakistan, said a press release received on

Tuesday. Paying homage to his visionary leadership, Tirmizi said that Dubai was the manifestation of Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum's dream of transforming this region into a commercial hub.

He said that Pakistan and UAE enjoyed an exemplary relationship and Pakistani diaspora had contributed significantly for the progress and development of the UAE.

"I strongly believe that businessmen are the real leaders who can steer economies towards growth. We deeply encourage business-to-business collaboration amongst the business community of Pakistan and UAE. We warmly invite Emirati investors to invest in Pakistan.

US-Pakistan 'Green Alliance' to improve climate, smart agriculture: CG Kristin

MULTAN (APP): US Consul General to Lahore Kristin Hawkins on Tuesday said US-Pakistan Green Alliance was an effort to improve climate, smart agriculture, food security and sustainable energy.

She expressed these remarks while inaugurating the Multan Electric Power Company's (Mepco) Customers Facilitation Centre.

The Facilitation Centre has been established as part of the U.S. government's ongoing assistance in Pakistan's energy sector. Since 2014, the United States has supported Mepco in deploying more than

40,000 smart meters, helping to improve power efficiency for residents in Multan. "USAID's partnership with Mepco has delivered great results. We have introduced new approaches and technologies to improve customer service and to increase revenues," said Consul General Hawkins.

For the past 20 years, Pakistan has consistently been ranked among to 10 most vulnerable countries on the Climate Risk Index.

Hawkins underscored the need for urgent action to adapt to climate change and highlighted U.S. efforts to support Pakistan through the 'Green Alliance' to address the

challenges related to climate change, food security and energy.

She also visited a U.S. funded fruit processing plant. Ms Hawkins stated, "We will continue to explore additional opportunities to promote sustainable agricultural practices, improve productivity and reduce the environmental footprint of the agricultural sector including through modern tools, techniques and technologies. These innovations support Pakistan peasants, create jobs, lower cost, reduce pollution and strengthen Pakistan's climate resilience".

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, MSC Rida, Medi Chiba and Al-Rayyan carrying Containers, Canola seeds and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Grain Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile another Containership MSC Aby also arrived at outer anchorage of the port on Tuesday morning. A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of a container vessel left the port on today morning and four more ships, Star Sino, African Baza, Medi Chiba and Kamome Victoria are expected to sail on today afternoon. A cargo volume of 145,757 tonnes, comprising 127,624 tonnes imports cargo and 18,133 tonnes export cargo.

Turkiye Consul General, FPCCI discuss ways to boost bilateral trade, investment ties

LAHORE (APP): Turkiye Consul General (CG) Durmus Bastug visited Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Office here Tuesday to discuss the ways and means to boost the bilateral trade and investment relations.

During the meeting, the matters of enhancing cooperation in diverse fields including trade, investment, technology, tourism, agriculture and exchange of delegations were discussed.

Talking to the FPCCI office-bearers and members, he assured that Turkiye would further promote bilateral trade and investment with Pakistan, adding that Turkiye would increase the trade with

Pakistan up to US \$ five billion from the existing US \$ one billion. Turkiye's 20 largest companies were doing business in Punjab, he mentioned and said that Turkiye has excellent scope for energy, infrastructure, construction and agriculture in Pakistan. Business-to-business (B2B) relations with Pakistan would also be strengthened and more joint ventures would be made, he vowed.

Durmus Bastug said that Pakistan and Turkiye are brotherly countries and all possible measures are being taken to promote bilateral trade. He said that Turkish investors and companies are making progress to invest in various sectors in Pakistan.

LCCI brings forth strategy to promote investment

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Tuesday put forth a well-conceived strategy to promote investment in the country.

While addressing a high-profile country-wide delegation from Board of Investment (BoI), the LCCI President Kashif Anwar highlighted the challenges hampering investment in the country. He said that local industry issues should be resolved first to attract foreign investment.

Kashif Anwar said that for the past few years,

the business community is facing problems like rupee devaluation, inflationary pressure, high policy rate and high cost of doing business, high energy prices, repeated increase in POL (Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants) prices, MDI charges on closed industrial units, reduction in axle load limit, hike in cargo delivery charges and non-opening of LCs (Letters of Credit). "Settling down all these problems will definitely spur socio-economic development," he remarked.



MULTAN: Members of Pakistan Wapda Employees Pegham Union are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Multan press club.

LESCO collects over Rs 5.3m from 322 defaulters in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has recovered more than Rs 5.3 million from 322 dead defaulters in all the five districts - Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara - on the 168th day of its recovery campaign.

LESCO spokesman told media here Tuesday that on the 168th day, Superintendent Engineer (SE) Faizan Butt recovered outstanding dues of Rs 0.99 million from 37 defaulters in Northern Circle, SE Umar Bilal

recovered Rs 1.11 million from 38 defaulters in Eastern Circle, SE Shabbir collected Rs 0.76 million from 39 defaulters in Central Circle, SE Zafferullah Saanghi recovered Rs 0.26 million from 15 defaulters in South Circle, SE Muhammad Hussain recovered Rs 0.48 million from 42 defaulters in Nankana Circle, SE Najamul Hassan collected Rs 0.49 million from 29 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle, SE Jamshed Zaman collected Rs 0.47 million from 65 defaulters in

World Health Organization: Child malnutrition 'particularly extreme' in north Gaza

GENEVA (Online): United Nations organisations said on Tuesday that child malnutrition levels in northern Gaza were "particularly extreme" and about three times higher than in the south of the Palestinian enclave where more aid has been available. Richard Peepker, WHO representative for Gaza and the West Bank, said that one-in-six children under two years of age were acutely malnourished in northern Gaza.

"This was in January. So the situation is likely to be greater today," Peepker added, referring to when the data was recorded.

UNICEF spokesperson James Elder said malnutrition rates for children under five in northern Gaza, where access to aid has been highly limited since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas on Oct. 7, were three times higher than those in Rafah in the south.

Elder said this showed that "when that trickle of aid can come in, it does make a life saving difference."

At least 15 children have died over the past few days from malnutrition and dehydration at Kamal Adwan hospital in northern Gaza, the health ministry in Gaza said on Sunday.

Calls for Israel to do more to address the humanitarian crisis have grown louder since the deaths of Palestinians lining up for aid in Gaza last month.

Gaza health authorities said 118 people were killed, attributing the deaths to Israeli fire and calling it a massacre. Israel, which says many people were trampled or run over, has pledged to investigate.

Adding to hunger, there is a growing risk from infectious diseases, with nine-in-10 children under the age of five - around 220,000 - falling sick over the last weeks, according to Elder.

"That becomes the spiral that we are so fearful of: infectious diseases, lack of food, a desperate lack of clean water and ongoing bombardment and incredulously still discussion of an offensive into Rafah, which is a city of children," Elder told reporters in Geneva, referring to Israel's stated aim of rooting out Hamas battalions it says are hiding there.

"Rafah has about three quarters of a million children living there," Elder said.

Israel last month intensified its bombardment of Rafah, where about 1.5 million people are estimated to be crammed, most of them having fled their homes further north to escape Israel's military onslaught.



Czech Republic's President Petr Pavel and French President Emmanuel Macron walk past an honour guard at Prague Castle in Prague, Czech Republic.

Ships entering Yemeni waters must obtain permit: Houthi minister

CAIRO (INP) Ships will have to obtain a permit from Yemen's Houthi-controlled Maritime Affairs Authority before entering Yemeni waters, Houthi Telecommunications Minister Misfer Al-Numair said.

Houthis have repeatedly launched drones and missiles against international commercial shipping in the Gulf of Aden since mid-November, saying they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians against Israel's offensive in Gaza.

The near-daily attacks have forced firms into long and costly diversions around southern Africa, and stoked fears that the Israel-Hamas war could destabilise the wider Middle East. The United States and Britain have bombed Houthi targets in response.

"(We) are ready to assist requests for permits and identify ships with the Yemeni Navy, and we confirm this is out of concern for their safety," Al Masirah TV, the main television news outlet run by Houthi movement, reported Al-Numair as saying. The territorial waters affected by the Yemeni order extend halfway out into the 20-km (12-mile) wide Bab al-Mandab Strait, the narrow mouth of the Red Sea through which around 15% of the world's shipping traffic passes on its way to or from the Suez Canal.

US envoy says war at Lebanese-Israeli border would not be containable

BEIRUT: US Special Envoy Amos Hochstein said on Monday (Mar 4) that a truce in Gaza would not necessarily bring an automatic end to hostilities across Lebanon's southern border and he warned about the risks of an escalation of the conflict. Hochstein is visiting Beirut as part of diplomatic efforts to end four months of exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and Israel taking place in parallel to the Gaza war. It has marked the worst conflict across Lebanon's southern border since the 2006 war.

Ladakhi people express outrage as talks with India end without progress

NEW DELHI (INP): The much-anticipated meeting between Ladakh's Apex Body (LAB), the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), and the Indian Home Ministry ended without any tangible progress, sparking widespread anger among the people of Ladakh. New Delhi's refusal to address the fundamental demands of Ladakhis, including the restoration of their political rights and inclusion.

43 countries call for international probe into Navalny's death

GENEVA: More than 40 countries on Monday demanded an independent international investigation into the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny — and said President Vladimir Putin bore ultimate responsibility.

European Union members, the United States, Britain, Ukraine, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Norway were among countries to voice outrage over Navalny's death at the UN Human Rights Council. Navalny, 47, who died in an Arctic prison colony, was laid to rest in Moscow on Friday, surrounded by crowds of defiant mourners who chanted his name. "We are outraged by the death of the Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny, for which the ultimate responsibility lies.

US wants 'as many channels as possible' for Gaza aid, State Dept says

WASHINGTON: The United States is working to get aid into Gaza through as many channels as possible to remedy the humanitarian disaster amid Israel's war with Hamas militants, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday (March 4), describing the situation as "simply intolerable."

Washington was optimistic that a new maritime route to deliver aid to Gaza could supplement current efforts to get aid into the enclave, Miller said, adding that that route was "still in the development phase."

In addition to trucks carrying aid through two border crossings in the south of Gaza, the US military, along with allied nations, has in recent days dropped aid packages into Gaza from aircraft, amid warnings much of the population is on the verge of famine.

SpaceX launches new crew to ISS

KENNEDY: Three American astronauts and a Russian cosmonaut blasted off on Sunday night from Florida for a six-month mission on the International Space Station.

The SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifted off at 10:53pm from the Kennedy Space Center, lighting up the night sky with a long, bright plume of orange flame. Just minutes after the launch, as the rocket soared over the Atlantic, it was moving at a speed of 6,000 miles per hour, NASA TV commentators said. It took about nine minutes for the capsule to settle into orbit as it prepared to dock with the ISS and relieve four other crew members.

A first attempt to launch the mission was scrubbed due to high winds. Endeavour.



German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius gives a statement on apparent eavesdropping of German army Bundeswehr call at the defence ministry, in Berlin, Germany.

Indonesia's presumed president Prabowo promises 'very smooth' transition of power

JAKARTA: Indonesia's presumed president Prabowo Subianto on Tuesday promised a "very smooth" transfer of power later this year and pledged to continue the policies of incumbent Joko Widodo and do what was necessary to make improvements in the country. Speaking at an investment forum, Prabowo, who unofficially vote counts show won the Feb 14 presidential election by a huge margin, said Indonesia had fundamental strengths that only needed good management, but said it was crucial to create more jobs and tackle poverty.

He said he believed economic growth could reach 8% annually within the next four or five years and he was seeking to privatise state companies and increase tax ratios, by widening the tax base, not necessarily raising taxes.

In a wide-ranging speech, Prabowo also said Indonesia should be proud of the election, for which the turnout was "not bad", although he was not satisfied with his country's democracy. "Let me attest, testify that democracy is really very, very tiring. Democracy is very, very messy, democracy is very, very costly," he said.

Indian police arrest 5 more after Spanish tourist gang raped

NEW DELHI: Indian police have arrested five more men in connection with the gang rape of a Spanish tourist, taking the total detained to eight, local media reported on Tuesday.

The attack on the woman, who was on a motorbike trip with her husband, took place last week in Dumka district in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand where the couple was camping. The Press Trust of India news agency broadcasted footage of five suspects, handcuffed and tied to each other in a line by a rope.

London gold price benchmark hits all-time high

LONDON (INP): London's gold price benchmark hit an all-time high of \$2,098.05 per troy ounce at an afternoon auction on Monday, surpassing the previous record of \$2,078.40 set on Dec. 28, the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) said.

LBMA is a leading trade body that certifies gold refiners, allowing them access to London's bullion market, the world's largest. The LBMA Gold Price is the global benchmark price for unallocated gold delivered in London. "Yet again gold reinforces its diversification appeal with the new high reached today."

Taiwan to increase missile drills amid China threats

TAIPEI: Taiwan's armed forces will increase the number of missile drills this year, defence minister Chiu Kuo-cheng said on Tuesday, amid China's ramped-up military pressure to force the island to accept its sovereignty claims.

China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, over the island's strong objections. It has in recent years increased military activities near Taiwan, including almost-daily incursions into the island's air defence identification zones. Answering reporters' questions on the sidelines of parliament, Chiu said the ministry would increase the frequency of missile drills in response to a change in "enemy threat". Chiu said that in the past, missile drills had only been held at certain times of the year to limit the impact to aviation and everyday life. "We must consider boosting our training in response to the enemy's situation," he said, adding that the amount of ammunition the drills use will be in line with regulations.

No Indian troops, not even in civilian clothes to remain on his island: Maldives President reaffirms

MALE (INP): Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has affirmed that no Indian military personnel, not even those in civilian clothing, would be present inside his country after May 10. Muizzu's statement comes less than a week after ostensibly an Indian civilian team, but in reality military officials, reached the Maldives to take charge of one of the three aviation platforms in the island nation, well ahead of the May 10 deadline agreed by the two countries for the withdrawal of Indian military personnel.

Addressing a community in Baa atoll Eydhafushi during his tour across the atoll, President Muizzu stated that due to his government's success in expelling Indian troops from the country, people who spread false rumours, are attempting to twist the situation, a news portal Edition.mv reported. "That these people [Indian military] are not departing, that they are returning after changing their uniforms into civilian clothing. We must not indulge such thoughts that instil doubts in our hearts and spread lies," the portal quoted Muizzu as saying.

"There will be no Indian troops in the country come May 10. Not in uniform and not in civilian clothing. The Indian military will not be residing in this country in any form of clothing. I state this with confidence," he said. Within hours of taking oath, last year, Muizzu in his inaugural address to the parliament demanded India to remove its personnel from the strategically located archipelago in the Indian Ocean.

Spanish blogger's gang rape in India sparks global outrage

NEW DELHI (Online): India is deemed highly unsafe for foreign female tourists. A Spanish blogger woman fell victim to a gang rape, exposing India's secular state to scrutiny.

On March 1st, a Spanish girl was traveling on a motorcycle with her partner in the city of Jharkhand, India when she was targeted for gang rape.

The Spanish couple had set up a tent in Dhanbad, a state in India, for an overnight stay when a group of seven individuals assaulted them, reports Al Jazeera. The 28-year-old Spanish travel blogger mentioned in her Instagram post that the group targeted them for violence, looted their belongings, and raped her, as reported by Hindustan Times.

In another post, a companion of the affected blogger stated that she was repeatedly assaulted with blows to the head and face with a helmet.

After the gang rape, the girl was left in critical condition, Al Jazeera reports. Following the attack, a petrol pump attendant rescued both and took them to a local hospital.

There has been a strong international backlash over the rape of the Spanish blogger woman. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, in India, approximately 90 cases of sexual assault are reported daily on average, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. In 2022, one case of rape against a woman was reported every 18 minutes. Last year, 31,516 incidents of sexual assault were recorded.

The states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of cases, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.

Delegates matter after Haley wins Washington primary

WASHINGTON: When the richest haul in the US presidential primary race arrives on "Super Tuesday," millions of Americans will cast their votes — and many of them will count for nothing. In the primary system it is the number of allocated delegates that matters more than the popular vote count.

The Republican and Democratic nominating contests that play out across the US every four years serve to elect delegates to the national conventions, where they formally select their party's presidential nominee.

It's a system that tends to favour front-runners, and for Nikki Haley, the sole remaining challenger to Donald Trump for the Republican nomination, it's one that has dulled her already razor thin chances.

On Sunday night Haley won the Washington, DC, Republican primary taking 19 delegates, her first victory in the nominating process and a symbolic win for the former US ambassador to the United Nations, Edison Research said.

Haley won 62.9 per cent of the vote, versus 33.2pc captured by the former president.

"It's not surprising that Republicans closest to Washington dysfunction are rejecting Donald Trump and all his chaos," Olivia campaign spokesperson Perez-Cubas said in a statement. With 2,429 Republican delegates from across the country, Trump needs at least 1,215 to secure his lock on the nomination. Having won all eight early state and territory contests, he already has more than 247 delegates in his column compared to Haley's 24 going into Super Tuesday, when more than a third of the national Republican total is up for grabs.

Trump's dominance is such that he could cross the magic threshold as early as March 19 — even though the primary calendar stretches into early June.

Women lifesavers train next generation on Australia's Bondi Beach

SYDNEY: Sprinting through the surf, veteran lifesaver Nixy Krite and her teammates jump into an inflatable rescue boat on a sunny morning on Sydney's iconic Bondi Beach. Krite and her team pilot the boat over the ocean before they scoop up a fellow teammate stranded at sea.

The manoeuvres are part of a training session that Krite is holding for a new generation of women lifesavers, raising awareness of opportunities ahead of International Women's Day on March 8.

Krite, head of the beach's Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) Racing team, has been a volunteer lifesaver for the past 12 years and devotes at least 40 hours per week to shifts during peak season. Through training up new IRB members, she says she's helping Australia "make up for lost time," referring to the fact that Australian women were only allowed to become lifesavers as late as 1980.

"We're making up for those times that we just haven't had the opportunity. So, now we've got equal opportunities across our organisation, it opened up doors for our women to take on those positions of leadership," said Krite, who also works as a recruitment officer for a clinical research institute.

Established in 1907, it would take another 73 years until Surf Life Saving Australia, which trains and accredits lifesavers, admitted women as fully trained members to volunteer as surf lifesavers around Australia.

Today, it's a different story. According to Surf Life Saving Australia, women make up almost 50% of the 190,000 volunteer lifesavers in the 314 clubs across the country.

Among the new IRB recruits is 15-year-old Char Smith, who was inspired by her mother Kristy, a volunteer lifesaver at Bondi, to join up.



Military delegation arrive for the opening session of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

China boosts defence spending as regional disputes heat up

BEIJING: China announced on Tuesday that it would boost its defence spending in 2024, as hostility over Taiwan and in the South China Sea grows.

The 7.2 per cent increase, identical to last year's figure, was announced at the start of the annual meeting of the country's rubber-stamp parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC).

China will spend 1.665 trillion yuan (\$231.4 billion) on defence in 2024, according to the budget report that lays out the government's financial plans for the year ahead.

China has the world's second-largest defence budget behind the United States, even though the People's Liberation Army (PLA) surpasses the US military by number of personnel.

Still, China's military spending is around three times smaller than Washington's in recent years.

The world's second-largest economy will maintain "reasonable growth" in its defence budget to "safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests", NPC spokesman Lou Qinjian said Monday.

The country's expenditure on its armed forces has been on the rise for decades, broadly in line with economic growth.

China's military spending makes up 1.6pc of its GDP, far less than the United States or Russia, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri).

But its defence expansion is viewed with suspicion by Washington, as well as other powers in the region including Japan.

Protesting farmers cut off as India tops list of digital blackouts

SHAMBHU: They have been beaten with canes, doused in tear gas and blocked by concrete barricades and metal spikes but the thousands of farmers trying to march to India's capital to demand higher crop prices also face an invisible barrier — digital blackouts.

As their caravan of tractors and trucks moved from the northern state of Punjab towards New Delhi, the farmers found their phones going dead as state authorities imposed temporary internet shutdowns.

It is not the first time authorities have cut the internet — India imposed the highest number of internet shutdowns in the world in 2022 — and campaigners fear more digital crackdowns ahead of elections expected by May.

Farm union leaders are seeking guarantees, backed by law, of more state support or a minimum purchase price for crops.

Since Feb 12, Haryana state authorities have cut access to mobile internet services at regular intervals and for several days at a time. They said they did so to "stop the spread of misinformation and rumours" and to prevent the mobilisation of "mobs of agitators and demonstrators", according to local media. The farmers, many of whom are members of the Sikh religious minority from Punjab, say the shutdowns made it hard to get medical help for the injured and to source food. It also cut them off from their leaders, making coordination difficult. "We're already far away from home and the communication blackout adds to our miseries," he said.



SpaceX astronauts Matthew Dominick, Michael Barratt, Jeanette Epps and Alexander Grebenkin leave their crew quarters for the launch pad at the Kennedy Space Centre.

SC issues written order regarding Musharraf case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued a written order regarding termination of the Lahore High Court's (LHC) verdict quashing the trial of former president Pervez Musharraf in the high treason case.

The SC, in the 16-page verdict authored by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, said, "The impugned judgment dated 13 January 2020 passed by the Lahore High Court, Lahore in Writ Petition No. 71713 of 2019 is not sustainable and is accordingly set aside by converting these petitions into appeals and allowing them. Detailed reasons shall be given later." It said, "The impugned judgment passed by the Lahore High Court in sheer violation of the judgments and orders of this Court is, therefore, not only without jurisdiction but also unconstitutional."

"Particularly, we have noted that the Judges of the Special Court, who announced the final judgment on 17.12.2019, namely, Justices Waqar Ahmed

Seth, 26 Nazir Akbar 27 and Shahid Karim, 28 were appointed with the approval of the Federal Government.

"The judges are not sovereigns with unfettered discretion but are guardians of the law, tasked with ensuring that justice is done according to established legal norms and principles. Their decisions must be guided by the law, precedents, and the facts before them, not by personal desires or objectives. A judge, in the pursuit of justice, cannot embark on a self-imposed crusade of right and wrong."

"He is not to innovate at pleasure. He is not a knight errant, roaming at will in pursuit of his own ideal of beauty or of goodness. He is to draw his inspiration from consecrated principles. He is not to yield to spasmodic sentiment, to vague and unregulated benevolence. He is to exercise a discretion informed by tradition, methodized by analogy, disciplined by the system."



GWADAR: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti receiving Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif upon his arrival.

ADB, UNICEF join hands to strengthen climate resilient services in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Tuesday signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) to collaborate on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and solid waste management interventions under an ADB-funded project in the cities of Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur in Punjab province of Pakistan.

The agreement was signed by ADB Country Director for Pakistan Yong Ye and UNICEF's Representative in Pakistan Abdullah Fadi here, said a news release.

"ADB and UNICEF are joining forces and renewing our shared commitment to strengthen policy, legislative framework, and institutional capacity in municipal service delivery, this time to improve the quality, coverage, and reliability of urban services

under the Developing Resilient Environments and Advancing Municipal Services (DREAMS) Project," said Yong Ye.

"The collaboration will enable us to support the government's efforts to address water supply and solid waste management challenges in these two important and rapidly growing cities", he added.

Under the new partnership, ADB and UNICEF will collaborate to support inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban infrastructure and services in Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur through public awareness and communication campaigns that will improve behaviours and practices related to water, sanitation, and solid waste management.

The understanding reached between ADB and UNICEF Pakistan offices will help promote sustainable, inclusive,



QUETTA: Provincial Election Commissioner Muhammad Fareed Afridi examining the documents of PPP candidate of Senate seat former Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo. MPAs Haji Ali Madad Jattak and Asghar Rind are also present.

Secretary Health says All resources being used to prevent outbreak of epidemics Gwadar

GWADAR (APP): Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan on Tuesday said that measures had been taken to prevent outbreak of any epidemic and improve the situation in the rain-affected areas of Gwadar.

All resources were being used for the purpose as medical teams consisting of doctors and staff with essential medicines and ambulances were present in the field, he added.

The Secretary Health, who is in Gwadar to monitor the ongoing operation of medical teams, expressed satisfaction over hospital facilities and other services in the area.

He visited District Headquarters Hospital, GDA Hospital, Pak-China Hospital and District Health Office in Gwadar, and Basic Health Unit Shado Band.

Abdullah said there would be no compromise on the provision of medical facilities, including medicines, in the hospitals of Gwadar as majority of the people in the area depended on them.

The Secretary Health said that the teams of Balochistan Health Department were continuously engaged in providing medical facilities in the rain-affected areas.

He added that additional doctors, medical staff and essential medicines had been made available to cope with any untoward situation.

Director General Health Balochistan Dr. Feroz Hot, Manager TB Control Programme Balochistan Dr. Asif Shahwan, Provincial Coordinator Malaria Control Programme Dr. Amir Raisani, Deputy Secretary Health Yasir Dashti, DHO Gwadar Dr. Rahim Buledi, MS District Hospital Gwadar Dr. Hafeez, DHO Lasbela Dr. Hameed, DSMP PPHI and other officials were present on the occasion.

Secretary Health also chaired a meeting regarding the provision of health facilities at GDA Hospital Gwadar. He also took round of various departments of the hospital.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti expressing views during introductory meeting with the officers of Chief Minister Secretariat

PN continues humanitarian assistance in flood hit areas of Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): Pakistan Navy in assistance with civil government continues providing ration, medicines and warm clothes to flood stricken people in different areas of Gwadar district.

Pakistan Navy was utilizing helicopters to ensure continuous supply of relief goods to Jiwani, Ganz, Pishukan and Kappar.

Pakistan Navy troops were reaching out to stranded people in other far-flung flood affected areas as well to distribute relief goods.

Pakistan Navy special response forces were providing their support to local flood-affected communities to drain rain water from their homes and streets with all available resources.

COPHC donates relief supplies to Gwadar's flood victims

QUETTA: China Overseas Port Holding Company (Pakistan) continued to supply relief goods the coastal district of Gwadar area of Balochistan hit by the recent heavy rains and floods in.

According to the spokesman, so far, more than 30,000 mineral water bottles and 30,000 packets of canned food items have been distributed among the affected.

During the flood, the China-Pakistan Faqeer Colony Middle School in Gwadar, built and managed with China's aid and took in hundreds of people affected by the disaster to take shelter.

Local people appreciated the efforts of China Overseas Port Holding Company (Pakistan) for helping the rains and flood victims.

National economic, reconciliation plan need of hour: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that a national economic and reconciliation plan was need of the hour.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the opposition should play its constitutional role so that the country can be taken forward together.

He said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chose a path of anarchy and chaos in the country, which was directly sabotaged the process of country's economic recovery.

3 die, 2 injured car plunges into canal

MANANWALA (Online): 3 people were killed and 2 were critically injured after a speedy car plunged into canal on Sheikhupura-Hafizabad motorway.

Those died include two real brothers. The condition of the injured are stated to be critical. Those killed and injured were riding in the car.



QUETTA: A delegation of Quetta Press Club led by its President Abdul Khaliq Rind meeting with Director General Public Relations Balochistan Muhammad Noor Khetran.

Chief Minister Balochistan pledges: Effective system of governance to be established by ensuring transparency & accountability

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has made a pledge that we want to establish effective system of governance by ensuring transparency and accountability at every level.

He asserted that there would be no compromise on corruption, rather there would be zero tolerance on it.

He said that the corruption and irregularities would not be acceptable and those found involved in the same would be taken to task.

The Chief Minister was expressing views at the introductory meeting with the officers of Chief Minister Secretariat on Tuesday.

He said that the sus-

tainable solution to public issues is possible through establishing good governance.

He declared that neither he would do any work against the rules and regulations, nor he would let anyone do it.

He said that the Chief Minister Secretariat is the biggest administrative office, and it is duty of all officers to protect its dignity.

The Chief Minister said that we want to establish effective system of service delivery through performing official duties at fast pace.

He said that the active, capable and professional officers are our asset, who would be encouraged at every level.

However, the officers

who are unable to perform actively may choose their course by themselves.

He said that we have to work for the province and it's people without break.

He exhorted the officers to be ready for the public service doing away with the leniency.

He said that we would welcome those who want to walk with us speedily.

Earlier, the Principal Secretary briefed in detail about the administrative offices and responsibilities of different sectors.

He expressed the resolve that all officers of Chief Minister Secretariat would utilize their best capabilities for achieving the targets set as per the vision of Chief Minister.

Wukala, Shakeel & Democratic Panels merged: New panel of lawyers formed namely Independent Panel to protect rights of fraternity

Independent Report
QUETTA: A new panel of lawyers has been formed with the name of Independent Lawyers' Panel in Quetta on Tuesday.

While announcing formation of Independent Lawyers' Panel at a press conference at District Court on Tuesday afternoon, the senior lawyers Attaullah Langove, Qari Rehmatullah Advocate and others said that the Independent Lawyers' Panel has been formed to care interests of the lawyers besides resolving their problems.

Attaullah Langove said that we have laid founda-

tion of new panel of lawyers for protection and defence of lawyers remaining above the prejudices.

He announced that three other panels of the lawyers including Wukala Panel, Shakeel Panel and Democratic Panel have also been merged in the Independent Lawyers' Panel.

He also said that we are starting new journey for better interests of the lawyers and resolve their issues.

He asserted that we are not going to tolerate interference of anyone in judiciary and bar.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, Qari Rehmatullah Advocate said that bar exists for dignity and honour of the lawyers besides their welfare.

He regretfully pointed out that FIRs were lodged against some 20 lawyers last year, but senior lawyers kept mum on the issue.

He said that the new panel has been formed for respect and dignity of the lawyers after deliberations and consultations.

He announced that Independent Lawyers' Panel would not be restricted only to Quetta, rather it would be expanded to all over the province.

Dar, Aurangzeb included in the race for slot of finance minister

ISLAMABAD (Online): Consultation is underway for formation of federal cabinet.

Ishaq Dar once again is included in the race for the slot of finance minister.

Sources said Musaddaq Malik and Muhammad Aurangzeb, chief executive of a private bank are also included in the race. The final decision will be made by taking stake holders into confidence.

The coalition partners will also be given representation in the federal cabinet.

According to sources Nawaz Sharif is in favor of making Ishaq Dar finance minister.

Allied parties will also be included in the federal cabinet in the first phase.

Important ministry will be allocated to Abdul Aaleem Khan, leader Iteham-e-Pakistan Party (IPP).

Tariq Bashir Cheema and Salik Hussain from PML-Q will also be part of cabinet.

MQM has not shown its willingness to join the cabinet so far. MQM will seek approval from its coordination committee in this respect.

Ahad Cheema and Fawad Hassan Fawad are also likely to be made advisors. Jahanzeb Khan will once again be special advisor.

Sources said Khalid Magsi of BAP is likely to be taken as minister.

Around 2k children to be enrolled at govt-run schools

By Rafiullah Mandokhail SHERANI: Education is the fundamental right of every child and under article 25-A, providing free and compulsory education to children aged 5-16 is the responsibility of the government. A target has been set for the academic year 2024 to enroll around 1700 children in public sector schools across the district, said Deputy Commissioner

Manager Education Support Programme (ESP) Raziq Jan Kakar, District Chairman Adv Dawood Khan Sherani and representatives of teachers' union. A banner displayed behind the officers reads: 'Let's Enroll Every Child In School', urging the parents to enroll their loved ones at government-run schools.

The deputy commissioner further said that



Azeem Jan Dumar while addressing a press conference to formally inaugurate the students' enrollment campaign in all public sector schools. He was accompanied by the District Education Officer Taza Khan Nasar, District Program

preparations are completed and the distribution of free textbooks is underway at all the clusters. Moreover, walks and seminars will be organized and mass announcements will also be made in mosques through loudspeakers at the district level, he said.

BBISE cancels 10 students of papers on involvement of copying in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): Controller Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) Abida Kakar cancelled papers of ten students from annual metric examination after finding them in cheating during her visiting of examination center of Saryab Degree College on Tuesday.

She also suspended the relevant staff at the moment saying that no one would be allowed to copy in the exam saying that therefore Balochistan

Board has made a strict policy to prevent copying on which immediate action was taken.

She stressed that the student to stay away from cheating and the duty officers have been instructed to strictly follow the policy of BBISE in this regard.

She said that she would continue visiting of established examination centers in order to control duplicating system for bright future of students.