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Member APNS & CPNE

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Ruling coalition endorses Zardari's nomination for presidency

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

Our target is to change condition of the nation and we have to present our proposals to friendly countries to attract investment; PPP would support the prime minister as he would work to steer Pakistan on the path of progress, says Asif Ali Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said Asif Ali Zardari would be elected as President of Pakistan as coalition partners had overwhelming majority in the National Assembly, Senate and provincial assemblies. Speaking at a dinner hosted in honour of leaders of allied parties, he

said Asif Zardari would be the candidate of the allied parties in the presidential election on March 9.

The coalition government secured two thirds of the votes in the recent general elections and it would be reflected during the presidential election, he added.

He said the coalition

federal government was formed again with consensus and unity besides formation of Pakistan Peoples Party government in Sindh, Pakistan Muslim League(N) government in Punjab and a coalition government in Balochistan.

"We have to respect mandate of the people," he said adding, "the world is

looking towards Pakistan and seeing how the new government will overcome challenges and resolve issues."

He thanked his coalition partners, Quaid PML Nawaz Sharif and leaders of allied parties for electing him as the prime minister once again. The Prime Minister said his government

was facing Himalaya like challenges and the facts about economy were troublesome.

"Our gas and electricity circular debt had hiked to Rs five trillion. The debt of PIA had ballooned to Rs 825 billion. The annual theft of electricity

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing the participants of the dinner reception hosted by him



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti chairing a high level meeting of the Planning and Development department

PM thanks world leaders for good wishes on assumption of office

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed gratitude to the world leaders for extending felicitations and prayers for him on the assumption of office.

The prime minister took to X to thank the leaders including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Iranian President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi and Kenyan President William Ruto.

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

He said that the relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were deep rooted in historical bonds based on mutual respect, religious and cultural affinity and shared values.

He expressed the confidence that the fraternal bilateral ties would keep flourishing in the times to come.

"Looking forward to working closely with my brother for mutual benefit of the peoples of the two brotherly countries," he remarked.

He also thanked Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Deputy Amir and Qatari Prime Minister for their messages of felicitations.

"Pakistan cherishes its brotherly ties with Qatar and I look forward to working closely with His Highness to further strengthen our exemplary bonds of friendship," he remarked.



QUETTA: Provincial President Pakistan Peoples Party Mir Changez Khan Jamali, MPAs Nawab Sanaulah Khan Zehri, Mir Sadiq Umrani and Mir Ali Madad Jattak talking with mediators

Writ of state to be maintained for restoration of peace: Balochistan Levies, Police and Constabulary would be put on modern lines, announces CM

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has announced that the Balochistan Levies, Police and Constabulary would be put on modern lines for restoration of peace in the province.

He also announced to introduce the modern training courses for increasing professional capacity of the civil forces.

The Chief Minister made these announcements while presiding over meeting of Home and Tribal Affairs department here on Thursday.

The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Inspector General Prisons, Shujaudin Kasi, Additional Chief Secretary Home,

Zahid Saleem, Additional Inspector General of Police, Jawad Ahmed Dogar and Director General Levies, Naseebullah Khan Kakar.

The overall law and order situation was also reviewed besides reviewing the performance of department.

Certain important decisions were also made in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister pledged to maintain writ of state for restoration of peace in the province.

During the course of meeting, rich tributes were paid to Assistant Commissioner Mach who fought bravely against the terrorists.

The Chief Minister announced to confer the highest civil award of the province on Assistant Commissioner Mach.

PM, CJCS exchange views on professional matters of armed forces

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamsahad Mirza called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad Thursday.

He congratulated the Prime Minister for assuming his office and expressed best wishes for him.

During the meeting, views were exchanged on professional matters of the armed forces of Pakistan and the security situation.

Meanwhile former caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jillani called on Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif Thursday.

BA sessions summoned on March 8 & 9

Independent Report
QUETTA: The sessions of Balochistan Assembly have been summoned on March 8 and 9 in Quetta.

According to an official notification issued here by the Balochistan Provincial Assembly secretary on Thursday, the Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar summoned the session of assembly at 11:00 AM on March 8.

The newly elected members of the provincial assembly would take oath of their membership in the assembly session.

Moreover, the Speaker Balochistan Assembly summoned the session on March 9.

CM expresses anger over delay in projects of rehabilitation of 2022 flood affected areas

Mir Sarfraz Bugti directs to start work on World Bank-funded project of worth 400 million US dollar immediately

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed displeasure over delay in the projects of rehabilitation of the areas affected in 2022 floods in Balochistan.

He directed to Chief Secretary to suspend all the provincial officers responsible for delay in the foreign funded projects and initiate an inquiry against them.

In addition to this, the Chief Minister also directed to start work on the rehabilitation projects within 10 days.

The Chief Minister

was chairing a high level meeting of the Planning and Development department here on Thursday.

The members of provincial assembly, Mir Zahoob Ahmed Buledi and Mir Shoaib Naushewani as well as the Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development, Abdul Saboor Kakar, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Rashid Razaq, Secretary Finance, Babar Khan, Secretary Planning Lal Jan Jaffar were in attendance.

The Chief Minister

Continued on page 2



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

International Women's Day being observed today: Economically empowered women eligible to resolve their problems, says Governor Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the economically empowered women can resolve their issues better, so we have to make them self independent.

He stressed the need to run wholehearted awareness campaign about the dignity and honour of women in the society.

In an official message issued here on eve of the International Women's Day on Thursday, the Governor said that half of our total population comprises women.

If the women are recognized and treated equally in the society, then all the

issues would continue to be resolved gradually, he believed.

The Governor said that it is reality that the lap of mother has the status of best educational institution for education and character building of the children even in the present developed era of information technology.

He also referred the saying of a philosopher that you may give me educated mother, I will give you the literate nation."

He said that the women are guarantors of the bright future.

He said that no woman can get their rights and powers without attaining self economic sufficiency.

SJC declares Justice Mazhar Naqvi as guilty of misconduct

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

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

SJC rendered its opinion in the nine complaints against Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi under Article 209(6) of the constitution, said a press release.

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

Allegations are leveled against judges of the supreme court and high courts and the same are publicized. A number of judges have expressed concern that if they respond to such allegations the same may be construed as misconduct

because the code of conduct, dated 2 September 2009 issued by the SJC, in its Article-V states that a judge should not seek publicity.

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

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

Therefore, Article-V of the Code of Conduct is amended to read as under:

"Functioning as he does in full view of the public, a judge gets thereby all the publicity that is good for

him. He should not seek more. In particular, he should not engage in any public controversy, least of all on a political question, notwithstanding that it involves a question of law. However, if an allegation is publicized against a judge he may respond to it."

The press release said that SJC considered six different complaints, in chronological order, and in respect of five the opinions expressed by the members to whom it was referred, recommended that there was no substance therein, with which the SJC concurred. However, in respect of complaints submitted against a judge of the high court of Balochistan the SJC issued notice to submit his reply/explanation within fourteen days, it said.

Security forces kill 2 terrorists in separate operations

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed two terrorists including a ring leader in two separate operations conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on night between March 6 and 7.

The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a statement, said an intelligence based operation (IBO) was conducted in Khyber district.

During the operation, terrorist ring leader Shamrooz alias Sheenay, was killed by the security forces in exchange of fire.

In another operation conducted by the security forces in Dera Ismail Khan district, terrorist Mansoor was also successfully neutralized.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces as well as extortion & target killings of innocent civilians, and were highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies.

President Alvi appoints three judges

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

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

The president approved the appointment under Article 175 A of the Constitution.

The president also approved the appointment of

senior most judge Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar as Caretaker Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court.

The president made this appointment of the caretaker Balochistan High Court chief justice in accordance with the Article 196 of the Constitution.

President Alvi also appointed senior most judge Justice Malik Shehzad Ahmed Khan as Chief Justice of Lahore High Court, in accordance with the Article 175 (A) of the Constitution.



QUETTA: Director General High Education Commission Dr. Zahoor Bazai meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

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

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has said Indian stubbornness is major hurdle on the way to success of SAARC due to which regional connectivity stand paralyzed.

"We will welcome mediation from any friendly country for resolution of Indo-Pakistan conflict or Kashmir issue, this was said by Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during her weekly press briefing here in FO Thursday.

She said the presidents of China, Iran Tajak and Turkey have congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on assumption of office of prime minister.

Prime ministers of Malaysia, Palestine, Afghanistan, Amir Qatar have also congratulated PM Shehbaz Sharif.

Indian PM Nerindar Modi sent message of congratulations to PM Shehbaz Sharif on social media.

The cabinet has not been formed so far. The foreign policy will be evolved afterwards.

As the world celebrates International Women's Day tomorrow, we would like to remember the strong women of Kashmir who have faced the brunt of Indian atrocities in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They have endured widespread devastation and confronted obstacles that impede their access to essential needs and their capacity to lead a dignified life.

The Kashmiri women widowed and orphaned because of fake encounters by Indian forces do not even get time to mourn for their dead husbands and fathers and are forced to become the sole breadwinners for their families. Women heading households face additional difficulties in the society and face hurdles in finding respectable jobs.

Full court reference held to bid farewell to CJ BHC elevated as SC judge: Judgments of BHC speak of merits & dispensation of justice without fear & favour, says Justice Naeem Afghan

Outgoing CJ BHC urges district judiciary to make efforts for disposal of civil cases as we have no problem throughout Balochistan in disposal of criminal cases

Independent Report

QUETTA: A full court reference was held to bid farewell to the Chief Justice, Balochistan High Court (BHC), Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan on his elevation as Judge of Supreme Court, in the Auditorium of High Court here on Thursday.

All the judges of High Court including senior Judge, Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Kakar, Mr. Justice Muhammad Ejaz Swati, Mr. Justice Muhammad Kamran

Mulakhail, Mr. Justice Zaheer-ud-din Kakar, Mr. Justice Abdullah Baloch, Mr. Justice Nazeer Ahmed Langove, Mr. Justice Rozi Khan Barrech, Mr. Justice Iqbal Ahmed Kasi, Mr. Justice Shaikat Ali Rakhsani, Mr. Justice Gul Hasan Tareen, Mr. Justice Muhammad Amir Nawaz Rana and Mr. Justice Sardar Ahmed Halimi. The full court reference was also attended by the senior judges of the subordinate courts as well as office bearers of different bar associations and senior lawyers.

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Honorable Judges of Balochistan High Court attending a Full Court Reference held in honour of Chief Justice BHC Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan on his appointment as Judge Supreme Court of Pakistan

Govt committed to provide equal opportunities to women in all sectors: CM Bugti

QUETTA (APP)- Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti on Thursday said that The Chief Minister said that the provincial government was committed to provide equal opportunities to women in all sectors and the journey would be started by ensuring the advancement of women through policy reforms.

In one of his messages on the occasion of International Women's Day, the Chief Minister said that no society could develop without the participation of women and we would take steps to fully utilize the capabilities of women in all walks of life in the reform agenda while maintaining the sanctity of the veil and the four walls.

He said that he was a supporter of the policy of gender equality and women's development, the aim of which is to provide a better, sustainable and suitable environment for women and girls by making meaningful reforms.

He said that by ensuring their participation in all sectors, they should also be given the opportunity to play their key role in the development of the society.

The Chief Minister said that the provincial government was committed to provide equal opportunities to

women in all sectors and the journey would be started by ensuring the advancement of women through policy reforms.

By including women in the development process, it will be possible to achieve the goals of sustainable development, he said.

The CM said that half of the population of our country consisted of women who were indispensable to be included in the development process saying that steps were being taken to provide education to women as well as to participate in business activities.

He said that Women Parliamentarian Caucus, Ombudsman, Protection from Harassment among Working Women and Balochistan Commission Status of Women were seen as a guiding principle by all national institutions and law enforcement agencies.

The Chief Minister said that women's partnership was important for a strong economy and we have to raise our voices against violence against women and especially housewives and to make its role more effective for gender equality and women's development and to make it possible for the society to provide equal human rights for all without discrimination.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding PM's Ramadan Relief Package and Benazir Income Support Program.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presenting a meeting to review affairs of Home and Tribal Affairs Department

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

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

Miller made this statement while responding to a question from a Pakistani journalist on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message of congratulations to the newly-elected Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on taking the oath of office for his second term.

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

"We would welcome productive and peaceful talks between India and

Pakistan, but the pace, scope, and character of any dialogue is a matter for India and Pakistan to determine," he said in response to another question.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Modi congratulated his Pakistani counterpart Shehbaz Sharif on taking his oath on Monday.

The relations between the two neighbours deteriorated in 2019 after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the state into two Union Territories in violation of international law and UN Security Council resolutions on the Kashmir dispute.

To yet another question, Miller stated that the investigation into the assassination attempt on a Sikh activist in the US involving the Indian government was still ongoing, despite a lapse of five months since the assassination attempt.

"My understanding is the investigation is on-going," he added.

Country's economic crisis....

Continued from page 1

amounted to Rs 500 billion". He said these figures showed the gravity of the economic situation.

He said the government refunded Rs 65 billion to the exporters, adding the tax base should be expanded while burden on those who were already taxed, should be reduced. He pointed out that Pakistan's tax to GDP ratio was just 9.8 percent whereas this percentage was higher in other countries.

He said state owned entities were making losses of hundreds of billions of rupees and the government was paying these losses by taking more loans. He informed that Rs 1.7 trillion taxes were stuck in courts due to legal disputes, vested interests and collusion. "We have to unite to take Pakistan out of the present economic difficulties. If we cannot take Pakistan out of this situation history will not forgive us," he remarked. "Our target is to change condition of the nation and we have to present our proposals to

friendly countries to attract investment."

In his remarks, co-chairperson of Pakistan Peoples Party Asif Ali Zardari said his party would support the prime minister as he would work to steer Pakistan on the path of progress.

He was of the view that Pakistan could make economic progress with growth in the agriculture sector. He mentioned that history was amended with the Supreme Court judgment in the reference on judicial murder of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said last time during his presidential tenure, his father Asif Zardari gave up his powers in favour of the Parliament. Asif Zardari would be elected as the civilian president for the second time, he noted. He said economy and reconciliation in Pakistani politics would be priority of the coalition government. He thanked the political parties for supporting Asif Zardari for the presidential election.

SC moved for fixing military courts case for early hearing

ISLAMABAD (Online): Petition has been filed in Supreme Court (SC) for fixing military courts case for early hearing.

The petition was filed by Latif Khosa counsel for Aizaz Ahsan. A five members larger bench of SC gave decision against military courts. Federation and provinces filed intra court appeals against the decision.

Balochi Music Illuminated English Dept Welcome Prog Independent Report

QUETTA: The English department at the University of Turbat (UoT) has always been at the forefront of platforming the eminent artists of the Balochi language and providing students and other budding musical talents a venue to experience the artistry of maestros up close. These views were shared by Dr. Shah Mir Baloch, Chairman Department of English, University of Turbat.

Meanwhile, popular Balochi singer Khair Jan Bakiri was welcomed at the university by throngs of excited fans during the welcome program of the English Department at UoT. Dr Shah Mir Baloch welcomed the new batch of BS English students on behalf of the faculty and administration and thanked Mr Khair Jan Bakiri for his presence.

CM expresses...

Continued from page 1

was briefed about the rehabilitation projects in the 2022 flood affected areas of the province.

While expressing his anger over delay in the rehabilitation projects, he particularly directed to start work on the World Bank-funded project of worth 400 million US dollar immediately.

Under the project, some 1,60,000 houses would be constructed in the flood affected districts of Balochistan, adding he mentioned.

He also vowed to prepare the next public sector development programme (PSDP) as per the requirements instead of personal liking and disliking.

Bilawal voices concern over missing of 14 fishermen

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday expressed deep concern over reportedly missing of 14 fishermen following a boat capsized in the open sea near Thatta.

Bilawal, in a statement issued by the Media Cell of Bilawal House, urged the authorities concerned to urgently mobilize all available resources for the rescue of the missing fishermen.

"My thoughts are with the affected families

during this distressing time, and I fervently hope for the safe return of the missing fishermen to their homes," he added.

Emphasizing the need for a modernized approach for such rescue operations, he said, "It is imperative to enhance the capabilities of our rescuers to prevent such tragic accidents in the future and swiftly respond to emergencies at sea."

He said that the PPP was fully committed to the safety and security of maritime communities.

Court suspends arrest warrants of Hassan & Hussain Nawaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Accountability Court of Islamabad on Thursday suspended the permanent arrest warrants of Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz till March 14 in the Panama Papers reference.

Judge Nasir Javed Rana announced the decision on the plea of Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz, seeking suspension of their arrest warrant in the Avenfield, Al-Azizia, and Flagship references. Defence Counsel Zazi

Misbah argued that the court had declared his clients as proclaimed offenders and issued their permanent arrest warrants, whereas the other accused had already been acquitted in the references.

National Accountability Bureau's Prosecutor Sohail Arif contended that both the accused would have to appear in the court in accordance with the law.

Subsequently, the court suspended their arrest warrants.

Minimum Nisab set at Rs 135,179 for Zakat deduction

ISLAMABAD (APP): In continuation of its efforts to facilitate Zakat collection and distribution in accordance with Islamic principles, the government has announced the Nisab-i-Zakat for the Zakat Year 1444-45 A.H.

The Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PASS) notified the new Nisab at Rs. 135,179.

According to the notification, the Zakat would be deducted from Saving Bank Accounts, Profit and Loss Sharing Accounts, and other similar accounts.

According to the Zakat and Ushr Ordinance, 1980, no deduction of Zakat at source shall be made if the balance in the specified accounts is less than Rs 135,179 on the first day of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, 1445 A.H.

The 'Deduction Date' for Zakat, likely to fall on 12th or 13th March 2024, subject to the sighting of the moon.

On this day, Zakat will be deducted from accounts holding a credit balance equal to or exceeding Rs 135,179.

Dr. Sabin says Strategy to be made to work together with MNCH for proper use of resources

QUETTA (APP)- Provincial Coordinator of Maternal and New Child Health (MNCH) Dr. Gul Sabin Azam Ghorizi said that a strategy should be made to work together with the MNCH program and the nutrition program through the health department for proper use of resources.

She expressed these views while chairing a meeting regarding maternal and child care and facilities, nutrition goals and data system for evaluation and monitoring of health facilities in the districts of the province with the support of DHI to make it effective.

Provincial Coordinator of District Health Informa-

tion System (DHIS) Dr Dawood Kasi, District Coordinator National Program Dr Muhammad Arif and other assistants participated in the meeting.

District wise classification of health facilities related to maternal, newborn and child health indicators with the support of MNCH and DHIS program was presented by Dr. Muhammad Arif.

Addressing at the meeting, Dr. Gul Sabin Azam Ghorizi said that in the light of today's data, these districts would be reviewed on the basis of desk monitoring in order to assess the number of health facilities in the districts, human resources, physical resources and the quality of service delivery, various proposals were evaluated.

In the meeting, taking

into account the scattered population and remote areas of the province, deep interest was shown in devising a strategy for the availability of health care services at the teshil level, she said.

She said that cooperation would be sought from the Department of Population Welfare for the supply of family planning items at the district and teshil level saying that DHIS program would develop an information collection mechanism for evaluation/monitoring of "Education Level" PHC facilities. Deploying skilled human resources for providing health facilities through the health department at the discretion of the district authorities and posting of unnecessary manpower at one place would be avoided, she maintained.



QUETTA: MPA Raheela Durrani, Syed Nadeem Shah and Syed Feroz Shah inaugurating Japanese calendar exhibition in collaboration with Pak-Japan Friendship Society and Japanese Consulate Karachi

Judgments of BHC speak of merits & dispensation...

Continued from page 1

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Justice Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan said that "I can take pride in saying that judgments of High Court of Balochistan speak of merits and dispensation of justice without fear and favour safeguarding the fundamental rights of the citizens of Pakistan as guaranteed by the Constitution."

He said that he is leaving the High Court with 4538 cases at the principal seat, 498 cases at circuit bench Sibi, 309 cases at Circuit bench Turbat and 18,738 cases in the district courts.

He was sure that the incoming Chief Justice with him team would chalk out strategies to further reduce the pendency of the cases.

He said that all that whatever has been achieved so far in the Balochistan judiciary is the result of team work and it is not by one man show.

He said that during his tenure as Chief Justice, the brother judges, all the law officers, lawyers and judges of district judiciary worked very hard with him day and night and put their tireless efforts to achieve the noble object of dispensing justice.

He said that one alarming aspect which he has observed as Chief Justice High Court is that civil judges are not taking due interest in maturing and deciding civil judges and civil cases are suffering inordinate delay in the lower courts due to which litigants are badly suffering.

"As per my observa-

tions, there are number of reasons for this delay. I will attribute one major reason to the advocates, who at the instance of the parties, are using delaying tactics but substantially I am holding the Judicial Officers responsible being regulators of the proceedings", Chief Justice maintained.

He said that no doubt, a court has to accommodate an advocate requesting for adjournment for genuine reason but not at the cost of inordinate delay.

Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan said that judges being the regulators of the court proceedings have to deal with the cases with due diligence and efficiency and have to avoid delay in disposal of cases by adopting different techniques which include the fixation of cases with short intervals and discouraging unnecessary and frequent adjournments.

He urged the district judiciary to make efforts for disposal of civil cases as we have no problem throughout the province in disposal of criminal cases.

He said that discipline has to be maintained at any cost for success of every institution.

He said that today we all have mixed feeling of joy and sadness, as one of us is leaving for Supreme Court and my senior puisne judge has to shoulder the responsibility of Chief Justice of the province.

He said that he has always professed to build the institution. Though the individuals don't matter and the institutions matter, but

it is also a reality that the individuals make the institutions with collective efforts.

He said that he is sure and confident that as a team leader his successor would set new goals to achieve the noble object of dispensing justice and Allah Almighty would bestow upon him the wisdom, courage and sagacity to dispense the sacred duty as Chief Justice of the province.

Mr. Justice Naeem said that let me remind you all that dispensation of justice is worship. The judges as well as lawyers have pivotal role in dispensation of justice. The lawyers should work very hard with commitment and dedication to for rendering proper assistance to the courts enabling the judges to reach at a just and fair conclusion so that the grievance of aggrieved is redressed at the earliest, adding he stressed.

In the end, he thanked all the speakers and audience for their profound love and admiration.

He also thanked the judges from the core of his heart for their full cooperation and giving him strength, courage and boldness as Chief Justice High Court.

Earlier, the senior judge and Chief Justice-designate, Mr. Justice Hashim Khan Kakar and office bearers of different bar associations also addressed the full court reference. They paid rich tributes to Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan on the meritorious services rendered by him for the cause of judiciary in Balochistan.



QUETTA: Residents of Kakar Colony and Qaiser Colony are holding protest demonstration against prolong sui gas load shedding in their area, outside Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) Office in Quetta.

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232403380853 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PROVINCIAL B&R DISTRICT LORALAI invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates, Tender Fee Rs.1000/- and bid Security 3%

S.No	Name of Works	E/Cost
1	Construction of B/T Road and Side Drain at Thatti Kakaran, Killi Pathan Kot 3000 Cross Pipe / drains dist Loralai	108,000,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules-2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-4 and above (Up to 200 million) in Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE10(i) (General Civil Engineering Works). Turn over of at least 75,600,000 PKR Amount in 2 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. PEC Valid License with CE-01. 3% CDR in Favour of Executive Engineer (Roads) CWPP&H Loralai. Green Challan of Rs 1000 in Favour of Executive Engineer (Roads) CWPP&H Loralai. Under taking on judicial stamp paper that the firm was never black listed by any Government / Semi Government Organization Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee/Deposit at Call of 3% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 21 March, 2024 till 01:00 PM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 02:00 PM on EPPS System Address: Loralai

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (Roads) PROVINCIAL B&R DISTRICT LORALAI
PRQ No.1569/06-3-2024
www.dprgob.pk @dprgob @dprgob @dprgob

TENDER NOTICE

The POLICE TRAINING INSTITUTION invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. TSE-232403380922 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. Tender Fee Rs.1000/-

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (Total Item(s) Count: 18)	0 PKR

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules-2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 03 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity Worth PKR. 300,000 Million each in Previous 5 Years. Accumulated Turn over of at least PKR.500,000 Million in 3 Subsequent Previous Years. Presence in Active Tax Payer List. BRA Registration Certificate. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. The firm participated will be registered with BRA. Detail of work to be participated be mentioned on letter head Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of amount 0 PKR specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 28 March, 2024 till 12:30 PM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 01:00 PM on EPPS System Address: POLICE TRAINING COLLEGE SARYAB ROAD QUETTA Phone no: 3003811612 Email: ptcquetta@hotmail.com

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BJP Indian govt pushing false narrative on normalcy in IIOJK to mislead world

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Hindutva Bharatiya Janata Party Indian (BJP) government is continuously peddling propaganda to push the false narrative of so-called normalcy returning to Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Kashmir Media Service, political analysts talking to media men in Srinagar said that continued cordon and search operations, house raids, frisking on roads, detentions, slapping of draconian laws, snatching of properties and suspending or terminating government employees debunk India's claim of normalcy. Indian troops have converted IIOJK into an open prison and cantonment zone.

The BJP Indian government and its regime in IIOJK, they maintained, snatched every right, including the right to live and voice of Kashmiris, and intended to paint the picture that all is well in the terri-

tory but the fact is that all is against normal in the territory.

They urged the world to press India to allow United Nations observers and global rights bodies to visit IIOJK and assess the ground situation and Kashmiris be allowed to decide their future themselves.

Peace and stability will remain a distant dream in South Asia without a resolution of the Kashmir dispute, the analysts warned.

They demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners, including Hurriyat leaders, youth and activists, languishing in different jails of India and illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The political analysts said the people of Kashmir have not forgotten the promise of a plebiscite. "Each time Kashmiris have renewed their demands. These acts of repression

have now turned into a systematic 'reign of terror' in the Vale of Kashmir. All the features of severe political repression are evident," they added.

They added the United Nations bears a special responsibility to bring peace to Kashmir because it was in its charter since 1947-48 that India pledged to the World Body, in general, and to the people of Kashmir, in particular, that they would be enabled to decide their future under an impartially-supervised plebiscite based on their innate right to self-determination.

They appealed to the UN Secretary-General to impress upon the Indian government to release unconditionally all political prisoners, including Masarat Alam Butt, Mohammad Yasin Malik, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Aasiya Andrabi, Nayeem Ahmad Khan, Dr Hameed Fayaz, Naheeda Nasreen, Fahmeeda Sofi and others.



ISLAMABAD: Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan, and Dr. Luay Shabaneh, UNFPA Representative presenting a shield to chief guest Dr. Sabina Durrani, Director General, National Health Emergency Preparedness & Response Network.

PIMA partners with Cheezious to aid Gaza medical relief efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) has teamed up with Cheezious, food a chain in Pakistan, to provide essential medical assistance to the people of Gaza.

The fast-food chain has vowed to contribute Rs 50 for every meal sold to assist Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) in their efforts to provide medical relief to Gaza, including supplying medical supplies and treating the injured, said a press release issued here.

The memorandum of understanding, (MoU) titled "Every Order Counts," was signed by PIMA General Secretary, Dr. Ifikhar Burney, and the Executive Director of Cheezious, Umer Farooq, on Thursday.

The ceremony was attended by President PIMA Islamabad, Dr. Saeedullah Shah; former president, Brig. Dr. Asif Nawaz; Head

of Marketing, Zihab Hassan and Director of Corporate Affairs, Azam Shah.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Ifikhar Burney said that collaboration in acts of goodness and charity is an integral part of the Islamic teachings. This MoU is a step forward in this direction. Serving humanity is our fundamental responsibility as doctors, and at this moment, the greatest opportunity for humanitarian service lies in assisting the people of Gaza.

He emphasized the urgent need to end the blockade in Rafah/ Gaza and establish safe humanitarian corridors for the seamless supply of medical aid, food, and the safe evacuation of the wounded. "We welcome the private sector's collaboration in providing much-needed medical assistance to Gaza, acknowledging the crucial role it plays in addressing humanitarian crises", he added.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers working on expansion of Chak Shahzad Road in the Federal Capital.

Senator Bahramand bid farewell speech with heavy heart

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Bahramand Tangi on Thursday in his farewell speech said that he will cast his vote in favor of Asif Ali Zardari on March 9 and part his ways from Pakistan Peoples Party.

In his emotional speech, senator Tangi blamed Senator Sherry Rehman and Nayyar Ali Bukhari for hatching conspiracy against him and creating differences between him and party leadership.

He said that every senator should be given freedom to work for the strengthening of democratic and parliamentary system.

"I am satisfied with my six years tenure as senator" said Tangi adding that after March 9, he will start a fresh political journey but will always respect the leadership of Pakistan Peoples Party who honored his 44 years political struggle and nominated him for senator

ship. Senator Tangi appreciated Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani and Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Khan Afridi for conducting the house business in smooth ways.

Senator Mohammad Akram said that during his tenure he raised the issue of missing persons and development of Baluchistan but unfortunately failed to resolve those issues.

He said Pakistan witnessed different systems but unfortunately did not witness development and prosperity.

Countries in the world got freedom after Pakistan left behind us in the race for development, means the system of Pakistan needs overhauling.

Pakistan cannot prosper until and unless free and fair election are to be conducted and the Parliament is made sovereign.

AIOU organizes seminar on Women's day

ISLAMABAD (APP): A seminar was organized here on Thursday at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on account of International Women's Day.

Social worker, gender expert and renowned writer Dr Fauzia Saeed was the keynote speaker and chief guest.

In-charge, Department of Gender and Women Studies, Dr. Atifa Nasir delivered the welcome speech and informed the participants about the history, aims and objectives of celebrating International Women's Day.

Dr. Fauzia Saeed highlighted the various chapters from her book "Tapestry - Strands of Women's Struggles Woven into the History of Pakistan" in the seminar.

Jail authorities fix meeting of Fawad Ch with his family

ISLAMABAD (Online): Jail authorities have fixed Thursday for meeting of his family members with Fawad Chaudhry.

The date has been fixed in connection with case regarding meeting of family members of Fawad Chaudhry with him.

The court wrapped up the petition. Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz of IHC heard the petition filed by Hiba Fawad Chaudhry on Thursday. The court was informed through state counsel jail authorities have fixed Thursday for meeting of Fawad Chaudhry with his family.

11 apprehended Crackdown against alms seekers in ICT

ISLAMABAD (APP): Assistant Commissioners City, Farhan Ahmad led by teams of district administration on Thursday executed a targeted operation against professional beggars on the directives of the Deputy Commissioner and arrested 11 beggars from different areas of the city.

The Assistant Commissioner City took swift action, nabbing 11 professional beggars from various areas. These individuals were promptly handed over to the police, while minor children found begging were safely relocated to the Edhi Center, said the ICT spokesman, Dr Abdullah Tabassum. According to the details, under the supervision of Assistant Commissioners, the operation against beggars persists daily.



ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) holds consultation session on Pakistan School Safety Framework held at local hotel.

Chairman HEC meets delegation from University of Sussex, UK

ISLAMABAD (APP): The delegation from the University of Sussex, UK, met with Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC), Dr Mukhtar Ahmed on Thursday.

The delegation visited Chairman HEC as part of the "Bilateral Agreements and Inward-Outward Student Mobility Initiative" partnering with IBA-Sukkur-University to foster global collaboration for diverse skills, and industry partnerships, emphasising intercultural research development, and ongoing relationships.

The meeting was facilitated by the Pak-UK Educational Gateway Part-

nership Programme between Sukkur IBA and the University of Sussex sponsored by HEC and British Council, Pakistan.

The participants of the meeting included the delegation led by Prof. Dr. Jeremy K. Hall, Director SPRU, University of Sussex, Prof. Dr. Asif Ahmed Shaikh, VC, Sukkur IBA University, Dr. Altaf H. Samo, Director EDC, Adviser HEC, (Academics), Muhammad Raza Chohan.

Prof. Altaf and Prof. Jeremy explained the development of the "Hinge Strategy" for global engagement being pioneered by both PIs' which aimed to address the critical societal

issues ("grand challenges") in developing countries, specifically focusing on agriculture, human capital development, and resource management. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed appreciated the development of the "Hinge Strategy" as an outcome of the Pak-UK Mobility Programme. He stressed the need to further develop this strategy in coordination with other national and international partners focused on improving food production using technological advancements, identifying new export-oriented agricultural sectors to generate foreign exchange revenues, and developing a strategy to engage youth and develop capabilities for the future.

Mandviwalla urges political parties to uphold dignity of Senate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Saleem Mandviwalla on Thursday urged the all political parties to uphold the dignity of the Senate of Pakistan by following the democratic norms.

In his farewell speech in the Senate Session, he said that unfortunately during the last few years, some undemocratic measures have harmed the honor of the upper house.

He said that the people of Pakistan sent them to the Parliament for the prosperity and development of the country but unfortunately, many things occurred against the public and the country's interest.

He thanked all outgo-

ing colleague senators for playing their role during the last five years and hoped they would come again to serve their country.

Senator Azam Nazir Tarar in his speech said that the mandate of the senate should be respected by formulating new laws, and amendments in favor of the people and country.

He said that listening to the points of view of each other in the Senate is the essence of democracy.

He said that the senate atmosphere remained cool and calm during their tenure, adding "We had a good time in the Upper House as each member played his/her role efficiently".

AC cracks down on price hike, encroachment, arrests 8

ISLAMABAD (APP): Assistant Commissioner (AC) Pothohar, Aneeq Khan on Thursday paid a surprise visit at vegetable market in federal capital and inspected price hike, anti-encroachment action and other facilities being provided to the customers there.

In a bid to curb overcharging, he reviewed market rates, promptly displaying the official rate list at the vegetable market, and arrested eight violators.

These violators were promptly transferred to the local police station for further action, said the ICT Spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabassum.



ISLAMABAD: Journalists gather outside National press club during annual election of NPC, in the Federal Capital.

PIO Dr. Tariq says: Digitalization offers opportunities in abundance for women empowerment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Principal Information Officer (PIO) Dr. Tariq Mehmood Khan on Thursday highlighted the evolving landscape of opportunities for women, driven by digitalization.

In a seminar titled "Women Empowerment: Challenges & Opportunities in a Changing World," organized in connection with International Women's Day, he emphasized the transformative impact of digitalization, stating that it has led to a significant increase in opportunities for women, particularly in economic spheres.

He noted a positive trend towards women's increased participation in various aspects of life, including politics and the economy, which is gradu-

ally crossing traditional barriers. Acknowledging the prevailing social challenges faced by women, Dr. Tariq underscored the importance of addressing issues relating to gender equality and ensuring the provision of basic human rights to all individuals, regardless of gender.

Highlighting the global nature of the women empowerment movement, he mentioned the momentum gained by feminist movements in countries such as the United States and European nations. He emphasized the need for concerted efforts at both national and international levels to empower women and promote gender equality.

Dr. Tariq urged women to seize opportu-

nities in social, political, and economic domains to showcase their capabilities and contribute effectively to society. He encouraged women to embrace the digital world to enhance their livelihoods and achieve economic empowerment.

Meanwhile, Farzana Bari, a renowned Gender Expert and Human Rights Activist, addressed the seminar shedding light on various critical issues faced by women in contemporary society. Highlighting the pervasive challenges confronting women, including domestic violence, early marriage, and nutritional deficiencies, she emphasized the systematic discrimination against women, characterizing their treatment as that of second-class citizens must come to an end.



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam at Blue area in the Federal Capital.

MQM to support Zardari in presidential election: Faisal Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Faisal Karim Kundi of the Pakistan Peoples Party on Thursday said that the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) would support Asif Ali Zardari in the presidential election.

Speaking at a press conference along with Nadeem Afzal Chan, another PPP leader, Kundi expressed the confidence that Asif Zardari would secure over 400 votes in the election scheduled for March 9 (Saturday).

Kundi termed the recent alliance between Maulana Fazl ur Rehman and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) an unusual

political collaboration.

Maulana Fazl's electoral mandate was allegedly stolen in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but he was contesting election results in Sindh and Balochistan, he added.

Commenting on the frequent disruptions in parliament, he remarked that for legislation the opposition should not protest.

Nadeem Afzal Chan said politically Pakistan at present was in critical condition and stressed the importance of national dialogue. He urged political parties to engage in dialogue both within and outside of the Parliament.



ISLAMABAD: Program Manager of SPARC Dr Khalil Ahmed Dogar addressing during a seminar at a local hotel, in the Federal Capital.

IHC seeks report about presence of Bushra Bibi in sub jail

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while hearing the petition filed by Bushra Bibi wife of PTI founder in connection with her shifting from Bani Gala Sub jail to Adiala jail has sought report about presence of Bushra Bibi in sub jail.

The court ordered senior officer of Islamabad administration to visit sub jail Bani Gala remarking superintendent jail should pass order on the petition related to meeting of Bushra Bibi with PTI founder. Superintendent Jail should file report of order with registrar

IHC. The petition filed by Bushra Bibi seeking her shifting from Bani Gala to Adiala jail came up for hearing in IHC Thursday.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb took up the case for hearing Thursday.

The notification regarding approval of chief commissioner on shifting Bushra Bibi to Banigala was presented in the court.

The court inquired from state counsel this home is owned by whom. Has this been done with the willingness of owner of the house.

Fauzia pays tribute to "unwavering commitment" of Pakistani women

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment at Workplace Fauzia Waqar Thursday paid tribute to "unwavering commitment" of Pakistani women and expressed her firm belief that their success is integral to the progress of our nation.

On the eve of International Women's day which is to be observed (Friday) tomorrow she while speaking to a private news channel said that we are proud of our talented and passionate Pakistani women and we will continue to provide a safest environment to women in society.

She said the government was ensuring equal participation of women in

all policy matters like human rights, climate change, social protection, education, health and social security. She also reaffirmed the national and international commitments for the protection of women's rights and ending violence against them.

"We are immensely proud of our Pakistani women, who have consistently demonstrated their dedication, leadership and commitment to shaping a brighter future for our society, she added.

"We stand united in our efforts to empower women and promote collaboration, as we believe that their success is integral to the progress of our nation," she added.

Excise staff sets up mobile van at Trail 3 for vehicle services

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory's (ICT) Excise Department is offering convenient access to essential administrative tasks for vehicle owners through its mobile van which is stationed at Trail 3 on Thursday. The excise staff will be on-site, offering a hassle-free experience for vehicle owners seeking registration, transfers, and token tax processing, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabassum said.

He said this unprecedented initiative not only caters to vehicular paperwork but also introduces the ICT Doorstep Service. The citizens are encouraged to avail the opportunity to obtain the Domicile Certificate, Birth Certificate, Power of Attorney, Inter-

national Driving Permit, Fuel Permit (Domestic/Commercial), or Motor Vehicle Registration, all at one convenient location, he added. He further emphasized that the Facilitation Center's Doorstep ICT Vehicle will be present, providing a seamless and efficient solution for various administrative needs.

Whether a vehicle owner looking to sort out your paperwork or in need of essential documents, this event promises efficiency with a touch of convenience to the masses, he added.

By bringing these services directly to the community at Trail 3 parking, residents can save time and effort in completing necessary bureaucratic procedures.

Daily Voice of Masses
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Friday March 08, 2024

Justice denied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pakistan's path to economic recovery under sifc in FY-2024

By Aiman Khattak

The finance ministry of Pakistan has released the 'Monthly Economic Outlook' report for January, shedding light on the first-half performance of Pakistan's economy in FY2024. The report showcases a series of encouraging developments, signaling an improvement in macro-economic conditions and a resurgence in overall economic activity. These positive trends stand in stark contrast to the challenges faced during the previous fiscal year, offering hope and optimism for Pakistan's path to economic recovery in FY2024.

During the initial phase of the fiscal year 2024, the economy of Pakistan witnessed a steady and progressive improvement in the overall macro-economic environment, resulting in a significant revitalization of the economy. The manifestation of these encouraging developments can be observed through the notable upswing in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, which recorded a commendable increase of 2.13% during the first quarter of FY2024.

Moreover, the prevailing positive trajectory in the economy instills optimistic projections for continued expansion in the subsequent quarter, thus indicating a sustained and robust recovery. Commencing with a promising note, the tangible aspect of the economy has exhibited highly encouraging indications of expansion. Specifically, the agricultural sector has surpassed expectations, as evident by the cultivation of wheat, which exceeded its projected target by a noteworthy margin of 1.8% during the Rabi season of 2023-24, achieving a remarkable production output of 32.12 million tons. Moreover, the growth trajectory extends beyond crop cultivation, as the manufacturing and sales of farm tractors have experienced remarkable surges, with production witnessing a substantial upswing of 67.5% and sales registering an impressive spike of 103.3% during the period spanning July to December in the fiscal year 2024.

Another critical component of Pakistan's industrial progress, the Large-Scale Manufacturing (LSM) sector, is also on the

path of recovery. This sector, known for its pivotal role in bolstering the country's industrial growth, has showcased considerable signs of improvement. Notably, in November 2023, the LSM sector displayed a notable year-on-year surge of 1.6%, along with a commendable month-on-month increase of 3.6%. Although there was a slight contraction of 0.8% during the period spanning July to November in FY2024, but it is crucial to note that the overall trend for this sector remains on a positive trajectory. These observations suggest that the LSM sector is steadily regaining its strength and is poised for sustained growth in the foreseeable future.

Moreover, from July to December of the fiscal year 2024, the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which measures changes in the prices of goods and services, has shown an upward trend. The CPI for this period was 28.8%, which is higher than the CPI of 25% during the same period last year. However, in December 2023, the month on month increase in CPI was 0.8%, which was lower

than the 2.7% increase seen in the previous month. Looking at the fiscal situation, the overall fiscal deficit, which is the difference between the government's spending and its revenue, has widened by 2.3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during July to December of the fiscal year 2024. On the other hand, the primary surplus, which represents the excess of government revenue over its non-interest expenditure, has improved by 1.7% of GDP during the same period.

On the top of these developments, the Pakistan's external sector has shown promising improvements. The current account deficit during Jul-Dec FY2024 stood at \$831 million, a significant improvement from the \$3.6 billion deficit of the previous year. This improvement can be attributed to a better trade balance. Notably, the current account recorded a surplus of \$397 billion in December 2023 and a surplus of \$198 million in the second quarter of FY2024. Additionally, exports have risen by 21.3% year-on-year, primarily due to the easing of import restric-

tions, which facilitated a steady supply of raw materials for export-oriented industries. Additionally, there has been a favorable development in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with an impressive growth rate observed during the period of July to December in the fiscal year 2024. FDI has reached a noteworthy figure of \$862.6 million, marking a substantial 34.8% surge compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. Notably, Chinese investments have played a pivotal role in fostering this upward trajectory.

Furthermore, the inflow of remittances has also shown a positive trend, further bolstering the economic stability of the country. In December 2023, remittances have increased by 13.4% compared to previous periods, making a noteworthy contribution to the overall economic landscape.

It is critical to mention here that, the entire credit for this significant positive economic development goes to the timely decisions of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). Its proactive measures have played a pivotal role in stabilizing overall economic

indicators during the first half of FY2024. Led by COAS General Asim Munir and the current caretaker government, SIFC has effectively attracted investments from countries such as China, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf countries. These investments have opened the doors for foreign direct investment, fostering economic growth and improving Pakistan's overall economic outlook.

The report notes that, the Pakistan's economy has witnessed notable advancements in the initial half of the fiscal year 2024, with encouraging developments observed across multiple sectors under the timely decisions of SIFC, which played a crucial role in attracting foreign investments and fostering economic development through its timely decisions and proactive initiatives. Moving forward, there is an expectation that economic activities will continue to gather pace in the latter half of FY2024, under the condition that well-founded and cautious economic policies are consistently executed, while maintaining stability in both domestic and external aspects.

How to move ahead

Kamila Hyat

If there's anything that Pakistan needs today to improve both its political environment and economy, it is some degree of unity and the willingness of all parties to work together.

We as citizens need to acknowledge the fact that Pakistan currently faces one of the worst crises in its history; its economy is in shambles and most people are starving because they are unable to buy food at inflated rates. Petrol prices continue to increase as well. A high number of people are unemployed, and this contributes to the high rate of petty crime in all parts of the country.

Unfortunately, as we saw in the National Assembly on Sunday (March 3) as the new prime minister, Mian Shehbaz Sharif, was elected — and before this during a session in the Punjab Assembly — there is clearly no willingness on the part of the PTI to move towards reconciliation.

In acts that can only count as being extremely hostile to the country, PTI chief Imran Khan has allegedly dispatched a letter to the IMF asking the or-

ganization not to lend any money to Pakistan until a fair and free election is held. He states that this was a promise made by the IMF. There is controversy over the wording and context of his message.

But what is clear is that Pakistan today cannot survive without the vital IMF loan that will come after a new round of talks in March. At the moment, we must hope it does come in, giving the country the much-needed time to set some agenda for the future.

As Shehbaz Sharif said in his victory speech, work ahead will be "difficult" but not "impossible". We hope that this proves to be true for the sake of all citizens of the country, especially the one-third who live below the poverty line.

The PTI's refusal to move towards dialogue or show any willingness to work with the government in power is alarming. Yes, most analysts and observers believe that the elections held on February 8 were not transparent. But even so, Pakistan's future is what all political leaders should be thinking about. After all, controversial elections have been held in the

past as well, including the 2018 ballots which brought the PTI to power. Indeed, there have been many who argue that no election in the country has been fair since the first exercise carried out in 1970.

The reality is that only a stable political situation can benefit the country and its people. This stability can be brought about only if there is some willingness to work within the rules of parliamentary democracy. At the moment there is no evidence of this, with Shehbaz Sharif's speech largely drowned out by shouting and a volley of noise from PTI members in the NA and those supporting them in the galleries.

There is also another element to all this. Pakistan — even after over seven decades of existence — has not developed the majority that democracies need. We have seen this in provincial assemblies and parliament. The waving of watches in the KP and Punjab assemblies is simply childish. It serves no purpose and is not dignified. Yes, the Toshakhana case needs to be sorted out and those responsible brought to justice. The de-

gree of their offences also needs to be determined in the context of Pakistan's past history, but simply making a mockery of parliament by bringing up the offences of others serves no purpose.

The purpose of parliament and assemblies is to legislate in favour of people and, most important of all, work on an agenda that can push forward the course of the people who have been wronged for far too many years and are today in desperate need of help and a way to move forward. The fact that we see no way to the future is manifested in the fact that more people than ever before left the country in 2022 and 2023 by legal means. Others have left illegally, including PIA flight attendants who slipped away from flights to Canada.

The fact that a woman can be driven so desperate by the existing situation in her homeland that she leaves behind a three-year-old child, as one air hostess did, simply shows the mindset of people who see themselves placed before a wall that they know they cannot climb up.

The PTI meanwhile has essentially issued a cry for war and bloodshed by appointing Amin Gandapur as KP's CM. This is a move intended to show the intent to go to battle whether it is to talk or govern. The PTI should be working towards making KP a model province so that other provinces can see what is happening there and favour the party in any future poll. Some believe this poll may happen sooner than mandated in the constitution. Others of course point out that different outcomes are also possible in the coming years.

But Gandapur is a sign that the PTI wishes to retain the animosity and hostility it has displayed in the past, using verbal abuse as a kind of weapon against opponents and misogyny against women opponents as well as news reports and anchors. Besides this, in 2017, there were reports about Gandapur's alleged involvement in the alleged stripping and parading naked of a teenage girl in Dera Ismail Khan. People cannot simply ignore such allegations.

Things need to

change. They need to change fast. We need a united stand by all parties on what is to be done in the future and how this is to happen. There is no point in continuing with the strategy of endless hostility and acrimony. The amount of abuse we have heard in the past years under the PTI government is virtually unprecedented.

It is time to return to the dignity and respect that political leaders should demonstrate in order to set an example for others. It is also true that such dignity will also bring greater benefits to themselves. We at the present moment have chaos in the country. We are indeed very close to anarchy.

This is, in so many ways, dangerous and shows that our political leadership has nothing for people who struggle to place a meal or two on the table before their children. There is now growing evidence of the desperation of people and at the same time evidence of the indifference of political leaders to this. The mix is a disaster. -- Courtesy TheNews

Restoration, 2024

F.S. Aijazuddin

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

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

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

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

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

dent Franklin D. Roosevelt's warning: "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the 46 years from 1953 to 1999, the Indian Planning Commission had

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

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

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

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

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

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

Minerals economy

Umer Farooq

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

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

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

the anticipated outcomes for the entire sector.

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

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

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

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

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

Murad announces Rs 22.5bn Ramzan package to help 60% Sindh population

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has announced a Ramzan package worth Rs 22.5 billion aimed at supporting 60 per cent of the population, particularly those who earn a minimum wage of between Rs 32,000 to Rs 35,000 per month. The targeted families will receive Rs 5000 cash each through banks. The mechanism for this will be announced within the next two days. Meanwhile, the CM directed all the divisional commissioners to start a crackdown against the hoarders and profiteers from today and report him.

He took these decisions while presiding over a meeting regarding the Ramzan package and other arrangements, including price control. The meeting was attended by Mayor Karachi Muratza Wahab, Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, IG Police Riffat Mukhtar, Secretary Finance Kazim Jatoi, Secretary Agriculture Aijaz Shah, Secretary Food Nasir Abbas Soomro, Adil IG Karachi Khadim Rind, Commissioner Karachi Saleem Rajput, all deputy commissioner of Karachi, representatives of KE and SSGC and other concerned. During a briefing to

the chief minister, Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam informed that there were 4.5 million deserving families in the province who were earning between Rs 32,000 to Rs 35,000 per month or less. The CM said that these families constituted 60 per cent of the population, and he has decided to provide them with a Ramzan package of Rs 5,000 cash each. The total subsidy amount for this initiative is expected to be Rs 22.5 billion. The chief minister mentioned that a similar package worth Rs 15.5 billion was provided during the last

Ramzan. Murad Ali Shah instructed the chief secretary to determine the number of eligible families to ensure that no one is left behind. He also directed him to talk to the banks to distribute the allocated Rs 22.5 billion. The Chief Minister directed all the divisional commissioners to start a crackdown against the profiteers and hoarders. "You have to maintain not only the price of the commodities and edibles but ensure a balance between demand and supply so that prices could remain under control."



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



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

Maryam meets ASP Shehrbano, praises her bravery

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz met ASP Shehrbano Naqvi here on Thursday and said protection of vulnerable sections of society was among her priorities. The woman ASP briefed the chief minister about the Ichhra incident and how she rescued a woman who had been confined in a shop by a mob due to her shirt having a print in Arabic language. She also briefed the CM about the initiatives for the

minority communities, transgenders, and animal rescue centres in Lahore, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi. CM Maryam Nawaz praised ASP Shehrbano Naqvi for showing courage, saying the woman police officer had set an example of bravery and courage for the young officers. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, IGP Punjab, CCPO Lahore and SSP Law & Order also attended the event.

Efforts afoot to strengthen city's infrastructure: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Karachi Mayor Barrister Muratza Wahab on Thursday said that efforts were underway to strengthen the city's infrastructure, including enhancing Safari Park and introducing various recreational projects through public-private partnerships. He said this after inaugurating internal roads, restaurants, horse riding, cafe, and a shooting range in Safari Park. Barrister Murtaza said that the Pakistan Peoples Party had promised to revive Karachi's prosperity, and Bilawal Bhutto's vision was the progress of the city. Significant

developmental projects had begun in the city after the formation of the Sindh government, he added. Deputy Mayor Karachi, Salman Abdullah Murad, Dil Muhammad and mayor Karachi special representative for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi were also present on the occasion. He emphasized the importance of providing entertainment facilities like indoor games, cycling, and horseback riding in major parks. The mayor also highlighted the presence of horses in Safari Park, which was initially considered a leisure activity for the elite but was now accessible to the general public.



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

Pakistan Army arranges educational trip for N Waziristan students

PESHAWAR (APP): As part of the 'Ilm Toloo Dapara' (Education for All) initiative, the Pakistan Army organized a four-day educational trip for the students from schools in North Waziristan, focusing on Tehsil Ghulam Khan and Miranshah. As per the district administration on Thursday, the students embarked on a journey to discover historical landmarks in Peshawar and Abbottabad. In Peshawar, the students visited the Islamic University, Peshawar Museum and Bala Hisar Fort.

Meanwhile, in Abbottabad, they toured the Pakistan Military Academy Kakul, Frontier Force Regimental Center and Shimla Hill. At Peshawar's Museum and Bala Hisar Fort, the students received insightful briefings on the historical significance of these sites, enriching their understanding of the region's heritage. Grateful for the opportunity, the students expressed their gratitude to the Pakistan Army, recognizing the sacrifices made by the armed forces for the nation's security.

CJ, PHC visits blood donation camp

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Justice (CJ) Peshawar High Court Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan visited blood donation camp here on Thursday organized by Hamza Foundation. The chief justice also met the lawyers who donated blood. "I myself will donate blood and will come again after a while," the CJ said. A camp has been set up in the High Court for blood donation for thalassemia-affected children wherein a large number of lawyers visited. Hamza Foundation has set up a camp in the Peshawar High Court.

Kidnapped man killed by the kidnappers

By Adeel Ahmed SHIKARPUR: The one of kidnapped Car Electrician Muhammad Rafiq Samejo was murdered by the kidnappers due to non payment of Ransom money to them on last night. According to reports reached here that the kidnappers had sent the video of kidnapped Rafiq Samejo on Wednesday night in which his feet toes were tightened and seemed dead and later such video shared on social media (Facebook) as to spread the fear of Kidnappers with the message that they are most powerful to Police and law enforcement Agencies and can do anything at anytime without any hurdles and fear. And on Thursday the dead body of deceased kidnapped Car Electrician Rafiq Samejo was found dead from Kandhkot Kashmir District near to BS Feeder Irrigation Canal and later sent to Kandhkot Civil Hospital for autopsy and later was handed over to his heirs who brought his body to Shikarpur.

Nisar Khuhro, Mehtab Dahar, 2 others sworn in as MPA

KARACHI (APP): PPP Sindh president Nisar Ahmed Khuhro, former provincial Minister Jam Mehtab Dahar and two other members elected on reserved seats have sworn in as member of the Sindh Assembly here in assembly session held here on Thursday. Speaker Syed Awais Qadir Shah taken oath from the newly elected members. Nisar Khuhro sworn in as MPA for 8th time after he was declared as returned candidate PS 15 Meero Khan by Election Commission of Pakistan. Jam Mehtab Dahar was elected as MPA from PS 18 Ghotki on Feb 08 general election. Surrender Velasai and Sameta Afzal who were elected as returned candidate on non-Muslim and Women reserved seats respectively.

Governor greets UET students for academic success

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali Thursday congratulated the students, parents, faculty members who achieved academic success in his address to the Annual Convocation-2024 of the University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar here. Engineering education should be compatible with domestic and international industry and engineering and technology has made society faster, more integrated and made human life easier, Haji Ghulam Ali said. He said young people keep their access to modern sciences including engineering, technology

and to deal with the challenges of the present era, there is a need for practical research in engineering, technology and other modern sciences. Modern research in all fields can lead to progress, Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali said, adding, all educated youth, including the engineering department, are the bright future of the nation. Haji Ghulam Ali said that our youth are not less capable in any field than the youth of other countries. At the end, the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali also held a meeting with the students in joy and appreciated them for their academic success.

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

LAHORE (Online): Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) has challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC) the Election Commission (EC) move for not giving them reserved seats. Chairman SIC Sahibzada Hamid Raza has challenged the EC step for not giving them reserved seats in Punjab in LHC. Sahibzada Hamid Raza has filed petition through advocate Ishfaq A Khan. EC and all others have been made respondents in the petition. The petitioner

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



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Khawaja Salman Rafique in a group photo with delegation of German Development Bank.

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

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A jirga was convened here on Thursday under the chairmanship of Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Zafarul Islam Khattak to resolve Gomal Zam dam area's demarcation issue between Wazir and Mehsud tribes. The meeting was attended by the deputy commissioners of South Waziristan Lower, Upper districts and elders of Mehsud, Wazir and Buki tribes. After a threadbare discussion, both the tribes agreed to delineate the dam's boundaries in

accordance with historical maps from the British era. However, the Wazir committee emphasized extending the boundary beyond the British-era demarcation. The Gomal council of Mehsud and Burki asserted that the Gomal area constitutes shared land, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding their interests. They said that ownership of the land beyond the boundary of Gomal Zam Dam did not belong to the Darray Mehsud tribe, thus it could not take responsibility for the further demarcation.



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

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

Independent Report LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman has said in his message on the occasion of International Women's Day that he pays tribute to the women who are contributing to the development of country in every field. He said that Pakistani women are talented who are working shoulder to shoulder with men in every field of life. He said that our religion Islam gave rights to women in the age of Jahiliyyah when

daughters were buried alive as soon as they were born. He added that example of Hazrat Khadija (RA) is before us. He added that she was a successful business woman. He emphasized that the opportunities for education and growth should be provided to the women in the society. He added that the education of a man is the education of an individual while the education of a woman is equivalent to the education of a family. Governor Punjab said

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

15 dead, 1,497 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 15 people were killed and 1,497 others injured in 1,406 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 671 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 826 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams. The data analysis showed those 777 drivers, 39 underage drivers, 211 pedestrians, and 524 passengers were among the victims of road accidents. The statistics show that 309 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 309 persons, placing the provincial capital on top of the list.



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

High-level meeting held to discuss security measures for Ramazan

KARACHI (APP): A significant meeting was convened under the leadership of IGP Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, to address security concerns for the upcoming holy month of Ramazan. The meeting, held at the Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi, brought together key officials including Additional IGP Karachi, DIGP - Traffic, and other senior officers from various regions. IGP Sindh emphasized the importance of enhancing police presence, particularly in all zones of Karachi, to tackle street crime effectively. Measures such as increased patrols, foot patrols, and snap checking in central areas, shopping centers, and surrounding regions were discussed. Consultations with all

stakeholders were highlighted as essential for formulating comprehensive security and traffic arrangements during the month of Ramazan. Additionally, the update and assessment of venues such as mosques, schools, and other places for prayers were emphasized, followed by the implementation of robust security plans. Special attention was given to ensuring extraordinary traffic management alongside the protection of public safety during Ramazan. The meeting stressed the importance of crime analysis and the security situation in other provinces. The IGP underscored the need for full-proof security measures at all levels to ensure safety during all ten days of Ramazan.



LAHORE: Members of All Pakistan Pensioners Welfare Association are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Lahore press club.

Conference on violent extremism concludes

PESHAWAR (APP): The three-day Countering Violent Extremism Conference, organized under the auspices of the Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism, concluded its second-day sessions. On the commencement of the second day of the three-day workshop, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr Qibla Ayaz, enlightened participants on the inclinations towards religious seminaries in Pakistan. He emphasized the importance of discipline in both religious and modern

sciences. He advocated for initiatives post integration, ensuring main-streaming of the tribal areas, and the establishment of health, education, and swift justice services, as well as the enforcement of law for the sustainable peace in the region. According to him, extremist ideologies arise from deprivation and social alienation. Project Director of Pir Roshan Institute North Waziristan, Dr Jamil Ahmed Chitrali stressed the need for fostering patience, tolerance, and reasoned dialogue within society.

WASA chalks out desilting plan for all sub-divisions

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

PM for removing hurdles to expedite privatisation process

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

Level playing field for all fertilizer manufacturers to encourage new investments

Independent Report
KARACHI: By removing discriminatory gas pricing among fertilizer manufacturers, the Government can facilitate new investments and promote efficiency to ensure sufficient urea availability for the farmers.

In a media workshop, Ali Rathore – Chief Financial Officer, Engro Fertilizers, briefed the participants about the importance of a robust indigenous fertilizer industry, its key challenges and opportunities, and recent steps taken by the Government to reform the fertilizer sector.

"The removal of subsidies for fertilizer manufacturers on SSGC and SNGPL network, which represents 60% of all fertilizer manufacturing capacity, is a step in the right direction. While gas prices for SSGC and

SNGPL network have increased by around 200 percent, the manufacturers on Mari network (FFC and Fatima) are still receiving gas on the subsidized price of PKR 580/mmbtu. This discriminatory gas pricing in the industry has led to multiple prices in the market and will not help the Government achieve its fiscal objectives," he highlighted.

The urea prices of FFB, Engro Fertilizers and Fauji Fertilizer Company Ltd now stand at PKR 5,489 per bag, PKR 4,649 per bag and PKR 3,767 per bag, respectively. This price discrepancy has created an opportunity for the middlemen to profiteer by PKR 80 – 100 billion. A homogenous gas price will create a level-playing field for all fertilizer manufacturers in terms of input costs.

Prices of essential food items fixes during Ramadan

SUKKUR (APP): Divisional Commissioner Sukkur, Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi has issued a notification to regulate the prices of essential food items in Sukkur, Khairpur and Ghotki districts for holy month of Ra-mazan.

In this connection, a comprehensive price control programme has been initiated to monitor and manage the prices of various food commodities.

In addition to these measures, a special Ramadan relief package has been announced at utility stores, of-fering reductions in prices for a variety of items. This initiative aims to ease the financial burden on con-sumers during the holy month.

Ahead of Ramadan, concerns over rising prices of food items have been addressed through these regulatory actions.

PSX loses 53 points
ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday lost 53.53 points, a nominal negative change of 0.08 percent, closing at 65,603.09 points against 65,656.62 points the previous trading day.

A total of 354,153,110 shares valuing Rs14,435 billion were traded during the day as compared to 419,737,124 shares valuing Rs18,296 billion the last day.

Some 354 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 145 of them recorded gains and 187 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 22 remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Pak Elektron with 31,074,761 shares at Rs 23.24 per share, Telecard Limited with 22,636,636 shares with 8.57 per share and PIAC(A) with 21,560,000 shares at Rs 15.60 per share.

Telenor Pakistan's first female sales trainee program Parvaaz begins

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

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

Held at the Telenor 345 headquarters, this bootcamp marks a significant milestone in Telenor Pakistan's ongoing commitment to nurturing diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

With 11 onboarded sales trainees having placements in major cities including Peshawar, Faisalabad, Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and AJK, the program aims to create a more representative workforce while tapping into fresh talent pools.

During the bootcamp, top management from Telenor Pakistan mentored the trainees on the organisation's overall vision including their sales strategy and distribution network.

Sessions on design thinking and Telenor's open and transparent culture were also conducted.

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PESHAWAR: People are buying grocery on ahead of start Muslim holy festival Ramadan Mubarak.

SCCI, Rizq Trust sign MoU to combat Food Insecurity

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and Rizq Trust, a well-known charity organization, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to tackle the serious problem of hunger, especially during Ramadan, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

At a ceremony held at the Rizq Trust headquarters, former SCCI president Sherbaz Bilour and Rizq Trust's Co-Founder and Vice President, Huzaiifa Ahmad,

officially signed the agreement, said in a press release issued here on Thursday. The event was attended by important officials, members of the business community, and representatives from different groups. Under the agreement, both organizations agreed to work together to fight hunger and poverty and help those in need across K-P province. Speaking at the event, Sherbaz Bilour praised the partnership as a big step towards addressing hunger issues.

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

Independent Report
QUETTA: In response to the devastating floods sweeping through Gwadar, Pakistan's largest telecommunications and every day for a month to the affected communities.

Torrential rains have plunged Gwadar into chaos, displacing families and leaving them desperately of clean drinking water is delivered directly to those reeling from the disaster.

Commenting on the effort, Syed Atif Raza, Chief Marketing Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, said, "Access to clean water is indeed a fundamental human right, crucial for survival. PTCL Group, in collaboration with Pakistan Red Crescent.

SECP notifies amendments in CRCs Rules 2019

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

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

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

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

The subject rules have been amended in consultations with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), International Finance Corporation and public at large.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, Cap Andreas, MSC Spring-III, San Nicolas, Huang Shan-16, Cetus and Lusail, carrying Containers, Coal, Palm oil, Wheat, and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, HF Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Grain Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively.

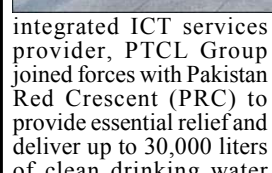
Meanwhile another edible oil carrier 'Ardmore Cherokee' also arrived at Outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on Tuesday. A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a Containers ship, Cap Andreas left the Port on today morning, while three more ships.

Rupee gains 07 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Thursday gained 07 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.28 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.35.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279 and Rs 281.8, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 82 paise to close at Rs 304.22 against the last day's closing of Rs 303.40, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).



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

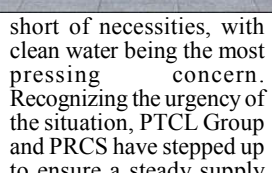
Underground cabling project accelerates

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

Inaugurated in January 2024, phase I of the project includes shifting electric wires to the underground system in areas including Mall Road Service Road (North), Hyder Road, Bank Road, Canning Road and partial areas of Kashmir Road.

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

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

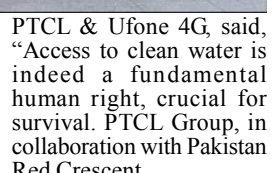


ISLAMABAD: A woman employee of a petrol pump filling the petrol in a car, in the Federal Capital, ahead of International Women's Day.

Islamic Microfinance Services Meezan Bank, Pakistan Microfinance Network ink MoU for promotion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic Bank, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Pakistan Microfinance Network (PMN) - the national association for retail players in the microfinance industry.

Under this agreement, the Bank will provide financial and Shariah technical support to PMN member institutions for delivering Islamic finance to the under-privileged



The Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives on Thursday organized a Workshop on Public Investment Management Assessment (PIMA), Climate-PIMA & Climate Gender Tagging of Development Budget under the chairmanship of Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan (DCPC) in collaboration with Revenue Mobilisation, Investment & Trade (REMIT).

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

Independent Report
KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of FPCI, has apprised that during the visit of Director General of Custom Valuation to FPCI Head Office in Karachi, it has been agreed, in principle, to work together to reduce review time from 30 days to as low as possible to facilitate country's trade production and exports; whereas, any delay in custom valuation results in unfair and undue demurrages and detention charges to the importers. These are financial costs and losses which can be avoided through better liaison between customs department and the business community, he added.

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

Envoy Hashmi applauds China's exemplary 5.2% economic growth rate

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi applauded China's exemplary 5.2% economic growth rate in 2023, highlighting it as a beacon of success in the global economic landscape.

This commendation underscores the significance of China's economic policies and performance, drawing attention to its impact on regional and international dynamics. Hashmi told China Economic Net in an exclusive interview on Wednesday that two sessions in China are going on and it is the most important political event in the annual calendar of the country.

The most significant thing is the Chinese economy shown in the

Work Report presented by Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Tuesday talked about two things. One is what was achieved last year and secondly, what are the plans and targets for 2024?

"I was very impressed with what has been achieved last year, 5.2% economic growth rate in very challenging circumstances is a major achievement. I have no reason that China will achieve the targets for next year as well" he stated.

"There will be a year-long program of stimulating consumption and several other measures as well. The second thing which struck me most was the progress that has been made and emphasis going forward also on technology and green development", the ambassador said.



ISLAMABAD: A woman employee of a petrol pump filling the petrol in a car, in the Federal Capital, ahead of International Women's Day.

Islamic Microfinance Services Meezan Bank, Pakistan Microfinance Network ink MoU for promotion

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Under this agreement, the Bank will provide financial and Shariah technical support to PMN member institutions for delivering Islamic finance to the under-privileged

segments of the society, said a news release.

The MoU was signed by Ahmed Ali Siddiqui - Group Head, Shariah Compliance at Meezan Bank, and Syed Mohsin Ahmed - CEO of PMN.

Notable figures present at the event included Dr. Muhammad Imran Ashraf Usmani - Vice Chairman Shariah Board, Meezan Bank, Syed Tanveer Hussain - Group Executive Corporate, Commercial & Investment Banking Group.

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

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

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

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

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

Modi also remotely

"[Occupied] Jammu and Kashmir is not just a region, it is the crown of the country," Modi said at the rally in a stadium attended by thousands.

Modi took pride in having cancelled the region's constitutional special status and inherited protections of land and jobs for its permanent residents.

He said the former rules and "dynastic politics" had limited the region's potential.

"Today, from [occupied] Kashmir I extend my greeting to the entire country," Modi said, ahead of the holy month, expected to begin in the coming days.

Thousands of armed police and paramilitary forces were deployed, and checkpoints set up across Srinagar.

Modi also remotely

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

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

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

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



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

Cairo truce talks at an impasse as Ramadan looms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Turkish Red Crescent sends its biggest Gaza aid shipment yet

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

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

"This aid, which will be delivered to Gaza with the support and cooperation of the Egyptian Red Crescent, will keep the hopes of Palestinians alive on the eve of Ramadan," Turkey's ambassador to Cairo, Salih Mutlu Sen, said on social media platform X.

India gets its first underwater metro

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI (INP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first under-river metro tunnel in Kolkata, nearly four decades after metro services began in the country.

The metro tunnel has been built under Kolkata's Hooghly River that will connect Howrah Maidan to Esplanade.

Kolkata was also the first city in India to have an operational metro system, in 1984.

Trains will pass under a 520-metre river stretch in just 45 seconds, making commuting easier for residents in both cities.



Palestinians transport flour bags on a truck as humanitarian aid arrives in Gaza City. The UN has warned of an impending famine, with acutely malnourished children being treated at hospitals.

Donors likely to resume funding for UNRWA soon, says Norway

Monitoring Desk
OSLO/OTTAWA: Many countries that paused funding to the UN Palestinian refugee agency are likely having second thoughts and payments could resume soon, Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide said on Wednesday.

Several countries, including the United States and Britain, paused their funding to UNRWA after accusations by Israel that a dozen of its 13,000 staff in Gaza took part in the Oct 7 Hamas raid on Israel.

Norway, a top donor to UNRWA, has maintained its funding and transferred 275 million crowns (\$26 million) in February, its regular annual contribution, and said more could come. It is also lobbying countries that have paused funding to resume.

"I think that a large number of those countries

Hezbollah holds funeral for Israeli strike victims

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

A photographer saw hundreds of people turning up for the funeral in Houla, near the border with Israel that has seen deadly exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and Israeli forces since the start of the Gaza crisis.

Tuesday's strike killed a man and his son who were initially identified as civilian victims but later claimed by Hezbollah as fighters "martyred in battle".

During the funeral, the coffins of Hassan Hussein, his wife Ruwaida Mustafa who was also killed in the same strike, and their 25-year-old son, Ali Hussein, were draped with the Hezbollah flag, the photographer said.



Hezbollah supporters attend funeral of those killed in Israeli bombardment.

AI tools generate misleading election images: researchers

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Image creation tools powered by artificial intelligence from companies including OpenAI and Microsoft can be used to produce photos that could promote election or voting-related disinformation, despite each having policies against creating misleading content, researchers said in a report on Wednesday.

The Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), a non-profit that monitors online hate speech, used generative AI tools to create images of US President Joe Biden laying in a hospital bed and election workers smashing voting machines, raising worries about falsehoods ahead of the US presidential election in November.

"The potential for such AI-generated images to serve as 'photo evidence' could exacerbate the spread of false claims, posing a significant challenge to preserving the integrity of elec-

Indian farmers foil Delhi protest

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Dozens of protesting Indian farmers were detained en route to New Delhi on Wednesday, forcing them to call off their plan to converge on the capital in their demand for higher crop prices, protest leaders said.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from the northern state of Punjab, launched a "Delhi Chalo" (Let's go to Delhi) march last month demanding higher guaranteed prices for their produce but were stopped by police about 200km (125 miles) north of the capital.

Protest leaders had planned to resume the protest on Wednesday, urging farmers across India to head for the capital by bus and train since their tractors had been blocked and tear gas and water cannon used to disperse them.

Angry Polish farmers protest EU rules

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

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

Polish farmers have been blocking border crossings with Ukraine since last month to protest at what they say is unfair competition from goods entering from Ukraine. "I want to produce healthy food but we're importing products lower in quality than ours with which we can't compete in terms of price," said Jan Kepa, who has a farm in southwestern Poland. "We still have hope but we've been protesting for over a month and so far there's been no satisfying solution for us," he said.

Congress will repeal 'discriminatory' CAA if voted to power: Khera

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI (INP): Congress leader Pawan Khera has said that the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 will be revoked if the party comes to power.

Pawan Khera addressing a press conference said that the cutoff date for 1971 is sacrosanct for Assam. But that CAA will take away and 2014 will be their new cut-off date.

He was referring to the cut-off date of March 25, 1971, for granting Indian citizenship to people entering Assam from Bangladesh, according to the Assam Accord.

At least 200 people, mostly women and children, abducted by extremists in northeastern Nigeria

Monitoring Desk
ABUJA: At least 200 people, mostly women and children displaced by violence in northeastern Nigeria, were abducted by Islamic extremists while they were searching for firewood near the border with Chad, the United Nations office in Nigeria said late Wednesday.

The victims had left several displacement camps to look for firewood in Borno state's Gaboru Ngal council area when they were ambushed and taken hostage, the U.N. said, in the latest attack in the conflict-hit region where frequent abductions and killings limit movement.

"The exact number of people abducted remains unknown but is estimated at over 200 people," the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Nigeria Mohamed Fall said in a statement about the attacks, which occurred several days ago but whose details are only emerging now because of limited access to information in the area.

Russian jailed for seven years for articles about Ukraine war

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: A reporter for an independent Russian news outlet was sentenced to seven years in prison on Wednesday for articles he wrote about alleged Russian war crimes in Ukraine, his publication said.

Roman Ivanov, who works for the online RusNews, was convicted of publishing "fake news" about the Russian army under wartime censorship laws passed shortly after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago.

After long tussle, Sweden to become NATO member

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

China accuses US of using Philippines as 'pawn'

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

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

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

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

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, brushing aside competing claims from a host of Southeast Asian nations and an international arbitration ruling that has declared its stance baseless.

"China's resolve to defend its legitimate rights and interests is unwavering, and the Philippines' rights-infringing and provocative attempts will not succeed," Mao said. Asean, Australia reaction Southeast Asian and Australian leaders on Wednesday warned against actions that "endanger peace" in the South China Sea, following fresh confrontations between Beijing and the Philippines in contested waters.

Turkey struggles to stop violence against women

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Muhterem Evcil was stabbed to death by her estranged husband at her workplace in Istanbul, where he had repeatedly harassed her in breach of a restraining order. The day before, authorities detained him for violating the order but let him go free after questioning.

More than a decade later, her sister believes Evcil would still be alive if authorities had enforced laws on protecting women and jailed him.

"As long as justice is not served and men are always put on the forefront, women in this country will always cry," Cigdem Kuzey said.

Evcil's murder in 2013 became a rallying call for greater protection for women in Turkey, but activists say the country has made little progress in keeping women from being killed. They say laws to safeguard women are not sufficiently enforced and abusers are not prosecuted.

At least 403 women were killed in Turkey last year, most of them by current or former spouses and other men close to them, according to the We Will Stop Femicides Platform, a group that tracks gender-related killings and provides support to victims of violence.

So far this year 71 women have been killed in Turkey, including seven on Feb. 27 — the highest known number of such killings there on a single day.

The WWSF secretary general, Fidan Ataselim, attributed the killings to deeply patriarchal traditions in the majority Muslim country and to a greater number of women wishing to leave troubled relationships. Others want to work outside the home.

"Women in Turkey want to live more freely and more equally. Women have changed and progressed a lot in a positive sense," Ataselim said.

Hong Kong court affirms landmark sedition conviction for pro-democracy activist

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Criticizing laws or chanting anti-government slogans can be enough to jail someone for sedition in Hong Kong, an appeal court ruled Thursday in a landmark case brought under a colonial-era law increasingly used to crush dissent.

Hong Kong's Court of Appeal upheld a 40-month sentence for pro-democracy activist Tam Tak-chi, the first person tried under the city's sedition law since Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997. Tam's lawyers had argued his conviction should be overturned because the prosecution did not show he meant to incite violence.

The prosecution is widely seen as part of Beijing's clampdown on dissent in the former British colony, following widespread anti-government protests in 2019. Tam was convicted on 11 charges in 2022, including seven counts of "uttering seditious words." A judge at the lower court took issue with him chanting the popular protest slogan "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times" — words the government says imply separatism — and criticizing the Beijing-imposed National Security Law during a primary campaign.

The judge said his words broke the law because they incited discontent against Hong Kong and disobedience to the law.

Tam and his lawyers had drawn hope from a ruling made by a top Commonwealth court in a 2023 case about a similar law. In that case, the London-based Privy Council said that the sedition law in Trinidad and Tobago could not be used to convict people unless they intended to incite violence or disorder. The Privy Council is the court of final appeal for a number of Commonwealth countries.

But the Hong Kong court rejected the argument, finding that the Privy Council ruling only applied to the law in Trinidad.



WARSAW: Polish farmers demonstrate against the European Union's climate measures and Ukrainian imports in front of parliament.

PM announces Rs 7.5bln Ramadan relief package for poor people

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday announced a historic subsidy based Ramadan relief package 2024 of Rs 7.5 billion for the poor and middle classes.

He was chairing a high level meeting on Prime Minister's Ramadan Relief Package and Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

Senator Ishaq Dar, Ahad Cheema, Shiza Fatima Khawaja, Romina Khurshed Alam and high ranking officials attended the meeting.

The PM was given a detailed briefing on the Ramadan relief package.

During Ramadan ul Mubarak, under the package more than 39.6 million

families will be provided edible goods on lower rates.

Under the Benazir Income Support Programme, 88 percent of the eligible families will be given 19 edible items including flour, rice, pulses, ghee, cooking oil, sugar, sherbet and milk on lower than market rates. The rate of subsidy on these goods would be 30 percent which was more than the inflation rate.

Subsidy of Rs 77 per kilo would be given on the 20 kilogramme flour bag and Rs 70 subsidy on every kilogramme of ghee.

The Prime Minister's Ramadan relief package would be distributed among the needy families through 4775 utility stores across the country and the supply would continue till the end

of Ramadan.

Those who would face any difficulty in registration for the Ramadan relief programme, would be facilitated and registered at the spot and their complaints would be resolved.

The prime minister said it was priority of the government to distribute edible items to the poor and low income class on lower than market rates.

He said no compromise would be made on the quality of the edible items being provided under the relief package.

The quality of the eatables would be strictly monitored, he added.

The prime minister said it would be ensured that the people should not face any difficulty while



Pakistan Navy contingent presenting salutation to Commander-in-Chief of Russian Federation Navy onboard PNS TABUK during Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition 2024.



QUETTA: President National Party Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti. MPAs are also present on the occasion.

Pakistan urges UNSC to ask Taliban to cut ties with TTP, eliminate terrorism

UNITED NATIONS (APP): A top Pakistani diplomat has called on the UN Security Council to join Pakistan in demanding that the Taliban authorities terminate their relationship with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is responsible for persistent attacks against Pakistan's military and civilian targets.

"Left unchecked, the TTP, supported by Al-Qaeda and some State sponsors, could soon pose a global terrorist threat," Ambassador Munir Akram warned the 15-member Council on Wednesday.

Speaking in a debate

on the situation in Afghanistan, the Pakistani envoy said, "The Afghan Interim Government's failure to control the TTP and other terrorist groups erodes its claim of full control of its territory that it asserts in order to secure international recognition." He also urged the United Nations to undertake an investigation to find out how the TTP has acquired advanced military equipment and weaponry and to identify the sources of the TTP's financing, which is helping sustain its 50,000 fighters and their dependents and its terrorist operations.

Orders to return all from other provinces CM takes notice of misuse of official vehicles

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has taken strict notice of the misuse of official vehicles and ordered to return all those vehicles present in other provinces.

According to an official circular issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister expressed his displeasure on misuse and unnecessary use of official vehicles and imposed ban on the use of vehicles of Balochistan government

President grants special remission to children, women prisoners

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday announced special exemption in the punishments of woman and child prisoners on humanitarian grounds.

The remission would be applicable to women and children sentenced for two years or less, and the ones with less than two years of sentence left to complete, a President Office news release said.

The reduction in sentence would not apply to the prisoners involved in murder, espionage, and anti-State activities. The other categories without remission included convicts of adultery, theft, dacoity, kidnapping, terrorism, narcotics and foreign nationals, it added.

President Alvi approved the remission in sentence for prisoners in accordance with Article 45 of the Constitution.



QUETTA: Students are holding demonstration in connection with the school admission campaign organized by the Pashtunkhwa Students Organization (PSO), at Quetta press club.

BBISE determined to end copying culture from Balochistan: Abida Kakar

QUETTA (APP): Controller of Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) Quetta Abida Kakar said that the BBISE was determined to eliminate copying culture from examination centers in Balochistan. She expressed these views on Thursday while visiting at established center of Islamic Model High School Quetta and other centers.

She was accompanied by Deputy Controller Munawar Hussain, Assistant Secretary, Zahoor Mengal, Superintendent Abdul Aziz and others during visiting of the centers.

The Controller took action against 12 students and rejected their papers after founding them in cop-

Sindh govt has recruited army of law officers: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has reserved judgment on the matter of appointment of 7 officers of grade-17 in forest department Sindh.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa rejected the reply of chief secretary Sindh declaring it highly disappointing.

The CJP remarked Sindh government has employed army of law officers. Pension is paid to judges and government employees out of pockets of oppressed people.

The CJP gave these remarks while presiding over a 3-member bench of SC during the hearing of case pertaining to appointment of 7 officers of grade 17 in Sindh forest department Thursday.

Bugti reiterates resolve to solve issues of zamindars at earliest

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has reiterated his government's resolve to solve the issues being faced by zamindars of province at the earliest.

He said that he had expressed his resolve to resolve the issues being faced by the zamindars besides development of the agriculture sector.

He vowed to take up the issues of zamindars with federal government with ground reality and arguments.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the representative delegation of zamindars who called on him under leadership of

Pakistan Navy participates in Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition-2024

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship PNS TABUK and Submarine PNS/M KHALID visited Doha, Qatar to participate in Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition (DIMDEX-24). Upon arrival, Pakistan Navy Units was received by Defence Attaché of Pakistan at Doha and Senior Officials of Qatari Emiri Naval Force (QENF). The PN mission was led by Cdre Mazhar Bashir, commander submarines.

During the visit, Mission Commander called on high level dignitaries including Commander of Qatari Emiri Naval Forces, Maj Gen Abdullah Hassan Al Sulaiti. Various high level Military and Naval leadership including Commander-In-Chief of Russian Federation Navy, Admiral Nikolay Evmenov and Turkish Fleet Commander visited PNS TABUK. During the interactions, matters of mutual interests were discussed and enhancement of bilateral ties in all spheres was re-affirmed. Taking the opportunity, Mission Com-

CM directs to shifts offices of all PDs & Field Officers in respective sites

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to shift offices of all Project Directors and Field Officers in the respective sites of districts.

While chairing a meeting in the Chief Minister secretariat on Thursday, the Chief Minister said that he would pay surprise visit to all divisions and districts frequently.

Stern action would be taken against those officers who were found absent from their place of postings, adding he warned. He exhorted the project Directors and officers not to make provincial capital as their permanent place, rather perform their duties remaining present there.

He also directed to utilize all their capabilities for resolving the issues being faced by the masses.

Ghazala thanks Zardari for bringing justice to 3rd generation of Bhutto

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola thanked former President Asif Ali Zardari for bringing justice to the third generation of Bhutto on Thursday. In a statement issued here, Provincial President of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Women's Wing Ghazala Gola said that the leadership and workers of Pakistan People's Party were succeeded by the decision. The opinion of the Supreme Court has proved that the execution of Shaheed ZAB.



QUETTA: MPA Meena Baloch meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

Consultative meeting marks milestone toward drafting MHM policy for Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): Stakeholders representing various sectors and government line departments convened for a consultative process to draft a comprehensive Provincial Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Policy on Thursday.

The initiative, supported by the German development agency GIZ, underscores the collective commitment to address a crucial aspect of women's health and hygiene.

Participating in the event were representatives from diverse sectors, including senior politician and Member Balochistan Assembly (MPA) Ms Rahila Durrani, Commissioner Income Tax Balochistan Rehmatullah, Ms Zulaikha Buledi, Hashim Khan, and Ms Rabia Baloch (GIZ), Ms Shazia Nazir and Ms Falak Naz (Unicef), Mr Ejaz ur Rehman, Mr Qahir Agha, Dr Saadullah, Dr Rukhshanda and others shared their views on the

topic. This diverse representation emphasized the importance of a multi-sectoral approach for the successful implementation of the forthcoming MHM policy.

MPA, Ms Rahila Durrani emphasized that MHM is vital for the overall health and well-being of women in Balochistan, noting that cultural sensitivity is paramount in crafting effective policies.

While highlighting the importance of government-ownership, she assured the participants of every possible support for the legislation on MHM and its policies.

Rehmatullah, Commissioner Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Balochistan highlighted the importance of access to menstrual products, stressing that affordability and availability are key factors in ensuring women can manage their menstrual hygiene with dignity.



NEW YORK: Ambassador Masood Khan inaugurates the event "Pakistan Heritage and Resolution Month" being organized by New York Police Department.

MPA Rahila for portraying Pakistani Art and Culture on Japan's pattern

QUETTA (APP): MPA Rahila for portraying Pakistani Art and Culture on Japan's pattern Rahila Durrani, a member of the Balochistan Assembly and a former speaker of the provincial assembly, said on Thursday that Japanese calendars perfectly capture their art, way of life, sports, cultural history, and environment.

"Pakistan has a diverse and vibrant culture; the only need is to portray the beautiful art and landscape of our country on the pattern of Japan," she remarked at the opening ceremony of the Japanese Calendar Exhibition.

The exhibition was organized by the Pak-Japan Friendship Society (PJFS) in collaboration with the Consulate-General of Japan Karachi here at the Pakistan Japan Cultural Centre Quetta.

Syed Feroz Alam Shah, Honorary Technical Advisor Federal Board of Investment and founder member of PJFS, Syed Nadeem Alam Shah said Japan has launched number of uplift projects in Pakistan.

Efforts are afoot to enhance the trade volume of both the country, he said emphasizing the need for strengthening the bond of the trade community of Pakistan and Japan.

New Cabinet to engage US gov't for Afia's return

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader of the House in the upper house Senator Ishaq Dar on Thursday informed that the new cabinet will engage the United State's government once again for the return of Afia Siddique.

He said that his government in 2013 had interactions with the US officials and the then Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif made a request in Oval office of white house but unfortunately it was accepted.

I had 3 times detailed meeting with Antony Blinken and I put all my efforts for return of our daughter to Pakistan.



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

New York Police holds Pakistani heritage month

Masood Khan says it reflects growing US-Pak ties

NEW YORK (APP): The New York City Police Department (NYPD) Wednesday organized the first-ever 'Pakistan Heritage & Resolution Month' at its headquarters, with Ambassador Masood Khan congratulating over 600 Pakistani-American police officers serving the force for their dedicated work in keeping the city safe.

The NYPD is the largest and one of the oldest municipal police departments in the United States, with approximately 36,000 officers and 19,000 civilian employees. The ambassador, who was the chief guest at the largely attended event, said that the holding of 'Pakistan's Heritage & Resolution Month' in connection with the 'Pakistan Day' carried a special significance and reflected the strength of decades-long Pak-US relations. It is the first time NYPD is organizing such a ceremony, sponsored by the Pakistani-American Law Enforcement Society and Pakistan's Consulate in New York to commemorate Pakistan's heritage and to pay tribute

to Pakistani officers' contributions. "The growing visibility and outstanding performance of Pakistani-Americans in all walks of life reflects the huge potential of our people. It is also indicative of the deepening bonds between Pakistan and the United States," said Ambassador Masood Khan. The function was attended, among others, by Mayor of the New York City Eric Adams, First Deputy Commissioner Tania Kinsella, Chief of NYPD Jeffrey Maddrey, United States District Judge of New Jersey Zahid Qureshi,



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola, MPA Raheela Durrani and others addressing participants of a ceremony held in connection with World Women Day.