

President directs immediate release of radiation machine for cancer patients

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the decision of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), directing the Collector of Customs, Lahore to get released a radiation machine within seven days, for the treatment of cancer patients.

He directed the release of the machine that had been lying with M/s Gerry's Dnata (Pvt) Ltd since 2023, keeping in view the sensitive nature of the equipment and the noble cause of serving humanity, particularly

the cancer patients, according to a President House press release on Friday.

He stressed that in case of non-compliance the Collector of Customs shall initiate necessary proceedings as per law.

The president regretted that the radiation machine had been lying in the shed of the Collectorate of Customs, Lahore since 04.04.2023 and the Gerry's was refusing to release the machine without payment of the extra cost for keeping the shipment with it in

the warehouse, despite the fact that Customs authorities had issued a Delay and Detention Certificate (DDC) for waiving off the storage/demurrage charges.

He lamented that the Gerry's did not consider it a serious matter, and refused to release the machine without a huge payment of warehouse charges, thus making those cancer patients and poor people of Pakistan suffer who get treatments from public sector hospitals of the country.



MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq.

PM Shabbaz holds an aerial view of the snow affected areas of AJK

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): The newly Elected Prime Minister of Pakistan Shabbaz Sharif held aerial view of rain and snow affected areas of Azad Kashmir and held meeting with AJK Prime Minister Ch. Anwarul Haque at PM Secretariat Muzaffarabad here on Friday.

The AJK PM Anwarul Haque felicitated Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shabbaz Sharif on assuming office and expressed his good wishes. The PM Pakistan while talking to AJK PM extended his unconditional support and assured his full cooperation with his government. He also expressed his commitment for Kashmiri people who are engaged in freedom struggle against Indian occupation and pledged that his government and people of Pakistan will continue their support morally, diplomatically and on the political front till achieving their right to self-determination as per their wishes and UN resolutions.

PM thanks China, Türkiye, UAE leaders for their congratulatory messages

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed gratitude to the leadership of China, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates for their congratulatory messages on his assumption of office.

Responding to Chinese President Xi Jinping's message of felicitation on X, the prime minister said that he looked forward to working with him to further strengthen Pak-China iron-clad friendship and for high-quality development of China Pakistan Economic Corridor as flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative.

He also thanked Chinese Premier Li Qiang and said that Pakistan would continue to work with China to deepen the All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and for harnessing full potential of CPEC. In a separate post, the prime minister also thanked Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and said that he looked forward to working closely with him to further elevate the already historic bilateral relationship to unprecedented levels of fraternity and cooperation.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also expressed gratitude to the UAE leadership including Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed for their wishes and prayers.

He also thanked Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President, Deputy PM and Chairman of the Presidential Court for his letter of greetings.

"Looking forward to working, once again, with the brotherly and visionary leadership of the UAE to further advance our strong fraternal ties. Mutual trust, common faith, shared history and heritage are the pillars of Pakistan-UAE relations," Prime Minister Shehbaz remarked.

Japan provides a grant to Kuchlak Welfare Society of an amount of US\$ 50,152

INDEPENDENT REPORT
QUETTA: The Government of Japan extended a grant of US\$ 50,152 to Kuchlak Welfare Society, Quetta for "The Project for the Provision of Ambulance and Medical Equipment in Kuchlak, Quetta District" under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP).

The grant will enable vulnerable patients to receive state-of-the-art medical treatment by replacing outdated machines, and the ambulance service will be able to provide faster treatment for patients involved in road accidents.

Speaking on the occasion, Consul-General Mr. HATTORI expressed his appreciation for the work being undertaken by organizations such as Kuchlak Welfare Society for the fulfillment of healthcare sector initiatives for vulnerable and underprivileged patients in Quetta. He hopes that grants for such projects serve the people



for the procurement of ambulance and medical equipment such as X-ray, Echo Cardiac, ECG, ultrasound, CBC machines and Chemistry Analyzer for the clinic of the Kuchlak Welfare Society.

The Kuchlak Welfare Society was established in 2001 and has been providing comprehensive and free treatment and care in Kuchlak area in Quetta since 2001, with a focus on

CS assures to provide relief..

Continued from page 1
He congratulated all the Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners on holding the general elections successfully.

The Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners briefed in detail about provision of best facilities in schools and healthcare institutions.

He directed to take legal action against the absentee staff in hospitals and schools of the province.

He mentioned that 454 non-functional schools have been made functional in the province.

He directed to hold meetings of the District Education Committee and District Health Committee on regular basis.

The Chief Secretary also assured that the shortage of officers would be met in all divisions.

Meanwhile, the comparison of availability and rates of different essential items including price control was also reviewed.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary directed to hold the meetings of price fixation committees.

He also directed to do monitoring of the rates by conducting raids by the district administration.

In addition to this, Chief Secretary also directed to display the official rate list at the shops ensuring sale of commodities at the prescribed rates.

He directed to take action against the shopkeepers and dealers violating the official price list.

He asserted that the shopkeepers would not charge above the prescribed rates.

He said that the official rate list would be enforced in all districts immediately.



KARACHI: Women supporters of the Jamaat-e-Islami holds banner to stage a Pro-Palestinian demonstration on the eve of International Women's Rights Day, in the Provincial Capital.

NA passes resolution appreciating women's contributions to society

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly celebrated International Women's Day by acknowledging the remarkable contributions of Pakistani women, especially highlighting the legacy of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, in a majority vote resolution while members of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) were in opposition to the resolution.

Ms. Sehar Kamran, moved the resolution in the Lower House of Parliament, while Ms. Sharmila Faruqi, and Shaza Fatima Khwaja, also submitted similar resolutions.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq put the resolution, which garnered majority support despite objections

from members of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed disappointment that the opposition chose to oppose the resolution without considering its contents, emphasizing the importance of transcending politics for such significant matters.

He also observed that the opposition had not submitted its own resolution and instead resorted to block a tribute to the legendary daughter of the nation.

He advised the opposition to realise importance of the matter and instead of opposing for the sake of opposition, should add its voice for the promotion, protection and well-being of the women of Pakistan.

Wapda grabs National Kabaddi C'ship title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wapda bagged the 43rd National Kabaddi Championship title here at the Jinnah Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex on Friday.

Pakistan Air Force secured second position while Pakistan Army grabbed third position.

Wapda beat Pakistan Air Force by 48-40 in the final to win the title.

In the third position match, Pakistan Army defeated Higher Education Commission by 40-22 points.

Pakistan Sports Board Director General Shoaib Khosa was the Chief Guest of the closing ceremony of the championship. Meanwhile Secretary General of Pakistan Kabaddi Federation Rana Muhammad Sarwar presented medals and trophies to the players at the closing ceremony.

A total of 13 teams of departments, provincial and regional associations affiliated with the federation from across the country participated in the championship.

The participating teams included Pakistan Army, Pakistan Air Force, Wapda, Police, POF Wah, Higher Education Commission, Pakistan Railways, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad.

Youngsters have to learn...

Continued from page 1
generating means of livelihood for the unemployed youth of the province few months back.

The courses have been started in five different trades in phases enabling the youngsters to earn money while sitting at home.

The Government of Balochistan, Vice Chancellors of all universities and head of Ultra-soft system have extended cooperation to make the Governor IT Initiative Programme successful.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor said that we are aware of the reality that artificial intelligence is influencing the economy and

human behaviors at fast pace.

Therefore, it is necessary for us to meet the requirements of modern era.

He said that we can ensure building of bright future keeping in view the artificial intelligence and robotic technology in near future.

The Governor thanked UNHCR for providing laptops and tablets to youngsters.

He also appreciated the special cooperation of the whole team of Ultra-soft system.

In the end, he distributed commemorative shields, laptops and tablets among the organizers and participants of the IT Initiative Programme.



QUETTA: Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Salma Kakar is addressing a seminar organized by Awami National Party (ANP) on the occasion of International Women's Day, at Quetta press club.

Govt. committed to...

Continued from page 1
he maintained.

He said even the salaries of the federal employees were being paid with the borrowed money. Therefore, he said this was the right time to take tough and important decisions to resolve all the key challenges, the country was facing.

As regards the losses of SOEs, the prime minister informed that the SOEs were incurring losses of hundreds of billions rupees as the loss of only Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was around Rs 825 billion. Similarly, he said the country lost Rs 500 billion every year to power theft.

Talking about the losses and damages occurred due to recent rains, snowfalls and land sliding in AJ&K, the prime minister expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss of eight precious lives and prayed for the grant of eternal peace to the departed soul and early recovery of those injured in the incidents.

He said that the government of Pakistan always stood with its Kashmiri brothers and sisters in the hour of need.

On the occasion, he also distributed cheques among the affected people.

He said Rs 2 million each would be distributed among the families of the deceased and Rs 500,000 each to those injured in the recent incidents.

Similarly, Rs 700,000 each would be given to those whose houses were completely damaged while Rs 350,000 would be given to those whose houses were partly damaged.

He directed the Prime Minister AJ&K to complete the survey as soon as possible so that the

funds be distributed by March 13.

On the request of the AJ&K prime minister, PM Shehbaz also announced to keep a helicopter of NDMA available for the region in case of emergencies to immediately reach out to the affected people in the hilly areas.

He said Jammu and Kashmir was the jugular vein of Pakistan and it would not leave alone the people of Kashmir in this hour of difficulty.

PM Shehbaz maintained that almost over 20 million children were out of school across the country. He said mosques would be utilized to provide education to such children.

On the occasion, Fatima was also recited for those who passed away in the recent rains and snowfall in the area.

Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for his support in this hour of difficulty. He informed that during the recent rains, snowfall and landsliding in AJ&K, eight people were died while 88 houses were completely damaged.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday said the government was fully committed to empower youth, particularly women by providing them better facilities of education, vocational training, and the latest technology tools so that they could help propel Pakistan on the road to economic progress. He was speaking at a ceremony to give away "Khatun-e-Pakistan Awards" on the occasion of the International Women

Day.

He congratulated the award winners and lauded them for making the name of Pakistan prominent among nations with their efforts and significant contributions.

He said the government was making its utmost efforts to facilitate the female population of the country and protect their rights.

International Women's Day was observed around the world to acknowledge the important role of women in society and Pakistan was not far behind others in providing rights and facilities to women, he added.

He said Pakistan needed to make more policy interventions and provide more resources and opportunities to women.

"We have to provide more opportunities and resources for education and training of women,"

He noted that women all around the world were contributing to the progress and welfare of society, adding there was a need to give women equal opportunities and a better environment at the workplaces so that they could easily contribute to economic progress and development. He expressed the hope that the provincial governments would take forward the policies for women that were introduced and implemented in the past. He pledged to make all resources available for women so that they could equip themselves with the latest technology tools. "Women can help make Pakistan a great nation by utilising all available resources," he remarked.

TENDER NOTICE

The Directorate of Education (Schools) invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. TSE-232403380361 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	Educational Lab Equipment (Total Item(s) Count: 165)	3%

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules-2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 2,500,000 in Previous 3 Years. Turn over of at least 2,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years. Presence in Active Tax Payer List. Sales Tax Certificate. The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. JV is not permissible. Submission of the required Bid Security in case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and non-responsive. Submission of the required Bidding document Fee. All Supply Orders must be related to Government Department. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 3% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 16 March, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 16 March, 2024 till 10:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 11:00 AM Address: Directorate Of Education (Schools) Balochistan Brewery Road Quetta Phone no: 0819202102 Email: programdirector@emil.com

Director
Directorate of Education (Schools)

PRQ No.1584/8-3-2024
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TENDER NOTICE

The Directorate of Education (Schools) invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. TSE-232402380171 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	Furniture & Fixtures (Total Item(s) Count: 10)	3%

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules-2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity Worth PKR. 4,800,000 Million. each in Previous 3 Years. Accumulated Turn over of at least PKR 4,500,000 Million in 3 Subsequent. Previous Years. Presence in Active Tax Payer List. Sales Tax Certificate. The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Supply orders must be related to Government Department. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 3% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 15 March, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 15 March, 2024 till 11:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM Address: Directorate of Education (Schools) Balochista Brewery Road Quetta Phone no: 0819202102 Email: programdirector@emil.com

Director
Directorate of Education (Schools)

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ELECTION COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN
Secretariat, Constitution Avenue, G-5/2, Islamabad

TENDER NOTICE

Election Commission Secretariat, Islamabad invites sealed tender from competent sales tax registered firms for the supply of liveries as per following detail:

Sl.No.	Category	Livery Set Detail	Quantity
1.	Staff Car Drivers (30 Nos)	White Shalwar Kameez, cap with ECP monogram, Black waistcoat with name plate and black shoes with pair of socks	60 Nos.
2.	Dispatch Riders (04 Nos)	White Shalwar Kameez, cap with ECP monogram, Black waistcoat with name plate and black shoes with pair of socks	08 Nos.
3.	Quasids/Naib Quasids (150 Nos)	White Shalwar Kameez, cap with ECP monogram, Black waistcoat with name plate and black shoes with pair of socks	300 Nos.
4.	Chowkidars (05 Nos)	Pant Shirt, Jacket, sweater, Pair of Shoes with pair of socks, Cap with ECP monogram	10 Nos.
Total:			378 Nos.

Tender shall reach the undersigned on 26-03-2024 at 1100 hours which will be opened on the same day at 1130 hours in the said office under the supervision of committee in the presence of tenderer or their authorized representatives.

- Single Stage Single Envelop method will be adopted for the said tender. Tender documents and list of items can be purchased against the payment of Rs.2000/- (non-refundable) from the said office during the office working hours.
- Rates quoted in the tender shall remain valid for one year.
- Bidders should mention per unit price as well as total price for complete set of liveries for each category inclusive of all taxes.
- The successful bidder will be bound to provide items on quoted rates for the whole period without any fluctuation and without increase/decrease of quality.
- The bidder should have to present a sample set of livery of each category before the Committee for physical inspection.
- An amount of Rs.200,000/- shall be enclosed with the tender in the form of call deposit, bank draft or pay order in the name of DDO, Election Commission of Pakistan. Tenders received without call deposit will not be considered.
- Documentary proof of General Sales Tax and Income Tax Registration should be sent along with tender.
- Income tax and other taxes will be deducted as per Govt. instruction and applicable rate.
- Incomplete tenders will not be considered.
- Firm will be responsible to supply the items to the office at their own expenses.
- The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids in accordance with PPRA Rules.

(Atif Rahim)
Deputy Director (Admn)
Ph: 9203300
PID(I)5364/23



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with a delegation of students from the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), who won the Best Small Delegation Award for Pakistan at the Harvard National Model United Nations USA, at Aiwana-e-Sadr.

Education key to unlocking full potential of women: First Lady

ISLAMABAD (APP): First Lady, Begum Samina Alvi on Friday said that education was the key to unlocking full potential of women and girls as investing in their education and empowering them with knowledge and skills would help creating a more equitable and prosperous society for all.

"Education is not just about acquiring knowledge; it is about empowering individuals to become agents of change in their communities and beyond," she said while addressing an event organized in connection with the International Women Day by Serena Hotels.

She stressed to pledge to work towards gender equality in all spheres of life, including technology and innovation.

"Together, we can create a future where women have equal access to opportunities and can contribute fully to society," she said, adding currently, the ratio of women in Pakistan was almost 50 percent, but the country still had a long way to go in terms of their inclusion and empowerment.

"According to the Global Gender Gap Index-2023, Pakistan ranked at 142nd position out of 146 countries.

This represents a very

sorry state of affairs due to low economic participation, educational attainment, access to healthcare services and workforce participation. These challenges are not just obstacles; they are injustices that must be addressed with urgency and determination," she remarked.

She highlighted that Pakistan, as a member state of the United Nations, fully endorsed the Charter of the United Nations which strived to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination of gender.

The constitution of Pakistan also ensured fundamental rights and provided ample guarantees to women against all forms of discrimination, exploitation and marginalization, in addition to the right to equality, to grow and lead a healthy and prosperous life, she said.

Samina Alvi also stressed on girls' education to make the country's women strong enough to face the challenges of life with the strength of their minds.

Besides, she also stressed the need to make continuous efforts to equip our women with vocational skills to utilize their potential and also to save them from economic exploitation.

Security of Pak Secretariat, Minister Enclave tightened

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) is constantly engaged to ensure effective security arrangements at the Pakistan Secretariat and Minister Enclave to avoid any untoward situation.

On the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Police is always engaged in ensuring the peace and order situation in the federal capital, said the spokesman of Islamabad Police here Friday. He said that the Islamabad Capital Police was ensuring effective security arrangements at the

Pak Secretariat and Minister Enclave, located in the high security zone.

The senior police officers directed the officers and officials to ensure the security of important government offices, and superior courts, located in the high-security zone, he said and added, they further directed them to perform their duties with utmost dedication to uphold peace and security, with no room for negligence or complacency during duty hours.

The Islamabad Police, he said is taking all possible measures to protect the life and property of the citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President, Haleem Adil Sheikh talking to media persons, outside Election Commission office.

CCP allows merger in health insurance, health Takaful sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) on Friday granted approval to a merger in the health insurance and health Takaful sector. The approved transaction involves the acquisition of 100% shareholding of M/s. EFU Health Insurance Limited by M/s. EFU Life Assurance, said a news release issued here.

The acquirer, EFU Life Assurance is a public listed company and engaged in life insurance business including ordinary life business and pension fund business.

from M/s. EFU Services (Private) Limited and six other shareholders.

EFU Life will be issuing its own ordinary shares at a swap ratio to the current shareholders of EFU Health.

Following the Phase-I Review, the CCP determined that the proposed transaction would not lead to the acquirer attaining dominance in the relevant market after the completion of the transaction.

Consequently, the merger has been authorized.

The approval of the acquisition of EFU Health by EFU Life marks a significant development in the health insurance and health takaful sector of Pakistan.

It reflects the ongoing consolidation and strategic realignment within the industry, which could potentially lead to improved services and offerings for customers.

While the target company, EFU Health Insurance Limited, is an unlisted public limited company and its principal activities include selling health insurance and health takaful cover in Pakistan.

EFU Life Assurance is acquiring 100% shareholding of EFU Health



ISLAMABAD: WAPDA workers busy in installing new electricity cables on pylons at Tarlai.

Japan awards MEXT research scholarships to Pakistani students

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Government of Japan has awarded prestigious MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan) Research Scholarships for Masters/Doctorate degrees to eleven Pakistani students for academic year 2024-25 aiming to provide them with an opportunity to pursue advanced studies and research in various disciplines at the prominent universities of Japan.

MEXT research scholarship is the flagship scholarship program of the Government of Japan, operating world over including Pakistan.

The scholarship is

fully funded by the Japanese government for a Master's or PhD degree, said a news release issued here on Friday. The Embassy of Japan organized a pre-departure orientation for the scholarship grantees. At the orientation, on top of the briefing on the scholarship program, Pakistani alumnus of the Japanese universities shared their knowledge and experience of studying and living in Japan with the new scholarship grantees.

They gave some useful pieces of information and advice to the young students who are on their way to various universities in Japan for higher studies.

Secy Religious Affairs says: Saudi officials complete survey for 'Road to Makkah' project at Karachi Airport

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Religious Affairs, Dr. Syed Atta-ur-Rehman, on Friday informed that Saudi officials had successfully concluded the survey for the 'Road to Makkah' project at Karachi Airport, marking a significant step forward in facilitating the Hajj pilgrimage process.

He confirmed this development, emphasizing the project's importance in streamlining immigration and customs procedures for pilgrims.

"This year, Saudi immigration and customs clearance of Hajj pilgrims will be completed at Karachi Airport," he stated, highlighting the convenience and efficiency this initiative would bring to pilgrims.

The implementation of advanced immigration technology is on the horizon, with Secretary Religious Affairs expressing optimism about its potential impact.

"There is a strong possibility that the Saudi authorities will introduce the latest immigration technology at Karachi Airport," he remarked, hinting at the potential for quicker processing times.

Dr. Syed Atta-ur-Rehman also underscored the use of modern technology in baggage handling, stating, "With the help of modern technology, immigration can be completed in less than a minute."

The integration of RFID technology would enable the swift delivery of pilgrims' luggage, minimizing the risk of loss or misplacement, he added.

Furthermore, to enhance organization and efficiency, he said pilgrims' belongings would be labeled and coded based on eight zones, facilitating smooth sorting and delivery processes.

In conclusion, the secretary said the 'Road to Makkah' project represented a significant leap forward in Hajj pilgrimage facilitation, leveraging technology and collaboration to ensure a seamless and hassle-free experience for pilgrims.

Makkah' project through Karachi Airport, and those from Peshawar via Islamabad Airport, demonstrated the project's extensive reach and accessibility.

The secretary also highlighted that more than 60 percent of government pilgrims would benefit from the initiative this year, with provisions in place for private Hajj scheme participants as well.

Expressing gratitude for Karachi's inclusion in the 'Road to Makkah' project, he commended Saudi authorities and Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki for the collaborative efforts to enhance the pilgrimage experience.

Private Hajj group operators interested in availing the facility were urged to liaise with the Ministry of Religious Affairs for further details, he added.

In conclusion, the secretary said the 'Road to Makkah' project represented a significant leap forward in Hajj pilgrimage facilitation, leveraging technology and collaboration to ensure a seamless and hassle-free experience for pilgrims.

ICP commends women officers on International Women's Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Responding to the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, a special video has been released to appreciate and acknowledge women police officers and personnel on International Women's Day.

A public relations officer said that the Islamabad Capital Police acknowledges and commends women officers and officials who diligently fulfill their duties day and night, shoulder to shoulder with their male colleagues.

He further said that the women police officers and personnel not only possess expertise in their respective fields within the police department but also contribute significantly to maintaining public security and combating crime.

Senior police officers emphasized that Islamabad Capital Police is providing the best environment for the professional performance of women police officers and personnel.



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi cutting cake to mark International Women's Day at an event organized by Serena Hotels.

8 percent girls still out of school: ASER report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Around 8 percent girls are still out of schools as compared to boys that touching the figure of 6 percent as per the report of ASER-2023, which is a flagship project of the Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA).

The report was officially unveiled on International Women's Day being observed across the country. Senior educationists, distinguished panelists, government officials, representatives from civil society, development partners, media persons, students and teachers also attended the event organized in connection with the women's day. Former federal education minister Rana Tanveer Hussain, was the chief guest on the occasion.

Welcoming the ASER report's findings, he said that the report would help the decision makers to address the concerns particularly for those girls who are still out of schools.

Province-wise results showed that gender gap is wider in the percentage of out-of-school children particularly

in the province of Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Although the gender gap in the report has declined over the time but a significant percentage (14pc) of both girls and boys (aged 6-16) in rural areas still out of the education system, which is a matter of concern for policy makers.

The participants of the event called for decisive measures to address the issues in support of the girls and other marginalized groups. According to the report of ASER, more than 272,000 children of 3-5 years across rural and urban including 8765 public and private schools/madrassahs and NFE centres. More than 200,000 children 5-16 years were assessed on a foundational learning or grade 2 tool in Urdu, Arithmetic, and English. The twelfth launch of ASER Pakistan on foundational literacy and numeracy in the country was made possible by 10,000+ educated enumerators in collaboration with 16 civil society organizations.

CM GB pledges for women's rights on Int'l Women's Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Haji Gulbar Khan on Friday reaffirmed the government's commitment to address challenges and empowering women across the region on International Women's Day.

Drawing attention to issues affecting women globally, he underscored the importance of this day in highlighting the rights and challenges faced by women.

Talking to media persons here, he emphasized the need to resolve issues such as violence and abuse.

Int'l Women Day CCO organizes an enriching event to commemorate

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chief Commissioner Office here on Friday organized an enriching event to commemorate International Women's Day under the theme "Breaking Barriers."

The event brought together esteemed guests, speakers, and participants to celebrate the achievements and contributions of women across diverse fields. The event witnessed the presence of distinguished guests including Humaira Ahmed, Secretary, National Heritage & Culture Division, Aisha Humera Ch, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Interior among others. The lineup of speakers comprised renowned figures who shared their insights.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari along with Ambassador of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in Pakistan Ms. Dilsad Senol giving away awards to the volunteers at a seminar on International Women's Day Celebration under theme "Invest in Women Accelerate Progress".

Cleft lip, cleft palate patients receive free treatment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Cleft Lip and Palate Association (ICLAPA) announced on Friday that it will continue to arrange free treatment including surgery of cleft lip, cleft palate patients free of charge.

"The patients are treated by a team of physicians and surgeons at in twin city hospitals. We formally register the patients before having their treatment and surgery," said a news release.

Recently, a team of doctors and surgeon led by Dr. Azhar Sheikh and Dr. Ayesha Aslam conducted detailed examinations of many Cleft lip and palate patients at a free medical camp arranged at the residence of ICLAPA's President Mrs Farhat Akhtar Rehman.

The Association has been working to provide free medical facilities to the poor families since 2004 with the support of philanthropists.

The ICLAPA is a group of volunteers, which relied on donors to bring hope and happiness in the lives of people, for whom it was financially difficult to give treatment to their children.

Mrs Farhat Rehman said the parents of affected children can contact at mobile numbers 03335157676 and 03005192490 for any assistance and guidance.

She hoped that well-to-do people will come forward to support the Association for providing free services to this neglected section of the society.

Zakat can also contribute for this purpose, before the start of Ramadan ul Mubarak.



ISLAMABAD: Police personals stands alert and blocked the road during Aurat March, a demonstration rally, to mark the International Women's Day, in the Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Saturday March 09, 2024

Result tampering

The botched conduct of the Feb 8 election continues to haunt the Election Commission of Pakistan. After failing to meet the legal deadline of Feb 22 to publish all Form 45s, the Commission finally released the documents on Tuesday, in the process triggering another storm of complaints regarding blatant and, in some instances, rather crude manipulation of electoral results. The Form 45, which is a tally of all votes cast at a polling station for each of the contesting candidates, is the formal documentation of the first and most important step in the post-poll vote-counting exercise. A copy of it is supposed to be issued to the nominee of each candidate who witnesses the count of ballots. Since the result of an election is built on the consolidation of individual Form 45s issued by presiding officers from each polling station, the integrity of these forms is what ultimately legitimises the poll exercise.

In the case of the recent general election, many candidates had complained that the Form 45s they received from the presiding officers in their respective constituencies were showing very different results than those announced by the ECP after unlawful and as yet unexplained delays.

There were several rival candidates and even entire parties endorsing the PTI's claim of victory on various seats based on the Form 45s collected by them, even though official results had declared some other candidate as the winner. Since the ECP's copies of its Form 45s had not been shared till earlier this week, it was impossible to determine where exactly the official count and the Form 45s issued to candidates had deviated. The documents now released seem so full of inconsistencies and errors that they have bolstered the persistent allegations of widespread tampering with results and strengthened independent observers' demands for a transparent audit of election results.

Where, on the one hand, the ECP insisted on rigid interpretations of election rules and laws to deny the PTI its bat and the Sunni Ittehad Council its share of reserved seats, it cannot expect the nation to look the other way when it comes to its own violations of legal deadlines and failure to explain the glaring anomalies in its announced results.

This duplicity cannot be condoned. Given how crudely vote counts have been overwritten in some of the Form 45s shared by the ECP, the Commission must explain why it considered it appropriate to announce winners and allocate seats based on seemingly tampered documents without conducting some kind of cross-checking first.

It must also organise an immediate, independent audit of the election results that have been contested, which all important stakeholders should be invited to witness. It will prove extremely difficult for the nation to move forward unless these disputes are resolved.

Upgraded CPEC, President Xi and Shahbaz Sharif

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC, CEO ATV



As anticipated, Chinese President Xi Jinping, known for his deep and affectionate sentiments towards Pakistan, was the first head of state to extend congratulations to Mr. Shahbaz Sharif upon assuming the office of Prime Minister.

This gesture reflects President Xi's special regard for Pakistan, highlighting his reputation as one of the most benevolent leaders globally, particularly towards Pakistan.

As the leader of China, one of the fastest-growing nations worldwide, President Xi's support will give added confidence to the newly elected Prime Minister, who is soon to face significant economic, financial, and political challenges.

The brief yet impactful message not only conveyed congratulations but also emphasized a revitalized vision for the future of Pakistan-China cooperation which was delineated into five distinct areas, underlining a roadmap for their continued collaboration.

Firstly, emphasis was placed on nurturing and preserving the longstanding friendship between the two nations. Secondly, emphasized exchanges and cooperation across a wide spectrum of fields. The third to advance and upgrade the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The fourth to deepen cooperation and foster resilience. Fifth to ensure tangible benefits for the populace of both nations.

While all five elements hold significance, the joint development of an upgraded version of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

emerged as particularly pivotal, with far-reaching implications.

This revamped iteration of CPEC, built upon a reassessment of its initial framework (CPEC-1) transcends its previous focus on infrastructure, energy, and communication projects. Instead, it embraces a multifaceted approach centered on fostering economic prosperity, industrial development, ICT, livelihood projects, mining and mineral exploration and development, agriculture, political, economic, education, science and technology, cultural, and people-to-people relations. It also covers food security and research, media exchanges, space cooperation, urban sustainable development, climate change, vaccine development, transportation, energy.

In essence, the upgraded CPEC delineates five distinct corridors, each tailored to address key priorities and aspirations.

A Growth Corridor, aimed at driving economic expansion by focusing on infrastructure development projects that directly stimulate economic activity. Such as expanding existing industrial zones and creating new special economic zones to attract foreign investment. It includes improving transportation networks to facilitate trade domestically, regionally and globally, diversify Pakistan's export basket and expand its industrial base and connect Gwadar with the landlocked countries, thus opening new vistas to the west and beyond.

The Livelihood-Enhancing Corridor aims to bridge socio-economic disparities by empowering individuals and communities by harnessing the potential of the country's youthful population and capitalize on the growing social consciousness to transition towards a knowledge-driven society. Central to this vision is

the development of human and social capital alongside institutional reforms that prioritizes sustained, inclusive growth, emphasizing indigenous solutions and involving all segments of society. Creating an enabling environment for the private sector to drive economic growth and enhance national competitiveness. It focuses on enhancing living standards through investments in education, healthcare, social services, and poverty alleviation initiatives besides uplifting rural communities aimed at improving the overall quality of life for all Pakistani citizens.

The Innovation Corridor will foster technological advancement through the establishment of research and development centers, fostering collaboration between universities and industries, and investing in digital infrastructure aimed at ushering the country into a new knowledge revolution by introducing disruptive technologies such as micro-electronics, computers, telecommunications, human-made materials, robotics, and biotechnology. By catalyzing significant increases in productivity and giving rise to entirely new economic sectors, the corridor serves as a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship. It aims to position Pakistan as a hub for technological excellence, driving economic growth and enhancing competitiveness globally. Through strategic investments and partnerships, the Innovation Corridor seeks to propel Pakistan forward as a leader in technological innovation and advancement.

The Green Corridor in Pakistan is committed to promoting environmental sustainability by prioritizing investments in renewable energy sources, clean technologies, and sustainable waste management. Em-

phasizing the importance of modernization, food security, and agricultural and environmental protection. This vision advocates for energy conservation, commercialization of renewable energy, and the adoption of advanced biofuels and synthetic fuels. It also calls for the implementation of alternative propulsion methods and energy-efficient urban infrastructure. Through these initiatives, the Green Corridor aims to mitigate environmental degradation, enhance energy security, and build resilient communities, ensuring a more sustainable and prosperous future for Pakistan.

The Open Corridor aims to ensure inclusivity and accessibility, extending the benefits of CPEC-1 and II to a wider range of people and regions in Pakistan. This initiative envisions empowering local communities, providing skills training, facilitating access to financing for small businesses, and offering clear information about opportunities. While achieving this ambitious vision requires careful planning and collaboration among stakeholders, it holds immense potential to uplift all of Pakistan through equitable development.

Since its announcement five months ago, the upgraded China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has transitioned from the drawing board to practical implementation. The Chinese Ambassador recently unveiled promising developments regarding CPEC, announcing the successful launch of the Growth Corridor, Livelihood-Enhancing Corridor, Innovation Corridor, and Green Corridor, alongside the Open Corridor.

Concrete plans are underway in collaboration with Xinjiang province to revolutionize Pakistan's agricultural sector, aiming to modern-

ize and boost productivity. This initiative involves introducing high-quality seeds, leveraging cutting-edge technology and implementing comprehensive training programs to cultivate skilled human resources. Additionally, infrastructure is being developed for storage, preservation, value addition, marketing, and exports of staple crops, cotton, vegetables, and fruits. Development cooperatives in selected agricultural hubs will ensure maximum benefits to farmers regardless of land holdings.

Moreover, several Chinese companies are poised to invest in green energy projects, including photovoltaic and other renewable energy initiatives with low carbon emissions.

They are committed to environmentally friendly and high-tech projects. Many Chinese companies are pledging to establish manufacturing facilities.

The completion of Rashakai SEZ Phase-I was also announced by the ambassador, marking a new stage of high-quality development for CPEC. These advancements inject new momentum into fostering an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future.

Sizable progress has been made to convert the Khunjerab Pass into an all-weather border by upgrading customs and logistics services to facilitate seamless trade and movement of people. Secondly, efforts have been directed towards making the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) fully operational, enhancing connectivity and accessibility to the region. Additionally, operationalizing the Pak-China Friendship Hospital and accelerating the expansion of the desalination plant and other key projects have been expedited to improve healthcare facilities and address water scarcity challenges.

Thirdly, multiple memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and agreements have been inked between China and Pakistan, covering commerce, communication, and transport sectors, notably including the Main Line-1 (ML-1) rail project, whose cost has been reduced from \$9 billion to \$6.7 billion. Spanning 1,733 kilometers, ML-1 will link Peshawar to Karachi, significantly enhancing Pakistan's transportation infrastructure. Additionally, an MoU between The United Energy Group of China and Pakistan Refinery Ltd for a \$1.5 billion investment aims to boost the refinery's production capacity, significantly increasing the country's petrol and high-speed diesel production.

Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, a dynamic leader known for his proactive approach, will undoubtedly take President Xi's letter seriously. The letter, while extending congratulations, underscores an unwavering commitment and resolve to propel both CPEC-1 and the Upgraded CPEC-2 forward with accelerated momentum to yield tangible results. It emphasizes the imperative of giving undivided attention to both phases of CPEC and calls for building the capacity of government and private institutions to handle the influx of massive investment. President Xi's directive underscores the urgency of developing managerial skills to navigate highly precise and high-value projects, enhancing transparency and expediency in processing proposals and projects, and creating highly efficient and effective enabling conditions to ensure the timely completion of corridors and projects within the agreed-upon timeframe and with the intended output and outcome.

War of no words



Bina Shah

The 15th Karachi Literature Festival took place against a backdrop of conflict and protest against the Israeli war in Gaza, which has been going on for 75 years or 153 days, depending on whom you speak to. Pakistanis have been speaking up loudly for an end to the war. People of conscience everywhere have been doing the same. Actors, academics and artists, Muslim and Jewish, Arab and non-Arab, have been risking their professional careers to show their support for an immediate and permanent ceasefire.

When the Karachi Literature Festival programme was announced, the British-Palestinian writer Selma Dabbagh and the Palestinian-American academic Joseph Massad were given prominent places in the line-up. Dabbagh was to deliver the keynote speech at the opening ceremony and Massad the keynote at the closing. But controversy arose at the inclusion of Ronya Othmann, a German poet and journalist whose work deals with migration, homeland and war.

The Feminist Collective, a Pakistani feminist leftist group, unearthed details on social media about Othmann's support for Israel in the current conflict, and statements where she likened support for Palestinians to antisemitism. The Collective then wrote an open letter demanding that KLF remove Othmann from the programme altogether, and that KLF should apologise, or they would boycott the festival now and in the future.

The letter received nearly 500 signatories, but neither KLF nor the Goethe-Institut which sponsored Othmann's visit addressed the controversy just yet. When speakers who were scheduled to appear alongside Othmann informed the KLF organisers they were dropping out of her panels in protest, the KLF quietly removed Othmann's name from the programme, and then announced the next day that her sessions had been cancelled.

The consensus among speakers who opposed Othmann's appearance was that the controversy should subsequently be starved of all oxygen. Once Othmann was dropped from the programme, nobody spoke about it again and the festival went on as planned. Selma Dabbagh delivered an extremely powerful keynote speech about Palestine and the disastrous effects of Israeli aggression on innocent civilians, within the context of 75 years of displacement and oppression. Later, she said that she found both energy and empathy at the festival, both of which she had needed badly. Meanwhile, I spoke on stage with Kenize Mourad, the renowned French-Turkish writer and journalist best known for her successful memoir, *Regards from the Dead Princess*. Mourad spent many years on the front lines of various conflicts in the Middle East and South Asia, including the 1971 Bangladesh war of independence, the Iranian Revolution, the civil war in Lebanon, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She recounted that when she wrote a book in 2006 called *Our Sacred Land: Voices of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*, she placed herself firmly on the side of the downtrodden: the Palestinians who were living under Israeli oppression and those Israelis who opposed the occupation. For this, she was boy-

cotted in France, despite having sold four million copies of her memoir. No longer was she invited on television; reviewers refused to even open her books. For this reason, she had moved, broken-hearted but defiant, to Istanbul.

I later learned that Ronya Othmann was of Syrian descent, Kurdish-Yazidi on her father's side. Her people faced tremendous state oppression in their Kurdish village on the border of Turkey, which forced her father to emigrate to Germany, where she was born in 1993. Twenty years later, when IS tore through the region and enslaved and murdered thousands of Yazidis, it ripped her world apart again, and the indifference of Germans to this brutality inspired her to write her first novel, *The Summers*.

Maybe if given a chance, Othmann could have clarified her position and we would have understood where she was coming from. But people must act according to their principles, and boycotts and sanctions are powerful tools to hold the guilty to account and to shift policy, as Joe Biden is now experiencing through protest votes in the US primaries. Othmann was not the face of Zionism but she had aligned herself with it and faced the consequences too.

But we still should speak to each other, writers and artists, while boycotting Israeli government funding. Deplatforming a pro-Israeli voice at one venue is a mirror image of deplatforming a pro-Palestinian voice at another, and learning opportunities are erased when we boycott individuals instead of institutions. It may feel correct in the moment, but it's a cycle that never ends, like the violence itself. And just because we can't hear the words doesn't mean the realities, or the histories behind them, disappear on either side. -- Courtesy Dawn

Pakistan's women



Zubeida Mustafa

Today is March 8 — International Women's Day, an occasion to revisit the women's movement in Pakistan. Where do they stand 76 years after independence? This question was quite comprehensively answered at the annual conference of the newly formed Fem Consortia comprising 12 women's rights organisations and five alliances from across the country. Much food for thought emerged from the research papers presented at the four sessions on women in politics, adolescent girls, working women and climate change and women, and the panel discussions that followed.

It was clear that a lot of progress has been made in the status and empowerment of women but many hurdles continue to obstruct the way forward.

Farhat Parveen, whose NOWC was the convener of the conference this year, acknowledged the cooperation women have received from men. This in itself is remarkable given the patriarchal structure of our society. It would not be out of place, however, to point out that the male presence at the moot was noticeably sparse. As she also mentioned, not all problems have been resolved after years of struggle. Issues of gender inequality, lower wages for female workers, their contributions not being recognised, violence and the exploitation of women persist.

It was also conceded that some women had risen to the top in politics and in

certain other areas of professional life. But that was not the norm.

Why this dichotomy? The true story was told by the census held in the country in August 2023. We were told that women constituted only 49.1 per cent of a total population of 241 million. This testifies to women's higher mortality rate and poorer access to healthcare, making women more vulnerable and therefore more at risk. Who are the sufferers? The doubly oppressed woman from the disadvantaged class, whose size has yet to be determined by our economists. Some place the poverty benchmark at 60pc. I doubt if any of them would have attended a conference held in a five-star hotel.

Do women from the affluent classes and their daughters suffer from undernourishment? Do they die in childbirth? Do they have large families as they have no choice? Do they have to leave minor children unattended at home when they go out to earn a living to feed their children? The fact is that most women's moods are not wholly inclusive and the real issues of the poor go unaddressed, and therefore unresolved. The bane of Pakistan's national life — social and economic inequality — is concetly ignored. The women who really need to be heard are missing in such gatherings.

We live in a country called 'Do Pakistan' (two Pakistans), to borrow from the title of Kazim Saeed's book. The problems of the poor are not the problems of the rich and the privileged — the 2pc described by the Nobel Prize-winning economist, Joseph Stiglitz. This is never publicly mentioned.

At the Fem conference, this issue was identified before the close of the event by Sheema Kermani, who was honoured for her contributions to the feminist movement in Pakistan.

She has been talking about it since she founded the Tehreek-i-Niswan and began to use dance as a form of resistance art. She has also practised what she preaches by making her organisation inclusive and bringing within its fold men and women of all caste, creed, gender and class. They go out and perform in the poorest of poor localities for the benefit of those who would otherwise never get to see such a piece of art.

What then is the solution? It is the inequity factor that pulls down Pakistan's position in gender gap rankings internationally. Today, we stand at a lowly 142 out of 146 in the Davos index. What needs to be realised is that in a society where such large numbers are exploited, one cannot expect the exploiters to hand over rights to the exploited on a silver platter. One has to facilitate the struggle of the oppressed to win their rights. This is possible only if the underprivileged are not only made more conscious but are also empowered with good education. Given the large numbers involved, good education would empower a huge chunk of the population and shift the power balance in their favour.

This applies to women as well. Here we have failed miserably. Feminists have focused only on numbers and not the quality of education imparted to the underprivileged. At the most, they have shown concern about the gender disparity in the contents of textbooks. What should also be looked into is what is happening in our schools. Their concern should also be the quality of education in our schools where the children of the indigent study. Regrettably, education has not proved to be the equaliser it was expected to be, and no one has even noticed it. -- Courtesy Dawn

Murad decides to reshuffle police dept, to review policy decisions of caretaker govt

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday announced a Rs 22.5 billion package for Ramzan, approved Rs 5.3 billion for the Safe City project, reviewed policy decisions taken by the Caretaker government, and pledged to form the Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) within a month.

Addressing a press conference held at the CM House, the CM flanked by Mayor of Karachi Murtaza Wahab and Mayor of Hyderabad Kashif Shoro, announced the Ramzan package and said that last year, the government provided a grant of Rs 2000 cash per family, and this year, during the Holy month of Ramzan, eligible families would receive a grant of Rs 5000 cash per family.

The grant would be given to 4,413,584 families, which constituted 60 percent of the province's population, he said and added the amount being distributed was Rs 22.5 billion.

The chief minister said that simultaneously, an anti-hoarding operation had been launched which was being monitored by him. "The operation is in progress in which district administration, police and agriculture dept officers are participating," he said and added that a price control mechanism had also been evolved under which district administration would maintain the government notified process of the fruits, vegetables and other commodities.

To a question, the CM said that the Punjab government was not giving cash but they have decided to distribute ration bags (atta, ghee, sugar, basen,

etc) and each bag cost Rs 3425. The KPK government has announced Rs10,000 cash each for 842,000 families and their total package comes to Rs 8.5 billion while the Sindh government has announced a Rs 22.5 billion package for over 4.4 million families, he added.

Replying to another question, the CM said that social protection packages for deserving families were being announced by governments all over the world.

"In Islam, there is a proper Zakat system under which well-off people support the needy and deserving people financially," he said and added his government has established a separate department for Social Protection and it would be made properly functional in the larger interest of the eligible people shortly.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Balighur Rahman is taking oath of office from Chief Justice of Lahore High Court Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan while Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is also present in the Governor House.

CM restores Health Card facility in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, announced on Friday that free medical treatment for all residents of the province through Health Cards will be restored from the first day of Ramzan.

Addressing the media after a cabinet meeting, he emphasized that ensuring peace and security in the province remained the top priority for his government. During the holy month of Ramzan, he disclosed that a cash amount of Rs. 10,000 would be disbursed among approximately 850,000

deserving individuals, with data collected from the Ehsas Program. An additional amount of Rs. 10,000 will be provided to an additional 150,000 people from all provincial constituencies, he said.

To assist poor people, he mentioned the functional establishment of "Langar Khanay" and announced that the provincial government would organize "Sehri" and "Iftari" meals at hospitals to facilitate the attendants of patients.

Ali Amin Gandapur further stated that youth would be provided skills training for job creation,

along with financial assistance in the form of grants and interest-free loans to establish their businesses. He said that there would be no compromise on the development of the province and demanded the federal government to release arrears of Net Hydel Profit.

He welcomed Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif's visit to rain-affected areas and his announcement of compensation for affected families after the recent rains. He added that the provincial government had already released funds to the rain-affected areas.

Not a single day but every day is women day: Maryam Nawaz

LAHORE (Online): Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Maryam Nawaz has said not a one day is women day but every day is women day.

"Women are our heroes. A woman has to wage much struggle to get recognition. I myself worked hard to assert my self in party and everywhere. I am grateful to opponents to help me reach this slot. I faced harassment. I was kept in jails. She said this while addressing a function on the eve of women international day.

She announced to evolve zero tolerance policy against harassment of women. More conducive environment will be available to working women due to safety app. It is my desire every woman benefits from this app.

She underlined that getting underage girls

employed and then subjecting them to violence is source of grave concern for us. There is need to get implemented laws against forced labor sternly.

She urged that parents should take their children into confidence so that they could tell them whenever they are subjected to harassment outside. Girls should be made powerful.

If some one harasses girls any where on road, working place they should make call on 15. The lady operator will provide you safety soon after receiving the call.

Announcing to increase the women quota in jobs by 5 percents she said that job quota has been increased to 15 percent in Punjab.

She announced to provide motor bikes, free training to women working online besides restoring Sanat zar bazaar.



LAHORE: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari presides over the Punjab Parliamentary Party meeting at Governor House Lahore.

Justice Malik takes oath as new LHC CJ

LAHORE (APP): Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan on Friday took oath as the 52nd chief justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) in a ceremony held at the Governor's House here.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman administered the oath to Justice Khan.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz attended the ceremony. LHC senior puisne judge Justice Shujaat Ali Khan and other judges, Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan, provincial ministers, federal and provincial law officers,

corps commander of Lahore, inspector general of police Punjab, judicial officers and relatives of the chief justice were also present. Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Khan read out the notification of the appointment of the chief justice.

After taking the oath, the chief justice arrived at the LHC where he was warmly welcomed.

LHC Registrar Sheikh Khalid Bashir with other officials presented a bouquet to the chief justice.

Later, a smart contingent of police presented guard of honour to the chief justice.

Ghotki police launched targeted operation in Kuchu Bundi Kucha area

MIRPUR MATHILO: Ghotki police launched a targeted operation in sub-division Kuchu Bundi Kucha area to recover the hostage Retik Kumar and other hostages, ongoing against Mir Ahmad Jagirani gang and others. The camps of many robbers were destroyed.

According to the details, the joint operation of the police and rangers against the robbers continued on the last fourth day in the area of police station Kuchu Bundi 2 of Kuchu Bundi sub-division while one Rangers official was injured Ghotki.

All entrances and exits of Kacha have been closed by the police. During the operation, there is an exchange of fire between the dacoits and the police. Crime No. 06/2024 Section 324,353,148 at Police Station Kuchu Bundi 2.

A case under 149 TPC has been registered against dacoits Ali Hasan Jagirani, Mir Ahmad Jagirani and others.

ZAB declared martyr, national hero in PA resolution

LAHORE (APP): Former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto has been posthumously declared a martyr and national hero by a resolution passed with overwhelming support in the Punjab Assembly.

The resolution was presented on Friday in the Assembly by Ali Haider Gillani, the parliamentary leader of the Pakistan People's Party, stating that world renowned jurists have classified Bhutto's death sentence as judicial murder and the Supreme Court has also ruled that he was denied a fair trial.

Asif Zardari will be elected President with thumping majority: Afridi

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Information PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Amjad Khan Afridi has said that all democratic political parties would vote for Asif Ali Zardari to elect him for the second term with thumping majority.

In a statement issued here on Friday, the PPP KP chapter's spokesman took exception to the demand of Mahmood Khan Achakzai for the postponement of presidential poll, saying it is surprising that the winner of a single parliamentary seat is making such demand.

He said that no one would be allowed to hatch conspiracy against democracy and destabilize the country. He added that Achakzai is sleeping rabbit sleep and could become the President of Pakistan.

The PPP leader said that Asif Ali Zardari could be elected as President of Pakistan without allotting reserved seats to Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), while after sensing defeat Mahmood Khan Achakzai is bent upon adopting cheap tactics. He further accused Achakzai of making futile attempts.

LHC CJ reconstitutes administration committee

LAHORE (APP): Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan on Friday reconstituted a seven-member administration committee of the court.

The committee headed by the chief justice includes Justice Shujaat Ali Khan, Justice Ali Baqar Najfi, Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan, Justice Alia Neelum, Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh and Justice Sadaqat Ali as its members.

LHC Registrar Sheikh Khalid Bashir issued a notification for reconstitution of the administration committee.



HYDERABAD: Large number of women participating in a rally in connection of International Women's Day at Thandi Sarak.

IG Police pays tributes to all women of society

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has paid rich tributes to all the women of the society.

On exclusive message of International Women's Day, Dr. Usman Anwar said that Punjab Police salutes all brave mothers, sisters, daughters of nation especially of martyrs and ghazis. He said that on International Women's Day, Punjab Police reiterates its determination to fight against gender based crimes, sexual harassment and violence against women. The IG Punjab said that today's woman is more conscious, courageous and empowered than ever before and in all departments of Punjab

Police, women are showing excellent skills and performance alongside men. He said that women serving in Punjab Police are our pride and valuable asset, lady police officers and official play an outstanding role in law and order, crime control and community policing.

The IG Punjab said that providing equal opportunities and favorable environment to women is indispensable for sustainable economic and social development. Punjab police is ensuring prompt registration of FIRs and arrest of culprits in case of crimes against women.

Dr. Usman Anwar said that Women Safety App, Helpline 15.

Four more kidnapped from Shikarpur

By Adeel Ahmed SHIKARPUR: Four more persons were kidnapped from Shikarpur District in a day from the jurisdictions of Naparkot Police Station and New Faujdari Police Station here on Friday.

According to initial reports that some group of armed men kidnapped the five persons traveling on datson vehicle from village KB Allah Bux Soomro Rahimabad Link road near Khanpur who were returning back after attending the religious meeting there in the jurisdiction of Naparkot Police Station. Later the kidnappers released three of them and took away two persons including Datson driver and Echo Sound Operator identified as Sanaulah Soomro and Basheer Ahmed Pahore.

Train's time changed for Ramadan

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Railways administration has decided to change the timings of the 125-Up Lasani Express (Lahore-Narowal-Sialkot) for the convenience of public.

According to the PR spokesperson on Friday, the new timings will only be applicable for the month of Ramzan. The Lasani Express (125Up) will depart at 3:10 PM.

SIC moves SHC against not allotting reserved seats in SA

KARACHI (Online): Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) has filed petition in Sindh High Court (SHC) against not giving reserved seats to it in Sindh Assembly (SA).

The constitutional petition was filed in SHC through Ali Tahir.

Justice Zulfiqar Ahmad accepted the plea for immediate hearing.

Hearing will be done today. The petitioner has taken plea in the petition that independent candidates achieved success in large number despite rigging in polls. Independent candidates joined SIC through legal way. In Sindh Assembly SIC is entitled to one

minority seat and 2 reserved seats of women.

The petitioner prayed the court to declare EC decision illegal and unconstitutional.

The SIC has resorted to high courts in other provinces as well on the matter of reserved seats.

Earlier SIC chairman Sahibzada Hamid Raza had challenged in Lahore High Court the matter of not giving reserved seats to it in Punjab Assembly.

Peshawar High Court had extended the order for stopping elected members from taking oath till March 13 on the petition by SIC against not allotting reserved seats to it in KP assembly

New Cancer Care Hospital to address patients' needs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Punjab's Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, Khawaja Salman Rafiq, announced plans for a comprehensive Cancer Care Hospital in Lahore to cater to patients across the province.

This initiative, aligned with Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision, aims to consolidate treatment facilities for cancer patients under one roof. The project, discussed during a meeting chaired by Minister Salman Rafiq and Minister of Communications Malik

Sohaib Ahmad Barth at the Infrastructure Development Authority Punjab (IDAP) head office here on Friday, underscores the government's commitment to enhancing healthcare infrastructure. With funds allocated and construction entrusted to IDAP, the ministers emphasized continuous monitoring of the hospital's development stages.

Secretary Health Ali Jan Khan and CEO IDAP Sohail Ashraf provided insights into the master plan, highlighting a state-of-the-art facility.



FAISALABAD: Students participating in scooty march and walk to mark International Women's Day at Government College for Women University (GCWU) Madina Town.

ATC grants bail to 42 accused in Jinnah House attack case

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday granted post-arrest bail to 42 accused involved in Jinnah House attack case of May-9 riots.

The court ordered the accused to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each for availing the relief of bail.

ATC Judge Muhammad Naveed Iqbal heard the post-arrest bail petitions of the accused and announced the verdict on completion of arguments by the parties. The court also adjourned

further hearing of 60 post-arrest bail petitions till March 12.

The accused who were granted bail are: Owais Gulzar, Zakawat, Usman Ashraf, Majid Rais, Shakeel Mustafa, Wahid Shah, Asif Ashraf, Akash Ramzan, Sagheer Ahmad, Idress Zulfiqar, Muhammad Afzal, Gul Bahadar, Akram Khan, Niaz Ahmad, Attaur Rehman, Qaisar Butt, Liaqat Ali, Irfan Asghar, Amir Ameen, Sharif, Zakir Ali, Muhammad Ali, Hamza Gul, Sher.



MUZAFFRABAD: Employees of MNCH hold a protest during Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif arriving in AJKA, at Bank Square, in the city.

SFA team inspects cafeterias in SHC

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Food Authority (SFA) team has inspected the two cafeterias established in Sindh High Court (SHC).

The inspection was conducted on the request of office bearers of Sindh High Court Bar Association (SHCBA), under the supervision of Director General SFA Agha Fakhar Hussain, said a statement on Friday.

On the occasion of inspection, the cleanliness of both the cafeterias was found to be very poor.

The staff members working in the cafeterias were not experienced in food handling according to hygiene rules. SFA will provide training to cafeteria staff on food safety and food handling.

Improvement notices were also given to the management of the cafeterias.

On the occasion of the inspection, the DG SFA also warned the management of cafeterias to improve the sanitation situation.

Dar urges political parties for Charter of Economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader of the House in the Senate, Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday urged all political parties to get united and sign a Charter of Economy to get the country out of financial trap.

In his farewell speech, the Senator said that time has come to work together for the betterment of Pakistan. Ishaq Dar thanked his party leadership for honoring him with the role in the Senate of Pakistan since 2002.

He said that during his tenure, he witnessed many ups and downs and the Senate played an important role in the parliamentary history of Pakistan and will always be remembered in golden words.

He said difference of

opinion is the beauty of democracy but opposition for the sake of opposition is a disaster for the country.

He said Senate is a symbol of the federation therefore the sanctity of this House must be maintained at all costs and the protest should be within the limits.

He stressed all political parties for the Charter of Reconciliation and Charter of Economy to get the country out of financial trap. "We should avoid personal vengeance against each other and take the country forward collectively", said the Senator adding that all political parties should work together to get Pakistan's name included in G-20 countries.

He said Pakistan is an atomic power, therefore

the enemies of Pakistan have interest in weakening the country and all political parties remain busy fighting with each other. He said that all political parties should make sacrifices for Pakistan. Senator Mian Raza Rabbani in his farewell speech, said that it was not appropriate to talk about the country whose financial sovereignty was mortgaged with international financial institutions. He said it is also inappropriate to comment on hybrid system over the parliament and internal politics of the country. He also urged all political parties to have a grand national dialogue to get the country part of international financial institution and hybrid political system.



ISLAMABAD: Women visiting stalls at 10th National Women at Work commemorating International Women's Day organised by Lok Virsa with the collaboration of Devcom-Pakistan and dtn.

PARC signs agreement to enhance livestock, dairy production

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Holstein Research Management Dairies Private Limited, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), for enhancing livestock and dairy production in the country.

Under this partnership, both organizations have pledged to provide technical support for capacity building and to conduct training programs in Theriogenology, animal breeding and genetic research and development.

In this regard, the PARC also organized an international seminar focusing on genetic and economic impact of Norwegian red dairy cattle. The seminar provided a platform for experts and stakeholders to explore the potential of Norwegian red cattle in enhancing genetic and domestic breed improvement in the dairy

industry. PARC's institutions, the National Institute for Genomics and Advanced Biotechnology (NIGAB) and the Animal Sciences Institute (ASI), will jointly facilitate research on genomic testing and Theriogenology to optimize the utilization of improved Norwegian red cattle semen.

Addressing the seminar, Federal Secretary Ministry of National Food Security and Research Captain (retired) Muhammad Asif, highlighted the diversity of domestic livestock breeds and underscored the importance of breed improvement and the genetic advancement of domestic cattle breeds.

He emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to revolutionize the livestock sector through genetic breed improvement, recognizing it as a crucial component in ensuring national food & nutritional security.

Turkiye CG visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Consul General of Turkiye Durmus Bastug and Commercial Attache Nurettin Demir visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Friday to discuss ways and means to boost the bilateral trade and investment relations.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik and Vice President Aamer Majeed Sheikh warmly welcomed the distinguished guests.

During a meeting, President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik said Pakistan and Turkiye committed to enhancing bilateral cooperation in various sectors as focused by various Government-to-Government meetings in the past few years.

He said: "We are thankful that Turkiye is also an important investment partner as number of Turkish firms are working in Pakistan in the domains of energy, finance, and infrastructure projects. We believe that both Turkiye and Pakistan must harness each other strengths and expertise to drive mutual progress and prosperity".

Pakistan exports to southern China witness 16% growth in 2023

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's exports to the southern region of China witnessed a 16% growth last year, partly due to the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA) that lowered tariffs as well as events like FoodAg 2023 and TEXPO 2023 which further facilitated exports in the textile and agricultural sectors.

This was stated by Zhou Hanmin, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and President of the Shanghai Public Diplomacy Association. "I had visited Pakistan before the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed and deeply felt the sincere emotions of Pakistani people towards China. The CPEC not only improved the bilateral trade but also provides

substantial economic uplift to Pakistani people. If given the opportunity, I still hope to visit this friendly country again." Zhou stated.

During this year's Two Sessions, the National People's Congress (NPC) and CPPCC, Zhou Hanmin expressed optimism about the progress of BRI and the trade relations between China and the participating countries. In his proposal, he suggested implementing specific measures aimed at expanding the export of agricultural products from Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries, with a particular emphasis on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) is a classification used by the United Nations (UN) to identify and categorize countries that exhibit the lowest levels.



MULTAN: A farmer spraying pesticide on his vegetable crop field.



RAWALPINDI: Group photo of People's Trader Cell President Tariq Waheed Butt and Secretary General Naveed Kanwal on the occasion of congratulating the newly elected President Malik Shaukat Hayat Kekezai and the newly elected Secretary General Adnan Ahmed of Central Anjuman Tajran Gwalmandi.

Envoy urges Pakistani investors to invest in Ethiopia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, on Friday urged the Pakistani business community to invest in Ethiopia that offered comparative advantage in form of important geographical location, cheap and clean energy and skilled human resources.

Addressing a Business Forum on Ethiopia-Pakistan Bilateral Trade at Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Lahore, the ambassador said his country was hosting the Invest Ethiopia Conference from April 28-30 in Addis Ababa to

showcase extraordinary investment opportunities in Ethiopia, said a press release issued here.

According to Ambassador Jemal Bekir, it was a high time for the business community of Pakistan to explore the lucrative market of Ethiopia which was a gateway to the African continent of more than 1.4 billion people.

He said Ethiopia was a signatory to the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement which meant that whatever produced in Ethiopia could easily be traded to the entire Africa.

The ambassador highlighted the economic reforms carried out by the reformist Government of Ethiopia to build a home grown economy to achieve a robust and sustainable economic growth by creating an enabling environment for business community and foreign investors. He said under its economic reforms, Ethiopia had laid a major focus on its five economic sectors including agriculture and agro-processing, manufacturing, mining, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and tourism.

He added that this

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 190 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Friday, gaining 190.67 points, a positive change of 0.29 percent, closing at 65,793.76 points against 65,603.09 points the previous trading day. A total of 481,704,055 shares valuing Rs16,992 billion were traded during the day as compared to Rs14,435 billion the last day. Some 355 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 206 of them recorded gains and 119 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 30 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 59,083,977 shares at Rs 4.83 per share, Nergiyco Pakistan with 51,468,215 shares with 4.89 per share and Kohinoor Spinning with 45,948,000 shares at Rs 5.52 per share. Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 160.00 per share price, closing at Rs 8,050.00, whereas the runner-up was Pakistan Services Limited with a Rs 29.99 rise in its per share price to Rs 894.99. Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 345.00 per share closing.

SBP announces holiday on first Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has announced that all its public dealing offices will remain closed on 1st Ramadan-ul-Mubarak.

According to the SBP Statement issued here on Friday, the day will be observed as bank holiday for the purpose of Zakat deduction.

All banks, Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and Microfinance banks (MFBs) will remain closed for public dealing.

However, all employees of the Bank, DFIs and MFBs will attend their office on bank holiday as normal working day.



BAHAWALPUR: People purchasing oranges from vendor's roadside stall.

SCCI president inaugurates Bank Alfalah on Ring Road

PESHAWAR (APP): President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Fuad Ishaq on Friday inaugurated a new branch of Bank Alfalah on Ring Road, Hayatabad here on Friday.

During the inauguration ceremony, the SCCI executive members Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Hafaf Ali Khan, Secretary General Sajjad Aziz, members of the business community, along with the Bank Al-Falah Regional Head Jamil Ahmad Sauval, Area Manager Muhammad Adil, Branch Manager Taniya Khan, Regional

Coordinator Asadur Rehman and others were present.

Talking on the occasion, the SCCI chief praised the Bank Alfalah for its services and facilitation to the business community. He said the Bank Alfalah's business-friendly policies have become fruitful for the traders and asked other commercial banks to adopt such pro-business policies to facilitate the community.

Fuad Ishaq said the opening of a new branch of the Bank Alfalah on Ring Road, Hayatabad is welcoming.

Rupee gains 25 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Friday gained 25 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.03 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.28.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.2 and Rs 282, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 97 paise to close at Rs 305.19 against the last day's closing of Rs 304.22, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 188, whereas an increase of Rs 2.10 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 357.68 compared to the last closing of Rs 355.58.

SECP issues concept paper on Shariah-compliant brokerage services

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) on Friday published a concept paper aimed at enabling Shariah-compliant brokerage services in the securities market through an optimal organizational and operational model.

The concept paper presents several options available for the provision of Shariah-compliant brokerage services, including the opening of an Islamic brokerage subsidiary having the license of either a trading-

only/online-only or trading and self-clearing category; or through the establishment of a dedicated Islamic window, said a news release. A critical analysis of the available options and a summary of international best practices have also been included. The SECP released guidelines last year for conventional financial institutions to offer Shariah-compliant services. A separate set of guidelines was issued enabling the general public to invest in PSX while adhering to Shariah principles.

Gold rates up by Rs 450 per tola

ISLAMABAD, Mar 8 (APP): The price of per tola 24 karat gold increased by Rs 450 and was sold at Rs 228,600 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs 228,150 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 386 to Rs 195,988 from Rs 195,602 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 179,655 from Rs 179,301 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Pays tribute to Pakistani women SBP Director stresses for women's digital financial inclusion key to progress

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Director at the State Bank of Pakistan Abid Qamar Friday paid tribute to Pakistani women for pivotal role in nation building and urged for women's digital financial inclusion as economic empowerment is key to Pakistan's development.

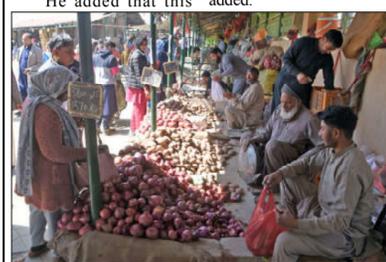
Talking to PTV news channel, while paying tribute to Women on International women day he stressed that the women's financial inclusion is crucial to promoting gender equality and empowering women in all aspects of their lives.

"No nation can rise to the height of glory unless their women are side by side with them", he said, adding, recognizing their important role, SBP has taken a number of steps towards financial inclusion of women.

He added that this

initiative envisions greater engagement of women in the financial sector through increased employment in financial institutions as well as enhanced access to financial services.

"SBP considers it is imperative to support the career progression of the women employees and encourage them to aim for leadership position with the hope that in the coming years women in leadership position should become the norm, not the exception", he mentioned. "We must acknowledge the contribution of women in our economy and to encourage greater participation of women as we as an industry must provide women friendly work environment and facilities where women can thrive and contribute their full potential towards the nation's progress", he added.



ISLAMABAD: People are busy is buying vegetables in Friday Weekly Bazaar.

Women empowerment can change economic fate, says LCCI Chief

LAHORE (APP): President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kashif Anwar said that women empowerment, equal distribution of resources and increasing number in workforce can change the economic fate of the country. He said that Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry has always remained a step ahead for the promotion of women entrepreneurs.

Meanwhile, the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized a special event in connection with Women International Day at LCCI.

LCCI Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Convener Standing Committee for

Women Empowerment and Executive Committee Member Fareeha Younas, Amina Wahaj, Captain @ Saira Fazal, Additional IG @ Punjab Shahzadi Gulfaam, Uzma Rehman also spoke on the occasion.

On the occasion, an exhibition was also held where women entrepreneurs showcased their state-of-the-art products. LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that the celebrations are one of the LCCI efforts to achieve that position for Pakistani women for which they are entitled to. Lahore Chamber is successfully highlighting the problems being faced by women entrepreneurs which need to be solved on a priority basis.

Stock markets diverge before US jobs data

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets diverged Friday, with all eyes on key US jobs data to see if it alters expectations of a cut to US interest rates in June.

Approaching midday, London's FTSE 100 index traded lower. Paris rose and Frankfurt steadied, one day after the eurozone's leading indices closed at record highs. Wall Street also reached new all-time peaks Thursday, with global sentiment lifted by strong company earnings and cooler inflation.

Asia's main stock markets rose as they ended a week which has seen

record highs also for gold and bitcoin. The precious metal on Friday hit a new summit at \$2,171.13 an ounce. The outlook for interest rates continued to dominate market focus.

Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell this week told lawmakers that while the battle against inflation was ongoing, the US economy remained resilient and he saw a more dovish tilt to monetary policy coming soon.

European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde on Thursday hinted at cuts to eurozone interest rates also starting in June.



MULTAN: A vendor displaying seasonal fruit (Bair) to attract customers at his roadside setup.

Weekly inflation up by 1.11 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.11 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on March 7, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 322.86 points as compared to 319.30 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the

combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 32.39 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, increased by 1.69 per cent and went up to 317.18 points from last week's 311.92 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs. 17,732-22,888, Rs. 22,889-29,517, Rs. 29,518-44,175 and above Rs. 44,175.

North Korea's Kim guides artillery firing drill, KCNA says

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guided an artillery firing drill by the Korean People's Army, the country's military force, on Thursday, state media KCNA reported on Friday. The drill involved units that are in firing range of "the enemy's capital," the state media said, referring to Seoul, the South Korean capital and added it "fulfilled important military missions for war deterrence." Thursday's artillery drill was aimed at increasing combat readiness posture and actual war capability, KCNA said. Kim urged to push forward with preparations so the artillery sub-units could "take the initiative with merciless and rapid strikes at the moment of their entry into an actual war."

"He stressed the need to train all the artillerymen of the whole army into experts in artillery engagement ... and set forth important tasks for rounding off the artillery war preparations," the report said, referring to the leader of the reclusive state. The move comes as the South Korean and US militaries kicked off their spring drills known as the Freedom Shield exercises on Monday with twice the number of troops joining compared to last year. Seoul's defence minister, Shin Won-sik, visited the Capital Defense Command on Thursday and ordered a firm response if North Korea made provocations aimed at the capital. The move comes as the South Korean and US militaries kicked off their spring drills known as the Freedom Shield exercises on Monday with twice the

number of troops joining compared to last year. Earlier this week, the North Korean state media said Kim inspected field training of troops at a major military operations base in the western region of the country. The drill involved units that are in firing range of "the enemy's capital," the state media said, referring to Seoul, the South Korean capital and added it "fulfilled important military missions for war deterrence." Thursday's artillery drill was aimed at increasing combat readiness posture and actual war capability, KCNA said. Earlier this week, the North Korean state media said Kim inspected field training of troops at a major military operations base in the western region of the country.



The Korean People's Army conducts an artillery firing drill, KCNA news agency reported, in North Korea in this picture released by the Korean Central News Agency.

Hamas team leaves Cairo after stalemate in Gaza truce talks

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Hamas said its delegation had left Cairo on Thursday amid ongoing negotiations on a ceasefire accord in Gaza that mediators hope to achieve before Ramadan early next week. After four days of talks mediated by Qatar and Egypt to secure a 40-day ceasefire ahead of the fasting month there is still no sign of progress on key sticking points, with both sides blaming the other. "Hamas's delegation left Cairo this morning for consultation with the leadership of the movement, with negotiations and efforts continuing to stop the aggression, return the displaced and bring in relief aid

to our people," a Hamas statement said. Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri said Israel had been "thwarting" efforts to conclude a ceasefire deal. He said that Israel was rejecting Hamas's demands to end its offensive in the enclave, withdraw its forces, and ensure freedom of entry for aid and the return of displaced people. Health officials in Gaza said the number of people confirmed killed in Israel's offensive had now passed 30,800. It reported 83 deaths in the past 24 hours and witnesses said the Israeli bombardments continued in Khan Younis, the southern city of Rafah, and areas in central Gaza.

China says more Indian troops at Himalayan border won't ease tensions

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China believes that India's move to add more troops at their disputed border is "not conducive to easing tensions", a foreign ministry spokesman said on Friday. India has freed up a contingent of 10,000 soldiers, previously deployed at its western border, to strengthen its disputed border with China, according to several media reports. The two countries have previously agreed to maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels, and recently held a constructive meeting on resolving border issues in the western section.

UK PM Sunak's mother-in-law appointed to Indian parliament

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: The mother-in-law of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was on Friday appointed to serve in India's parliament, capping a career working for the philanthropic arm of her billionaire husband's tech firm. Sudha Murthy, 73, is the former chair of the Infosys Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the global tech behemoth Infosys her husband N.R. Narayana Murthy co-founded in 1981.

Ukraine's Zelensky in Turkey where Erdogan is expected to press for negotiations to end Russia war

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky was in Istanbul on Friday for talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan whose NATO-member country has sought to balance its close relations with both Kyiv and Moscow and repeatedly offered to act as a peace-broker between them. During the talks in Istanbul, Erdogan was ex-

pected to press for negotiations to end Russia's war in Ukraine, now in its third year, a Turkish government official said. Talks would also focus on a possible new measure that would guarantee navigational safety of commercial vessels in the Black Sea, the official said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with Turkish government protocol.

Biden orders US military to establish port in Gaza

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden will tell Congress on Thursday that he has ordered the US military to set up a port in Gaza to get more humanitarian aid into the beleaguered territory by sea, senior US officials said. The major announcement will not involve any US boots on the ground in the Palestinian enclave, as military personnel will stay offshore while other allies are involved, officials said. "Tonight the president will announce in his State of the Union address that he has directed the US military to undertake an emergency mission to establish a port in Gaza," a senior administration official told reporters. "This port, the main feature of which is a temporary pier, will provide the capacity for hundreds of ad-

ditional truckloads of assistance each day," the official said on condition of anonymity. US officials said the "significant capability will take a number of weeks to plan and execute," and would involve a maritime corridor bringing aid by sea from the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. US officials were careful to stress that American troops would not be on the ground in Gaza, which has been under relentless Israeli bombardment since the Oct. 7 attack. A second official said it was "foreseen to be an operation that won't require boots on the ground." "The US military has unique capabilities. And they can do things from just offshore that are extraordinary and so that is the concept of operations that the president has been briefed on," the official said.

287 children are missing in Nigeria's forests

Monitoring Desk
ABUJA: Security forces swept through large forests in Nigeria's northwest region on Friday in search of nearly 300 children who were abducted from their school a day earlier in the latest mass kidnapping, which analysts and activists blamed on the failure of intelligence and slow security response. The abduction of the 287 children in Kaduna state, near the West African nation's capital, is one of the largest school kidnaps in the decade since the issue was highlighted by the kidnapping of schoolgirls in Borno state's Chibok village. Analysts and activists say the security lapses that allowed that mass abduction remain. The victims of the latest attack — among them at least 100 children aged 12 or under — were surrounded and marched into a forest just as they were starting the school day, said locals in Kuriga town, located 55 miles (89 kilometers) from

the city of Kaduna. One man was shot dead as he tried to save the students, school authorities said. As Kaduna Gov. Uba Sani and security officials met with aggrieved villagers on Thursday, they pleaded with the governor to ensure the release of the students and secure their villages. "Please stay and help us, please don't leave us," one woman cried as the governor's convoy sped off. The school — located with no fencing close to nearby forests that often serve as enclaves for armed gangs — was "surrounded from all angles" by the motorcycle-riding gunmen who arrived at the school just after 8 a.m., said Joshua Madami, a youth leader in the area. Security forces did not arrive at the scene until several hours later, locals said, prompting concerns from families and analysts that the gunmen might have gone deep into the forest with the children.

After months of warnings that Israel's siege is causing famine

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: After months of warnings over the risk of famine in Gaza under Israel's bombardment, offensives and siege, children are starting to die. Hunger is most acute in northern Gaza, which has been isolated by Israeli forces and has suffered long cutoffs of food supply deliveries. At least 20 people have died from malnutrition and dehydration at the north's Kamal Adwan and Shifa hospitals, according to the Health Ministry. Most of the dead are children — including ones as old as 15 — as well as a 72-year-old man. Particularly vulnerable children are also beginning to succumb to aid is more regular. At the Emirati Hospital in Rafah, 16 premature babies have died of malnutrition-related causes over the past five weeks, one of the senior doctors told The Associated Press. "The child deaths we feared are here," Adele Khodr, UNICEF's Middle

East chief, said in a statement earlier this week. Malnutrition is generally slow to bring death, striking children and the elderly first. Other factors can play a role. Underfed mothers have difficulty breastfeeding children. Diarrheal diseases, rampant in Gaza due to lack of clean water and sanitation, leave many unable to retain any of the calories they ingest, said Anuradha Narayana, a UNICEF child nutrition expert. Malnutrition weakens immune systems, sometimes leading to death from other diseases. Israel largely shut off entry of food, water, medicine and other supplies after launching its assault on Gaza following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel — allowing only a trickle of aid trucks through two crossings in the south. Israel has blamed the burgeoning hunger in Gaza on U.N. agencies, saying they fail to distribute supplies piling up at Gaza crossings.

Trump shirt, ceasefire pins are State of the Union fashion

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Some were clad in white for reproductive rights. One donned red to represent Washington's desire to be a state. And former Representative George Santos wore a bedazzled collar. Lawmakers and their guests used fashion to make a statement on Tuesday as Joe Biden's State of the Union address gives not just the president, but also his audience, their biggest platform of the year. Yellow and blue was the choice for some lawmakers, the bicolor of Ukraine. Legislation that includes \$60 billion in aid for Ukraine has been held up by House Republicans for months, a delay that has contributed to some setbacks for Kyiv on the battlefield. Santos, who was expelled from Congress after a dizzying array of lies about his biography led to his indictment on fraud charges, nonetheless appeared at the speech in

what looked like a rhinestone-studded collar, a black blazer and white trousers. He also chose a more subtle touch favored by several lawmakers: a pin. His and that worn by other Republican lawmakers was red and in tribute of Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student from Georgia, who was allegedly murdered last month by an undocumented immigrant who had been released on parole. Republicans, who blame Biden and his administration's border policies for the deaths of Americans killed by illegal migrants, have seized on the case. Firebrand US Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene wore a "Say Her Name" t-shirt, a reference to Riley. She handed Biden a Riley pin, which he accepted and later held up during his speech. Rep. Troy Nehls wore a t-shirt emblazoned with former President and Biden challenger Donald Trump's face and the words "never surrender."



Family members of passengers aboard the Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 demand the search for the missing plane be resumed on the 10th anniversary of the aircraft's disappearance, in front of police lines near the Malaysian embassy in Beijing, China.

US, Turkey kick off comprehensive talks to explore improving troubled ties

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US and Turkey are set to kick off comprehensive talks on Thursday to discuss if the NATO allies can move beyond deep rooted disagreements over issues such as Syria and Ankara's close ties with Russia. Senior US and Turkish officials are set to meet at the State Department for several rounds of talks focusing on topics spanning Syria, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, defense cooperation, energy, counterterrorism and the Israel-Hamas war. The conversations, dubbed the Strategic Mechanism, will set the stage for a meeting on Friday between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan.

Ties between the US and Turkey have drifted away from a strategic partnership in recent years as disagreements between the two long-standing treaty allies have widened. Turkey's 2019 acquisition of Russian S-400 defense missile system triggered US sanctions on Ankara and led to its removal from the F-35 stealth fighter jet program. Meanwhile, Turkey has remained deeply troubled over US support in northern Syria to Kurdish militia that it sees as an extension of the PKK, a militant group it considers as a terrorist organization. The US was also annoyed by Ankara's 20 month-long delay in approving Sweden's NATO membership, which took place in January.

Sweden joins Nato in shadow of Ukraine war

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Sweden on Thursday became the 32nd member of Nato in the shadow of the war in Ukraine, ending two centuries of official non-alignment and capping two years of torturous diplomacy. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson was visiting Washington, where Secretary of State Antony Blinken was to ceremonially receive the ratification documents after the hard-fought battle to secure the green lights needed from all Nato members. "This is a historic day. Sweden will now take its rightful place at Nato's table, with an equal say in shaping Nato policies and decisions," Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in a statement. "After over 200 years of non-alignment Sweden now enjoys the protection granted under Article 5, the ultimate guarantee of allies' freedom and security," he said.

Sri Lanka's Rajapaksa claims he was ousted over China investments

Monitoring Desk
COLOMBO: Former Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa ended a long silence over his ouster on Thursday by releasing a book claiming "geopolitical rivalry" between China and other countries was responsible for his downfall. Rajapaksa was forced into temporary exile after protesters stormed his official residence in 2022, following months of street protests over the island nation's worst-ever economic crisis. In a self-published account of his downfall, "The Conspiracy", Rajapaksa defends his government's economic policies, which forced an unprecedented foreign debt default and saw months of severe food and fuel shortages.

EU sees maritime aid corridor to Gaza opening this weekend amid famine fears

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: The head of the European Commission said on Friday a maritime aid corridor could start operating between Cyprus and Gaza this weekend, part of accelerating Western efforts to relieve the humanitarian crisis in the war-ravaged Palestinian enclave. Ursula von der Leyen's comments came a day after President Joe Biden announced plans for the U.S. military to build a temporary port on Gaza's Mediterranean coast, amid UN warnings of famine among the tiny territory's 2.3 million people. Negotiations on a possible ceasefire in Israel's war against Hamas, now in its fifth month, remained deadlocked in Cairo, while the U.N. human rights office urged Israel not to extend its military offensive into the border town of Rafah, saying this would cause a further "massive loss of life". EU Commission President von der Leyen said a pilot test run of food aid collected by a charity group and supported by the United Arab Emirates could be leaving Cyprus as early as Friday. "We are launching this Cyprus maritime corridor together, the European Union, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States."

India confirms citizen fighting with Russian army has died

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's embassy in Moscow has confirmed the death of a citizen recruited by the Russian army, days after a relative said he had been sent to fight in Ukraine. Two years after Russia's invasion began, tens of thousands of its soldiers have been killed in Ukraine and Moscow is on a global quest for more combatants. The foreign ministry in New Delhi said last month that it was working to secure discharges for around 20 Indian nationals "stuck" in the Russian army.

From camels to control rooms: India prepares for its mammoth election exercise

NEW DELHI (INP): From transporting voting machines on camelback to remote corners of its vast western desert to bolstering control rooms for monitoring malicious deepfakes, India is preparing to run the world's largest election due by May. More than 960 million Indians are registered to vote at over one million polling stations across the country in a mammoth election exercise with 2,400 political parties that may contest, and during which Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will bid for a rare third term. India could announce in weeks the dates for general elections that Modi is widely expected to comfortably win. The nation's election commission - tasked with conducting a fair vote - will for the first time set up hundreds of control rooms dedicated to spotting fake content on social media. The teams will continuously monitor feeds, analyse narrative, sentiment and content, the commission's top officer Rajiv Kumar said at a press briefing on Thursday.

Greek students clash with police ahead of education bill vote

Monitoring Desk
ATHENS: Greek students threw petrol bombs at police who responded with tear gas in central Athens on Friday, hours before parliament was expected to pass legislation that will allow foreign private universities to set up branches in the country. Thousands of students have been protesting peacefully for weeks against the reform that they say will devalue degrees from public universities, but anger boiled over just as Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis urged lawmakers to vote the bill through.

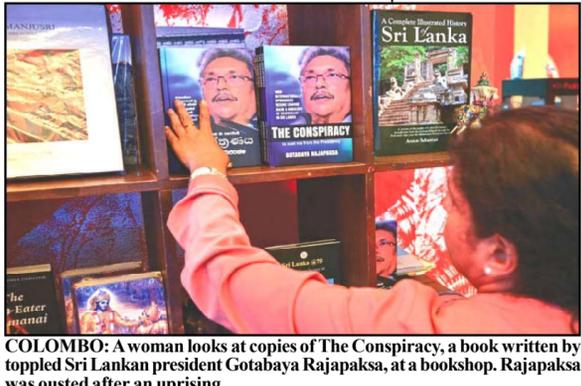
Ireland's constitution says a woman's place is in the home

Monitoring Desk
DUBLIN: Irish voters will decide Friday — International Women's Day — whether to change the 87-year-old document to remove passages the government says are outdated and sexist. The twin referendums are on deleting a reference to women's domestic duties and broadening the definition of the family. The first vote deals with a part of the constitution that pledges to protect the family as the primary unit of society. Voters are being asked to remove a reference to marriage as the basis "on which the family is founded" and replace it with a clause that says families can be founded "on marriage or on other durable relationships." If passed, it will be the 39th amendment to Ireland's constitution. The second change — a proposed 40th amendment — would remove a reference to women's role in the home as a key support to

the state, and delete a statement that "mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labor to the neglect of their duties in the home." It would add a clause saying the state will strive to support "the provision of care by members of a family to one another." Ireland's constitution dates from 1937, when the country became a republic. Ireland has changed enormously since then, transforming from a conservative, overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country in which divorce and abortion were illegal, to an increasingly diverse and socially liberal society. The proportion of residents who are Catholic fell from 94.9% in 1961 to 69% in 2022, according to the Central Statistics Office. The social transformation has been reflected in a series of constitutional changes.

Sri Lanka's Rajapaksa claims he was ousted over China investments

Monitoring Desk
COLOMBO: Former Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa ended a long silence over his ouster on Thursday by releasing a book claiming "geopolitical rivalry" between China and other countries was responsible for his downfall. Rajapaksa was forced into temporary exile after protesters stormed his official residence in 2022, following months of street protests over the island nation's worst-ever economic crisis. In a self-published account of his downfall, "The Conspiracy", Rajapaksa defends his government's economic policies, which forced an unprecedented foreign debt default and saw months of severe food and fuel shortages.



COLOMBO: A woman looks at copies of The Conspiracy, a book written by toppled Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, at a bookshop. Rajapaksa was ousted after an uprising.

Outlined by India, seeking more permanent seats Pakistan rejects as 'flawed' UNSC reform proposal

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has firmly rejected a UN Security Council reform model proposed by the aspirants for permanent seats (India, Brazil, Germany and Japan), saying any expansion in the permanent category will compound the 15-member body paralysis, and prevent the majority of small and medium-sized states from serving on it.

The plan, presented on Thursday by India on behalf of the so-called Group of Four nations, proposes the Council's membership from 15 to 25-26, adding six permanent and four or five non-permanent members, while hinting at "flexibility" on the veto issue.

"As a member of the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) Group, it is evident that our position has consistently opposed the issue of the creation of new permanent members," Ambassador Munir Akram, per-

manent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the long-running Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) aimed at restructuring the Security Council to make it most effective, representative and accountable. On its part, the UfC group has proposed a new category of members—not permanent members—with longer duration in terms and a possibility to get re-elected.

Emphasizing that the two basic vectors for reform were expansion and equitable representation, Ambassador Akram said the G-4 model would direct the effort in the "opposite direction", noting it would expand 6 new permanent seats, but only 5 new non-permanent seats—making the proportion of the members who are permanent versus those who are non-permanent even greater.

The Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council reform, which began in February 2009

have remained stalled. Despite a general agreement on enlarging the UNSC, as part of the UN reform process, member states have remained divided over details.

The UNSC currently has five permanent members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—and 10 non-permanent members elected for a two-year term.

"Today," the Pakistani envoy pointed out, "the permanent members are 1 to 2—5 permanent members to 10 non-permanent members"—whereas in the G-4 model, in a 26-member council, the equation would be 1 to 1—11 permanent members to 14 or 13 non-permanent members," reducing the proportionality between the two membership categories by half and lessen the chances of representation for the rest of the 182 countries who will not be permanent members on the Security Council.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo along with Tri-Services Officers during the closing session of exercise SEASPARK 2024, in Karachi.

Pak Navy's Maritime Exercise Seaspark-2024 concludes

Independent Report
KARACHI: The concluding session of Pakistan Navy's Major Maritime Exercise SEASPARK-2024 held at Karachi, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the session as Chief Guest. The exercise was conducted in North Arabian Sea to validate operational plans designed under realities of ever-evolving geo-strategic environment. Relevant elements of PAF and Pak Army also participated in the exercise to practice tri services synergy during war.

Addressing the closing session, Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted that the exercise helped in synergizing Naval Operations with Land and Air Operations. He stressed

that the on-going strategic competition among major countries are being increasingly confronted with difficult foreign policy choices to safeguard national interests. Evolving character of war under Grey Hybrid scenarios coupled with internal security challenges also complicate the threat matrix. All these threats and challenges necessitate a constant review of our operational plans through major exercises.

Earlier, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) presented overview of the exercise and conduct of the exercise was discussed threadbare to draw pertinent lessons. Towards the end, recommendations were presented to revise war plans and strategies under

the evolving maritime environment in the region.

Exercise SEASPARK-2024 was aimed to assess combat readiness and operational preparedness of Pakistan Navy to meet the entire spectrum of National Security Challenges in the Maritime Domain. The exercise was conducted on a two force format with Blue Force being the own and Orange Force being the enemy forces. Successful conduct of the exercise was a testimony of perpetual readiness of Pakistan Navy in proving its capability to combat broad spectrum of threats in the maritime domain.

The concluding session of the exercise was attended by high ranking officers from Sister Services and notable representatives from various Ministries.



ISLAMABAD: Women activists scuffle with police personnel during Aurat March, a demonstration rally, to mark the International Women's Day, in the Federal Capital.

Punjab, Balochistan healthcare commissions join hands

LAHORE (APP): The healthcare commissions of Punjab and Balochistan will collaborate further to improve the healthcare service delivery systems of both provinces and benefit from their respective ambits of functioning.

According to the PHC spokesperson on Friday, this was decided by the commissions in a two-day meeting held at the PHC office. Chairperson Board of Commissioners BHC Justice (ret'd) Abdul Hameed Baloch led an eight-member delegation comprising members of the Board and other officials, whereas Chairperson BoC PHC Justice (ret'd) Muhammad Bilal Khan headed his team. Detailed discussions were held regarding the health landscape of their respective provinces. The officials dilated upon various aspects and issues of quality assurance in the healthcare service delivery, implementa-

tion of rules and regulations, minimum service delivery standards (MSDS) and their enforcement in the healthcare establishments (HCEs). The visiting delegates appreciated the PHC for its success in bringing reforms to the provincial health sector. While welcoming the BHC delegation, Chief Executive Officer PHC Dr Muhammad Saqib Aziz briefed the delegation about the regulatory framework and its consequential impact on the quality of healthcare services, jurisdiction, working, mandate and achievements of the PHC. The visiting delegates were briefed about the PHC's performance, and were told that so far the Commission had registered more than 62,000 besides preparing the MSDS for all kinds of treatment facilities and enforcement of the Standards in the HCEs. About the training of the health professionals on the MSDS.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan addressing Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners Conference.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributing Khatoon-e-Pakistan Awards among the high achievers women in their respective fields on the eve of International Women Day.

Issues are not resolved through violence & provocations: Endeavours being made to resolve demands of Chaman's dharna in peaceful manner: Speaker BA

Abdul Khaliq Achakzai says he is equally mindful of problems faced by participants of dharna and people of Chaman during last six months

Independent Report
CHAMAN: The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Ret'd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai has stated that the utmost endeavours are being made to resolve the demands of dharna continued in Chaman in the peaceful manner. However, he asserted that demands are not resolved by spreading violence or chaos.

The Speaker Balochistan Assembly was addressing the participants of dharna in Chaman on Friday. A large number of people were present at the dharna, which otherwise is continued for last six

months to pressurize the government for acceptance of demands.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai said that he supports demands of Chaman dharna and he has never been in support in enforcing passport system for across the border movement.

He said that he is more aware of the issues of unemployment and poverty being faced by local people of Chaman due to the government's policies. He is equally mindful of the problems faced by the participants of dharna and

people of Chaman during last six months.

But, he is against making politics on the dharna or provocation of people, just because our issues would not be resolved through violence and provocation, rather they would increase further, adding he feared.

The Speaker Balochistan Assembly also said that he is native and representative of the area, and livelihood of thousands of our people is linked with the border. Even he is also affected due to the situation like all others present in the protest sit-in.



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms. Ghazala Gola administering oath of the membership of Provincial Assembly to Sadiq Sanjrani, Mir Zafarullah Zehri, Muhammad Khan Lehri and Noor Muhammad Dummar.

PPP, all coalition parties pledge to maintain political traditions based on tolerance & respect in Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and all coalition parties have vowed to maintain political traditions based on tolerance and respect in the province.

They have also expressed the resolve to establish good governance, public welfare, eliminate terrorism and establish sustainable peace in the province under leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

The members of provincial assembly were at the dinner reception arranged

by the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti here on Friday.

They also expressed the resolve to move ahead for public welfare and development in province under a unified approach.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that Balochistan is the province having traditions and it would be our endeavour to take all along for development of the province and its people.

He also vowed to get the masses rid of problems by establishing good governance.



QUETTA: MPA Raheela Durrani cutting cake during a ceremony on eve of World Women Day organized by SCAP-Balochistan.

Hamza takes measures to ensure maximum facilities to masses

Independent Report
QUETTA (APP): The Quetta administration under the supervision of Commissioner Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat has taken multiple measures to ensure the provision of maximum facilities to the people and governance in the provincial capital city.

The initiatives taken by the Quetta administration have brought improvement in the civic life of the

masses. The city administration has decided to auction the designed parking plazas and motorcycle stands in the city to generate more revenue.

He said the authority would auctioned around 100 parking spots transparently and enhanced tax collection to generate more revenue which would be spent on the development of the city.

Sanjrani takes oath as MPA

Independent Report
QUETTA: The outgoing Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani took oath as the Member Balochistan Assembly here on Friday morning.

The Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms. Ghazala Gola administered oath of the membership of Provincial Assembly to Sadiq Sanjrani during its session held with her in the chair.

The newly elected members of assembly including Mir Zafarullah Zehri, Muhammad Khan Lehri and Noor Muhammad Dummar also took oath of the assembly membership.

Deputy Speaker Ghazala Gola administered oath to both the members.

CM summons GM SSGC, CEO QESCO on public complaints

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti took notice of the public complaints about sui gas and electricity in Quetta city.

The Chief Minister took notice of the public complaints during the session of Provincial Assembly held on Friday.

Different members had raised the issue of sui gas and electricity while delivering speeches at the session.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti summoned the General Manager Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) and Chief Executive Officer of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) over the issues related to their organizations today (Saturday).

Mushahid demands release of Imran

ISLAMABAD (Online): Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed has said in Senate that Imran Khan be released and all the prisoners be granted general amnesty.

He said this in his farewell address in Senate Friday.

He held that the political forces should forge good relationship with judiciary, establishment and powers that be.

Pakistan stands shoulder to shoulder with Kashmiris: PM

MUZAFFARABAD (Online): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Kashmiris in their just struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination.

He expressed the resolve during his meeting with Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq during his visit to Muzaffarabad today.

The Prime Minister also assured Pakistan's unconditional support to the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir for the Kashmir cause.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on as-

suming the office of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and expressed his best wishes.

He also thanked Shehbaz Sharif for undertaking the visit of Azad Kashmir immediately after assuming the office of the Prime Minister.

He said the visit of Shehbaz Sharif to express solidarity with the Kashmiris, affected by torrential rains, reflects that hearts of Pakistani people always throb with their Kashmiri brethren.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the presence of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister distributed compensation cheques among people affected by rains and snowfall in Muzaffarabad.



QUETTA: MPAs Mir Sadiq Sanjrani and Dr. Rubaba Khan Buldi meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Safaraz Ahmed Bugti.

Daring women of Balochistan flying flags of success in all fields despite challenges: Bugti

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the women of Pakistan including Balochistan are second to none, and especially the daring women of the province are flying flags of success in all fields despite numerous challenges and resources constraints.

In a message issued on the eve of International Women Day observed on Friday, 8th March in the country as elsewhere in the world, the Chief Minister said that the formation of civilized societies and development and prosperity of the nations is not possible without active participation and cooperation of women.

The Chief Minister said that our women believe in waging continuous struggle in the footsteps of the Mother of Nation, Muhtarma Fatima Jinnah.

Similarly, the martyr Muhtarma Benazir Bhutto had told the world with her political struggle and sacrifice that our women are not second to none in any field.

He said that the courageous women of Balochistan are making achievements and proving mettle in every field. These women have brightened the name of province and country through their struggle, he commended.

He also said that it is our top priority to remove the hardships facing the womenfolk in all sectors and provide them the necessary facilities.



LONDON: High Commissioner of Pakistan to UK Dr. Mohammad Faisal, spouse Dr. Sarah Naeem, Director General FCDO Mr. Owen Jenkins, British PM's Trade Envoy for Pakistan Mr. James Daly MP and guests cutting cake at Pakistan Day Reception.

Ghazala welcomes resolution giving ZAB as Shaheed status

Independent Report
QUETTA (APP): Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola on Friday welcomed the resolution for giving Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as status of "Shaheed" and declaring the former premier of Pakistan a democratic hero of the nation, in a session of the Balochistan Assembly held here.

The resolution was presented by member provincial assemblies (MPAs), in an assembly session.

In her statement issued here, Ghazala Gola said, it was a great honor for me to chair the session of the Balochistan assembly while tabling the same resolution.

Ghazala Gola said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the most popular prime minister of Pakistan who gave the first constitution to this country and laid the foundation for making Pakistan a nuclear power.

She said that Z.A. Bhutto was sentenced to death without giving a fair trial. She added that the Supreme Court has opined in the presidential reference filed 12 years ago by Pakistan People's Party co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari.

500 liters of harmful milk destroyed in Loralai crackdown

Independent Report
QUETTA (APP): At least 500 liters of detergent (Surf) found, harmful milk was destroyed in crackdown against adulteration mafia in Loralai by Balochistan Food Authority (BFA) on Friday.

According to BFA spokesman, a fine was also imposed on the milk seller involved in the scandalous business of adulteration besides, hundreds of liters of expired cooking oil of a well-known company were also seized during operations in Loralai along with the district administration. Extra virgin cooking oil