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Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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Turkish ambassador calls on him PM calls for cementing Pak-Turkiye bilateral ties

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has underlined the need for enhancing bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Turkiye in all areas of mutual interest, including trade, defence, connectivity and culture.

He was talking to Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, who paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister in Islamabad on Tuesday.

He emphasized that both the countries enjoyed exemplary bilateral relations which are based on shared history, religion and culture and are unshakable. The Prime Minister said both countries need to work

together to achieve the annual target of five billion dollars in bilateral trade.

On core issues, the Prime Minister said Pakistan deeply appreciates Turkiye's firm and consistent support for the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He also reaffirmed Pakistan's support to Turkiye on the issue of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The Turkiye's Ambassador congratulated the Prime Minister on his re-election and conveyed best wishes from the leadership of Turkiye and emphasized the importance of strengthening the fraternal ties between both countries.

The Prime Minister

deeply appreciated the congratulatory telephone call and message of felicitations from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan immediately after his re-election.

In this regard, he congratulated Turkiye on the successful flight of KAN 5th generation fighter aircraft.

The Prime Minister reiterated his invitation to President Erdogan to visit Pakistan.

Shehbaz Sharif said the people of Pakistan look forward to the visit which would provide a useful opportunity for both the sides to carry out extensive consultations during the 7th session of High Level Strategic Coordination Council.

PM, CNS discuss professional matters pertaining to Pakistan Navy

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad Tuesday and discussed professional matters pertaining to Pakistan Navy.

The Naval Chief also felicitated Shehbaz Sharif on assuming the office of the Prime Minister.

President decides not to draw salary

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Asif Ali Zardari has decided not to draw his salary. According to a press release issued by the presidency, the President took this decision in view of prevailing economic challenges.

The decision is aimed to encourage prudent financial management in the country.

Deciding not to burden national exchequer president Asif Ali Zardari preferred not to draw salary.

Bugti expresses sorrow on death of Asafandiyar Wali's wife

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti expressed his deep sorrow over the death of Asafandiyar Wali's wife and mother of Aimal Wali and condoled with the bereaved family.

In one of his statements, the chief minister prayed to Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal abode with peace and granting courage to bereaved family members.

Pakistan, IMF talks likely to begin from March 15

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan and International Monetary Fund (IMF) talks under the \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) are likely to commence from March 15.

According to media reports, the country's newly sworn-in Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb has given the green signal for talks with the IMF for the SBA and a new loan programme.

Islamabad will hold talks with the international lender about the last tranche of \$1.1 billion under the SBA programme. Pakistan has already achieved the targets set by the IMF for the second review, the sources said.

They further said Pakistan is likely to request IMF for a \$6 to 8 billion fresh loan programme. Finance ministry sources said Islamabad will engage the IMF on the economic targets for the fresh loan programme. On March 8, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said it is ready to send mission to Islamabad for the second economic review after the formation of PM Shehbaz Sharif's cabinet.



KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari offering Dua at the grave of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori and Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah are also accompanied him.

Ban imposed on meeting with prisoners in Adiala jail for two weeks

RAWALPINDI (Online): Ban has been imposed on visitors meeting with prisoners in Adiala jail for two weeks due to security concerns.

Home department Punjab has issued orders to IG Jails Punjab to slap ban on meetings with prisoners and jail visits for two weeks. Media coverage has also been banned. According to home department Punjab law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies have informed about threat alert with reference to central jail Adiala.

Internal security wing home department Punjab has informed in the light of reports that anti state terrorists group which is supported by anti state elements want to target central jail Adiala to foment chaos in the country. Necessary steps are urgently needed to avoid any untoward situation.

According to sources, home department Punjab has directed to conduct search operation on March 13 inside jail through special branch, intelligence bureau and staff of jail department, erect barbed wire on jail boundary wall besides screening inside jail and adjacent area through disposal squad team.

Order in respect of security clearance of government contractors working in the jail and staff members has also been issued.

PTI founder Imran Khan, former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, former chief minister Punjab Pervaiz Elahi and former federal ministers and high profile prisoners are imprisoned in jail.



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

PPP, JUI-F form alliance for Senate elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary General Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Syed Nayyer Hussain Bukhari Tuesday said that PPP and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) have agreed to collaborate in the forthcoming Senate elections.

Addressing a press conference along with Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani and JUI leader Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, he said that PPP will support the JUI candidate for Senate polls in Balochistan, while the JUI will extend support to Yousaf Raza Gillani in Islamabad.

Nayyer Bukhari said the Senate by-election being held on vacant seats of the upper house on March 14. Balochistan's three Senate seats have been vacated and the JUI has requested for the PPP's support in Balochistan.

On the occasion Ghafoor Haideri said JUI will not participate in government making but play their role in the Parliament.

Yusuf Raza Gillani said "We are supporting to each other for the Parliament and will work in tandem in the house."

Two cops embraced martyrdom in terrorists attack

PESHAWAR (APP): At least two cops embraced martyrdom while an ASI sustained injuries in an attack by terrorists on a police mobile in the jurisdiction of the Machni Gate area police station.

According to SSP Operations Peshawar, Kashif Aftab Abbasi, the policemen were on routine patrolling when the terrorists ambushed and attacked the police mobile.

The SSP said that a search operation was started in the area to trace the terrorists.



QUETTA: A large number of people gather for collecting relief flour bags during food aids distribution under the supervision of provincial government in connection of the Holy month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, at Meezan Chowk in Quetta.

Information minister assumes charge of his office Atta Tarar emphasizes importance of promoting positive & constructive journalism

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday assumed charge as Minister of Information and Broadcasting.

Federal Secretary of Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid along with other senior officers of the ministry welcomed the minister on his arrival at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Attaullah Tarar is a senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) who was elected Member of National Assembly from Constituency NA-127 from Lahore in the February 8 elections.

After taking oath as Federal Minister in the President's House, today he assumed his duties in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

It was Asif Ali Zardari's first visit to Karachi after assuming charge of the office of the president of Pakistan for the second time.

President Zardari laid a floral wreath at the grave of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and offered Fatiha. He also penned down comments in the book of visitors. Asif Ali Zardari, at the occasion, was received by Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Provincial president PPP Sindh Nisar Ahmed Khuro and other senior officers of Sindh government.

ISLAMABAD: Attaullah Tarar assumes charge as Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

We should use word of 'independence' with pride instead partition: CJP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa on Tuesday during hearing of a case stopped the lawyer to use the word of 'partition' instead of independence of Pakistan. The CJP remarked that words of partition can be used by the people of India because they have never been rulers. We should use the words of freedom with pride, he said.

A three-member bench of the top court presided by

Chief Justice Isa heard the case pertaining to a property dispute. The CJP said that we can't run the case on basis of assumptions. If there is any proof of property ownership then show it, he asked the petitioner.

The court subsequently turned down the appeal of petitioner. It may be mentioned here that the petitioner even couldn't present an ownership proof before lower and high courts.

Jam Kamal assumes office as Federal Minister for Commerce

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jam Kamal Khan officially on Tuesday assumed his duties as the Federal Minister for Commerce, marking a new chapter in his political career.

He was received by Federal Secretary for Commerce, Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Khurram Agha at the Ministry, said a press release issued here.



The Minister brings a wealth of experience to his new role. During his inaugural briefing, the Ministry's scope and objectives were outlined.

Minister Khan emphasized focus on growth, investment and the need to fully facilitate both local and foreign investors, believing that Pakistan can achieve significant strides through an inclusive approach. He expressed his commitment, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, to overcoming the country's economic challenges.

Emphasizing his dedication to enhancing trade volume, the Minister identified key sectors like mining, livestock, and textiles as areas for modernization.

9 people killed as residential building collapses in Multan

MULTAN (INP): At least nine people persons were killed and two others were wounded when a three-storey dilapidated building collapsed in Multan late Monday night.

According to District Emergency Officer Dr Kaleemullah, a residential building located in Haram Gate area of Multan collapsed, burying at least 10 persons under the rubble. The debris of the building also fell over adjoining houses. Rescue teams reached the spot after being informed and retrieved the dead bodies of nine persons



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Biased interrogator becomes threat to justice system: SC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday upheld the verdict of Sindh Service Tribunal for dismissal of a police official on account of defective investigation in a minor's rape case.

A three member bench headed by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar announced the verdict on appeal of police official.

The top court in its order said that the investigation officer plays an important role in the justice system, adding that poor investigation is the biggest obstacle in the way of justice.

It said that only the officials who possess unblemished character should be part of disciplinary force, adding that a flawed investigation gradually contaminates the justice process.

The investigating officer must act without any manipulation in the discharge of his sacred duty, it said, adding that a biased interrogator becomes a threat to human rights.

The court said that it is the duty of superior officers to make investigating officers work with integrity, without laziness or lust.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor, Kamran Tessori administering oath to provincial cabinet members of Sindh during oath taking ceremony held at Governor House in Karachi.

Speaker Balochistan Assembly maintains: Every possible steps would be taken for development & prosperity of Chaman, welfare of people

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai has stated that every possible steps would be taken for development and prosperity of Chaman besides resolving all issues facing the people.

The Speaker exhorted the high ups of WAPDA, Municipal Corporation, Health, Education and other departments to perform their duties in professional manner.

He was addressing the introductory meeting with heads of all line departments of Chaman district in Chaman on Tuesday.

The Deputy Commissioner Chaman, Raja Athar Abbas and other administrative officers were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, Speaker stressed that it is responsibility of the district administration, levies, police, Frontier Corps and other concerned institutions to maintain law and

order and protect life and property of the people.

He directed all officers, doctors, paramedics and other staff to ensure presence at their respective duty places.

He said our future is linked with education department and if the carelessness, lenience and negligence was demonstrated in this sector, then it would cause irreparable loss to the country and nation.

Similarly, cleanliness is considered to be very important and a symbol of a good dignified nation.

For the purpose, the staff and officers of the corporation would have to perform better, he added.

Moreover, the Speaker directed to WAPDA authorities to improve their performance and don't give any opportunity to lodge complain.

The Speaker said that his doors would always remain open for the people.

He asserted that nepotism and favoritism would not be tolerated at all.

Pakistan, Tanzania agree to strengthen bilateral ties in diverse areas

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Tanzania on Tuesday agreed to strengthen bilateral relations, in the areas of trade, defence, capacity building and educational cooperation.

The consensus was reached during the inaugural session of Pakistan-Tanzania Bilateral Political Consultations held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Additional Foreign Secretary (Africa), Ambassador Shaharyar Akbar Khan, led the Pakistan side, while the Tanzanian side was headed by Ambassador Salvator Marcus Mbilinyi, Director, Asia & Australasia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & East African cooperation, a press release issued by High Commission of Pakistan Dar es Salaam said.

The two sides held detailed discussion on the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including political, trade and investment, capacity building, educational cooperation, defence and culture. Regional situation and

collaboration at the multilateral forums was also discussed.

They highlighted the holding of the first session of Bilateral Political Consultations as a stepping stone towards further strengthening Pakistan-Tanzania relations and agreed to continue cooperation in all matters of mutual interest.

They agreed on the importance of high level exchanges for further strengthening of the bilateral relationship.

Tanzanian side informed that they were planning to arrange an official visit of their Foreign Minister to Pakistan in the near future.

While in Dares-Salaam, the Additional Foreign Secretary held separate meetings with the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Ambassador Dr. Samuel W. Shelukindo and Director General, Tanzania Trade Development Authority, Ms. Latifa M. Khamis.



Pakistan and Tanzania agreed to strengthen bilateral relations, in the areas of trade, defence, capacity building and educational cooperation. Additional Foreign Secretary (Africa), Ambassador Shaharyar Akbar Khan leading the Pakistan side, while the Tanzanian side was headed by Ambassador Salvator Marcus Mbilinyi, Director, Asia & Australasia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & East African cooperation

ECP completes preparations for Senate elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will announce the schedule for the election on Senate vacant seats on March 14.

As per details, the preparations have been completed for the polling for 48 Senate seats, scheduled to take place on the second of the next month (April).

After the merger with KP, the elections on the four FATA seats will not be held. "These seats have been abolished after the merger of tribal areas into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) under the 25th Amendment of the Constitution," the ECP said in its statement.

Nomination papers about the Senate elections can be obtained from the Election Commission Secretariat Islamabad as well as the provincial elections commissioners of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Candidates can submit their nomination papers to their respective Returning Officers on Friday and Saturday (March 15, 16). Earlier, 52 senators retired on March 12 after completing their six-year tenure.

Lahore hosted SAARC events, came to a magnificent end

Independent Report

LAHORE: Lahore hosted three days of SAARC comprises of "SAARC Bazaar," trade fair and SAARC conference titled "Invest in South Asian Women: A Path towards Regional Progress", aimed to empower South Asia's SME sector, especially its female entrepreneurs, and promote cooperation, innovation, and economic progress.

Jointly inaugurated by Mr. Anjum Nisar, Vice President, SCCI (Pakistan Chapter), Mr. Shafiq Haider, vice President, SCCI (Bangladesh Chapter), Mr. Kashif Anwer, President Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ms. Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Member Parliament, PMLN, the fair lasted for three days at the Expo Center, Lahore. About 100 enterprising including women entrepreneurs joined to showcase their diverse array of products and their entrepreneurial success stories.

H.E. Mr. Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique, High Commissioner of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Pakistan, visited the exhibition. During his visit, he engaged with media representatives and highlighted the significance of such platforms for the empowerment of women and small-scale industries. He emphasized the need for exploring possibilities of connectivity at the government level and finding solutions to unify all exhibitors from South Asian countries onto a single platform. Jemal Bekker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan also visited the exhibition.

The Women's Conference, themed "Invest in South Asian Women: A Path towards Regional Progress," also took place in Lahore Pearl Continental Hotel, on the eve of International Women's Day. Ms. Hina Pervaiz Butt, the political figure of the Pakistan Muslim League (N), was honored as the Chief Guest of the conference. There was also the transfer of the SCWEC Chairmanship to Pakistan, with Ms. Hina Mansab Khan becoming the new Council Chair for a period of two years.

The recently elected Chairperson of the

SCWEC, Ms. Hina Mansab Khan, stated that Pakistan is making more strides toward completely integrating women into the political and economic spheres of the nation. She predicted that more gender equality in Pakistan would follow. Ms. Maryam Nawaz's recent election to the position of Chief Minister of Punjab. Ms. Hina voiced hope that Ms. Nawaz's leadership will result in significant advancements for women in the social, political, and economic domains.

The speakers from South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, India, Maldives, and Pakistan, contributed their invaluable perspectives and experiences during the conference, enhancing the dialogue on women's empowerment and regional advancement. The activities are primarily sponsored by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Nimir Chemicals, Interloop, and Gohar Textile. The events were organized under the Banner of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry & SAARC women Council.



Mr. Anjum Nisar, Vice President, SCCI (Pakistan Chapter), Mr. Shafiq Haider, vice President, SCCI (Bangladesh Chapter), Mr. Kashif Anwer, President Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ms. Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Member Parliament, PMLN inaugurating three days of SAARC comprises of "SAARC Bazaar," trade fair and SAARC conference titled "Invest in South Asian Women: A Path towards Regional Progress", aimed to empower South Asia's SME sector, especially its female entrepreneurs, and promote cooperation, innovation, and economic progress.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja assumes charge as Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication.

KP CM recommends appointment of Shahab Ali Shah as Chief Secretary KP

By M.Ilyas

PESHAWAR - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Ameen Gandapur has recommended the appointment of former Additional Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah as Chief Secretary KP through a letter to the federal government.

The Valley Housing Society Scheme is facing serious allegations of corruption. In the said inquiry, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's housing society, New Peshawar Valley, was declared fake. The top officials of journalistic organizations also earned crores of rupees.

This project was declared as the biggest fraud in the history of the provincial capital Peshawar.

The biggest fraud in history came to light when Shahab Ali Shah was appointed as Peshawar Commissioner. He saw a fake account in Mauza Garhi Faizullah. He made his front man, Ali Asghar, who was appointed Deputy Commissioner in his native district Bannu, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar for the purpose of falsifying the said account and naming hundreds of acres of land in the name of his benamidars. Ali Asghar began to acquire land in the names of Shahab Ali Shah's Benamidars in Mauza Garhi Faizullah. At the same time, private individuals started acquiring land. When enough land was acquired, Shahab Ali Shah approved a scheme named New Peshawar Valley. People were told that half of the land they buy will be given back to them for development while the other half will be given to PDA. Similarly, people bought properties worth billions of rupees.

Shahab Ali Shah, Ali Asghar, and later Captain Khalid also earned crores of rupees in this scheme. Along with putting their front men as collectors and tehsildars, bribes up to fifty thousand rupees were collected on each intimidation letter.

When the people of Peshawar became angry and fed up with Ali Asghar's corruption, he appointed the most incompetent officer who was included in the Pakistan Administrative Service through the recommendation of the army and was appointed Deputy Commissioner Peshawar for the purpose of falsifying the said account and naming hundreds of acres of land in the name of his benamidars. To hand over the development of this city to PDA, Shahab Ali Shah appointed Ali Asghar as DG PDA, but the PDA employees removed him from there on the grounds that he was a junior officer. Khalid also continued to work on this fraud as per the terms of appointment.

The work on this scheme continued rapidly, and in order to increase the prices of his lands, Shahab Ali Shah announced to the provincial assembly that the provincial assembly would also be shifted there and the Civil Secretariat would also be shifted to Peshawar Valley. In this project, the top officials of the journalistic organizations of Peshawar also made attachments worth crores of rupees. Meanwhile, the provincial and federal governments of PTI ended, and Shahab Ali Shah and his family were transferred from here.

PDM appointed Shah Fahad as Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, and he investigated the fraud of Shahab Ali Shah, Ali Asghar, and Khalid. In the light of this inquiry, the project was declared fake, and allotments of New Peshawar Valley City were canceled through a newspaper advertisement.

The term of 11 senators supported by PML-N, 13 by PPP, 7 by PTI, and two each from JUL-F, Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP), and National Party have ended.

Upper House becomes dysfunctional for three weeks as 52 senators retired

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan's Upper House (Senate) became dysfunctional for three weeks, as 52 lawmakers, more than half the strength of the upper house, retired including Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani, Deputy Chairman Mirza Afridi.

The schedule for Senate elections will be issued on March 14 while the nomination papers for elections can be obtained from Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) head office and four provincial secretariats. While the nomination papers can be submitted to concerned ECP offices during March 15 and 16.

As per law, the term of 52 Senate members, including Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, Deputy Chairman Mirza Afridi, Leader of the House Ishaq Dar, Leader of the Opposition Dr. Shahzad Waseem and Senator Raza Rabbani, ended on Tuesday.

The term of 11 senators supported by PML-N, 13 by PPP, 7 by PTI, and two each from JUL-F, Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP), and National Party have ended.

Federal Ministers pay surprise visit at G-6 utility store

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar along with Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain paid a surprise visit to the utility store at Abpara Market, G-6 Islamabad.

Both the ministers visited the utility store on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and reviewed quality of the edibles being sold at subsidized rates under the Ramadan Relief Package 2024.

The federal ministers also interacted with the public at the utility store to get their feedback in that regard.

According to Rana Tanveer, special discounts were being given to consumers at utility store under the Ramadan Relief Package 2024.

He said the government was making all-out efforts to ensure uninterrupted supply of food items during the holy month of Ramadan.

Prices of food items at utility stores were lesser than the market, he said,

Football team training camp underway

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan National Football team has commenced its training camp in preparation for the highly anticipated FIFA World Cup Qualifiers Round 2 home match against Jordan.

Under the supervision of head coach Stephen Constantine, the team was diligently honing their skills and tactics for the upcoming encounter.

Goalkeeping coaches Rogério Ramos and Nauman Ibrahim have been dedicating their efforts to the goalkeepers, while fitness coach Claudio Altieri is ensuring peak performance in preparation for the crucial match.

The training camp, currently underway in Lahore would span over the next few days before moving to Islamabad, where the team will continue their preparations.

Scheduled for March 2, the home encounter would take place here at Jinnah Stadium, followed by an away fixture in Jordan on March.

Tickets refund for HBL PSL 9 washout games to begin today

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will start tickets refund on Wednesday for the HBL PSL 9 washout games, which were abandoned on March 2 at the Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi.

The refund will start at designated TCS centres in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Peshawar and Lahore, said a press release.

The refunds will take place between March 13 to 20. Any claim later than the set date will not be entitled to a refund.

As communicated before, tickets purchased through TCS Express centres will require the buyers to present the original CNIC used for purchasing tickets, along with the physical tickets.

Refunds for tickets purchased online will directly be credited to the buyers' respective bank accounts without the provision to present physical tickets.

ICC Women's Player of the Month for February 2024 revealed

PERTH (INP): Annabel Sutherland became the fifth Australian player to claim the ICC Women's Player of the Month Award, joining the esteemed ranks of previous winners Alyssa Healy, Rachael Haynes, Tahlia McGrath and Ashleigh Gardner.

Sutherland, who scored 229 runs and claimed seven wickets in four matches in February 2024, beat competition from the UAE duo of Esha Oza and Kavisha Egodage to win the coveted prize. The 22-year-old was thrilled to collect her maiden Player of the Month award.

"It's a massive honour to be named the Player of the Month and a nice way to cap off a successful home summer for the team," she said. "South Africa are always a strong opponent and to be able to perform against them in a home Test is something I'm proud of."

"Test cricket is always a highlight and to have been able to contribute toward winning that match was really special," Annabel

Sutherland rewrote history books with her marathon double century in the one-off Test against South Africa. Before the Test series, Sutherland contributed to Australia's triumph in the ODI series, clinched 2-1 by the hosts. The versatile all-rounder not only secured two wickets but also made valuable runs. The shift to the Test format proved fortuitous for Sutherland.

Opting to bowl first, Australia swiftly dismissed South Africa for just 76, with Sutherland's medium-fast pace dismantling the Proteas' middle order by claiming the wickets of Sune Luus, Tazmin Brits and Delmi Tucker. This bowling success seamlessly transitioned into an extraordinary batting performance, where Sutherland dominated the game with a rapid double century. Achieving this milestone in just 248 balls, she set a new record for the fastest double century in Women's cricket, surpassing fellow Australian Karen Rolton (306 balls).



QUETTA: People buying vegetables in first day of Ramadan at Vegetable Market.

Govt urged to reevaluate subsidies in light of health concerns

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government of Pakistan is set to continue its tradition of providing subsidies on various food items through Utility Store Corporations, Ramadan Bazaars and other means. While this practice has been beneficial in ensuring food affordability during the holy month.

Concerns have, however, been raised about the nutritional content of some subsidised items like the subsidies given to certain items, such as sugar and

banaspati ghee and oils, which are linked to increased risk of obesity and chronic diseases. The evidence suggests that high consumption of sugar and trans-fatty acids present in banaspati ghee and oils are linked with increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer and several other chronic diseases, a news release said.

As part of a broader effort to promote public health and well-being, public health advocates are calling on the government to

withdraw its subsidy allocation on sugar and banaspati ghee/oils and prioritise subsidizing healthier alternatives like lentils, fruits and vegetables. In-Country Coordinator for the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA), Munawar Hussain emphasised the need for a shift in subsidy focus: "While ensuring food accessibility is crucial, we must be mindful of the impact of these subsidies on public health and the behaviour of the people on

food consumption. Subsidizing unhealthy food items may encourage public to continue consuming such foods without knowing the risks that they pose. The government has an opportunity to make a positive change by redirecting subsidies towards healthier food options that contribute to the well-being of the population." Recognising the importance of this issue, Mukhtar Ahmad, Executive Director of the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI),



Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada chaired a meeting in Islamabad. Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, Secretary Housing and Works and other officers of Ministry also present.



ISLAMABAD: Volunteers prepare Iftar food plates for devotees before breaking their fast on the holy fasting month of Ramadan, at PIMS hospital, in the Federal Capital.

Muslims across country welcome holy month of Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): With the start of the holy month of Ramadan, all the holy mosques across the country provided worshippers a conducive environment to offer their prayers at the mosque with serenity and sanctity.

A large number of enthusiastic citizens had observed first Sehri at homes while a huge influx of people was also seen in restaurants as well, said a report aired by a private news channel.

"We are making every effort to give the worshippers a conducive environment to offer their prayers at the mosque with seren-

ity and sanctity," said an administrative officer in a local mosque.

Special arrangements were also made for Sehri and iftar in mosques, said an Imam.

A heavy rush of the faithful was witnessed in the mosques with the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, said another imam of a mosque, adding, special prayers were also offered for the prosperity and integrity of the country and the well-being of the people.

Mosques and charities across the country are also organizing free iftar tables for the poorest, said a citi-

zen.

Daytime fasting and nighttime prayers spiritually energize the worshippers to lead a new life, benefiting the whole of humanity and opening a new chapter of peace and progress, said another citizen.

Strengthening the bond of love and friendship, the big iftar gatherings in Ramadan with varieties of food, spicy dishes, sweets, fruits, and beverages by the fasting Muslims and minorities build a spirit of affection and brotherhood, besides leaving positive effects on humans for a long time, commented a shopkeeper.

Evacuee trust property case: SC rejects review petitions

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has rejected the review petitions against possession of evacuee trust property by Punjab government.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked how can we issue order to Punjab government when it has not been made respondent in the petition. Chairman Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) had filed 4 review petitions against SC decision for retrieving 25 marla land. The court had rejected the petition.

Upon it they filed appeal plea.

Kram Chaudhry advocate appeared on behalf of

chairman ETPB.

The case was heard by 3-member bench of SC presided over by CJP Qazi Faez Isa Tuesday.

Kram Chaudhry argued that precious 25 marla land of ETPB is in the possession of government of Punjab which should be got returned.

The court raised question have you made Punjab government respondent.

In this regard it was told Punjab government has not been made respondent.

The court remarked the relevant respondent has not been made respondent by you. How can we issue order in this regard in this situation.

ISSI welcomes Envoy of Russian Federation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on Tuesday welcomed the newly appointed Ambassador of the Russian Federation Albert P. Khorev, for his inaugural visit.

Director-General of ISSI, Ambassador Sohaih Mahmood chaired the meeting, which was attended by Chairman of the Board of Governors (BOG) ISSI, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood; Director of the Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), Dr. Neelum Nigar; and Research Associate at CSP-ISSI, Taimur Khan, a news release said.

Extending a warm welcome to Ambassador Khorev, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohaih Mahmood hoped that Pakistan-Russia relations would continue to grow during his tenure.

Poet, writer, intellectual Shabnam Shakeel remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Poet, writer, intellectual and academician Shabnam Shakeel was remembered on the occasion of her birth anniversary on Tuesday.

Born on March 12, 1942 in Lahore, Shabnam Shakeel was the daughter of Syed Abid Ali Abid, a renowned poet, critic, and academician.

After completing her studies, she joined Queen's Mary College, Lahore, as a teacher and spent 30 years in the education sector.

CDA plans Rs 2 bln project to reforest Margalla Hills

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to enhance the biodiversity and green cover in Margalla Hills, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has prepared a PC-1 for a project worth over Rs 2 billion to plant 10 million trees in the park. The CDA is in process of sending the PC-1 to the federal government to secure funding in the upcoming fiscal year 2024-25 under the public sector development programme, with the cost estimated at Rs2,158,614 million.

Islamabad is a stretch of over an area of 908 sq kilometres in which - as per the master plan - Margalla Hills and 32 acquired villages consist of 39,000 acres of land which was declared as a national park

in the 1980s.

The park is located on the northern edge of Islamabad, south of the Haripur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, extending over 15,782.74 hectares (39,000 acres).

The PC-1 for the project 'Enhancing the biodiversity and green cover by managing the natural resources, maintenance and rehabilitation of the landscape of Margalla Hills National Park' has been prepared by the environment wing of the CDA and it will be implemented over five years. According to the PC-1, the main objective of the project is to "enhance the flora and fauna" of the national park and its preservation for the attraction of the public and tourists.



ISLAMABAD: Citizens purchasing snacks for fast-breaking in Federal Capital.

Pirzada directs to enhance transparency, expedite housing projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Tuesday directed the official concerned to enhance transparency, and expediting the completion of ongoing housing projects.

After assuming the charge of the Ministry of Housing and Works, the minister emphasized the importance of accountability and efficiency in the implementation of policies and programs to ensure

that the ministry accomplishes its mandate effectively.

Secretary Ministry of Housing and Works Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash and other officers of the ministry welcomed the minister upon his arrival, said a news release.

Dr. Shahzad Khan briefed the minister of the ongoing housing projects, challenges, and opportunities within the ministry.

The minister also stressed the need for inno-

vative and sustainable solutions to ensure the development of high-quality housing, infrastructure, and works projects that meet the needs of the government employees and general public.

Emphasizing a zero-tolerance policy towards inefficiency and corruption, he asserted that strict measures would be implemented to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and integrity within the ministry.

Crackdown against illegal LPG stations, price hike; 3 arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Assistant Commissioner (AC) Saddar area accompanied by the Magistrate on Tuesday launched a relentless campaign against rising prices and illegal activities in various areas of Saddar sub-division here.

On the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, both officials accompanied by the district administrations teams visited the G-15 area and scrutinized prices, inspected DC counters, and verified the display of price lists, said the ICT Spokesman, Dr Abdullah Tabassum.

During the operation,

an LPG filling station was found in illegal activities and promptly sealed by the Assistant Commissioner. Additionally, three individuals implicated in illegal activities were apprehended and handed over to law enforcement authorities.

The crackdown on price hikes, encroachments, and other violations is an ongoing effort, highlighting the commitment of authorities to uphold the rule of law and protect consumers from exploitation. On the occasion, AC warned that safety of citizens was the topmost priority of the district government and no one would allowed to play with innocent lives.

Mushaal inaugurates Iftar table at PIMS hospital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hurriyat leader Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Tuesday inaugurated the Maari Petroleum and CDRS Iftar table at PIMS hospital here and served the first iftar to the families of the patients.

On the arrival of Ramadan, various iftar tables (Dastarkhan) have been established in the capital city. Mushaal Mullick, wife of detained Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik, broke the fast with families of the patients, said a press release. Talking to media, she appreciated the administration of Maari Dastarkhan for advancing this good act in such an organized manner.

Parliament to complete its constitutional term, says Azma Bukhari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab's Information Minister Azma Bukhari Tuesday said that the parliament would complete its constitutional term as PML-N always believed in practical work, rather than tall claims and false promises.

Talking to a private news channel, she said the PML-N leadership wanted democracy to thrive and no one would be allowed to derail the democratic process.

PML-N-led government will not allow anyone to destabilize the country, adding, opposition needs to play a constructive role to strengthening democracy despite their personal interests.

She also reaffirmed the government's commitment to punish all the people involved in the May 9 incident, adding, cases registered against the miscreants would be taken to their logical conclusion.

She warned the government will not tolerate and give concession to any one who would try to destabilize the country.

PTI leadership was seeking a National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) but its founder must prove his innocence in a court of law, she added.

PTI founder was spreading chaos to disrupt democratic system in the country, she said, adding, PML-N always prefers values over power and takes decisions on the national issues in consultation with other political parties.

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Estate Office allots 1,227 govt accommodations in two year

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Estate Office, Ministry of Housing and Works has allotted as many as 1,227 quarters of Cat-IV, government accommodations to the federal government employees during the last two years.

"The department has made all the allotments on merit by keeping view of the seniority of the government employees who are working in different ministries and divisions," an official in the Ministry told APP.

He said that the Ministry of Housing and Works also intends to modify government accommodation allocation rules to facilitate federal government employees.

The official said a proposed amendment to modify the Allocation Rules, 2002 is under consideration which will be implemented shortly.

He said the ministry plans to eliminate Rule-20 of Government House Allotment. This rule currently allows a government house allocated to a retired federal employee to be assigned to their employed son or daughter.

The official said the waiting list employees are of the view that the rule is based on injustice to transfer the government house from father to child on retirement as it deprives the right of senior employees who have been waiting for a long time.

He said the officers and employees get their son or daughter recruited before retirement and the house is allotted to them, adding that the affected employees are demanding that the allotment of houses should be done only on the principle of seniority.

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Proper order will be issued for meeting with PTI founder: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while hearing the petitions filed by Barrister Gohar, Umar Ayub Khan and others in connection with their meeting with PTI founder has assured their court will issue proper order in this regard.

Petition by Barrister Gohar came up for hearing before justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb of IHC on Tuesday.

Shoab Shaheen counsel for barrister Gohar ap-

peared and told the court the petitioner wants to meet PTI founder along with Umar Ayub and Shibli Faraz. They have to exchange views with PTI founder on the matters related to election during the meeting. Jail authorities are not allowing the meeting with PTI founder. Jail superintendent is ordered to allow to meet PTI founder.

The court remarked appropriate order will be issued on this petition.

Rain-windstorm/thunderstorm with snowfall over hills likely at various parts of country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rain-windstorm/thunderstorm with snowfall over hills is likely in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, upper Punjab, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during the next 24 hours, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

Dry weather is expected elsewhere in the country during the period.

The rain will occur as a result of a westerly wave affecting western parts of the country and likely to

grip most upper/central parts of the country on March 13.

Heavy rainfall may cause flash flooding in local nullah's of Ketch and Panjgur. While snowfall may disrupt traffic flows in northern parts of Balochistan tonight.

Heavy rain with snowfall at isolated places may cause closure of roads in Murree, Galiyat, Naran, Kaghan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Shangla.

Islamabad's milestone: First protectorate office opens, strengthening Pakistan's commitment to safe migration

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a momentous occasion that signifies Pakistan's commitment to promoting safe and legal migration, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development has launched the first-ever Protectorate of Emigrants Office in the capital city of Islamabad.

An official source told APP, this groundbreaking initiative not only underscores the government's dedication to ensuring the welfare of its citizens seeking

employment abroad but also positions Islamabad as a focal point for international collaboration on labor and migration issues.

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

These steps are reflective of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development's ongoing mission to facilitate the journey of Pakistani workers abroad, ensuring their rights and well-being are prioritized at every stage.

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

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CDA taking steps for provision of quality food to citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA), is taking concrete and important steps to ensure the supply of high quality food items to general public during Ramadan so that citizens could not face any kind of problem during Ramadan.

In this regard the Directorate of Municipal Administration (MCI) has organized weekly Margalla Bazaar H-9 and weekly Abpara Bazaar G-6 from 1st of Ramadan to the end of Ramadan continuously. In which the citizens are being ensured the supply of high quality food items.

Similarly, Directorate of Municipal Administration (MCI) has also issued the number 03215050334 for the convenience of the citizens coming to Ramadan Bazaar can register their complaints. It should be noted that the relevant staff is present in the field to enable timely redressal of the complaints received. Similarly, before the arrival of Ramadan, the cleaning work of the meat section including the vegetable and fruit section in the weekly markets was also completed so that all possible facilities could be provided to the customers coming to the markets.

IHC allows Hiba wife of Fawad to go abroad

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has allowed Hiba Fawad wife of former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry to go abroad.

The court issued these orders while hearing petition filed by Hiba Fawad Chaudhry seeking removal of her name from no fly list.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani heard the petition filed by Hiba Fawad on Tuesday. Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Usman Ghuman, Qaisar Imam counsel of petitioner and others appeared in the court.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent
Wednesday March 13, 2024

PDM redux

The new prime minister has stuck to a safe formula by inducting familiar faces in his cabinet and giving them their usual portfolios, and accommodating allies and benefactors where more deserving people could have been given a chance. The only big change seems to be the inclusion of Muhammad Aurangzeb, the erstwhile president of one of Pakistan's largest banks, to do the finance minister's job. He replaces the candidate the PML-N has usually favoured for the portfolio, Ishaq Dar.

Mr Aurangzeb is among three as-yet-unelected members of the cabinet inducted yesterday, with the two others being the former caretaker chief minister of Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi, and a former adviser to the caretaker prime minister, Ahad Cheema. It seems the latter two had to be accommodated for their 'services to Pakistan'. Meanwhile, Mr Dar, despite his disastrous performance as finance minister during the PDM-led government, has still managed to be shortlisted for another ministry in the new regime.

A big positive is that the cabinet is not as bloated this time as it was during the PDM government. The new government would be well-advised to keep itself lean and focus on dealing with Pakistan's many crises.

At the same time, it is disappointing that Shehbaz Sharif's federal cabinet has shaped up to be a men's club. There was just one exception among the 19 individuals sworn in by President Asif Ali Zardari yesterday — Shaza Fatima Khawaja. She took oath as the only minister of state, while 18 others — including her uncle, Khawaja Asif — were inducted as federal ministers of the new government.

It is difficult to understand why the PML-N would so casually disregard half the population when assigning important portfolios. The omission seemed particularly jarring given the PR campaign around women's empowerment the party has been running ever since Maryam Nawaz got herself elected as the first woman chief minister of Punjab.

Is the PML-N really so short of capable women leaders, or does the new prime minister find them all unworthy of being given a seat at his table? It is hoped that neither is the case, and more women will eventually be nominated for top jobs.

Meanwhile, Mr Sharif has, knowingly or unknowingly, thrown his old guard a huge challenge. It has become clear over the past two years that Pakistan cannot continue to be run in the manner it has been in the past, and a lot must be done very differently this time around.

Will the PML-N's old hands prove themselves able to adapt and capable of catering to Pakistan's much-changed needs, or will we see them re-playing their past policies? It does not need to be pointed out that a lot is riding on their success, and the path forward is beset with difficulties.

Arifa Noor

Now that the people have voted and been outwitted, a new parliament is in place, and a new president and prime minister have reached Constitution Avenue. All of last week, the focus was on the federal cabinet; names were being whispered knowingly all over Islamabad, as once the names of female actors would be when a new Yash Chopra film was in the offing. Will it be her, or her?

But, as the Urdu expression 'waqt kam hai aur muqaabla sakht' (denoting a race against time) goes, the prime minister hit the ground running. Days before finalising his cabinet, he was holding meetings on the economy and the way forward — which his government never figured out in the previous tenure.

It was in these sessions that the first hints were dropped with reference to who he was planning to take along. Consider the visuals of the first meeting on the

economy he held, which were released to the media. Everyone but Ishaq Dar was present; and no one could miss how the footage had more close-ups of Atta Tarrar, the new PML-N MNA from Lahore, than anyone else, lending credence to conjecture about him being the new information minister. And, for once, the press got it right!

Before the heated discussions lost their intensity came the picture of the PM meeting the caretaker foreign affairs minister and Ishaq Dar. The visual more or less confirmed that the finance wizard of the party had been sent to the foreign affairs ministry, where it was rumoured he would have Tariq Fatemi and Jalil Abbas Jilani to babysit, or rather guide, him — though neither of the two retired diplomats had made it by Monday afternoon, when the cabinet took oath. It was a perfect example of a picture being worth a thousand words.

In his place, at the finance ministry, we are to see a banker from HBL, Muhammad Aurangzeb. Though the gentleman is new to the world of politics and the people, the entry of a technocrat at Q block was as open a secret as the fact that despite the 'mulk ko Nawaz do' slogan, it was Shehbaz who would get to occupy the PM House. The experienced party, which knew how to run it all, is now importing finance ministers as did the PPP and PTI. It is a sign of the new times, in which democracy has given way to a version of hybridity, be it 2.0 or pro max.

But all this news about the comings and goings of familiar and known Noonie faces did not pique as much interest as the news about the 'caretakers' being retained. These temporary takers of the government chairs stuck around for far longer than they should have and were far too fond of publicity and the sound of their voices than neutral beings should be. And, just as we thought we were rid of them, they are back.

Though only one name had made it to

Monday's ceremony, the rumours about others have not died down entirely. From Shamshad Akhtar to Jalil Abbas Jilani and even Ejaz Gauhar, all of them have proven indispensable to Pakistan's progress, or so thinks PML-N (or someone else). Why else would their names continue to be discussed?

Nonetheless, the biggest story is the retention of the former chief minister of Punjab. He had already confirmed in a news story that he would be elected to the Senate — without having joined a party — and bring 'Mohsin speed' to the centre. As Maryam Nawaz, the new chief minister of Punjab, is doing a fairly decent job of surprise visits to hospitals, schools and bakeries, one can only assume Naqvi's speed is closely linked to the alacrity of the Punjab Police during his tenure.

After all, why else would his name be doing the rounds for interior? And it also confirms the speed at which the state is planning to rule or deal with the PTI and others.

This is no moment for democracy where elected governments will now put in place different policies. Beyond Punjab, after all, the PPP's choice for chief minister Balochistan also indicates that this is no 2008 moment. The caretakers and their approach continue to be the preferred choice and the preference is the un-healing touch.

In other words, all these hopes of how Shehbaz Sharif will reach out or how Zardari will bring a soothing touch to the polity appear misplaced. They may not have the power to do much more than enjoy the protocol and official residences. There is little space for their personal touch or preferences in the hybrid regime.

And, if someone still has any doubts, one simply needs to compare the present moment with the early days of 2008. In his first address after being elected as prime minister, Yousuf Raza Gilani announced ending the house arrest of the then judiciary, which had been Perviz Musharraf's decision. It signalled a clean

break with Musharraf's policies. But at present, Shehbaz Sharif has been prime minister for days and has said little to indicate any break with the past. There has not even been a passing mention of the inexplicable ban on X, or the issue of arrested journalists — Asad Toor and Imran Riaz — or even the women prisoners of PTI. The PPP is no different. The crackdown in Punjab on the protest of the PTI — whether or not it was greenlit by the new provincial government — is simply a continuation of old policies, even if there is an elected lot that will bear the responsibility.

Civil liberties are no-go areas for most political players at the moment. Or, for that matter, any such issue which made the caretaker period contentious. By focusing on the economy, the new government is simply assuring those in control that those in power will continue to pretend that this is no moment of change. -- Courtesy Dawn

tion heads, street violence against minority groups, and the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya seem to not add up electorally. Tested methods have included the Muzaffargarh violence to polarise critical votes in Uttar Pradesh in 2014. In 2019, he exploited the military stand-off with Pakistan. Could the increased deployment of troops on the China border be the ace up his sleeve? Mr Modi's relations with the Sharif family have not been unfriendly, not to forget the unannounced stopover as their guest. The absence of Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari as foreign minister should help. Are relations so surefooted that troops could be moved to the Chinese front from the western border facing Pakistan, as reports suggest?

A flutter of the butterfly's wings would be enough to declare victory, given the pliant media, without a bullet being fired. As for the over-advertised temple in the UAE and endless embraces, could these not be sullen messages to Pakistan for letting the team down against the Houthis? -- Courtesy Dawn

It's a fact that Mr Modi harbours all the ambitions his mentors in the RSS have prescribed to make India a Hindu rashtra. He has tried every trick in the trade to undermine the opposition and put it on the back foot. Induced defections, communal catcalls, revenue raids on opposi-

tion heads, street violence against minority groups, and the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya seem to not add up electorally. Tested methods have included the Muzaffargarh violence to polarise critical votes in Uttar Pradesh in 2014. In 2019, he exploited the military stand-off with Pakistan. Could the increased deployment of troops on the China border be the ace up his sleeve? Mr Modi's relations with the Sharif family have not been unfriendly, not to forget the unannounced stopover as their guest. The absence of Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari as foreign minister should help. Are relations so surefooted that troops could be moved to the Chinese front from the western border facing Pakistan, as reports suggest?

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Social and emotional well-being at school is a precursor to motivation for success. Yet, very few schools follow a curriculum that embeds social and emotional learning. Hardly any schools offer formal, structured programmes that cater to social and emotional well-being. At the heart of well-being is the belief that learners can cater to their own growth needs and devise their own strategy for success.

Contrary to what many learners and their teachers believe, ability is not fixed. It's mostly malleable and directly related to the learners' self-belief and agency in steering their own course. If they are taught self-regulation early on, their motivation is entirely within their grasp.

Much of students' academic success is dependent on how their teachers interact with them. If the control is in the learners' hands and they believe that they are the 'captain of their ship', they demonstrate ambition and drive, and no longer need coercion. The reverse is also true. Once a lack of motivation sets in, it becomes a pattern that is hard to break. Students' behaviour begins to reflect their lack of control, which leads to avoiding studies. The words of a famous song 'Teacher, leave them [sic] kids alone' ring true timelessly. Students need consistent encouragement rather than fear, threats and sarcasm about their ability. -- Courtesy Dawn

Teachers often talk about 'making' students learn, which implies applying coercion. Students don't need to be 'made' to do anything if the underlying motivational needs are addressed. Once they are motivated to study, they only need encouragement and support. The teacher's role as a facilitator is paramount in ensuring that students develop a level of interest and curiosity that enables them to chase targets, to absorb the content, practise and reinforce concepts that must be studied.

Most facilitators set high expectations and show students how to get there — successful teachers unlock potential by making content accessible and easy enough to grasp. They give opportunities to students to respond to content, engage with each other and they monitor the gaps where students need extra help.

Telling students to study doesn't work as well as showing them how to tackle the work at hand. By middle school, many students begin to procrastinate,

Flutter of the butterfly's wings

separatists in the US and Canada.

The Barbadian singer arrived with her band at Jannagar's hurriedly assembled and short-lived international airport. She left smiling, amid ceaseless applause, with her emblematic bag of gold. The performance at the politically connected tycoon's party would continue to make headlines for days on India's TV channels. The music was entertainment for the elite guests. Was her silence on the farmers' struggle this time around an oversight, or a Faustian bargain? Let's also look at the possibility that it was no such thing.

A different take on Rihanna's music and politics came from India's alternate media as usual. It's no gainsaying that Western musicians have often soared in popularity through their politics — Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger and Bob Marley come to mind. The crowd-funded NewsLaundry portal played clips of the day when Rihanna made a tweet to support the farmers in Punjab who, like today, had gathered on the outskirts of Delhi two years ago.

Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg had followed Rihanna and posted the same CNN article, expressing solidarity with the protesting farmers. Thunberg was promptly decry by India's 'WhatsApp University' as a plotter against the country. The irony, according to TV clips played by

NewsLaundry, was that leading anchors who sang paeans to Rihanna last week were describing her as an anti-Indian mascot of global haters of India in 2021. To be clear, India-haters for the current crop of Indian anchors include the home-grown ones — the so-called tukde-tukde gang they invented, comprising student activists; organised Dalits; and worried intellectuals; several of whom are languishing in jail without trial.

There's always the odd judge, though, willing to stand up to the challenge. One such set free G.N. Saibaba last week, albeit 10 years too late. The 90 per cent-crippled English teacher at Delhi University was charged with five others of being Maoist. They were abused, as Rihanna was, for the moral stand they took against flourishing cronyism that drives the government's policies, including its approach to farmers.

And the farmers being overwhelmingly Sikhs from Punjab are given the treatment TV channels reserve for Modi's trenchant critics. They are Khalistani, anti-national terrorists, goes the chorus.

Equally to blame for the dejection and anxiety in society is the high prevalence of working children. Acquiring current and gender-specific information on child labour in the country, particularly with regard to girls, presents a significant challenge due to the limited availability of disaggregated data and difficulty in obtaining the most recent information. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, in collaboration with Unicef and local entities, such as the So-cietty for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, is leading the effort to gather data on child labour, so that, based on the figures, policy reform can be instituted.

But despite these efforts, child labour remains entrenched, exposing our young ones to hazardous and exploitative working conditions from an early age. Neighbourhood disorder, including violence, drug use, and community tensions, worsens domestic violence and negatively affects mental health and the quality of life. This results in depression, anxiety and PTSD, and highlights the very limited availability of mental health services and the stigma associated with seeking help for depression.

In such conditions, ensuring fundamental rights in Pakistan is challenging. A dedicated and collective effort by stakeholders to address the causes responsible for poor mental health can go a long way in making the issue a priority for the state. -- Courtesy Dawn

In Pakistan, a considerable escalation in the number of workplace harassment complaints has been observed. While this shows increasing awareness and a greater propensity among individuals to report harassment, it also highlights another significant reason behind mental distress. Statistics reveal a substantial rise in reported cases, which went up from nearly 500 in the period spanning 2010 to 2018, to a staggering 5,000 from 2018 to 2022. Despite the implementation of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, aimed at curbing and rectifying such misconduct, enforcing the law and archaic beliefs continue to impede progress.

Jawed Naqvi

About dialectics, the rulebook says, any two phenomena in the big world are related in a range of ways. "The flapping of the wings of a butterfly can be felt on the other side of the world", goes a Chinese proverb.

Ponder the unstated coincidence between what some analysts see as terse greetings Prime Minister Narendra Modi exchanged with his Pakistani counterpart for a second term, and the doubling of Indian troops on the Sino-Indian border.

Consider another example of the butterfly flapping its wings. There is no overt link between Pakistan's parliament vetoing the dispatch of troops to Yemen requisitioned by the Saudis and the UAE, and the construction of a new grand temple to Hindu deities in Abu Dhabi. But then again, what if there is an invisible link?

Let's begin, though, with Robyn Rihanna Fenty's concert in Jannagar, and see if it eased India's quandary with accusations from allies that its agents plotted to kill Sikh

separatists in the US and Canada.

The Barbadian singer arrived with her band at Jannagar's hurriedly assembled and short-lived international airport. She left smiling, amid ceaseless applause, with her emblematic bag of gold. The performance at the politically connected tycoon's party would continue to make headlines for days on India's TV channels. The music was entertainment for the elite guests. Was her silence on the farmers' struggle this time around an oversight, or a Faustian bargain? Let's also look at the possibility that it was no such thing.

A different take on Rihanna's music and politics came from India's alternate media as usual. It's no gainsaying that Western musicians have often soared in popularity through their politics — Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger and Bob Marley come to mind. The crowd-funded NewsLaundry portal played clips of the day when Rihanna made a tweet to support the farmers in Punjab who, like today, had gathered on the outskirts of Delhi two years ago.

Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg had followed Rihanna and posted the same CNN article, expressing solidarity with the protesting farmers. Thunberg was promptly decry by India's 'WhatsApp University' as a plotter against the country. The irony, according to TV clips played by

NewsLaundry, was that leading anchors who sang paeans to Rihanna last week were describing her as an anti-Indian mascot of global haters of India in 2021. To be clear, India-haters for the current crop of Indian anchors include the home-grown ones — the so-called tukde-tukde gang they invented, comprising student activists; organised Dalits; and worried intellectuals; several of whom are languishing in jail without trial.

There's always the odd judge, though, willing to stand up to the challenge. One such set free G.N. Saibaba last week, albeit 10 years too late. The 90 per cent-crippled English teacher at Delhi University was charged with five others of being Maoist. They were abused, as Rihanna was, for the moral stand they took against flourishing cronyism that drives the government's policies, including its approach to farmers.

And the farmers being overwhelmingly Sikhs from Punjab are given the treatment TV channels reserve for Modi's trenchant critics. They are Khalistani, anti-national terrorists, goes the chorus.

No peace of mind

Ali Burhan Mustafa

Domestic violence in Pakistan is widespread and indicative of deep gender inequalities and socioeconomic instabilities that are, in turn, exacerbated by unemployment and community disorder. Collectively, these factors contribute to the extensive state of psychological distress across communities. The issue of child marriage has aggravated the crisis: some 21 per cent of Pakistani girls are married off before the age of 18, thanks to poverty, dire education deficiency, and conservative cultural norms.

Child marriage is especially common in Pakistan's rural areas. It contributes to a cycle of domestic violence, one of the top factors responsible for psychological harm in the country. While laws like the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2014 are a step in the right direction, enforcing the rules and changing societal mindsets are huge challenges.

Culture's authoritarian stamp is evident in other reprehensible practices as well. For example, in 2023, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reported nearly 400 'honour' killings in the preceding year. However, some NGOs and international agencies estimate that the actual number each year could be as high as 1,000.

The discrepancy in figures highlights the difficulty in accurately recording such incidents, partly due to society's reluctance to view them as crimes. Despite the legal progress made by amending criminal law to reflect the unacceptability of such a practice, the lack of enforcement of the law and archaic beliefs continue to impede progress.

'Honour' killings, often motivated by perceived threats to family honour, contradict the aim of legal reforms and the protection of individual rights. They underscore the urgent need for further efforts to plug the gap between tradition and fundamental rights.

Similarly, in Sindh, the issue of forced conversions presents a significant challenge, with the Centre for Social Justice documenting a minimum of 124 instances of such cases in 2022 alone. Forced conversions predominantly affect girls, often minors, from Hindu families, but have also impacted the Christian and Sikh communities. While accurate figures are not known, activists estimate that between 20 to 25 Hindu girls may be subjected to forced conversions each month — these include cases of abduction and forced marriage. Despite taking up the issue in the Sindh Assembly and attempting to outlaw the practice, lawmakers have encountered social pressure as well as resistance from religious factions.

In Pakistan, a considerable escalation in the number of workplace harassment complaints has been observed. While this shows increasing awareness and a greater propensity among individuals to report harassment, it also highlights another significant reason behind mental distress. Statistics reveal a substantial rise in reported cases, which went up from nearly 500 in the period spanning 2010 to 2018, to a staggering 5,000 from 2018 to 2022. Despite the implementation of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, aimed at curbing and rectifying such misconduct, enforcing the law and archaic beliefs continue to impede progress.

Student motivation

Neda Mulji

The best of teachers find it hard to motivate some of their students. Numerous studies in motivation have looked closely at why and how some learners do well in school and others seem to give up without trying. Fear of bad grades, fear of failing and disappointing teachers or parents all play a role.

Excitement in academics cannot be achieved without motivation. The latter is largely a choice that leads to effort, and most students make the choice to stay motivated if they have the confidence that their goals are achievable.

Teachers often talk about 'making' students learn, which implies applying coercion. Students don't need to be 'made' to do anything if the underlying motivational needs are addressed. Once they are motivated to study, they only need encouragement and support. The teacher's role as a facilitator is paramount in ensuring that students develop a level of interest and curiosity that enables them to chase targets, to absorb the content, practise and reinforce concepts that must be studied.

Most facilitators set high expectations and show students how to get there — successful teachers unlock potential by making content accessible and easy enough to grasp. They give opportunities to students to respond to content, engage with each other and they monitor the gaps where students need extra help.

Telling students to study doesn't work as well as showing them how to tackle the work at hand. By middle school, many students begin to procrastinate,

fall behind on homework and end up facing disgruntled teachers and parents. A student recently asked me: "Where is my motivation?" Interesting thought, reflecting self-awareness.

Lack of motivation isn't a problem in itself, but rather a symptom of something else; just like fever, where the body temperature rises to signal an underlying health condition. Lack of motivation signals something else at play, most often a belief that the work is hard and beyond reach. Those that get left behind in a race don't run faster if they have given up and accepted that defeat is inevitable.

A study on motivation revealed that students work harder for teachers that they like and do well in subjects that are taught by their favourite teachers. This correlation isn't a coincidence. The 'favourite' teacher clearly understands what will unlock potential and does something right to instil belief and confidence in the student's ability. Sometimes, the strategies may be as simple as creating a thinking environment, as described in Nancy Kline's Time to Think, where the facilitator or mentor provides ease and comfort for the learner to embark on some kind of introspection, to understand what is needed to be done for academic success.

Schools, where students spend a large part of their formative years, are supposed to be breeding grounds for thought, interrogation, understanding and knowledge. Ironically, they become spaces that breed anxiety, competition and a desperate bid to avoid failure. Students who spend their time at school avoiding failure are unlikely to be self-

KP CM for preparing plan of action to raise financial matter with federation

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur on Tuesday directed the concerned authorities to prepare a plan of action within one month, to raise financial matters with the federation.

Presiding over a high level meeting here, the CM directed that all relevant documents should be kept ready to effectively present the case of the financial affairs province with the federal government.

He said that the matter of payments of all outstanding dues and constitutional rights of the province would be taken up at all available forums including courts.

Gandapur said that experts should be hired to effectively take up the financial matter with the federal government in an effective manner.

During the briefing, the Chief Minister was informed that as the AGN Qazi formula, Rs 1,510 billion dyes were payable by the federal government under the net hydro profits. Similarly, six billion rupees arrears were pending under the electricity price, sold to the National Grid.

Regarding the merger of tribal districts into KP, the officials concerned said that the financial merger of the tribal districts had not taken place so far. It was said that the merger had increased the KP population manifolds but no resources.

It was told that the share of the province under NFC was 19.64 percent in proportion to the current population of the province, while the province was only getting 14.16 percent at the time. The finance department informed that according to the current population of the province, it should get Rs 262 billion annually in the form of NFC Award.

Similarly, under the ten-year development plan of the merged districts, the province has so far received only 103 billion rupees out of 500 billion rupees.



LAHORE: Punjab Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan presides over the meeting of department at Transport House.

CM approves free Wi-Fi pilot project

Maryam visits Model Bazaar Johar Town, inspects arrangements

Independent Report
LAHORE: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that IT, education and Film City projects will start in Lahore at the earliest.

Presiding over a meeting on IT City and Lahore Knowledge Park, she added, "Business opportunities will be provided to best IT companies from all over the world in IT City Lahore."

She expressed her satisfaction that Microsoft, Oracle and other big companies had given their consent to establish offices in IT City Lahore. She also directed authorities concerned to invite major Chinese IT companies as well to set up their offices here.

Moreover, the chief minister was briefed that campuses of world-renowned international universities would also be built in Education City Lahore for students from all over Pakistan including Punjab. She directed to present a comprehensive plan in this regard at the earliest after consulting the management of these universities.

The Chief Minister also approved the launch of a free Wi-Fi pilot project in Lahore. She directed to start a free Wi-Fi service preferably in educational institutions, at airports, railway stations and bus stands. Under the project, in phase-I, free Wi-Fi services will be launched at 10 locations in Lahore within two weeks.

Minister reviews Sehri, Iftar arrangement in institutions of Social Welfare dept

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Sohail Shaukat Butt held a virtual meeting of all divisional directors to review the arrangements for Sehri and Iftar in institutions across their respective districts.

He underscored the importance of maintaining high-quality facilities in these institutions, stating that no compromise would be made in this regard.

Highlighting the significance of providing optimal Sehri and Iftar arrangements during the month of Ramadan, Minister Butt announced plans for his team to conduct visits to all districts. These visits aim to engage with residents directly, listening to their concerns with empathy, and ensuring that individuals in institutions supervised by the Social Welfare Department receive the best possible health and residential amenities.

Moreover, Minister Sohail Shaukat Butt issued directives to expedite the completion of ongoing developmental projects in the districts, emphasizing the government's commitment to advancing community welfare.



KARACHI: People prays before breaking their fast on the first day of holy fasting month of Ramadan, at a mosque, in Provincial Capital.

Zakat to be distributed after a break of 2yrs in KP

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting of the KP Department of Zakat, Ushr and Social Welfare was held here while adviser to Chief Minister on Social Welfare Mashal Azam Yousafzai in the chair.

Secretary Social Welfare Anila Mahfooz in her briefing on the projects, budget and issues of the department informed the meeting that not a single penny of the Zakat has been distributed in the province for the last 2 years. She said that due to lack of Zakat and Ushr Council, Zakat was not distributed and the summary of establishment of Zakat and Ushr Council is ready wherein 4402 local zakat committees are established in the province with 10 Darul aaman and 25 women facilitation centers.

She was told that 12 Child Welfare Homes and 4 Zamung Kor Centers have been established for the protection of children wherein 189 children in child homes and 995 children are being provided in Zamung Kor.

CM Sindh along with cabinet members visit Quaid's mausoleum

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari announced the "Nigehban Ramadan Package," a unique program for over 6.4 million deserving families in Punjab on behalf of Chief Minister Punjab. Verified Data of recipients is collected from the BISP and NADRA, with the goal of providing rations to deserving families without the requirement for them to queue up.

Addressing a press conference at Directorate General Public Relations Punjab, Azma Bukhari emphasized that the Ramadan package includes a separate allocation for delivery costs. She stated that 75% of identified beneficiaries have been verified, ensuring efficient distribution. An hourly updated dashboard has been created for ration distribution, with over 55,853 packages already distributed. This initiative began with a pilot project due to the massive target of reaching 6.4 million people.

The provincial minister highlighted that over 1.5 million families in Punjab have already received rations. She urged the public not to believe fake news circulating on social media and assured that any mistakes or omissions in the distribution process would be rectified.

Two killed, several injured in road accident

By Adeel Ahmed
SHIKARPUR: An horrible road accident occurred on Ratodero - Jacobabad Indus Highway Road near Samandar Gopang village in the jurisdiction of Nabi Shah Wagan police Station on Tuesday.

According to details, One speedy HiAce Passenger wagon overturned at Baghdad Laaro and collided with alive electric Poll when the vehicle went out of control from driver due to speed which caused two precious lives of Musamat Benazir w/o Eedan Jatoi and Shahmeer Baghdad on the spot. While 15 others including HiAce Passenger wagon driver and two minor children of deceased woman Musamat Benazir were received seriously injured. The injured were identified as Allah Warayo Khoso, Manzoor Ahmed Khoso, Jameel Ahmed Khoso, Imamdeen Khoso, Sabir Malghani, Sadam Hussain Khokhar, Musamat Lateefan Khatoon, Musamat Wazeer Khatoon and others who were sent to Taluka Hospital Ratodero and Larkana Hospital.

Suspect killed in encounter, found to be wanted gangster; SSP

Independent Report
KARACHI (APP): SSP Korangi Hassan Sardar Niazi in a press conference held at his office on Tuesday, announced that the police had successfully identified a suspect who was killed in an encounter in an Awami Colony.

The suspect, identified as Abu Huraira, was found to be a member of a notorious and wanted gang following an investigation into the incident.

The encounter stemmed from an incident thirteen days prior when the suspect had opened fire at a shop in Gulshan Market, injuring the shop owner, Qasim, his son, Harris, and a female customer, Saima, who later succumbed to her injuries during treatment.



LAHORE: US Consul General Kristin K. Hawkins in Lahore meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Sindh Governor administers oath to new cabinet ministers

Independent Report
KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori on Tuesday administered the oath to new Sindh ministers at the Governor House. The Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah attended the swearing-in ceremony.

Those, who took the oath included Sharjeel Inam Memon, Dr Azra Pechuho, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Saeed Ghani, Jam Khan Shoro, Zia Hussain Lanjar, Sardar Muhammad Bakhs Mahar, Ali Hasan Zardari and Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah. The Chief Secretary Dr. Fakhre Alam read out the notification of appointment of ministers.

The Governor and Chief Minister congratulated the newly sworn-in ministers. The Chief Secretary announced 3 advisers on the recommendation of the Sindh Chief Minister. Advisors included Babul Bhayo, Hassan Mazari and Najmi Alam. Zulfiqar Shah could not attend the swearing-in ceremony because he could not reach from Islamabad to Karachi.

The cabinet members and their portfolios are as follows: Sharjeel Inam Memon, Senior Minister: Transport and Mass Transit Department, and Excise, Taxation & Narcotics Control Department.

Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho: Health Department and Population Welfare Department. Syed Nasir Hussain Shah Rizvi: Energy Department and Planning & Development Department. Syed Sardar Ali Shah: School Education & Literacy Department, College Education Department.

Azma Bukhari says: Nigehban Ramadan package distributes rations to over 1.5m families so far

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LHC allows to construct 30-storey building in Gulberg Lahore

Independent Report
LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) while announcing important decision regarding construction of high rise buildings has allowed to construct 30 - storey building in Gulberg Lahore. Justice Shahid Karim of LHC allowed to build 30-storey building in the area of Gulberg Lahore.

The court dismissed the petition filed against the construction of 30-storey building. Sahibzada Muzaffar Ali, senior legal advisor of LDA made arguments. Petitioner Noor Din had challenged construction of 30-storey building in the residential area. He had taken plea in the petition that high rise buildings cannot be constructed in residential area.



LAHORE: President Lahore Press Club presenting bouquet to Punjab Information Minister Uzma Bukhari during her visit to LPC.

ANF recovers 125 kg drugs in 13 operations

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 13 operations across the country managed to recover 125 kg drugs and arrested 18 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that 109 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a passenger going to Sharjah at Lahore Airport.

700 grams of Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Doha at Multan Airport.

241 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of 4 passengers going to Sharjah at Peshawar Airport.

4 kg opium, 7.5 kg heroin, 33.6 kg hashish, and 1 kg Ice were recovered from two accused rounded up from GT Road Gujrat.

2 kg opium, 16 kg hashish, and 1 kg suspicious material were recovered from the Dalbandin Chagai area while 13.2 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two accused arrested near Khana Bridge Islamabad.

11 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects netted on National Highway Hyderabad.

8.4 kg of hashish was recovered from Dara Adamkhel.

7.2 kg of hashish was recovered near Express Highway Islamabad and an accused was also arrested.

Father, two sons killed in Palosai firing

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): In an unfortunate incident, a man and his two sons were shot dead when exchange of harsh words led to a clash between the deceased and the accused in Palosai area here on Tuesday.

Police said the incident took place in the vicinity of Tehkal police station where a man named Nawaz and his sons, Asghar and Dawood were killed by the accused from the same area. Police said a woman also sustained bullet injury in the firing.

Police have registered a case of triple murder against the alleged accused namely, Ibad Ullah.

AC Naurang pays surprise visits to bazaar

Independent Report
DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): District administration Lakki Marwat is taking concrete measures to extend relief to citizens during the holy month of Ramadan.

As part of efforts, Additional Assistant Commissioner Naurang Gohar Ali along with Tehsilidar Naurang on Tuesday paid visit to bazaar following receiving complaints regarding the overpricing of essential food commodities through Marastyal App.

Medical facilities under Sehat Card restarted: Minister

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah has said that provision of medical facilities under Sehat Card had been started and Rs. 10 million had been spend on seven hundred patients so far.

Addressing a press conference here Tuesday, he said that facilities have been restarted under Sehat Card that was party leadership to help those that are unable to bear expenses of medical treatment. Regretting suspension of facilities under Sehat Card in past, health minister said that treatment of about 1800 ailments are being provided under the scheme.

He said that operations of certain kinds would be done by government hospitals to address overbilling and added that number of hospitals that were on Sehat Card panel were reduced from 180 to 118.

He said that Sehat Card has been revived despite arrears of Rs. 18 billion on the system. He said that government would resolve the challenges to continue Sehat Card facility for betterment of people.



LAHORE: Ombudsman Punjab Major Azam Suleman Khan (R) Presented Annual Report 2023 to Governor Punjab.

Chaudhary Amir says: All facilities being provided to the journalist fraternity in the Punjab Assembly

Independent Report
LAHORE: A delegation from the Press Gallery, led by President Press Gallery Akhlaq Bajwa, met with Secretary Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Amir Habib at the Assembly's office.

The delegation included Press Gallery Secretary Hassan Ahmed, Sheikh Adnan, Ibrahim Lucky, Abbas Naqvi, Liaqat Ansari, Azam Malik, Hafiz Naeem, Sahil Baloch, Maqsood Khalid, Chaudhry Asif Iqbal, and others. During the meeting, discussions were held with journalists regarding current issues. Secretary Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Amir Habib assured journalists of addressing all their concerns. Speaking to the journalists, Secretary Chaudhry Amir Habib also stated that the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, is a friend of the journalists. All facilities are being provided to the journalist fraternity in the Punjab Assembly.

For the first time in history, the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly has allocated a room for the Press Gallery in the Punjab Assembly. He further mentioned that Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has directed to immediately arrange air conditioning in the media camp.

President Press Gallery Akhlaq Bajwa thanked the Speaker and Secretary Punjab Assembly for their special arrangements. Additional Secretary Admin Malik Khalil Ahmed and Staff Officer to the Speaker Imad Hussain Bhalli were also present at the meeting.

Minister advocates green technology to combat environmental pollution

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): Punjab Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan emphasized the urgency of promoting green technology to curb environmental pollution across the province.

Presiding over a departmental meeting at Transport House here on Tuesday, he welcomed the approval of the 20,000 electric bikes scheme by Chief Minister Punjab, deeming it a significant milestone. He stressed that the optimal results would emerge through the swift completion of the 657 eco-friendly urban bus project.

Transport Secretary Dr. Javed Ahmed Qazi provided an in-depth briefing to the Provincial Minister on ongoing schemes and projects. Dr. Qazi highlighted the operation of an eco-friendly bus system to boost e-technology and mentioned the consideration of several other schemes.

Minister Bilal Akbar Khan called for collective teamwork to transform Punjab into an ideal province. He underscored the necessity for the transport department to prioritize environmental pollution control.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing the media persons during his visit to JDC Sehari Dastar Khawan.

Minister commends PEF's commitment to quality education

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): Provincial Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat visited the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) head office to review the progress and initiatives of the foundation. During the visit, Managing Director of PEF, Shahid Farid, provided a comprehensive briefing on various educational projects undertaken by the foundation. Highlighting the impact of PEF's public-private partnership model, Shahid Farid said that 2.6 million students were currently benefiting from free and quality education in more than 7,000 partner schools in Punjab. He emphasized PEF's ongoing efforts to address the issue of out-of-school children in the province through targeted campaigns and the implementation of the new admission policy for the academic year 2024-25, aimed at enrolling more underprivileged children into PEF schools. Expressing concern over the insufficient fees received by PEF affiliated schools after nine years, Shahid Farid urged Provincial Education.

PM for a complete roadmap to enhance IT exports

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for submission of a comprehensive roadmap to boost IT exports.

He said the government would take steps to fully avail of the billion dollars potential of the country for IT exports, besides, the young people would be provided with required facilities of education, skills development and startups.

The prime minister chaired a review meeting on IT and Telecom sector. The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic

Affairs and Establishment Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Governor State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmed, Shahzad Saleem and the relevant senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister said that during their previous tenure, positive outcome was witnessed from the initiation of different projects in the IT sector.

He stressed upon resolution of all issues of start ups, freelancers and IT companies relating to banking. Expressing his satisfaction over the IT export volume of more than \$3 billion in the current year, he emphasized upon its further increase.

For bringing Pakistan's IT sector at par with the international standards, they would have to work hard, he observed.

The prime minister also asked for submission of a comprehensive report regarding special technology zones.

The meeting was apprised of progress on IT package announced by the prime minister during June 2023. During the previous tenure, due to special attention of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the IT exports witnessed 13 percent increase during

the first seven months of the current fiscal year when compared with previous corresponding year.

Under the Digiskills programme, a total of 4 million students of 17 batches, comprising 28 percent females, had been imparted training. Pakistan had emerged as the second top country in the world on the basis of numbers of freelancers. Pakistan was exporting IT products to 170 countries of the world, it was further added.

The meeting was informed that during the previous year, an investment of \$400 million was made in Pakistani startups.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding IT and Telecom Sector in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Abdul Aleem Khan, newly appointed as the Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BOI). In his first official act after assuming charge, Mr. Khan paid an inaugural visit to BOI and briefed by Additional Secretary Amreen Iftakhar and Executive Director Khashi ur Rehman at BOI.

Minister says: Vital for economy, agriculture sector to be uplifted on priority basis

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture Muhammad Sajjad has said that the agriculture sector is the backbone of the country's economy and the provincial government will develop this sector on a priority basis according to the vision of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

The officers involved in agriculture must perform their services with seriousness and honesty, he directed that such agricultural projects should be prepared which have far-reaching effects as well as in accordance with the aspirations of the landlords, and benefit the farmers.

He expressed these views while presiding over the first review meeting related to the projects of the agriculture department. Secretary Agriculture Javed Marwat, CPO Agriculture, DGs of all sectors and other relevant

Qaiser says: Uplifting industry, business essential for economic prosperity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Tuesday said that in view of the economic situation of the country, increasing business was the first priority of the government so that the economic issues were resolved.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that it was in the manifesto of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) that the economy will be improved through the growth of business.

Replying a query about the appointment of the Finance Minister, he said that the prime minister chose the best candidate in light of the country's economic issues, so that the economy can grow through technicalities.

Government focuses on revenue generation and relief initiatives: Musadik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum and Energy, Dr. Musadik Malik, said on Tuesday that the government's primary focus was revenue generation to drive economic revival. Talking to a private news channel, he said that revolutionary measures will be undertaken to provide maximum relief to the common man. He said that the agriculture sector was



Federal Minister for Petroleum and Power Dr. Musadik Malik assumed the charge in Islamabad.

Mobilink Bank, BizB partner to drive financial inclusion, empowering women micro-entrepreneurs

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank partnered with BizB, a leading marketplace in Pakistan, welcoming the company as a 'Brand Ambassador Organization,' to drive financial inclusion and bolster women micro-entrepreneurs nationwide. This symbiotic partnership strives to offer easily accessible financial services and support the endeavours



of female entrepreneurs in the growing e-commerce landscape.

Through this partnership, women micro-entrepreneurs under BizB's W-Empower will not only have access to a platform for buying and selling beloved apparel but will also enjoy the full range of features provided by the Dost App, ensuring smooth and convenient transactions.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of the world's population.

BizB revolutionizes Pakistan's fashion industry with sustainable practices, offering preloved clothing to empower urban women economically and environmentally, fostering community and reshaping fashion consumption for a conscious, inclusive future.

ADB, WAPDA discuss financial assistance for water and hydropower projects

LAHORE (APP): A 13-member Asian Development Bank (ADB) Mission, headed by Country Director, Progress Review Mission Mr. Yong Ye, called on WAPDA Chairman Engr Lt Gen @ Sajjad Ghani to discuss financial assistance for water and hydropower projects, according to a WAPDA spokesman here Tuesday.

The ADB Mission is on a visit to Pakistan for conducting Country Portfolio Review. It was a wrap-up meeting of the Mission with the Chairman about water and hydropower projects. The matters relating to financing of WAPDA projects, Kurram Tangi Dam Stage-II, Naulong Dam and Pattan Hydropower Project in particular, were discussed during the meeting.

Member (Finance), Member (Water), GM (C&M) Water, GM (Hydro) Planning, GM (Projects) South and GM (Projects) North also attended the meeting.

The Mission was briefed about the development portfolio of WAPDA. It was briefed that WAPDA is pursuing medium to long-term green strategies for sustained economic growth in Pakistan through water, food and energy adequacy.

It was highlighted that WAPDA's operations are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). The Mission was also briefed about the status of Naulong Dam, Kurram Tangi Dam Stage-II and Pattan Hydropower Project. In addition, Mohmand Dam, Diامر Basha Dam, Dasu Hydropower Project Stage I&II and Atta Abad Lake Hydropower Project were also presented to the Mission for consideration of financial assistance by the ADB. Earlier, welcoming the mission, the WAPDA Chairman thanked ADB.

'FESCO ensuring safe working environment for line staff'

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) is taking all possible measures for the provision of a safe working environment to its line staff.

These views were expressed by Additional Director Safety Muhammad Amjad at a safety seminar held at Lalian-Chiniot division on Tuesday. He said that lives and property of people could be saved only by following the safety rules and regulations.

He urged the line staff to keep in mind the basic safety rules before starting work on electric lines.

He said that FESCO was also taking measures to reduce the rate of incidental deaths in the region.

"On directions of Chief Executive FESCO Engr Mohammad Amir, the company is spending huge funds for the purchase of protective T&P, uniform, gloves and other equipment for the line staff. Although maintaining the continuity of electricity is our professional responsibility, protecting human lives is our religious duty and family need."

Minister seeks plan to increase fish farming

LAHORE (APP): Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has sought a plan to increase fish farming and shrimp production in the province.

On the direction of the Punjab Chief Minister, she chaired a meeting to task the fisheries department for promoting fish trading in the province here on Tuesday.

The meeting also discussed various models, timelines, casting, and the pros and cons of new projects. Directives were issued to gather data on fish farming from successful neighboring countries including Singapore and the UAE.

Addressing the meeting, Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb stated that it is the mission of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to bring progress to every sector in Punjab. Meetings will be held with experts from other countries and Pakistani companies engaged in fish farming to increase production, she added. She emphasized that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is determined to promote fish farming and trading. Projects are being initiated to increase production in shrimp farming in accordance with the directives of the chief minister.

Stocks push higher before US inflation data

LONDON (AFP/APP): Equity markets mostly rose Tuesday following the previous day's sell-off, with focus on the release of US inflation data that could play a key role in the Federal Reserve's decision-making on cutting interest rates. The broadly upbeat performance in Asia and Europe came despite a tepid showing Monday on Wall Street, and with analysts warning the recent rally across equities could stall as investors lock in profits and assess the outlook for monetary policy. London led the way in Europe, rising more than one percent approaching midday, as official British unemployment and wages data boosted hopes of a cut to UK interest rates in the coming months. There was nervousness on trading floors, meanwhile, ahead of the US consumer price index report for February.

The data due Tuesday follows a surprise uptick to US inflation in January that dented hopes that the Fed would begin cutting rates sooner rather than later.

Railways earn Rs 55b in eight months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has earned Rs 55 billion in the first eight months of the current financial year 2023-24, despite facing a financial crisis due to floods in the monsoon season.

During the first eight months of the last financial year (2022-23), the department earned Rs 37 billion, a historic increase in revenue during the same period of the current financial year (2023-24), a ministry official told APP.

According to the data, he said that out of the revenue of Rs 55 billion, revenue was derived from passenger and freight trains while other sectors of the department also contributed to the total revenue.

The department is expecting to generate revenues up to Rs 80 billion by the end of this financial year through the consistent efforts and hard work of the Railway workers, the official added.

At present, he said that Pakistan Railways is operating 96 passenger trains, up from the previous year when 86 trains were running.

Huawei & Ufone 4G win prestigious GSMA Global Mobile (GLOMO) Award

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Ufone 4G & Huawei won the GSMA GLOMO award for the category 'Best Mobile Innovation for Emerging Markets' at the Mobile World Congress for groundbreaking solution of Microwave SuperHub. The global first-ever trial and commercial deployment of the SuperHub feature was done in Ufone network during Q4 2023 enhancing the spectral efficiency of the microwave spectrum.

Microwave spectrum, a critical asset in today's digital landscape, demands efficient utilization to meet the ever-growing demands of wireless technologies, as the challenges facing microwave backhaul networks have intensified, particularly in emerging markets such as developing countries with lesser optical fiber footprints.

In response to these challenges, Huawei and Ufone 4G joined forces &



unveiled the groundbreaking SuperHub solution. Designed to overcome the hurdles posed by limited spectrum resources, spatial constraints and frequency acquisition difficulties, SuperHub has enabled Ufone to maximize microwave spectrum reuse with unprecedented efficiency. This was made possible by reuse of same microwave frequency channel across multiple links at aggregation site with a spatial separation as low as 20 degrees.

Ufone recorded a remarkable 50% spectrum saving without any compromise on quality. Jafar Khalid, Group Chief Technology and Information Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G commented, "We are absolutely delighted that Global Mobile (GLOMO) Awards, which are the industry's most prestigious accolade with over 200 independent judges and 30 awards across 6 categories, have recognized the joint contributions of Ufone and Huawei."

Adoption of AI, new technologies imperative to empower youth: Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday stressed the need for adopting artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning by modernizing the country's education system and curricula to prepare the youth for skilled jobs to empower and make them at par with rest of the world. She was speaking at a seminar titled, "The Challenges and Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cybersecurity in Pakistan", organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute here, said a press release.

The state minister said the world is rapidly adopting AI, but Pakistan



LAHORE: Chairman WAPDA Lt General (retd) Sajjad Ghani expressing his views with mission of Asian Development Bank about WAPDA Projects.

Gold rates dip by Rs.100 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold in the local market decreased by Rs.100 and was traded at Rs.230,100 on Tuesday as against its sale at Rs.231,000 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.86 to Rs.197,274 from Rs.197,360 whereas that 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs.180,834 from Rs.180,913, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver witnessed no change and was traded at Rs.2,600 and Rs.2,229.08 respectively.

Aurangzeb's appointment as finance minister, a positive step: Bloomberg

ISLAMABAD (APP): The appointment of Muhammad Aurangzeb as Pakistan's finance minister is a positive step to steer the country's economy in right direction, Bloomberg said in a report.

"Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif picked a former banker from JPMorgan Chase & Co. as finance minister, marking a shift to using technocrats to steer the cash-strapped economy and negotiate for new loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF)", the US-based Bloomberg reported. It added PM

Shehbaz Sharif had the experience of closing a deal with the multilateral lender as prime minister. He personally negotiated with IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

Bloomberg Economics analyst Ankur Shukla said in a report that Shehbaz Sharif had the track record of carrying out reforms and his return as prime minister for a second term increased the chances of securing a new IMF package. His party's election manifesto — which includes cutting the fiscal deficit and fixing the current account balance —

As Ramazan begins, world leaders call for silencing guns in Gaza

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: As Ramazan commences, global leaders united in recognising the significance of the holy month and called for silencing guns in Gaza.

US President Joe Biden pledged international efforts to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza in his Ramazan message and committed to working tirelessly for an immediate six-week ceasefire.

Simultaneously, UN Secretary-General António Guterres passionately appealed for peace in Gaza, urging all parties to "honour the spirit of Ramazan by silencing the guns".

He stressed the urgent need for delivering humanitarian aid, stating, "My strongest appeal today is to remove all obstacles to ensure the delivery of life-saving aid at the speed and massive scale required."

In the spirit of compassion, Guterres called for

the "immediate release of all hostages" and underlined the global significance of the situation, declaring, "The eyes of the world are watching. The eyes of history are watching. We cannot look away."

The secretary general highlighted the severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza, pointing out unprecedented civilian casualties and destruction. He lamented the slow and insufficient delivery of relief, noting that "life-saving relief for Palestinians in Gaza is coming in trickles — if it comes at all".

Drawing attention to the threat of an Israeli assault on Rafah, Guterres warned that it could plunge Gaza into an even deeper crisis. He deplored that no party showed any respect for international humanitarian law during this war and as a result, "international humanitarian law lies in tatters".

The UN chief recalled

heartfelt pleas from families affected by the conflict, quoting a family member who said, "We are not here for apologies. We are not here for immediate action." He emphasised the need to heed these voices and take urgent action to prevent further loss of life.

Acknowledging the start of the holy month of Ramazan, he emphasised its values of peace, reconciliation, and solidarity.

However, he expressed deep concern over the ongoing violence in Gaza, stating, "Even though Ramazan has begun — the killing, bombing, and bloodshed continue in Gaza."

The secretary general also extended his appeal for a Ramazan cessation of hostilities in Sudan, urging an end to the fighting for the sake of the Sudanese people facing hunger and hardships.



BEIJING: Delegates applaud as President Xi Jinping (centre) arrives for the closing session of the National Peoples Congress at the Great Hall of the People.

Communist Party gets more control over China's cabinet

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China's parliament on Monday revised a law to effectively grant the Communist Party more executive control over China's cabinet, the State Council, after cancelling the premier's post-parliament news conference for the first time in three decades.

The amended State Council Organic Law passed by 2,883 delegate votes, with eight opposing and nine abstaining, during the closing day of the National People's Congress in Beijing.

It was the latest in a series of measures in recent years that have gradually eroded the executive authority of the State Council, headed by Chinese Premier Li Qiang, which nominally oversees China's 21 government ministries as well as local governments.

Newly added articles stress that the State Council must "resolutely uphold the Party Central Committee's authority and its centralised and unified leadership" and follow Xi Jinping Thought, the party's name for the president's signature ideology, which expounds on subjects ranging from diplomacy to culture.

"This is a significant shift in the reorganisation of executive authority in China," said Ryan Mitchell, a law professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.



Aid ship sails, amidst a test to launch a new sea route from a port in Cyprus to deliver aid to residents of the Gaza Strip who are on the brink of famine, at sea.

Kremlin says appeal by Pope Francis for Ukraine talks is quite understandable

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: The Kremlin on Monday said that a call by Pope Francis for talks to end the Ukraine war was quite understandable and that Russia was ready to sit down, but that Kyiv had ruled out talks due to its mistaken view that the West could defeat Russia.

Pope Francis has said that Ukraine should have what he called the courage of the "white flag" to negotiate an end to a conflict that has killed tens of thousands.

Russia calls the war a "special military operation" to ensure its own security, Kyiv and the West call it a brutal colonial-style war of conquest.

"It is quite understandable that he (the pope) spoke in favour of negotiations," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told report-

ers when asked about the Pontiff's remarks.

Peskov said that President Vladimir Putin had repeatedly spoken of Russia's willingness and openness to negotiations, but that Ukraine had knocked down such proposals.

"Unfortunately, both the statements of the pope and the repeated statements of other parties, including ours, have recently received absolutely harsh refusals," Peskov said.

Peskov said the battlefield situation showed that Western hopes of inflicting a "strategic defeat" on Russia were mistaken.

"This is the deepest misconception, the deepest mistake, and the course of events, primarily on the battlefield, is the clearest evidence of this," Peskov said.

India-made fighter jet Tejas crashes for first time; pilot ejected safely

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: A domestically made fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force crashed on Tuesday in the western state of Rajasthan, the first such incident since the jet was inducted nearly eight years ago. The pilot ejected safely, the Indian Air Force said in a statement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has been pushing for local manufacturing as India seeks to shed its reputation as one of the world's biggest importers of defence equipment. The light combat jet, called Tejas, meaning flame or brilliance in Sanskrit, was inducted into the force in 2016 after a long wait in India's efforts to modernise its largely Soviet-era fleet.

Led by Musk, Silicon Valley inches to the right

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Since his tumultuous takeover of Twitter, Elon Musk has made an unabashed turn to the right politically, defying the orthodoxy that Silicon Valley is a citadel of well-heeled liberals beholden to Democrats.

Long considered non-identifiable ideologically, Musk's politics are now headline right wing as he uses his platform (now called X) to stoke the themes cherished by Fox News, conservative talk radio and far right movements across the West.

In just the latest example, repeating a conspiracy theory of far right chat rooms, Musk last week posted that US President Joe Biden was importing migrants for votes, laying the groundwork for "something far worse than 9/11." But beyond the posts, the question on everyone's mind is whether the world's second richest person will put his weight

Nord Stream sues insurers in London over 2022 pipeline blasts

Monitoring Desk

LONDON: Nord Stream is seeking more than 400 million euros (\$436 million) from its insurers over explosions in 2022 which ruptured pipelines designed to transport Russian gas to Germany, court filings show.

Nord Stream AG names Lloyd's Insurance Company and Arch Insurance (EU) DAC (ACGL.O), opens new tab as defendants in its lawsuit, which was filed at London's High Court last month.

Court filings state that

Nord Stream's current preliminary estimate of "the costs to dewater and stabilise the pipeline, to undertake a full repair and to replace the lost gas inventory" is between 1.2 billion and 1.35 billion euros.

Nord Stream's lawsuit also says one of the pipelines looked "mangled and deformed" in one area where it had been damaged, but "appeared smooth and to have been cut" in another.

Lloyd's declined to comment. Nord Stream and Arch did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

50 hurt as plane 'just dropped' mid-flight

Monitoring Desk

AUCKLAND: At least 50 people were hurt when a Boeing 787 operated by LATAM Airlines dropped abruptly mid-flight from Sydney to Auckland on Monday, according to the airline and a New Zealand health service organisation that treated the injured.

The aircraft experienced a strong shake and as a result 10 passengers and three cabin crew members were taken to a hospital, the South American carrier said as it investigates the cause.

The flight with 263 passengers and nine cabin crew members landed at Auckland airport as scheduled on Monday afternoon.

French lawmakers vote on Ukraine support in 'risky' Macron bet

Monitoring Desk

PARIS: French lawmakers will say on Tuesday whether they support a security accord with Ukraine, in a vote that is non-binding but closely watched in France and beyond.

The far-right National Rally (RN) have said they would abstain in Tuesday's vote and the hard left France Unbowed (LFI) is also opposed to the security pact. "I do not want Emmanuel Macron to have free rein," RN chief Jordan Bardella said, accusing Macron of leading France onto an "irresponsible, dangerous path." Macron has pushed for the vote in a bid to try and alienate the far-right and far-left ahead of European parliamentary elections in June over their perceived less supportive positioning towards Ukraine.

adopted a tougher stance towards Russia, urging Ukraine's allies to urgently do more and creating a backlash among some by not ruling out the presence of Western troops in Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials have told Reuters they are worried that a vote that was not overwhelmingly in favour of Kyiv would be negative symbolically and could hurt President Emmanuel Macron's efforts to ramp up his country's support in the coming months. The 10-year security pact with Ukraine includes commitments by Paris to deliver more arms, train soldiers and send up to 3 billion euros (\$3.2 billion) in military aid to Ukraine in 2024.

First Gaza aid ship leaves Cyprus as Palestinians on brink of famine

Monitoring Desk

LARNACA: A ship carrying 200 tonnes of aid for Gaza left Cyprus on Tuesday in a pilot project to open a sea route to deliver supplies to a population aid agencies say is on the brink of famine.

The charity ship Open Arms was seen sailing out of Larnaca port in Cyprus, towing a barge containing flour, rice and protein. The mission was funded mostly by the UAE and organised by US-based charity World Central Kitchen (WCK).

The journey to Gaza takes about 15 hours but a heavy tow barge could make the trip take considerably longer, possibly up to two days. Cyprus is just over 200 miles (320 km) north-west of Gaza.

The US military said its vessel, the General Frank S Besson, was also en route to provide humanitarian relief to Gaza by sea.

With aid agencies saying deliveries into Gaza have been held up by bureaucratic obstacles and in-

security since the start of the war on Oct 7, and even Israel's allies demanding easier aid access to the enclave, attention has shifted towards alternative routes including sea and air drops.

Qatar's foreign ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari said on Tuesday that negotiators seeking a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, which controls Gaza, were not close to a deal.

Washington had said for weeks that it hoped for a truce deal in time for the Ramadan Muslim holy month that began this week, but it has so far failed to materialise with the sides unable to agree terms to halt fighting, free hostages and bring in aid.

Tuesday's sea supply mission was the culmination of months of preparation by Cyprus, the EU member state closest to the conflict. It is keeping a wary eye on spillover effects from upheaval in the Middle East and is already seeing migratory inflows from Lebanon increasing.

German military needs 'substantial improvements', official says

Monitoring Desk

BERLIN: The German military still lacks sufficient equipment and personnel despite a 100 billion euro special fund set up following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces said on Tuesday.

In her 2023 annual report, commissioner Eva Hoegl said the "Zeitenwende" policy shift was on the right course with a total volume of 47 billion euros (\$51 billion) in procurement projects approved by the Bundestag lower house of parliament.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced the Zeitenwende, a new era of more assertive foreign policy backed by more military spending, on Feb 27, 2022, just days after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

As part of the Zeitenwende, and as a first step to bring the military back up to scratch after decades of attrition following

the Cold War, Germany in set up the fund to purchase modern weapons and pledged to reach NATO's target of spending at least 2% of the national GDP on defence from 2024.

"Despite the remarkable efforts, it remains to be said that substantial improvements in personnel, equipment and infrastructure are still a long way off in the second year of the Zeitenwende," said Hoegl, who acts as an advocate defending the rights of the troops.

Hoegl said the German military is facing an "enormous personnel problem", with its goal of increasing troop numbers to 203,000 by 2031 from the current 181,000 difficult to achieve. "In terms of equipment, the Bundeswehr is not yet fully operational," added Hoegl, citing a lack of ammunition, smaller items, such as night vision goggles, and large equipment like tanks and air defence systems.

Kenya's Haiti mission in limbo as urgency grows

Monitoring Desk

NAIROBI: Kenya has said its police officers will soon be in Haiti to confront rampaging gangs controlling the capital, but worsening insecurity and uncertainty about financing are casting doubt on the mission's prospects.

Kenya's government, which first pledged to lead an international security mission last July, says the coast is now clear to deploy after it signed an agreement with Haiti's government on March 1 meant to address concerns raised by a domestic judge who deemed the existing plan unlawful.

The United States and other powers are pushing for a swift deployment of Kenyan officers, seen as a prerequisite to allowing a half-dozen other African and Caribbean countries to also send security forces.

Prime Minister Ariel Henry has been unable to return to Haiti because of escalating violence since he signed the deal in Kenya. He announced overnight he would resign once a transi-

tion council and temporary replacement have been appointed.

Kenya's army has previously been sent to countries including Somalia, but its police officers have never been deployed in such large numbers and, for Nairobi, thorny issues remain to be worked out.

"The deteriorating security situation is likely to force a rethink in Nairobi," said Murithi Mutiga, the program director for Africa at the International Crisis Group think-tank.

The state seems to be crumbling from within and the security situation is much worse than when Kenya offered to lead the mission." Kenya's presidency and government did not respond to requests for comment.

One major challenge, according to diplomats with knowledge of the matter, is financing. The United States is providing the bulk of the funds for the mission, which was authorised by the UN Security Council in October.



Climate activist Greta Thunberg blocks the entrance of the Swedish Parliament during a protest in Stockholm, Sweden.

Sudan army general rules out Ramadan truce unless RSF leaves civilian sites

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: There would be no truce in Sudan in the Islamic holy month of Ramadan unless the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group leaves the homes and sites of civilians, senior Sudanese armed forces General Yasser al-Atta said on Sunday.

The statement follows an appeal by the United Nations Security Council for a truce during Ramadan, which begins this week. The paramilitary RSF said it welcomed the ceasefire call.

Atta's statement, is-

sued on the army's official Telegram channel, cited recent military advances by the army in Omdurman, part of Sudan's wider capital. It said there could be no Ramadan ceasefire unless the RSF complied with a commitment made in May last year at Saudi and U.S.-mediated talks in Jeddah to withdraw from civilian homes and public facilities.

It also said there should be no role for Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, the RSF leader commonly known as Hemedti, in Sudan's future politics or military.

From Dubai to Chile, Turkish series expand their empire

Monitoring Desk

ISTANBUL: In the skies above Istanbul's Tophane neighbourhood, seagulls are sent scattering by a drone that's filming a policeman arresting a young woman on the streets below.

But it's for a television series called "Degenler", one of about 60 filmed annually in Turkey that have made Istanbul and other Turkish cities familiar to viewers in nearly 170 countries around the world. Over the past 15 years, Turkey has established itself as the foremost exporter of series after the United States and Britain.

"Latin Americans find Turkish series very close to their culture," said Erdi Isik, development manager at Ay Yapim — Turkey's leading exporter last year and whose production "Yargi" ("Family Secrets") last November won an International Emmy for best telenovela. "When I show samples to a panel, even if they don't understand a word of Turkish, they catch what it is about because the family culture is very much the same," he said. Censorship constraints in Turkey also provide more modest material, important for audiences in the Middle East.

Bangladesh releases opposition party leader after 15 months

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: Bangladesh has freed the head of Jamaat-i-Islami, the largest religious-political party, officials said on Tuesday, 15 months since counter-terrorism officers arrested him after he vowed to take part in anti-government protests.

The release of Jamaat-i-Islami chief Shafiqur Rahman comes as political tension eases following Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's fourth consecutive election victory in January.

Hundreds of Tibetans march on New Delhi streets asking China to leave Tibet on uprising anniversary

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Hundreds of Tibetans in exile marched on the streets of New Delhi on Sunday to commemorate the 65th Tibetan National Uprising Day against China.

Over 300 protesters gathered near India's Parliament House and chanted slogans including "Tibet was never a part of China" and "China should leave Tibet." The protesters carried Tibetan flags and photographs of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.



Turkish actress Canan Urekil performs on the set in Istanbul.

Ahsan reiterates continuation of policies to ensure stability, economic development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal here on Tuesday reiterated that political stability and continuation of policies were prerequisites to lead the country towards stability and development.

Addressing a press conference after assuming the charge of federal minister, he lamented that political instability and discontinuation of policies had always inflicted the country and blocked the way towards sustainable progress and development.

Citing examples of various countries including India, Turkey, China, Bangladesh, and Korea, the minister said no country had achieved success without consistent policies and political stability.

He said, the last 50 year political history of Pakistan had a negative impact on the implementation and progress of development projects like Vision 2010, Vision 2025, and other five-year plans.

He underlined the importance of making comprehensive decisions and planning for the continued success adding it was imperative to focus on creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem, promoting job creation, and ensuring the success of the youth.

He said, the planning should be made keeping in view the modern infrastructure as digital technology was having great influence on different sectors in the era we were living in.

The minister emphasized the importance of replacing outdated production resources with new ones, by embracing international tools and technologies. This adaptation would help us foster growth in the agriculture and industry.

Ahsan Iqbal said that the government was determined to work honestly on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase-2 as was done in case of CPEC Phase one where

in \$25 billion investments were made from 2013 to 2018.

He underlined the need to adopt innovative financing mechanisms, especially considering the limited space in Pakistan's economic condition to ensure a strong infrastructure.

Talking about the debt situation, he said, it was previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf that took highest loan in the history of Pakistan during 2018, which forced the successive government to take further loans for paying off.

Ahsan also highlighted the importance of collaboration with the private sector to boost Pakistan's exports. With a target of reaching \$100 billion in exports within 7 to 8 years, it is crucial to tap into the potential of the private sector and create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive.

He highlighted that the success of Pakistan depended on increasing foreign exchange reserves.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal took the charge of the Ministry. Senior officials of the Planning Ministry warmly welcomed the Federal Minister upon his arrival. Secretary Awaiz Manzoor Sumra briefed the Federal Minister in detail on the ongoing projects of the Planning Ministry.

Federal cabinet members assume charges after allocation of portfolios

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has allocated portfolios to the newly-formed 19-member federal cabinet.

According to a notification, Khawaja Asif has been named defence minister. He has also been assigned additional portfolios of defence production and aviation. Ishaq Dar has been given the portfolio of foreign minister, Ahsan Iqbal is the Minister for Planning, Development and Special Measures.

Muhammad Aurangzeb has been assigned the portfolio of finance and revenue, while Mohsin Naqvi has been assigned the portfolio of Home Affairs and Narcotics Control, Ahad Cheema has been assigned the portfolio of Economic Affairs and Establishment Division.

Musadik Malik has been assigned the portfolio of Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Mian Riaz

Pakistan urges UNSC to be more transparent, inclusive to address conflicts, crises

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The Security Council must be more transparent and inclusive in conducting its business to meet the challenges posed by current global, regional conflicts and crises, a senior Pakistani diplomat has stressed, and called for improved working methods as also steps to ensure the implementation of its resolutions, especially on longstanding issues and disputes.

"Nothing undermines the credibility of the Security Council more than 'selective' implementation and non-implementation of its resolutions," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member body on Monday.

"Failure to enforce its resolutions undermines the credibility of the Security Council and erodes confidence in its ability to fulfill the responsibilities assigned by the UN Charter," he said while speaking in a debate on: The Working Methods of the Security Council.

Ambassador Jadoon underscored the imperative for the Security Council to respond decisively to the increasingly complex challenges to global peace and security by acting in an effective, transparent, accountable, and democratic manner.

In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy highlighted key areas for improvement in the Council's working methods, including the need for full adherence to openness and transparency, as provided under the rules.



QUETTA: MPA Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi and Barkat Baloch meeting with Chief Executive Office QESCO Engr. Shaqat Ali

PML-N prepares strategy for Senate's bi-election in Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Balochistan has prepared strategy for the upcoming bi-elections of Senate in the province.

The strategy was finalized in a meeting of the provincial parliamentary party held under the chair of its provincial president, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail here on Tuesday.

The meeting discussed the matter about the Senate elections and decided to make the candidates successful together with the coalition parties.

A three-member committee was also formed under leadership of provincial president of PML-N in the province.

The committee would make contact with the ally parties including the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

It may be mentioned here that the bi-elections are scheduled to be held on three vacant general seats of Senate from Balochistan on March 14.



QUETTA: Pro-Vice Chancellor Balochistan University of Information Technology Engineering and Management Sciences Dr. Abdul Rehman and General Manager Oil and Gas Company Abdul Razzaq Khattak exchanging documents after signing of a MoU between BUTEMS and OGDCL

Naqvi announces to forego salary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior & Narcotics control Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday announced to forego his salary during his tenure as minister.

He made an announcement on social media application X and stated that in this challenging time, he was committed to support and serving the nation in every possible ways.

Earlier, the minister had a meeting with lawyers' community in Lahore in a simple gathering organized in his honor in a local hotel.

Former President Supreme Court Bar Ahsan Bhawan, Federal Minister of Law Senator Azam Nazir Tarar and the officials of Pakistan and Punjab Bar Council attended the meeting.

Advocate General Punjab and officials of various bar associations also participated in the function.

The lawyer leaders pay tributes to Mohsin Naqvi for his unparalleled

Senior journalist Amin Butt passes away

MIRPUR (APP): Senior local journalist and former President Kashmir Press club Mirpur-AJK Muhammad Amin Butt died here on Tuesday after prolonged illness.

Late Amin Butt was suffering from diabetes since long and was shifted to local Kashmir Institute of Cardiology recently after he suffer heart problem, according to the family sources. Amin Butt had long distinguished career in the field of journalism as he served various local and national print and electronic media houses including Daily Jang, Such TV, Azad Kashmir Radio Mirpur and several other media organizations as their representative in Mirpur, Azad Jammu Kashmir. Convener Jammu & Kashmir Free Media Association Altaf Hamid Rao, President Jammu and Kashmir Union of Journalists Hafiz Muhammad Maqsood, Ex Secretary General Kashmir Press Club Mirpur Sohrab Ahmed.

Supply of free medicines restored to patients suffering from CML

Independent Report QUETTA: The supply of free medicines has been restored to the patients suffering from Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML) in Quetta on Tuesday.

The free medicines have been restored to the CML patients because of the untiring efforts made by Secretary Health, Abdullah Khan.

According to Secretary Health, the CML is a blood cancer that is curable and the patients can lead full life after the treatment.

He said that the free medicines have been restored to the CML patients in Sandeman Provincial Headquarter hospital Quetta.

The Secretary Health

JUI-F chief reaches Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah

LAHORE (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman reached Saudi Arabia on Tuesday to perform Umrah.

The party representatives received the Fazlur Rehman upon his arrival at Madina Munawara Airport.

The JUI-F chief will pay respect at Roza e Rasool (Peace Be Upon Him). After three-day stay in Madina Munawara, Maulana Fazlur Rehman will leave for Makkah Mukarrah to perform Umrah.

China, Pakistan enjoy great potential in marine energy exploration: NPC deputy

BEIJING (INP): China and Pakistan enjoy great potential in marine energy exploration, said Yan Hongtao, a deputy to the National People's Congress and the general manager of China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Tianjin.

"We can engage in more comprehensive cooperation on joint marine energy exploration and development, and strengthen the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between China and Pakistan," he stated according to China Economic Net (CEN).

As the pioneer of offshore oil and gas resource exploration in China, CNOOC has actively participated in the construction of the "21st Century



Ramzan Food Package for 15000 affected families is being dispatched to Gaza from Al-Khidmat Foundation.

Polio virus detected in sewage samples across Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Ministry of Health has confirmed the presence of the poliovirus in sewage lines spanning the four provinces of Pakistan. Twelve districts across the country have tested positive for polio in sewage samples, as revealed in a technical report received by the Ministry of Health. This brings the total number of polio-positive sewage samples for the current year to 46.

Polio testing samples were collected from 11 cities between February 13 and 20. Among the confirmed cases, sewage from the Urban Environmental Site of Okara, Orangi Nala in Karachi, Kemari, Muhammad Khan Colony in Karachi, and Haji Murid Goth in Karachi Central were found to be infected with the poliovirus. Additionally, sewage samples from cities including Karachi, Okara, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Jacobabad, Islamabad,

DC inaugurates Sasta Bazar for facilitating people in Ramadan

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Khara Muneer Ahmed on Tuesday inaugurated Sasta Bazar for giving subsidy on edible items to people in the Holy month of Ramadan on Tuesday.

Deputy Commissioner said that measures were being taken to provide maximum facilities to people in the month of Ramadan saying that therefore, Sasta Bazar was installed in the area with the aim to decrease difficulties of people.



MULTAN: Rescue-1122 workers performing rescue operation at the cylinder gas blast spot in Mohala Jawadia near Haram Gate.

FC Balochistan, MPCL distribute ration among 180 needy people

QUETTA (APP): Frontier Corps Balochistan (North) and Mari Petroleum Company Limited (MPCL) distributed rations among 180 indigent people and needy families of Kohlu on the occasion of Ramadan.

Commandant Mawand Rifles Brigade Col Babar Khalil and representative of Mari Petroleum Company Limited Lt. Col. Amjad distributed ration to the deserving and disabled people.

Lieutenant Colonel Amjad said that ration has been distributed to hundreds of deserving and needy families on the occasion of Ramadan, there was greatness in service.

Walk organized under title "Education for everyone, every child in School" in Loralai

QUETTA (APP): A walk was organized in the context of admission campaign 2024 under the title "Education for everyone, every child in school" organized by Department of Education Loralai on Tuesday.

District Education Officer (DHO) Imran Al-Hussani, Deputy District Education Officer Bahadur Shah Nasir, District Education Officer Female Medium Fausia Durrani, Kaleem Behlul of UNICEF, Majeed Rehman Muslim Aid of BRSP and representatives of other NGOs, Loralai, schools' principals, headmasters, teachers and students took part in the walk.

The students carried banners and placards with various slogans in connection with the school admission campaign.

The walk was started from the Municipal Committee Office which was ended at the Municipal Committee Office on the way back through various streets of the city.

Later, a seminar was held in the hall of the Municipal Committee.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Loralai Sajad Aslam Baloch said that this year, we have set up to achieve target of enrollment of 5000 children in schools.

He said that all-out resources would be utilized to gain the above target and this message could be delivered door-to-door for interest of children future.



QUETTA: A view of desert looks on the road during 1st holy Ramadan-ul-Mubarak.