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ing regarding Economic Roadmap for next 5 years.

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Pakistan

Peoples' Party (PPP)'s Mir

Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, Pakistan Muslim League-

Nawaz (PML-N)'s Mir

Dostain Khan Domki and

amiat Ulema-e-Islam

JUI)'s Abdul Shakoor

Shaibzai were elected as

senators in the bi-elections

of Senate from Balochistan here on Thursday.

According to the Re-

Quddus

ISLAMABAD: Commander Bahrain National

Guard, General Shaikh Mohammed Bin Isa Salman

Al Khalifa called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admi-

President vows to work closely

with Chinese counterpart

to deepen cooperation

Asif Ali Zardari thanks President Xi Jinping for felicitations on re-election

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and China shared

President Asif Ali Zardari

While replying to

President Xi's letter, the

president expressed his

commitment to working

closely with the Chinese

President to deepen prac-

strengthen the all-weather

partnership, and foster a

shared community for the

benefit of the two coun-

In his letter, President

Asif Ali Zardari said that

cooperation,

ral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters.

urning Officer and Provin-

cial Election Commissioner, Muhammad Farid Afridi,

Bizenjo secured 23 votes

while Mir Dostain Domki and Abdul Shakoor Ghaibzai got 17 and 16

The Balochistan Awami Party (BAP)'s Balochistan

Mobin Khilji got five votes

in the bi-election of Senate.

Earlier, the polling for

Mir Abdul

votes respectively.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meet-

61 MPAs cast vote in bi-election of Senate in Balochistan Assembly:

Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, Mir Dostain

Domki & Abdul Shakoor Ghaibzai

elected as Senators in bi-elections

in the provincial assembly.

and democratic manner.

three general seats of Sen-

ate was held in the

Balochistan's provincial

Commissioner, Muhammad

a unique bond forged in

the crucible of history

and nurtured by mutual

respect, understanding,

and common views on all

global issues, according to

a statement issued by the

serves as an anchor for re-

gional peace, stability and

development", he high-

and China were not

merely neighbours, but

iron-clad brothers fully

committed to the success

of our All-Weather Strate-

gic Cooperative Partner-

"Our solid friendship

He wrote that Pakistan

President House.

lighted.

The Provincial Election

assembly on Thursday.

CM Balochistan congratulates

newly elected Senators

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has congratulated the newly elected Sena-

tors from Balochistan as a result of the bi-elections held

the Chief Minister expressed satisfaction over holding of the bi-elections of Senate in peaceful manner. He said that the role of all political parties is very

appreciable in maintaining Senate elections in peaceful

Extending congratulations to the newly elected Sena-tors, the Chief Minister hoped that they would raise

voice for the rights of people.

He also hoped that the members of Senate would

also play their role in making effective legislation for resolving the public issues.

In a felicitation message issued here on Thursday,

State of health and education sectors such a pathetic:

CM vows to bring 60 reforms in Balochistan; announces to form reform committee in seven days

Mir Sarfraz Bugti says Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) of Balochistan to be revised

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has vowed to bring at least 60 reforms in different departments of the province, and adding he announced to constitute a reform committee within week time.

While talking informally to the media persons at Balochistan Assembly on occasion of bi-elections of Senate on Thursday, the Chief Minister said that we are going to bring around 60 reforms in the province.

He said that the reform committee would be formed in seven days, which would present its

report within two months. The services of retired sought for the reform coming of all the public sector

He said that the Public proved. Sector Development Programme (PSDP) of the province would also be re-

The Chief Minister said that it is our endeavour to include such development works which may benefit the general public.

He regretfully pointed out that huge amount of Rs. 80 billions has been allocated for the health sector. However, the situation of health sector is such a pathetic despite huge spending, he added.

He said that we are going to work under Public-Private Partnership in the health sector. He said that hospitals would be im-

He also said that we would improve the condition of our hospitals under the Sindh model

He said that it is just a mockery with the poor people of Balochistan to spend Rs. 80 billion in health sector. Similarly, billions of

rupees are also spent on education sector, however, situation is not better in it, e maintained.

Referring the reform committee, the Chief Minister said that the recommendations of committee would be kept before the cabinet for its perusal. Until then, the cabinet would



ISLAMABAD: The IMF Mission Chief for Pakistan Mr. Nathan Porter and Federal Minister for Finance Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb along with their teams started second review of Stand-by Arrangement.

eral Board of Revenue

pressed for the swift tran-

sition of Distribution Com-

panies (DISCOs) into pri-

vate sector administration,

highlighting the necessity

for a clearly defined

concern over the persistent

surge in commodity prices

within Pakistan, the IMF

delegation questioned the

disparity compared to glo-

bal trends, urging the Paki-

stani authorities to take de-

cisive measures to curb in-

tion was the provision of

subsidised gas to fertilizer

plants, with the IMF ada-

Of particular conten-

Expressing deep-seated

timeline.

Additionally, the IMF

IMF sets tough conditions for new loan programme; urges sweeping reforms

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): digitisation within the Fed-In a bid to secure a new loan programme, Pakistani officials engaged in rigorous negotiations with the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) review mission. The talks, held today, witnessed the IMF putting forth a series of stringent demands, underscoring the imperative need for comprehensive reforms within Pakistan's economic land-

Key among the demands outlined by the IMF is the freezing of revolving credit for electricity and gas, coupled with an immediate cessation of theft in these

Furthermore, the IMF insisted on halting the local gas supply to power plants, emphasizing the ur-



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti cast his vote while polling for By-Senate Election at Balochistan Assembly.

Pakistan takes strong exception to implementation of CAA by India

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has taken strong exception to the implementation of controversial Citizenship Amendment Act by India. At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad today, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the legislation and the relevant rules are evidently discriminatory in nature as they differentiate amongst the people on the basis of

The spokesperson said the regulation and laws are sumption that minorities are being persecuted in Muslim countries of the region and the facade of India being a safe haven for

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch pointed out that the rising wave of Hindutva under the BJP government has led to rapid political, economic and social victimization of Muslims and other minorities in India. She said the discriminatory steps further expose the sinister

Continued on page 2

Zardari welcomes interaction between

Muhammad Khyber of Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali

"It is high time we start thinking of working towards healing the divisions Pakistan has been going through", he added.

by showing them it could

Interior Minister meets Sudi Ambassador in

Saudi Arabia.

gratulated Mohsin Naqvi on assuming the post of Minister for Interior. He expressed his best wishes for the minister for his new responsibilities.

Gillani regains senate's seat from Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, the joint candidate of the ruling coalition, regained the Senate seat from the federal capital on Thursday by defeating Sunni Ittehad Council's candidate Chaudhary Ilyas Mehrban, according to unoffi-

According to an unofficial tally, out of the total 301 votes polled, Yousuf Gillani bagged 204 votes, while his rival Chaudhary Ilyas Mehrban received 88 votes. Nine votes were rejected.

PM, CM KP

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday welcomed the recent interaction between the Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief Minis-

Amin Khan Gandapur.

The president said that he had always advocated for prioritizing Pakistan above all else, and it was time we gave people hope in the democratic process

Thursday thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for extending him warm congratulations on his re-election as the President of Pa-

diplomatic enclave ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior & Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday arrived in diplomatic enclave to meet Nawaf Bin Saeed Ahmed Al Maliki, Ambassador of

The ambassador con-

First case of polio reported from Balochistan since last three years

Independent Report QUETTA: The first case of polio has been reported from Balochistan since January 2021.

The sources of Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication, the polio virus was detected in the infant aged 2.5 years belonging to Dera Bugti.

The samples were taken from the child had been collected on February 22, 2024.

This is also the first case of polio reported in Pakistan including Balochistan in the year 2024.

The last case of polio had been reported three years back from Kila Abdullah.

The polio virus was found in the environmental sample of the province since August 2023.

In view of the prevalence of polio virus, a special polio immunization is scheduled to be launched in nine districts of the province from March 24, 2024.

PM reviews five-year roadmap for economic progress ISLAMABAD (APP):

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday chaired a high-level review meeting on a five-year roadmap for economic progress of the The five-year roadmap

focused on decrease in inflation, poverty alleviation, and provision of employ-

The prime minister said consultation should be held on this plan with all stakeholders of different sectors of the economy.

Without wasting any time, implementation of projects for the economic stability and progress of the country should be ensured, he added.

The prime minister said a schedule of implementation for the projects should be presented, adding steps should be taken on priority basis to speed up progress in the sectors of agriculture, livestock, information technology, foreign investment and small

He said the government would reduce its expenditure and he would not allow further waste of money

of poor people. He said in the next five years, the country's economy would be stabilized to put the country on

the path of progress.
The PM said tax revenue would be increased with digitalization and technology, while the per acre yield in the agriculture sector would also be increased with the use of technology. The loss-making government institutions would be privatized on priority ba-, he added.

The meeting was informed in detail about the roadmap for economic progress and about proposed measures in important sectors including electricity, agriculture, livestock, exports, small and medium enterprises, taxes, information technology, small and medium enter prises, investment, and privatization



OUETTA: President National Party Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Safaraz Bugti. Mir Sadiq Umrani is also present

Commander **Bahrain National** Guard called Chief of Naval Staff

Farid Afridi performed as

the Returning Officer for

Continued on page 2

the bi-election on Senate

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Commander Bahrain National Guard, General Shaikh Mohammed Bin Isa Salman Al Khalifa called on Chief Of The Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest including bilateral collaboration and regional security were discussed. The visiting dignitary appreciated and acknowledged Pakistan Navy's efforts and commitments in support of collaborative maritime security in the region. Both the leaders pledged to further strengthen and diversify the scope of existing bilateral defence relationship.

Pakistan and Bahrain

enjoy brotherly relations and Navies of both countries cooperate and collaborate in maritime domain particularly in the field of training.

China gives 'Emergency Aid' to Pakistan for rain-hit areas

ISLAMABAD (APP) The People's Republic of China on Thursday provided "Emergency Aid" to the government of Pakistan for residents of the rain-hit areas in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"On March 14, the donation ceremony for emergency aid provided by the Chinese government to rain-hit areas in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan," said a news release. On behalf of the Chi-

nese government, Ambassador Jiang Zaidong handed \$100,000 emergency cash assistance over to the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Mohammad Syrus Sajjad

"China hopes that this cash donation can provide timely and necessary assistance to the needy people."

We have to benefit from modern science & technology for fast track development: Governor

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stressed the need to benefit from the modern science and technology for fast track development as our overall performance has been slowed down just because we couldn't benefit from the same.

The Governor said that it takes several months to pass an ordinary file in the government offices, which waste lot of precious time, energy and investment. This also causes frus-

tration among the common men for long time.

The Governor was speaking to the Vice Chancellor, University Turbat, Professor Dr Jan Muhammad who called on him here on Thursday.

He was appreciative of the initiative taken by University of Turbat about shifting traditional system on solar system and making the communication system digitalized. He said that improvement can be brought about in overall performance by promoting the spirit of teamwork.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Ambassador Jiang Zaidong handed USD 100,000 emergency cash assistance to the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Mohammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi for rains affected areas in KP and Balochistan.

PHC dismisses petition of SIC seeking reserved seats PESHAWAR (APP): The

Peshawar High Court here Thursday dismissed the Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) petition challenging the Élection Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) ruling that denied reserved seats to the party. The five-member bench of PHC led by Chief Justice Mohammad Ibrahim Khan and comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar, Justice Ishtiaq İbrahim, Justice Shakeel Aĥmad and Justice Arshad Ali dismissed the SIC petitions.

Êarlier, during his arguments, SIC's lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar said the Constitution does not mention when a party has to submit a list of names for reserved seats to the ECP.

He argued that it is not written anywhere that a person cannot resubmit the list or when it has to be submitted, adding that there is no restriction on providing a second list and that the ECP could have issued a second schedule, as it did for the general elections. Justice Ijaz Anwar re-

marked that as per the law, those who participate in elections will get seats.

The court then ques tioned Barrister Zafar if it was not clearly stated anywhere that the second schedule could not be issued. "The law does not prevent the Election Commission from issuing another schedule," the lawyer responded.



QUETTA: MPAs casting votes during Senate bi-election in Balochistan Assembly

Irrigation Minister Jam

Khan, PM Shehbaz Sharif

and Sindh Chief Minister

Murad Ali Shah held tele-

phonic discussion on the

matter after which the pre-

mier decided to withdraw

ter informed PM Shehbaz

about the reservations the

province had on the IRSA

chairman's appointment.

He said the federal govern-

ment could not appoint the

National Headquarters here

on Thursday. The discus-

sion underscored a shared

commitment to advancing

humanitarian endeavors in

Pakistan through collabora-

Ambassador Grannas commended PRCS's pivotal

role in alleviating the suffer-

ing of vulnerable communi-

ties and emphasized the en-

The Sindh chief minis-

the notification.

officer.

tive efforts.

German Envoy calls on

Chairman PRCS

PM withdraws

appointment of IRSA

chairman over

Sindh's concerns

Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif has withdrawn the

appointment notification of

the Indus River System

Authority (IRSA) chair-

notice of the Sindh

government's reservations

over the IRSA chairman's

Earlier, Sharif ap-

pointed Zafar Mahmood, a

grade 22 officer, IRSA chair-

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassa-

dor Alfred Grannas praised

the advancements made by

PRCS under Chairman

Laghari's guidance in easing the plight of vulnerable

communities and under-

scored the long-standing

partnership between PRCS

and the German Red Cross.

which has endured for four

appointment.

PM Shehbaz has taken

Independent

Turkish academic collaboration with CUI to be strengthened further: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD Ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye to Pakistan, Mehmet Pacaci has said that his country was keen to strengthen academic collaboration with COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) in research, faculty exchange and student mobility programmes.

The Envoy was speaking during meeting with officials of CUI and senior management here on Thursday. The meeting was also attended by Turkish alumni working at the university, and officials from the International Office.

The visit of ambassador served as an opportunity to revive the association between CUI and the Embassy of Turkiye.

Both countries share a deep cultural and religious bond and have collaborated in the past through exchange programs like Mevlana and Erasmus+.

In his address, Rector CUI Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar said, "We welcome the op-portunity to collaborate with Turkish counterparts in research, faculty exchange, and student mobility programs."

Dr. Junaid Zaidi, Founder Rector of CUI: We need to transform our excellent research into tangible products, and Turkish collaboration can be instrumental in achieving this

During the meeting, Dr. Hammad Omer, Head of the International Office, gave a short presentation high-lighting the CUI's strengths, research output, and engagement with Türkiye. He emphasized the need to developing concrete projects for collaboration in areas like research. faculty exchange, and student mobility, and come up with tangible outcomes beyond signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs).

He also underlined that we need to explore potential for joint ventures in

fields like commercialization of research, mathematics, computer science, and mountain research.

Friday March 15, 2024

Following the presentation, Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of Turkiye in his keynote address said We need to move beyond signing MoUs and develop concrete projects that leverage the expertise and facilities on both sides.'

They also agreed to identify potential areas for collaboration in various academic disciplines. There was also an agreement to go for joint research projects and exchange programs in near future. The discussion ended up with formulation of establishing a working group to develop concrete action plan.

Shariah Board

Pakistan sets

minimum Sadaqah

Fitr, Fidya at

Rs 300 for Ramazan

ISLAMABAD (APP)

Chairman of the Shariah

Board Pakistan, Sheikh Al-

Hadith Professor Dr. Mufti

Muhammad Zafar Iqbal

Jalali Thursday announced

that the minimum Sadaqah

Fitr and Fidya for fasting

this year was set at Rs 300

per person, roughly equiva-

lent to two kilograms of

phasized the importance of

philanthropists and afflu-

ent individuals contributing

Sadagah Fitr and Fidva in

accordance with their finan-

cial capacity, with values set

at Rs 600 for oats, Rs 2,400 for dates, and Rs 4,400 for

the Fidya rates for fasting

the entire month of

Ramazan, which are Rs

9,000 for wheat flour,

132,000 for raisins.

pect of recovery.

Similarly, he outlined

Rs 18,000 for oats, Rs

Dr. Jalali clarified that

72,000 for dates, and Rs

Fidya for fasting was in-

tended for individuals who

were chronically ill or un-

able to fast with no pros-

Bid to smuggle

9kg narcotics

to Sharjah

foiled, two

brothers held

ESHAWAR (INP):

The Airport Security
Force foiled a bid to

smuggle drugs worth

millions of rupees abroad and arrested

Peshawar Airport on

Thursday.
The ASF on a tip-

off searched the lug-

gage of two brothers

leaving for Sharjah

through private airline flight.

kilogram drugs worth

millions of rupees

were recovered from

secret cavities and

both accused were ar-

along with recovered

drugs were handed

over to the ANF au-

thorities for further

Earlier, the airport

ecurity force also

foiled a drug smug-

gling attempt from Sialkot and recovered

1 kg of ice heroin from

Bahrain-bound flight.

authorities, the staff

foiled the smuggling

attempt by recovering

drugs during the

search of the goods.

According to the

a passenger of

investigations.

detainees

rested.

The

During search, 9

brothers at

In a statement, he em-

wheat flour.

raisins.



QUETTA: Former MPA Malik Naseer Shahwani meeting with Governor Balochistan Malilk Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

PTI wants to work with all for country's economic development: Marwat

Member National Assembly (MNA) Sher Afzal Marwat on Thursday said that his party wanted to work together with all political parties for the country's economic development and progress amid prevailing pressing circum-

Talking to media outside the Parliament House, Minister of Khyber he stated that the Islamabad Pakhtunkhwa met the High Court (IHC) had al- Prime Minister vesterday lowed his party's leaders after consulting with the and lawmakers to meet the party and its founder. former party chairman in Adiyala Jail of Rawalpindi, to advance the affairs of the

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Home Department earlier citing security

> Sher Afzal Marwat said the court had further directed the party leadership to prepare standard operating procedures (SOPs) for its newly elected MNAs.

> He mentioned that Ali Amin Gandapur, the Chief

The meeting was held which was banned by the province," Marwat said.

Kh Asif welcomes improving ties between Center, KP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Thursday said that it is a good sign that the federation and the provinces are jointly solving problems

Speaking to the media in the Parliament House on Thursday, Khawaja Asif, in an apparent reference to Wednesday's meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, said that it was certainly a step in

He further said that instead of depending on the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the government should put its own house in order first. "If everything goes well, there is no need to go to the IMF," Khawaja Asif said.



ISLAMABAD: President Ida Rieu Schools, Ms Nadira Punjawani (HI SI) briefs the press at the Inaugural Ceremony of COMSTECH-Ida Rieu Schools for the Blind and Deaf Special Education Teacher's Training Programme at COMSTECH auditorium.

Pakistan takes strong exception...

agenda of transforming In-

dia into Hindu Rashtra. She advised the Indian authorities to stop pre-choreographed targeting and systematic marginalization of minorities. She said only a few days ago, a group UN special rapporteurs urged corrective actions to protect human rights and attacks against minorities in the run up to India's national elections. She urged India to take action to protect its own minorities especially Muslims who, she said, are in a very difficult situation

because of rising Hindutva. The spokesperson strongly condemned the Indian decision to declare illegal Kashmir National Front in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. With this, a total of nine Kashmiri political parties have been outlawed in IIOJK

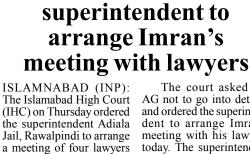
She said these oppressive measures reflect a vicious intent by India to stifle dissent and freedom of ex-

Continued from page 1 pression in IIOJK in complete disregard of international laws. She said India should immediately lift curbs on the banned Kashmiri political parties, release all political prisoners and forthwith implement the UNSC resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

The spokesperson informed the media that a meeting of programming committee of SAARC was held earlier this month in Kathmandu, Nepal after a gap of three years. She said it reviewed the status of SAARC processes and activities and finalized the budget and calendar of activities of the SAARC Secretariat, specialized bodies

and regional centers. She said being its founding member, Pakistan is fully committed to advancing the objectives of SAARC as enshrined in its charter. She said Pakistan has always played an active role in SAARC processes and activities

Both sides agreed to identify specific academics and projects for future collaborations with renewed commitment to strengthen educational ties between CUI and Turkish institu-



IHC orders Adiala Jail

Imran Khan with him to-The court also made it clear to the superintendent that non-compliance with the order would invite contempt of court proceedings. Speaking on the occasion, the advocate general, Punjab prayed to the court to make it binding on these lawyers that they would restrict themselves only to the cases the former prime minister was facing, and would not discuss with him any political

of the former prime minis-

ter and ex-PTI chairman

The court asked the AG not to go into details, and ordered the superintendent to arrange Imran's meeting with his lawyers today. The superintendent said that as far his information was concerned, decision in the intra-court appeal was still awaited. Naeem Haider Panjutha, on the occasion, requested the court to order the inclusion of his name on the list of

lawyers as well. The superintendent said that was the reason different people entered the jail to meet the ex-PTI chairman. "Everybody says he wants to meet the former prime minister," he added. The court, however, ordered him to let the lawyers, whose names were on the list, meet Imran.

Plan made to defeat PTI in vote recount: Omar Ayub

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI senior leader Omar Ayub alleged that a plan was made to defeat them by re-counting in 20 constituencies.

The PTI leader said that they wanted to bring their own people into the assembly to pass legislation of their choice. He claimed that their candidates were winning 202 seats.

Ayub further said that the mandate was stolen and they were protesting against it. We were not being given our right to the reserved seats. "We are going to the Supreme Court on this," he said.

Talking about the IMF programme, he said that there would be a flood of inflation in the country and poor people would become poorer.



mediamen after Senate bi-elections

Night Football **Tournament** kicks off with

QUETTA (APP): All Balochistan Haji Yousuf Khilji Ramazan Ňight Football Tournament started at Helper High School Satel-

Speaking on the occasion, the special guest of the match Haji Muhammad Yousuf Khalji emphasized the global popularity of football, calling it the national game of the world. He highlighted the enthusiasm for the sport in Pakistan particularly in Quetta, noting the region's strong talent pool.

Additionally, the guest wards for the winning team, runner-up team, and tourthe winners and forty thousand rupees each for the

Tournament officials, Achakzai, Secretary Inamullah Khan Achakzai and Press Secretary Bashir special guest for their sup-

thrilling matches

lite Town last night.

The opening match was played between Young Nausar Football Club Quetta versus Great Hazara Football Club Quetta.

> decades. Chairman

Following a match, a special guest presented a donation of 0.3 million rupees to the tournament

announced financial renament referees, totaling sixty thousand rupees for

including Chairman Haji Muhammad Naseem Khan Ahmed Barich, expressed their gratitude towards the



KARACHI: US Navy Ship USS INDIANAPOLIS, Freedom Class Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) visited Karachi Port. Upon arrival at Karachi.

At the outset, process of polling was completed smoothly and peacefully with no interruption in the

Travelers and those temporarily unable to fast were obligated to make up In all 61 members of for missed fasts, as Fidya the assembly cast their could not be a substitute for votes in favour of the canabstaining from fasting, he maintained. didates contesting bi-elections of Senate from the

> The MPA belonging to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Ravi Pahuja was the first among the members who cast vote for the bielections. He was followed by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Wali Muhammad Noorzai, Awami National Party's Zamarak Khan Achakzai, Ms. Rubaba Buledi, Zafar Agha, Nawab Sanaullah

> Zehri and others. Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti cast his vote for the bi-polls of Senate at 17th in the row. Similarly, the Speaker Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, Deputy Speaker Ms. Ghazala Golan, Nawab Aslam Raisani, Nawab Jangez Marri, Ms. Rahila Hameed Durrani and oth-

Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, Mir Dostain... Continued from page 1 ers also used their right of franchise for senate bi-elec-

> While the BNP-Awami's member assembly, Mir Asadullah Baloch didn't cast his vote. It may be mentioned

> here that in all seven candidates were in competition run for the bi-elections on three seats of the Senate from Balochistan.

> They were included: Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo of PPP, Mir Dostain Domki of PML-N, Kohda Babar and Mobin Khilji of Balochistan Awami Party and Abdul Shakoor of JUI.

Two more candidates including Syed Mehmood Shah and Mir Hairbiyar Domki contested the election as independent candi-

These seats had fallen vacant due to resignations of the senators Anwaarul Haq Kakar, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri. All the three success-

ful candidates would serve as the Senators till March 2027

Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves reach **\$ 13.15 billion**

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan reached at US\$ 13,151.3 million in the week ended on March 08, 2024 while foreign reserves held by State Bank increased to \$7,912.9 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank increased by \$17 million to \$ 7,912.9 million during the week under re-

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks also increased by \$ 114.1 million to \$ 5,238.4 million, it added.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on March 01 2024, were \$ 13,020 million. Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$ 7,895.7 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were \$ 5,124.3 million.

during partnership between PRCS and the German Red Sardar Shahid Ahmed Cross, spanning four decades. The meeting delved Laghari, expressed his appreciation for Ambassador into various topics includ-Grannas's sincere concern ing bilateral relations and the for the people of Pakistan imperative of enhancing coand his commitment to adoperation for the betterment

ISLAMABAD: German Ambassador to Pakistan Alfred Grannas meet Chairman Red Crescent Pakistan Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari.

dressing humanitarian needs. He emphasized the importance of the Ambassador's visit in broadening avenues of cooperation for the betterment of vulnerable communities.

[Islamabad, 14th March 2024]- The Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan, His Excellency Alfred Grannas, reiterated the paramount imthe Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) at the PRCS

of humanity. Chairman Laghari provided insights into PRCS's initiatives, particularly its endeavors in rehabilitation and reconstruction following recent floods in Pakistan. He highlighted ongoing col-

laborative projects with the German Red Čross, such as Anticipatory Actions for Humanitarian Disaster Risk portance of humanitarian Reduction (DRR) and the service during his meeting with Chairman Sardar Climate Advocacy and Co-ordination for Resilient Ac-Shahid Ahmed Laghari of tion (CACRA) project for Disaster Risk Management

VACANCIES ANNOUNCEMENT Applications are invited for initial recruitment to the following posts in the Balochistan Healthcare Commission (BHCC). Age Limit / Qualification / Position Experience Dispatch Rider 25-35 years. Matric Electrician 25-35 years, matric along with diploma in relevant field 25-35 years, matric, along with diploma in relevant field Security Guard 25-35 years, middle Chowkidar 25-35 years Cook 25-35 years, Fitness certificate with Driving License Sweepers 25-35 years

Terms & Conditions: - i) Preference shall be given to Local in domicile of the province. ii) The appointments will be made purely on contract basis. iii) Application along with attested educational and relevant documents, CNIC and (3) recent photographs can submit at address: -House No. C-56 Railway Housing Society, Joint Road, Quetta. iv) Only short-listed candidates will be called for test / interview. v) No TA/DA will be admissible for test / interview. vi)T h e remunerations will be paid according to Balochistan Healthcare Commission policy. vii) The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the applications without assigning any reason. viii) The last date of submission of applications is 29th March, 2024 office time and no application will be accepted after due date

BALOCHISTAN HEALTHCARE COMMISSION QUETTA



TSE-232403382303 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER II PROVINCIAL B&R SHERANI invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates. TENDER FEE RS.1000/- AND BID SECURITY 2%

S.No Name of Work/s Construction of BHU Killi Adil Abad U/C 15,000,000/-Ahmadi Darga District Sherani-PSDP #3519

(2023-24)Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 10,500,000 PKR Amount in 100 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering council (PEC) C-6 and above (Upto 25 million)In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE06 (Tunneling and underpinning) Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security**: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of **Bank Gurantee,Deposit at Call** of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 29 March, 2024during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 29 March, 2024till 12:00 PM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 01:00 PM Address:

Executive Engineer Building, Communication, Works, PP&H

Department Sherani **Phone no:** 0822412218

PRQ No.1618/14-3-2024

SHERANI gob 👩 dpr.gob f @dgpr.balc



QUETTA: Additional Secretary Arif Achakzai, CEO Balochistan Institute of Nephrology Urology Quetta BINUQ Prof Dr Syed Liquat Agha participating in World Kidney Day awareness' rally.

sure accessible and high-

quality health, education.

and social protection services for all citizens."

Commenting on the country's current challenge

of inherited debt, Minister

Ahsan Iqbal lamented the

burden placed on Pakistan

by the previous govern-

ments. Despite this chal-

lenge, he expressed con-

overcome obstacles and

lead the nation towards

the Planning Minister un-

derlined the need to adopt

innovative financing mecha-

nisms, especially consider-

ing the limited space in

Pakistan's economic condi-

tion to ensure a strong in-

sized that the future of Pa-

kistan hinged on the growth

of key sectors such as agri-

culture, industry and ser-

vices, and the adoption of

technological advance-

ments. The ambitious goal

is to transform Pakistan

into a \$100 billion export

oriented economy within

the next 7 to 8 years, mak-

ing a pivotal moment in the nation's history.

Ahsan Iqbal empha-

economic stability.

frastructure.

in government's ability to

During the meeting,

fidence



Defence Minister casts his vote in Senate by polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister Defence and Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Thursday cast his vote in the Senate by elections being held on six vacant seats of the Upper House of the Parliament. The voting process for by-elections on six vacant Senate seats was underway here at the Parliament House.

The members of the National Assembly and provincial assemblies of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will elect six senators in the by-polls, whereas the voting would continue till 4pm. The six senate slots got vacant after the senators got elected to the national and provin-

PM lauds Qatar's contribution to peace efforts in Gaza ISLAMABAD (Online): bilateral ties having the lauded Qatar's contribu-

Ambassador of Qatar Ali potential to grow even Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Thursday. Shehbaz Sharif

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani for their warm

on his re-election as Prime Minister.

thanked Amir of Qatar Facilitation Council that functioning as an effi-cient and productive mechanism. It is ensuring that foreign inves-

The Prime Minister said Pakistan is proud of mining and minerals as its close, fraternal relationship with Qatar, with The Prime Minister

of economy, trade and investment. He highlighted that the Special Investment was established during his previous tenure as Prime Minister, is now

tors are able to benefit

messages of felicitations from investment opportunities in Pakistan's key sectors like agriculture, Information Technology, well as renewable energy.

tion to peace efforts in Gaza. He said it is disapstronger and meaningful, particularly in the areas pointing that violence is continuing in Gaza even during the holy month of Ramadan.

Shehbaz fondly recalled his official visits to Qatar in August 2022 and March 2023. He extended an invitation to the Amir of Qatar to undertake an official visit to Pakistan and said the people of Pakistan look forward to welcoming him in the near future. The Ambassador thanked the Prime Minister and said he would do his best to foster stronger ties between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada chairs a meeting of Pakistan Public Works Department at Ministry. Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, Secretary Housing and Works, Chief Engineers of all zones and other senior officers of the ministry are also present.

Khater calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. **Planning Minister directs** stakeholders to hold 'consultative workshop'

The Planning Ministry has geared up efforts to implement the 5Es framework, a multi-pronged strategy to turnaround Pakistan and put it on a sustained growth trajectory.

On the direction of the Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal a one-day consultative workshop will be organized at the ministry within ten days for the speedy implementation of the framework.

taken on Thursday during a meeting chaired by the minister. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Planning Ministry and other senior officials of the ministry. During the meeting, the minister directed the stakeholders to invite the country's top experts from various fields in the workshop so that their input can be taken before the implementation of the frame-

The 5Es framework is lars, which include Exports.

and infrastructure and equity and empowerment. The framework marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's journey towards sustainable economic growth and development as it has set the stage for transformative change, addressing key challenges and capitalizing on opportunities for the betterment of the nation and its citizens. In

had approved the frame-The first E, aimed at The decision was increasing exports as the country's future heavily depended upon how fast it became an export-led economy. This E in particular focuses on initiatives that will tackle the chronic boom-and-bust cycles and

June last year, National Economic Council NEC

stabilize the economy.' E-Pakistan which would ultimately help Pakistan "Building a Knowledge Economy" with a mission to harness the immense potential of IT and Telecom

exports.
"The fifth E related to centred around five key pil- Equity and Empowerment recommends à strategic E-Pakistan, Environment and climate change, energy affirmative action and tar-

SC issues written order regarding hearing in **Monal Restaurant case**

ISLAMABAD (APP): RF&V. The CDA's lawyer The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday issued a written order regarding hearing on a case pertaining to the lease of land of Monal Restaurant.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa has conducted hearing on the case on March 11.

The court said that the 15 year lease agreement completed on March 9, 2021 and a further 15 year lease was to be granted as per the agreement.

It said that the counsel of restaurant also mentioned the agreement with till March 21.

one else for the land lease. He stated that the land of Monal Restaurant was owned by Capital Devel-opment Authority (CDA). The court instructed the federal government to submit detail report regarding the ownership of the

adopted the stance that the

restaurant couldn't sign an

agreement with for some-

land. The court also sought the relevant original record of the said land from the concern au-

thorities.
The further hearing of

Action continues against sub-standard food during Ramazan in ICT: DDO IFA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) Dr Tahira Saddique on Thursday said that actions were being continued against the substandard food during the holy month of Ramazan, responding to citizens' complaints

Talking to APP, she said that in a recent action, a team of IFA inspected several Iftar points at Java Road Burma Town.

During the inspection. the team found multiple violations at three food

All the three food points were sealed due to on health hazards conditions while heavy fines were also imposed to 20 food points.

IHC allows 4 **PTI lawyers** to meet PTI founder

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has directed the jail authorities of Adiala on Thursday to allow four lawyers from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to

neet the PTI founder. Justice Muhammad Tahir heard the application against the order of the Punjab government pertaining to the ban on meeting with the de-

Adiala Jail, Asad Warraich, argued before the court that a number of people were pretending to be defense counsels of the PTI founder and wanted to meet him.

He stated that more than twenty defense counsels attended the proceedings and claimed they wanted to meet the PTI founder, which was the root of the actual problem, the superintendent clari-

Pakistan envoy, Nepalese FM discuss bilateral ties, cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal Abrar H Hashmi on Thursday called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Nepal Narayan Kaji Shreshtha.

He felicitated the foreign minister on assuming the office and conveyed the best wishes of the Pakistani leadership, according to a press release.

In the meeting, they also discussed the full spectrum of bilateral relations and emphasised the need for enhanced engagement in diverse fields, as well as exchanges and cooperation in regional and international forums.

Two wanted dacoits arrested cash recovered

 public relations officer said that following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified its crackdown against the criminal elements to eliminate crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Noon police team criminal activities

Pirzada directs to improve construction work of govt buildings, roads ment. During the meeting,

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada Thursday directed to implement strict measures aimed at improving construction work and enhancing maintenance services of government buildings and roads.

He was chairing a meeting of Pakistan Public Works Department (PWD) at Ministry, addressing tained PTI founder at Adiala | critical issues concerning construction standards, Superintendent of maintenance, repair of to the DG PWD to enforce

the minister was apprised about the management and working of the department by Abdul Rasheed, Direc-General, Pak PWD. Riaz Pirzada expressed concern over re-

ports of corruption and underscored the imperative of eradicating corrupt practices to foster transparency and accountability within the department. In this regard, the minister issued clear directives

buildings, and tackling cor- a zero-tolerance policy toruption within the depart- wards corruption. PM dedicated to took

country forward on path of progress: Qaiser ISLAMABAD (APP): criticism" will guide the Federal Minister for Marigovernment in framing

time Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Thursday reiterated Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's commitment to Pakistan's rapid development and asked the opposition parties to work with the government to provide relief to the common man.

Talking to the PTV news channel, the minister stressed that our primary focus is to increase province revenue, business growth, and economy boost and to build confidence for inverters where the opposition's role is very crucial as its "constructive

government in framing prudent policies" He said that it is our

collective responsibility to make decisions in parliament in favor of the common people to bring improvement in national institutions. The minister said that the priority of the government is to get the country out of the current crisis.

Replying to a question, he emphasized the need for a solid and effective strategy to promote investment in Gwadar, adding, that the government will work to revamp and operationalize the Pakistan National Shipping Line to enable the institution



ISLAMABAD: A view of rain water and mud creates problem to the customers at Fruit and Vegetable Market, needs the attention of the concerned authorities.

21 outlaws netted, narcotics, weapons seized **Independent Report**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) apprehended 21 outlaws including nine professional beggars from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered narcotics and weapons from their possession. A public relations officer said that following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified its crackdown against the criminal

from the city. Meanwhile, Karachi company police team arrested an accused Zain Ali, and recovered one 30-bore pistol with ammu-

elements to eliminate crime

nition from his possession, while the police team also arrested two accused namely Gul Agha and Noman Fayyaz involved in illegal gas refilling.
Likewise, the Golra

police team arrested an accused Farhad Ullah, and recovered 10 liters liquor from his possession. The Shams Colony police team arrested an accused namely Sher Ali and recovered one 30-bore pistol from his possession. Similarly, the Khanna police team arrested two accused Israr Ahmed and Muhammad Altaf involved in illegal gas refilling. The Koral police team arrested an accused Fakhar Abbas and recovered 615 gram hashish from his possession.

CDA for providing best civic facilities to citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): To soon improve the road infrastructure in the city of Islamabad work on several projects is continueing by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) so the citizens could be provided best civic facilities. In this regard, under

the direction of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), a new footpath is being constructed in Sector I-8 of Islamabad, which will be completed at a cost of 14 million rupees.

In this regard, tenders have also been published in newspapers. It should be noted that after the scrutiny of the received bids, the construction of the reduce the carbon and foot-

On this occasion, the Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) while issuing instructions to the officers of the concerned departments, said that such footpaths, which are dilapidated, should be repaired as soon as pos-



in a long queue and waiting for their turn to purchase wheat flour on subsidized price provided by government in the city.

Similarly, wherever there is a need to build new footpaths, new footpaths should also be constructed so that all possible facilities can be provided to the citizens. Similarly, the construction of these footpaths will not only promote the culture of walking in the city, but also significantly



Ghouri Town. **AIOU** reschedules postponed

exams in Chitral ISLAMABAD (APP) Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has rescheduled the postponed papers

in Chitral region. Due to snowfall in Lower Chitral, schools and colleges were closed from 5 to 9 March and exams were postponed. According to the notification issued by the examination department, the exams of March 5 will be held on April 16.

IHC seeks comments from mobile companies in audio leak case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday sought written comments from telecom operator companies in audio leaks identical cases filed by Bushra Bibi and Najam-u-Saqib.

ISLAMABAD: A large number people attending Iftar arranged by an NGO at

Justice Babar Sattar heard the cases. The counsel for mobile companies adopted the stance that

could answer in a better way regarding the taping of the phone calls. The court remarked

that four federal secretaries have submitted their affidavits before it if someone has lied before the court he has to face the consequences. The court was told that the government never allowed any institution to record they give the access system the conversations of citi-

Scholarship Fund and Trust Rules, PM&DC Finance Rules, M&DC Ex-

It is need of time as PM&DC is responsible for regulating medical and dental education, practice, and related matters in Pakistan.

tions Rules should ensure medical and dental colleges to adhere specific standards of education, faculty qualifications, infrastructure, and curriculum.

The PM&DC Code of Ethics of Professional

PM&DC Licensing Regulations will improve the process of issuing licenses to practitioners.

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) on Thursday arrested two wanted members of a snatcher gang involved in numerous criminal activities and recovered booty from their possession.

used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of the snatcher gang involved in numerous

to the PTA. The authority zens. PMDC drafts new accreditation standards

kistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has prepared new upgraded drafts for accreditation standards.

In a statement, the President PM&DC Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj said that these accreditation standard drafts were prepared for Medical Colleges (Undergraduate), accreditation Standards for Teaching Hospitals (Undergraduate), Guidelines for MBBS Curriculum, Competencies of a Medical Graduate and Medical House Job Competencies, 2024.

He said that PM&DC has been actively working on the upgradation of medical and dental standards for the past three months, and these standards will be implemented after the approval of the Academic Board and Council.

He said that accreditation standards for medical colleges at the undergraduate level will serve poses, each of which will ultimately benefit both students and the healthcare

He said that after extensive hard work all these medical dental accreditation standards, rules and regulations have been forwarded Academic Board Committee for deliberation and ap-

These accreditation standards will set high standards for the quality of education provided by medical colleges, including faculty qualifications, curriculum content, teaching methods, facilities, and resources.

These standards ensure that students receive high-quality education that meets specific quality and rigor standards, protecting them from investing time and money in substandard With these accredited

standards, medical colleges will be able to provide stu-

skills, and experiences necessary for success in their future medical practice.

He said that the council has also prepared drafts for accreditation Standards for Dental Colleges for Undergraduate Dental Education, Inspection Proforma for 50 BDS Admissions, accreditation Standards for Dental Clinical Teaching Facilities, Hospital for Undergraduate Dental Education, Competencies of BDS Graduates and Dental Surgeons, Guidelines for BDS

Curriculum, 2024. He said that the accreditation standards are crucial in dental education, ensuring that dental colleges maintain high-quality educational programs. These standards will

curriculum content, teaching methods, and clinical training facilities. These will help design

curricula that prepare stu-

cover faculty qualifications,

several important purdents with the knowledge, dents for future dental careers, developing competencies in areas like patient care, communication, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making. He said that accredi-

tation standards will im-

prove the system of licen-

sure and certification, en-

suring graduates meet the necessary educational requirements to practice dentistry safely and compe-He said that the ultimate goal of designing these standards is to produce competent, well-rounded dental professionals who

can meet patients' oral

health needs and contribute

positively to the dental profession. He said that PM&DC has also devised the drafts of PM&DC Powers and Functions Rules, PM&DC Code of Ethics of Professional Conduct, PM&DC Licensing Regulations, PM&DC National Medical amination Regulations, Amendment to Admissions Regulations, PM&DC Student Registration Regulations, 2024.

Its Powers and Func-

Conduct promotes professionalism, integrity, and patient-centered care and it was a dire need to prepare an upgraded code of ethics to safeguard the doctors.

Daily Soice of Masse Independent

Friday March 15, 2024

Economic agenda On Tuesday, at his first formal

interaction with reporters after assuming control of Q Block, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb dropped some clear hints about the kind of financial policies he intends to pursue, at least in the short to medium term.

Signalling the continuation alarming Rs. 4000 bilof IMF-mandated stabilisation lion, while the national policies under the \$3bn Standby Arrangement, the former banker said that Pakistan, a sovereign, nuclear state, could no longer afford to continue with a 'patchwork' approach to deep-rooted economic woes if it wanted to address the challenge posed by low economic growth and inflation.

He was also clear about the Sharif government's plan to kick-start discussions for a new, larger and longer IMF loan during the international lender's visit for the second and final review of the current ninemonth facility that ends soon.

"We would at least kick-start the process and get this going Let us see how they respond," he said. Further negotiations on the fresh programme would be taken forward on the sidelines of the spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank in April in Washington, it was mentioned.

The finance minister's message was unmistakable: the government is aiming for permacroeconomic stabilisation even if it comes at the cost of growth. He said that the country should not expect cash deposits and debt transportation costs, rollovers from friendly countries, and that it was necessary to achieve the structural benchmarks laid out in IMF programmes signed Pakistan's previous finance ministers, as turning to patchwork measures was no solution. Inflation, he stressed, could only be addressed by achieving macroeconomic stability. Faced with a daunting challenge, the minister's prescription for the interlinked issues of low growth, balance-ofpayment troubles, inflation and fiscal deficit afflicting the economy indicate a plan for a consequential overhaul of the government as well as its budget over the next several years. His plan also represents a significant departure from the PML-N's signature economic mit non-Muslim religious and financial policies.

The question is: will he get enough room to execute the stabilisation policies for as long as it is required? What is the guarantee that the ruling party will support his attempts to effectively tax its core political constituency of retailers or the powerful real estate mafia? Last but not the least, how long will the government resist the temptation of spurring growth without executing the longstanding structural reforms once forex reserves rise to a comfortable level, as it panders to its vote bank?

Indeed, the new armybacked SIFC created last year to attract investment from the Gulf nations is widely expected to help him. Still, the success their election campaign. of the finance minister's stabilisation agenda will hinge largely on his ability to manage the desires and demands of the party in power, without digressing from the path of reform.

Will Shahbaz's Hard Work alone Do the Magic?

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President(Rtd): Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France: Former MD. SRBC



Pakistan's economy is alarming, with several key sectors facing sig-nificant challenges. The electricity circular debt has ballooned to an carrier, PIA, is incurring losses exceeding Rs. 800 billion. Furthermore, the state of electricity plants has deteriorated, contributing to inefficiencies and financial losses. Rampant electricity theft has resulted in losses exceeding Rs. 400 billion, exacerbating the financial strain on the energy sector.

Adding to the financial woes, corruption within government institutions, such as the FBR, has resulted in the embezzlement of over Rs. 300 billion. Stateowned enterprises are also struggling, with losses surpassing Rs.

500 billion. The consequences of these financial mismanagement are dire, disproportionately affecting the majority of the population. While a small percentage of the service, and military population benefits from these losses, the burden falls heavily on the remaining 90%, leading to increased taxes, utility charges, and commodity prices. As a result, the vulnerable population is experiencing a decline in living standards, facing challenges such as inflated school fees, ine reform efforts, they acerbate the plight of disobedience is met tic employed before the cratic principles and and housing expenses. pushing them further

into poverty. The Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif painted a bleak picture during his address at the inau-

gural meeting of the newly sworn-in cabihe delivered upon asnoticeable departure from scapegoating, as tributing the country's economic woes to the

Reflecting on our collective memory, we can recall countless instances where newly sworn-in leaders, be they prime ministers, military dictators, or technocrats, have delivered similar speeches promising to address the nation's dire economic and financial circumstances. They vow to leave no stone unturned in their efforts to uplift the country. However, history bears witness to the rapid fading of these promises as they become immersed in the trappings of power and privilege.

Once in office, these leaders often prioritize the perks and prestige of their positions, neglecting their initial pledges. They soon confront the reality of entrenched systemic issues, perpetuated by powerful vested interests within the government, civil bureaucracy. These individuals benefit from the status quo and resist any attempts at meaningful reform that improvement in the might threaten their own positions or privi-

Should a governthese entrenched interlished order. If they persist in their efforts, they face the threat of being swiftly removed from power.

suming the premiership a vicious cycle of staghe refrained from at-self-interest over the common good.

address, Sharif reiterated his steadfast belief in the power of "hard work" to surmount the nation's challenges. However, he also acknowledged the limita- hovering around \$8 biltions of hard work lion, posing severe conalone, recognizing the imperative for innovative and creative solutions. He emphasized the importance of learning from past mistakes and, above all, addressing the underlying systemic issues to plaguing the country.

challenges highlighted by the Prime Minister, several other pressing issues confront the new government, casting a shadow over its country towards stability and growth.

The contraction of to -0.2% in 2023, picture, with projected modest growth of only 2% in 2024 offering little solace. The surge in the unemployment rate to 8.5% in 2023 signals deep-seated economic distress, with scant prospects for foreseeable future.

This cycle of lion in 2023. Mean- reform and under- lies for more than 15 promising change but while, the country scores the complexity days. It fails to address net. It echoed a similar ultimately succumbing grapples with a mount- of navigating the politi- the systemic challenges sentiment to the speech to the pressures of the ing external debt bur- cal landscape in Pakistatus quo perpetuates den, soaring to approximately \$126.3 bilin April 2022. However, nation and decline, lion by 2023. This fisthis time, there was a leaving the nation's cal strain is further gesting that the elec- lack of livelihood opprogress at the mercy compounded by a perof those who prioritize sistent fiscal deficit, oscillating between -In his extensive GDP from 2022 to

eign exchange reserves have plummeted to critically low levels, straints on affairs effectively. These daunting chaleconomy and foster underscores In addition to the sustainable growth.

challenges is undoubt- over critical areas and insurmountable. Nu- challenge its authority. merous nations, grappling with severe ecosuccessfully resolved their underlying issues, self for another round paints a grim economic room," and propelled themselves toward accelerated growth and development.

However, in the context of Pakistan, these metaphorical elephants wield considerable power. They not only influence the seprovincial and national Furthermore, the assemblies, the Senate, relentless escalation of the president, and the nerable segments of process undermines the Consumer Price prime minister, but also society from the im- the government's credment dare to challenge Index, which reached a dictate the composition pending financial ibility and raises doubts staggering 29.2% in of the cabinet. Any strain. However, this about its commitment ests and pursue genu- 2023, threatens to ex- form of resistance or move is a familiar tac- to upholding demoare met with polite ordinary citizens, with with swift and unfor- implementation of governance. These linwarnings to desist from disrupting the estab- little respite in 2024. giving consequences, stringent economic gering doubts present a as punishment is meted measures. The provising indicating as punishment is meted measures. Compounding out promptly. The ension of free ration, for the government in these challenges is the trenched influence of though ostensibly a its efforts to enact dwindling foreign in- these powerful entities gesture of support, is meaningful reforms vestment, which trick- poses a significant woefully inadequate to and gain the trust of the led to a mere \$2.7 bil- hurdle to meaningful sustain vulnerable fami- populace.

Furthermore, alle-

gations surfaced sug-

toral process was orchestrated to prevent education, and even in-Nawaz Sharif from po-sufficient clothing and 7.6% and -7.8% of tentially assuming the footwear. Thousands prime ministership for of employees of State-To add to the quently, upon the for- anxiously anticipating woes, Pakistan's for- mation of the govern- the This Special Investment Faestablishment's intent Overcoming these to maintain control

> the nation is bracing itpaign to manage expec-

faced by these families, leaving them vulnerable to hunger, deprivation of basic necessities. portunities, inadequate the fourth time. Subse- Owned Enterprises are

ment, key ministries privatization and sale of were entrusted to their employers, which unelected individuals. could lead to retrenchcomposition ments, golden handsends a clear message: shakes, or terminathe interference in the tions, exacerbating the government's ability to country's internal af- already high levels of manage its economic fairs, financial and eco- unemployment. The nomic sectors, or the looming decisions have deterred the PPP from lenges underscore the cilitation Council will securing cabinet posiurgent need for deci- not be tolerated. The tions, as they seek to sive and strategic action strategic allocation of avoid public backlash stabilize the ministerial portfolios and preserve their pothe litical capital.

Regrettably, the current government assumed power under edly formidable, yet not deter any attempts to a cloud of controversy, with allegations of elec-With unelected toral rigging and matechnocrats, handling nipulation casting doubt ability to steer the nomic and financial the economy and the on the legitimacy of its predicaments, have finance of the country, mandate. The opaque and unfair conduct of the election process has the real GDP, plunging confronted the prover- of economic strain. raised serious concerns bial "elephants in the The government has about the transparency initiated a media cam- and fairness of the government's foundatations regarding immittion. Given these cirnent hikes in taxes, util- cumstances, there are ity costs, and petroleum legitimate questions prices. This effort is about the ability of a packaged as a Ramzan government that as-Package, purportedly cended to power worth Rs. 12 billion, through questionable aimed at showcasing means to instill translection of members in the government's purparency and fairness in ported commitment to the system. The lack of shielding the most vul- trust in the electoral

The enactment of CAA - Modi's pre-election political maneuver

By Maria Mansab India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has enacted the Citizenship Amendaims to expedite the process of granting citizenship to religious minority individuals from neighboring countries, except Muslims. The law provides evidence that Modi's authoritarian regime is attempting to convert India into a Hindunarginalize its 200 million

Muslim population. To aid those who are persecuted, CAA will perminorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan to apply for citizenship. In 2019, the law was enacted, inciting widespread demonstrations that resulted in the deaths of dozens and the apprehension of countless others. Acording to the country's Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah, "PM Modi had delivered on another commitment and realized the promise of the makers of ur constitution to the Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians iving in those countries.' It is clear from the statement above that the implementation of this law is discriminatory in nature as it excludes Muslims.

In the run-up to this year's general elections, the enactment of the CAA is a significant electoral pledge of Modi Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This action is a strategic political move employed by the autocratic overnment of Modi for

According to Amnesty International, the law is "discriminatory" and "goes against the constitutional values of equality and international human rights law." It states that the law "legitimizes discrimination based on religion" and is "exclusionary in its structure and intent

For instance, this law does not protect individuals escaping mistreatment in non-Muslim majority countries, such as Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka. Additionally, it fails to account for the inclusion of Rohingya Muslim refugees who have fled from Myanmar The 200 million Mus-

lims in the nation could face persecution if the CAA is used in conjunction with a planned national registry of citizens. Its enactment two to three days before the election announcement, following repeated extensions in the previous four years, indicates that it is being done for political purposes. Another example of Modi's flagrant lying is the length of time it took to announce the CAA guidelines. The sole purpose of the CAA is to target Muslims; it has no other intent. Modi is actively promoting a Hindu nationalist agenda that poses a threat to the country's secular foundation, restricts the rights of religious minorities, especially Muslims, and brings India closer to being a Hindu nation.

In addition, during the Modi-fascist rule, a significant number of Muslims were subjected to lynching by Hindu mobs based on accusations of consuming beef or engaging in cow smuggling. Muslim businesses have faced economic boycotts, their localities have been demolished. and places of worship have been intentionally set on fire. Moreover, there have been public calls for the genocide of Muslims. Modi's conspicuous silence over the anti-Muslim violence has empowered his most radical followers and fa-

cilitated an increase in

The United Nations Human Rights panel on pressed concern, on reports of assaults on minority groups, media outlets, and civil society in India. The panel urged immediate measures to address these issues. particularly since the country is gearing up for early 2024 elections.

Furthermore, they expressed strong disapproval of the inadequate degree of response from India to their messages. They observed that out of the 78 communications sent by UN human rights experts between 7 March 2019 and 6 March 2024, only 18 received public replies from the Government. The experts urged the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to persistently observe the developing human rights situation in India. They also

called on the Human

Rights Council to delib-

erate on potential actions

that could help prevent

human rights abuses in

the country, under its responsibilities outlined in General Assembly resolution 60/251. Modi's Under ethno-religious policies, the Indian government hindered its goal of becoming a global leader in a democracy that respects human rights. This was due to its consistent implementation of laws and actions that unfairly treat and stigmatize religious and other minority groups, as stated in the 2024 World

Watch. International's report in February 2024 states that India must immediately cease its extensive hate speech targeting illegal demolitions of

Report by Human Rights

longing to Muslims, which are being carried out using JCB bulldozers. The JCB brand machinery has been utilized as a weapon in a hate campaign against Muslims, naming it as Jihad Control Board Bulldozers. Global experts on genocide have declared that the Indian government has supervised the genocide and India is currently in stage 10 of a genocide against Mus-Under Modi's fascist

dictatorship, India's Press

Freedom Index ranking fell to its lowest point in history in 2023 (161 out of 180 countries). Freedom House, a US based democracy watchdog, downgraded India from a free democracy to a "partially free democracy." Similarly, the Swedish-based V-Dem Institute described the country as an "electoral autocracy." These numbers show that, under the Modi government, censorial nationalism jeopardizes free speech. The implementation of CAA by the Modi regime has been driven by political motives, particularly aimed at garnering support for the 2024 elections. It reflects a concerning trend towards discriminatory policies that marginalize Muslims. This, coupled with reports of attacks on minorities, suppression of press freedom, and erosion of democratic institutions, underscores the need for urgent corrective action to uphold India's secular values and ensure the protection of all citizens' rights.

The columnist is an Mphil scholar from Quaid i Azam University and a freelance writer. She can be reached at ma<u>riamansab@ir.qau.edu.pk</u> | ters of seats in parliament

Gender parity

Shazia Nizamani Pakistan ranks low on the Gender Gap Index in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, 2023. On women's political empowerment, it ranked 95th out of 146 countries, with only a handful of women occupying senior, managerial, policy- and decision-making posts. The main factors preventing women from achieving gender parity in politics are a patriarchal system, systemic gender discrimination, socioeconomic disparity, and hidebound cultural

The Constitution is clear that "there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone" and that 'steps shall be taken to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of national life". Besides, Pakistan is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which obligates governments to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life", including in elections. Pakistan's women constitute almost half of the population, but their share in parliament is just 20 per cent. The gender gap also exists among

Women's participation and representation in the political process is a fundamental principle of democracy, and it is a prerequisite for gender-sensitive and gender-responsive governance. Ensuring the latter is only possible by increasing the number of women in policy- and decision-making positions and providing them with a conducive and womenfriendly environment. According to UN Women, "in the last 25 years, women's political representation has doubled globally. Even then, more than three-quar-

are still held by men". Pakistan is making small but significant efforts to narrow the gender gap in the country's political pro-cess. For instance, reforms were introduced in the Elections Act, 2017, to address some of the concerns pertaining to women's exclusion from the electoral process, and to ensure their active participation, which included mandating that at least five per cent of each political party's nominated candidates for elections be women; election results be nullified in any constituency where women's turnout was below 10pc; etc. The Election Commission of Pakistan first released gender-disaggregated turnout statistics in the 2018

According to a voter turnout assessment report by the Free and Fair Election Network (Fafen), which was released soon after the general election last month, "the targeted initiatives have reduced the overall gender gap on the voter rolls between male and female voters from 12.4 million in 2018 to 9.9m in 2024"

However, women's turnout remained 43pc as compared to 52pc for males. The major political parties had nominated 280 women candidates, representing 4.64pc of the total 6,037 candidates, while the number of independent women candidates was 614. Twentyseven women candidates won national and provincial seats in the general elec-

Fafen said: "According to the available data, as many as 24.05 women cast their votes in 254 NA constituencies as compared to 34.02 men in the same constituencies" and that "as many as 2.3m more women turned out to vote in 2024 as compared to 2018, when 21.7m women had cast their -- Courtesy votes".

Maryam accords approval to reconstitute education council

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif presided over a meeting regarding the School Education department.

It was decided to reconstitute the School Education Council during the meeting. Approval was also granted to undertake restructuring of the Punjab Curriculum Wing.

CM directed to restore morning assembly in the government schools. On the direction of CM, tetra milk will be provided in the schools in order to meet dietary needs of the students. This pilot project will be launched in the schools of district Rajanpur and flavoured milk will be provided with the cooperation of Engro Foods. Maryam Nawaz directed to launch provision of milk project for the students across the province. She expressed her concern over the affairs of Punjab Text Book and Curriculum Board.

She expressed her indignation over delay being caused for the provision of curriculum

books to the students.CM sought a comprehensive plan to transfer the schools across Punjab on solar start afternoon classes and evening coaching centers in the government schools was also reviewed.

the appointment of CEO. international standard.

initiate all possible steps for the revival of better and energy. The proposal to quality education in the government schools across Punjab adding that it is the right of every child studying in the government CM directed to schools to acquire ensure implementation on education according to the

Health card to be relaunched in 3 months: CM Maryam

Independent Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has promised that no poor person will be deprived of his right to free treatment. She was chairing a special meeting on relaunch of the health insurance scheme in Punjab on Thursday. She added, "We want to provide the best medical facilities to common man."

The CM added: "Health card is a project of

Pakistan Muslim League-N. We want to re-launch it in a sustainable manner." She directed the authorities concerned to form a working group to make health card more effective, and present a workable plan in this regard in 3 months. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, former Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Provincial Minister for Specialised Healthcare and Medical Education Khawaja Salman Rafique, Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health Khawaja Imran Nazir, Chief Secretary, Chairman P&D, Secretary Health, Secretary Finance and other relevant officers attended the meeting



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz presiding over a meeting regarding School Education.

KPCM for relaunching of billion tree project

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has directed the concerned authorities to finalize modalities for relaunching Billion Tree Plus project in the province.Presiding over a meeting of the Department of Forests, Environment and Wildlife at Chief Minister House Peshawar, he said that it was as an important Motorway in which he was initiative to increase the given a detailed briefing on forest area in the province, said a press release issued here Thursday. The CM directed the concerned authorities to prepare a concrete and workable action plan to stop deforestation and increase the revenue of the department.He directed the wildlife department to prepare proposals and action plans for the promotion of fisheries.În order to prevent illegal cutting of trees and deforestation in the province, the CM directed to revise the existing rate of fines and increase to such an extent that the amount of fines

value of the timber axed

installation of CCTV cameras at check posts to keep a close watch on timber smuggling.

Matters related to the implementation scientific management of forests were also discussed in the meeting. Meanwhile, the Chief

Minister also presided over a meeting regarding the Peshawar-DI the progress on the project, the total cost and the proposed installment.

The CM directed the concerned authorities to consider the option of constructing Motorway on BOT mode (Built Operate Transfer).

Apart from Provincial Forest Minister Fazal Hakeem, Chief Minister's Principal Secretary Amjad Ali Khan, Forest Secretary Nazar Hussain Shah and senior officials of the Forest Department attended the meeting.

The Chief Minister was given a detailed briefing on department's should be higher than the administrative matters, performance, targets and



PESHAWAR: Deep fog covers the horizon of city creating problems for commuters and which cause increasing cold waves during the winter season, at GT road in Peshawar.

Federal Ombudsman regional office resolves NHA employee complaint

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Federal Ombudsman region secretariat's intervention has led to the recovery of an amount exceeding 6 lakh rupees for a complainant of Shoaib Yousuf.

According to the details, a complaint was highlighted the pivotal role lodged against the National Authority (NHA) regarding payment defaults Rs. 674000. Upon receiving the complaint, the Regional Office promptly issued a notice concerned department.

During the hearing, the NHA authorities informed that fifty percent of the total claimed amount has already been paid to the complainant and rest of the amount would be paid within a month. The complainant expressed doorstep

gratitude to the Federal Ombudsman's office for resolving the longstanding

Abdul Ghafor Baig the In-charge of the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat Abbottabad, the

Ombudsman's office in resolving grievances. He emphasized the ongoing collaborative efforts across federal and provincial departments to address mismanagement and ensure the protection of citizens' rights, striving to deliver solutions to their problems to the best of their abilities. Ghafor Baig also underscored Federal Ombudsman Ijaz Ahmed Qureshi's commitment to delivering justice at every

Injured ASI of **Machni Gate** firing attack died in hospital

PESHAWAR (APP): The injured ASI Mazhar Khan who was undergoing treatment in a private hospital in Peshawar lost his life due to critical injuries he received during the firing attack over Machni Gate by the terrorist two-day earlier.

According to details, the incident of terrorist attack on police over Machni Gate Peshawar were martyred and one ASI was injured critically in the attack. The injured ASI Mazhar Khan was undergoing treatment in a private hospital in Peshawar, the Police official said. Two days ago, terrorists attacked the police team in Machni Gate, two policemen were martyred and one other injured in the attack, the

Police official said. The funeral prayer of the martyr will be offered with official honors at 5:30 pm on Thursday in Police Line Peshawar.

PHC orders removal of Qadri's name from ECL

ESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court on Thursday issued an order to remove the name of former Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Noor ul Haq Qadri from the Exit Control List (ECL).

A two-member bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Waqar Ahmed conducting the hearing on the petition filed by Noor ul Haq Qadri for the removal of his name from

Sikander Hayat Shah Advocate, the lawyer of the petitioner said Noor ul Haq Qadri wanted to go to Saudi Arabia on an official invitation from the Saudi government but he couldn't travel abroad since his name was included in ECL.

The court accepted the request and ordered the removal of the name of the petitioner from the ECL.

Kazi Nazir posted as IG **Prisons Sindh**

KARACHI (APP): Kaz Nazir, Deputy Inspector General Prisons and Correction Service (BS-20), Headquarters Karachi was transferred and posted as Inspector General Prisons and Correction Service with immediate effect.

According notification, Kazi Nazir was posted as IG Prisons vice Syed Munawar Ali Shah transfered and directed to report to Home department.

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali presiding over 136th Senate meeting of University of Peshawar.

Governor inaugurates foreign faculty hostel in Islamia College

PESHAWAR **K**hyber Governor Pakhtunkhwa, Ghulam Ali here Thursday visited Islamia College

Peshawar and inaugurated

foreign faculty hostel. Vice Chancellor Islamia College, Professor Gul Majeed and faculty members were also present on the occasion. The governor was told that hostel was constructed with the financial assistance of higher

with an estimated cost of Rs. 50 million.

Independent Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa Minister for

Environment, Climate

Change, Forests and Wildlife Fazal Hakeem

Khan Yousafzai has said

that climate change emerged

a global challenge and, in

this regard, strengthening

department and improving

the system are among the

top priorities of the

introductory meeting of

Department at his office,

Civil Secretariat, here on

Provincial Environment

Secretary Syed Nazar

Hussain Shah and sectional

heads of the department

gave detailed briefings to

On this occasion,

Thursday.

He was addressing the

incumbent government.

environment

Énvironment

education commission

hostel has 16 rooms having all the needed

KP Governor also directed to construct the entrance gate of the college keeping in view its historic importance and announced support to beautify garden of foreign faculty hostel.

Vice Chancellor Islamia College also presented annual report of the institution and a souvenir to the governor.

Governor also chaired 136th Senate meeting of University of Peshawar (UoP) in Governor House. He was told that The meeting was also

the provincial minister

efforts to address climate

change challenges

annual

districts.

progress

attended by Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan, Vice Chancellor, Professor Muhammad Salim and concerned officials of finance, higher education

establishment

The approved development budget of varsity, new candidates of planning committee, statutes for management solutions, upgrading of zoology department to Institute of Zoological Sciences and

department.

experience relaxation to appoint four professors. Minister calls for collective

Nine dead, **1,180** injured in Punjab road accidents **Independent Report**

LAHORE: At least nine

regarding the performance. people were killed and At the meeting, details were also given to ,180 others injured in 1,123 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 558 people with serious injuries were shifted to the provincial minister about the ongoing and new development program and Accelerated I m p l e m e n t a t i o n different hospitals, while Programme (AIP) schemes 622 victims with minor of the department. There injuries were treated at the was also a discussion on incident site by the rescue the development projects medical teams. The analysis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's showed that 668 drivers, 34 underage drivers, 153 settled and merged pedestrians, and 368 The Forest Minister passengers were among the was also apprised of the victims of road crashes. on other The statistics show that important issues of the 261 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 273 people, department including Fisheries, New Forests, Watershed, Guzara Forest, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Faisalabad with 84 accidents and 87 KP Forest Ordinance 2002 and KP Forest Carbon



KP Forest Policy 1999,

Muhammad Tanveer Khan, MNA Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, MNA Muhammad Hanif Abbasi and others holding a press conference in connection with the murder of Chaudhry Adnan.

Deputy Speaker asks officials to provide ration bags at doorsteps

BAHAWALPUR (APP): departments were also Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal Chanar has stated that under the Nigehban Ramadan Package, all necessary measures will be taken to provide ration bags to deserving individuals at their doorsteps throughout the district as per the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He expressed these views in a meeting held at the Circuit House. MPA Malik Khalid Mahmood Waran, MPA Dr. Rana Muhammad Tariq Khan, Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Assistant Commissioners,

present at the occasion. Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, Malik Zaheer Iqbal Chanar, while overseeing the provision of food hampers to deserving individuals under the Ramadan Package, emphasized the need to expedite the delivery of the Ramadan Package.

Rana MPA Dr. Muhammad Tariq stated that while considering the dignity of deserving individuals, the provision of ration bags at their doorstep should be ensured. MPA Malik Khalid Mahmood Waran emphasized the need to achieve the objectives of the Ramadan Package

ANF recovers 46 kg drugs in 3 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP) Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting three operations managed to recover 46 kg drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here Thursday.

He informed that 460 heroin was grams recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Karachi Airport.

21.6 kg of hashish were recovered from Faisalabad while 4 kg weed was recovered from two suspects arrested from Zarghon Road area in Quetta.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.



KARACHI: A large number of needy people are being serving Iftar at Chhipa

Health Minister hosts E-Kacheri to address public concerns

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister of Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah presided over the first E-Kachehri live session on Thursday alongside Health Secretary Mahmood Aslam Wazir through social media website.

While addressing the session, the minister said that engaging with the public through social media platforms is a sign of good governance and it bridges the gap between the government and its public. During the session,

Minister Shah personally responded to queries and concerns raised by the

Several key officials including Director General Health Dr. Shaukat Ali, Chief HSRU Dr. Khalil, Director General Drugs Dr. Abbas, Director General IMU Dr. Ijaz, Director Public Health Dr. Arshad Roghani, CEO Sehat Sahulat Program Initiative

Dr. Riaz Tanoli, and other relevant stakeholders were also present on the

The session received around fifteen questions regarding health services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Teaching Institutions (KP MTIz), most of which were addressed directly by Minister Qasim Ali Shah, while inquiries regarding specific matters were directed to the relevant authorities.

Health Secretary Mahmood Aslam Wazir highlighted at the onset of the session that addressing public complaints through social media platforms is an integral part of their professional responsibilities.

Queries received regarding the Directorate General Health Services amounted to 20, with comprehensive responses provided by Dr. Shaukat Ali during the session.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah talking to media persons, at Sindh Assembly

IGP chairs meeting on 'Tahaffuz Darsgah' for transgenders education

Independent Report Inspector AHORE: General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that 'Tahaffuz Darsgah' is the first of its kind institution in Pakistan for quality education and vocational training of transgender children, which will meet the educational

citizen of society. He expressed these presiding over a meeting on professional affairs of the Tahaffuz Darsgah at the Central 1 c... on Thursday. Central Police Office, here

needs of transgender

children and help them

transform into a better

establishment of Tahaffuz Darsgah is right step for the bright future of transgender children, admission, appointments of hostel warden, principal and teachers should be completed at the earliest.

He directed that Victim Support Officers of DPOs and District Protection Centers transgender children from their areas for education. He said the Punjab Police were grateful for the support and cooperation

of UK Curriculum &

Accreditation Body, a charitable British organisation, establishing the Tahaffuz Darsgah. The IGP said residence would also be views on Thursday while provided to children who are rejected by their families due to being transgenders in the Tahaffuz Darsgah.

In the meeting, ASP Syeda Shaherbano Naqvi gave a briefing to IG Punjab about the Tahaffuz Darsgah project. Senior officers including DIG Welfare Ghazi Muhammad Salahuddin and SSP Operations Lahore Ali Raza also participated.



Kumar, Urologist Dr Naveed Akbar and others participate in an awareness walk on World Kidney Day at Shah Bhitai Hospital Latifabad.

Health minister urges healthy lifestyle on **World Kidney Day**

prevalence of kidney diseases in Pakistan, Punjab Minister for Specialised Healthcare and Education Medical Khawaja Salman Rafique has emphasised the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Speaking at an awareness walk, organised by the Punjab Human Organ Transplantation Authority (PHOTA) on World Kidney Day on Thursday, he highlighted the need for increased awareness and preventive measures against kidney ailments.

Congratulating PHOTA for organising the event, Minister Salman

LAHORE (APP): In a bid Rafique underscored the to combat the rising urgency of addressing the escalating burden of kidney diseases in the country. He pledged to enhance efforts to strengthen PHOTA's initiatives and improve dialysis facilities across Punjab. Reflecting on the vision of PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif, the minister reiterated the commitment to providing top-notch medical services to patients grappling with kidney ailments through institutions like the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI). The minister promised that stringent measures would be taken to carry out a crackdown on illegal organ trafficking

PM made strategy for Rural, Urban centers: Musadiq Malik

Petroleum Musadiq Malik Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has made a strategy for development in Urban

centers, farmers were needing water, seeds and fertilizer, therefore the PM has decided to ensure to provide fertilizer on subsidized rates to the

Secondly,

ISLAMABAD (APP): government will provide would be a start of green required will invite master imported seeds to the revolution in the country. farmers so they can on Thursday said that increase production. To resolve the issue of water, the government provide asked to provide small solar tube wells to the loans to youth and Small and Rural Centers across farmers meet the medium enterprises (SMS) requirements

He said as for cultivation, . He said if all development in rural these three ingredients are these three ingredients are growth will largely

said government will also encourage the farmers to make small agricultural intelligence. industrial farms and this

For urban centers, the

prime minister has directed that the banks must be for their businesses.

He government has decided to provided to the farmers, his organizes "Boot Camps" to train the fresh students the universities so they can compete at international level in the field of artificial

The government if

train the children, said Malik adding the PM has strictly asked to make a sustainable progamme.

He said the government has decided to open schools following the model of Danish School to provide free of cost education to the intelligent students from poor segment of society.

The government will send those bright students to the world's top class universities for education at government's expense.

Independent Report

AHORE: There is

surplus wheat available in

the market and the

administration should keep

a close watch on the

supply of good quality

The cabinet committee will soon

finalize the policy regarding the distribution

which the applications for

the distribution of bardana

will be received. Wheat

procurement campaign will

be fully transparent and

expressed by Punjab Food

Minister Bilal Yasin while

presiding over a meeting at

the Darbar Hall of Civil

Secretariat here on

These views were

merit will be ensured.

'bardana' per acre after

wheat at fixed price.

Surplus wheat available

in market: Minister Bilal



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation, Abdul Aleem Khan chairing a meeting with the

financial advisors for divestment of PIACL.

ISLAMABAD: Federal secretary Ministry of National Food security and Research, Capt (R) Muhammad Asif chairs 4th Steering Committee of

Steering Committee meeting held to enhance country's olive sector

Committee meeting for the "OliveCulture - Holistic and Multi-professional Mechanism for a Pakistani Olive Oil Value Chain" Project convened here on Thursday, marking another significant step towards Project with the close project's enhancing country's olive

The meeting was chaired by Federal Secretary of the Ministry of National Food Security & Research, Capt. ® Muhammad Asif and cochaired by Ambassador of Italian and Pakistani Italy in Pakistan Marilina experts is deemed essential impact.

ISLAMABAD (APP): State Minister for IT and

Telecommunication Shaza

Secretary IT Hassan Nasir Jamy, Additional Secretary Aisha Humera

Moriani, and senior officers of the Ministry of

State Minister for IT

briefed on NITB,

PSEB programs

Fatima Khawaja on Majeed Bhatti briefed the

Thursday briefed the National Information Technology Board (NITB) and Pakistan Software Technology Board (NITB) The meeting was also

briefed while chairing a Board (PSEB) working and meeting held at the programs. The PSEB

committee room of authorities told the Ministry IT said a press meeting that over 6,000 IT

IT were present at the interest in these STPs.

Steering served as a platform for strategic discussions and olive oil production. collaborative efforts, said a press release.

expressed her appreciation notable and commendable pace acknowledged and valued. The partnership between

Information Technology

Board (NITB) Babar

The meeting was also

meeting that over 6,000 IT

companies are registered with the Board, and a total

of 43 software technology

parks (STPs) have been

established throughout the

country. Currently, 357 IT/

ISLAMABAD (APP): Armellin, the meeting for nurturing olive cultivation and enhancing Without this fruitful

collaboration, Marilina Armellin objectives of the project would be unattainable. towards the work done so Capt. ® Muhammad Asif far by the OliveCulture expressed that the significant cooperation of the success in Pakistan owes Ministry and the much to Italian provinces. She said the collaboration. While Pakistan's environment is maintained inherently conducive to throughout the project was olive cultivation, prior government engagements at provincial and federal levels were limited in their

announce ticket booking office hour in Ramazan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has announced the ticket booking office hours during the holy month of Ramazan-ul-Mubarak to facilitate the passengers.

According to the spokesman of Pakistan Export Board (PSEB). apprised about the The minister was Pakistan Software Export Railways, the ticket booking offices would be open from 8 am to 1 pm Monday through Thursday during the first

15 days the holy month. The spokesman said the travelers could book tickets for the afternoon shift Monday through Friday between 1 and 6pm. He said there would

be a Friday prayer break from 12:30 to 2:00 pm.To facilitate the passenger, he said after the 15th of Ramazan, the reservation office would be open till 9 pm with Iftar break.

Rupee gains 01 paisa against dollar

SLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday gained 01 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.77 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.78.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 278.9 and Rs

prices and ng process were close at Rs 304.89 against the last day's closing of Rs 304.47, according to the State Bank of Pakistan

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.88. procurement for the year 2024 should be finalized soon, which will be approved by the Cabinet Committee.

Bilal Yasin said that

Director Food Lt ®

Muhammad Shoaib Khan,

DG Food Authority Asim

Javed, Cane Commissioner

Punjab Abdul Rauf were

present on this occasion

while all Deputy Director

Foods from across Punjab

participated in the meeting

Bilal Yasin in his address

directed that a policy

regarding the wheat

Punjab Food Minister

through video link.

PLRA, PITB and all related departments are being taken on board for the purchase of wheat and a toll-free complaint number will be given for immediate



ISLAMABAD: French Deputy Head of Mission (Guillaume Dabouis) calls on Minister for Petroleum & Power, Dr. Musadiq Masood Malik.

Pakistan's seafood exports to China up 13% in 2023

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's seafood exports to China increased by 13% in 2023 compared to the previous year. The rise is due to the growing demand for seafood products in China, a trend that has been steadily increasing over the past few years, said Ghulam Qadir, Investment and Trade Counsellor at the Pakistan

Embassy in Beijing.
Qadir noted that
Pakistan's seafood exports
to China reached \$247.3 million, marking a 13% increase for the January-December period in 2023 year-on-year. In 2022 exports were valued at \$219.3 million, while in 2021, they stood at \$139.29 million, as per data from the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of

China (GACC).

factors, such as improved trade relations between the participation in the China Fisheries & Seafood Expo held in Qingdao last year by a large group of Pakistani fisheries companies, and the implementation of efficient supply chain management strategies in the Pakistani seafood industry. This positive development has contributed to the overall economic growth and strengthened the ties

Economic Net (CEN) that, according to GACC, exports of frozen fish (commodity code 03038990) crossed \$60.63 million in 2023. Fresh/ chilled crabs (commodity code 03063399) saw an

between Pakistan and China, the counsellor elaborated. Oadir informed China

This growth can be increase to \$42.59 million, attributed to various up from \$27.26 million.

Implementation of 5 Es

one day workshop was made during the meeting with top officials of the ministry, to gather recommendations from experts including from academia and the private sector, said press statement issued by the

devised for the implementation of the 5 Es (Export Energy, Equity, E-

meeting of Ramzan Package Monitoring Ministerial Committee

Federal Minister for so that long-term policies Planning, Development can be formulated for and Special Initiatives, implementation in these

> The Ministry of Planning, under the leadership of Ahsan Iqbal had formulated 5 Es Framework during the tenure of previous government which was also approved by the National Economic Council (NEC).

> Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Iqbal said that it was top responsibility of the Planning Commission to determine the economic developmental

President of Iran's visit could seal free trade agreement: Envoy

Ambassador of Ìran to Pakistan, Dr . Reza Amiri Moghadam on Thursday said that there is a strong possibility that the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will be finalized in the upcoming visit of the President of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi to

Pakistan. He said that from the ambassador said that the several bilateral economic and trade agreements between the two countries. He said that the agreements will further strengthen the mutual economic and trade relations along with promoting the bilateral

Kyrgyz

honorary consul

felicitated

LAHORE (APP): SAARC

Chamber of Commerce and

Younis on his appointment

Malik said that it is

recognition of Younis

remarkable achievements

and dedication to fostering

international relations and

praised his commitment to

serving as a bridge between

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Pakistan's global outreach

and promoting economic

collaboration with other

countries. He hoped that Meher Kashif Younis

He emphasised the significance of such appointments in enhancing

through

Punjab province.

Dr. Reza

Moghadam made these remarks during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) at the invitation of President ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri here on Thursday.

upcoming visit of the current bilateral trade Iranian president to volume between Pakistan Pakistan, there will be and Iran is \$2.5 billion, which has increased by 11 percent in the last 11 months. He said that after the

FTA and bilateral agreements between the two governments for the promotion of mutual trade, Turkey, Turkmenistan.

ISLAMABAD (APP): business between the two there is a strong possibility of doubling the mutual trade between Pakistan and Iran to reach \$5 billion in

the next few years. He said that the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline is a huge facility for the people of Pakistan on behalf of the government of Iran, which will benefit both the domestic and industrial sectors of Pakistan. He said that Iran completed its section of the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline in 2009 at a cost of \$1 billion, bringing it to Pakistan's border to help resolve the country's energy problems. Iranian Envoy said that Iran is already trading with

CCP authorizes acquisition of 'Pakistani Microfinance Bank by Dutch Company'

Industry former president Iftikhar Ali Malik Thursday greeted leading businessman Meher Kashif ISLAMABAD (APP): microfinance banking Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the as the honorary consul of Kyrgyzstan in Lahore including the territory of acquisition of Advans Pakistan Microfinance Bank Limited by a Dutchbased holding company, MNT-Halan Pak B.V. This transaction marks a significant development in the microfinance banking sector of Pakistan.

Microfinance Bank Limited

operating

sector of Pakistan, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

involves the purchase of 100% shareholding of Advans Microfinance Bank Limited from Advans S.A SICAR Luxembourg-based

financial company. Following a MNT – Halan Pak B.V. is a holding company thorough review of the premerger application, the incorporated in the CCP determined that there Netherlands, with a are no overlaps between presence in Pakistan the merging parties, and the through its subsidiaries, market conditions will Halan Wallet (Private) remain unchanged post-Limited and Halan Finance merger. The approval of Limited. On the other hand, this acquisition is Advans Pakistan significant for Pakistan's microfinance banking is a public limited company sector, which plays a the crucial role in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Shaza Fatima Khawaja Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication chairs briefing on NITB projects.

Shipping activity at **Port Qasim**

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, LNGC Fuwairit, Khairpur and Spar Octans, carrying LNG, Gasoline and Coal, boothed at a PCPCI berthed at PGPCL Terminal, Terminal and Pakistan International Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile another ship Trans Sprig with Steel Coil also arrived at outeranchorage of the Port Qasim on Thursday.

A total of seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Olympia, Maersk Cape Town and Rhine left the Port on today morning, while two more ships Eagle and Khairpur are expected to sail Thursday afternoon. Cargo volume of 168,741 comprising 132,836 tonnes imports cargo and 35,905 tonnes export cargo carried

in 3039 Containers.

Ghee manufacturers announce reduction of Rs 15 per kg in ghee price

LAHORE Provincial Minister for Chaudhry Shafay Hussain on Thursday chaired a Chairman of Pakistan Vanaspati Manufacturers Association, Muneeb Mannu, announced a reduction of Rs 15 per kg in the prices of ghee across Punjab, which would be applicable from today.

On this occasion, Minister Shafay Hussain said that he welcomes the manufacturers to reduce provincial the prices in the holy minister.

Industry and Commerce instructions of Chief Minister Punjab, every necessary step is being meeting in which the delegation led by Vice the people. He assured to solve the problems of ghee manufacturers on priority basis and said that a meeting would be held after Ramadan to resolve the

Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Minister for Agriculture Ashiq Hussain Kirmani said that a meeting would decision of ghee be arranged between the

issues of the association.

PSX turns bullish, gains 1,015 points

The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 1,015.82 points, a positive change of 1.59, closing at 65,064.27 points against 64,048.44 points the previous trading day.

A total of 315,247,601 shares valuing Rs.10.487 billion were traded during the day as compared to 252,751,968 shares valuing Rs.9.247 billion the last day.

ISLAMABAD (APP): transacted their shares in the stock market; 248 of them recorded gains and 72 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 16 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCal Telecom with 42,747,519 shares at Rs 1.35 per share, Cnergyico PK with 36,111,224 shares with 5.09 per share and Kohinoor Spinning with 19,583,000 shares at Rs

4.79 per share.
Mari Petroleum Some 336 companies Company Limited.

rims before selling at his workplace near Shoba **Shafay reviews** implementation on Ramadan Relief Package

PESHAWAR: Youngster busy in washing alloy

Independent Report LAHORE: Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain chaired the meeting of ministerial formed committee regarding the monitoring of Ramadan relief package, held at the Civil Secretariat.

Provincial Ministers Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman, Bilal Yasin, Azma Bokhari, Ashiq Hussain Kirmani and the concerned secretaries attended the meeting. While the divisional commissioners participated in the meeting through video link.

In the meeting, implementation Ramadan package, availability of essential monitoring process were reviewed and the proposal for establishing trucking points for the sale of tomato was agreed. The pilot project of making trucking points will be started from Lahore. It was also decided to increase shopping counters in Ramadan and model convenience of the people.

Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain while addressing the meeting said that on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, delivery of Ramadan package is going on at people's doorsteps.

Framework accelerated ISLAMABAD (INP): Environment) Framework

LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Trade and Industry Chaudhry Shafay Hussain presiding over a

Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday chaired a meeting to expedite the implementation of the 5 Es Framework.

Decision to organize

Pakistan, and

ministry. determine the econ and developme agenda would also be priorities accurately.

He said that in order to move forward, there was need to increase revenues and boost exports.

Kremlin says Putin didn't threaten to use nuclear weapons, US took him out of context

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Thursday that comments on nuclear weapons that Russian President Vladimir Putin made in an interview with state media did not constitute a threat to use them and accused the US of deliberately taking the remarks out of context.Putin said in the

interview published on Wednesday that Russia was technically ready for nuclear war and that if the US sent troops to Ukraine, it would be considered a significant escalation of the conflict.

House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre told renorters that Washington

trine, but accused Russia thing out of context. Putin of deploying "reckless and made no threats about the irresponsible" nuclear rhetoric throughout the this interview. The presi-Ukraine conflict.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday that Putin had merely been answering a journalist's questions on the subject and restating the already well-known circumstances in which Russia would theoretically be forced to use nuclear weapons.

Peskov also drew same interview that the Commenting on idea of using tactical Putin's words, White nuclear weapons in Ukraine had never the fighting. crossed his mind. "This is a deliberate

use of nuclear weapons in dent was just talking about the reasons that could make the use of nuclear weapons inevitable.

'These are the reasons that are stated in our relevant documents, which are well known throughout the world. Moreover, everyone in the West deliberately failed to notice his words that it had never occurred attention to the fact that to him to use tactical Putin had said in the nuclear weapons [in Ukraine], despite the various situations that have developed in the course of

Asked about the distortion of the context



very few remaining UNRWA distribution centres in the Gaza Strip comes as food supplies are running out, hunger is widespread and in some areas turning into fam-

The health ministry in Gaza said four people were killed in the "bombing of the warehouse", as Israeli strikes for past five months has caused mass civilian deaths, reduced vast areas to a rubblestrewn wasteland and sparked warnings of looming famine in the Palestinian territory of 2.4 the attack on one of the million people.

Biden govt bypasses Congress to approve weapons for Ukraine Monitoring Desk field and resistance to th

Israel strikes UN's

United States will send a new military aid package for Ukraine worth \$300 million, President Joe Biden's administration said on Tuesday, the first such move in months as additional funds for Kyiv

tion centre in eastern part

of Rafah," the UN agency

said. The agency's chief

Philippe Lazzarini said

The White House has been scrambling to find ways to send more military assistance given the situation on the battle-

remain blocked by Re-

publican leaders in Con-

field and resistance to the funding from Republican hardliners

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said the funding was coming from unanticipated cost savings from Pentagon contracts and would be used for artillery rounds and munitions for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems

"This ammunition will keep Ukraine's guns firing for a period, but only a short period," Sullivan told reporters.

Second ship loaded with Gaza aid from Cyprus, says charity

Monitoring Desk NICOSIA: A second ship with food aid to Gaza was being loaded in Cyprus, a charity arranging the mission said on Thursday, as the first ship in a pilot trial of maritime deliveries neared the besieged Pales-

tinian enclave. World Central Kitchen (WCK) said it was loading a vessel at Larnaca port with 300 tonnes of food aid - including legumes, canned tuna, vegetables, rice and

US, UN voice concern about India's law on citizenship Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The US government and the United Nations expressed concerns on Tuesday about a contentious religion-based citizenship law in India, with the UN calling the legislation "fundamentally discriminatory in nature". Rights advocates have criticised the 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act, which the Indian government moved to implement on Monday. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International said it discriminates against

video released by the Russian navy showed the ongoing drill, known as "Marine Security Belt 2024." China sent the guided-GAZA STRIP: A man salvages items from the rubble of the Al-Atrash family

missile destroyer Ürumqi and the guided-missile frigate Linyi to the exercise. Russia's forces are being led by the Varyag, a Slava-class More than 20 ships, support vessels and com-

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: China, Iran and

Russia have begun a joint

naval drill in the Gulf of

Oman, a crucial waterway

near the mouth of the Per-

sian Gulf, officials said

nese state television and a

Footage aired by Chi-

bat boats from the three countries, as well as naval helicopters, are involved in the exercise.

A report by Iranian state television quoted the observers of the drill.

drill in the Gulf of Oman drill's spokesperson, Adm. Mostafa Tajaddini, as saying the drill will take place in 17,000 square kilometers (6,600 square miles) of wa-

Iran, Russia and China show

off their ships in a joint naval

Tajaddini added that the three nations' drill their fourth since 2019 was also meant to improve trade, confront "piracy and terrorism, support to humanitarian activities and the exchange of information in the field of rescue," among other goals.

Iran has stepped up its military cooperation with Beijing and Moscow in response to regional tensions with the United States, including due to supplying military denos to Russia now being used in Moscow's war on Ukraine.

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan and South Africa are

North Korea's Kim test drives a new tank and orders troops to prepare for war

Monitoring Desk SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un joined troops training on a new model of tank and drove one himself, state media reported Thursday, as his rivals South Korea and the U.S. wrapped up their annual military exercises. It's the third time Kim was reported to have observed military exercises since the start of the 11-day South Korean-U.S. exercises, which he views as rehearsals for an invasion. That's a less provocative option than missile tests. North Korea has intensified launches since

2022 and ramped up belligerent rhetoric this year. At the tank drills Wednesday, Kim praised the country's latest tank as "the world's most powerful" and told his troops to bolster their "fighting spirits" and complete "preparations for war," according to the official Korean Cen-

spected recently were dedicated to artillery firing and

maneuvering exercises. The tank was first unveiled during a military parade in 2020, and its rolling during Wednesday's drill indicates that it's ready to be deployed, South Korean ex-perts say. Photos of the tank released by North Korea shows it has a launch tube for missiles, a weapons systems the former Soviet Union already operated in the 1970s. The new tank could pose a threat to South Korea, said Yang Uk, an analyst at Asan Institute for Policy Studies, but it remains to be seen whether it can be mass produced. The North's Defense Ministry last week threatened "responsible military activities" in reaction to the South Korea-U.S. military training, which involved a computersimulated command post training and 48 kinds of field tral News Agency. The other two drills he in- conducted last spring.

Republic Of Congo reports its first mpox virus cases, in several regions

Monitoring Desk BRAZZAVILLE: The Republic of Congo has recorded its first cases of mpox in several regions, the health ministry said, an indication of how the disease may be spreading across Africa since sexual transmission was first confirmed

on the continent last year. Mpox is a virus that originates in wild animals and occasionally jumps to people, who can spread it to others. The virus was previously known as monkeypox, because it was first seen in research mon-

The World Health Organization said in November it had confirmed sexual transmission of mpox in neighboring Congo for the first time. African scientists warned this could make the disease difficult to contain.

The Republic of Congo's health ministry published its report on Wednesday. The report said some 43 cases had been reported to the ministry, in-cluding in nine out of the other parts of the continent.

country's 12 departments. The government has not issued any further comment on the publication, which was not officially distributed to the media and appears to have been intended for internal use. Mpox became a focus

of worldwide concern during an international outbreak in 2022 that saw the disease spread to over 100 countries, mainly by sex among gay or bisexual men. Mpox has been endemic in parts of central and west Africa for decades, but most cases involved infection from rodents, limiting

the spread of the disease. The WHO declared the outbreak a global emergency and there have been over 90,000 cases to date. In Congo, where sexual transmission was first confirmed, it has tracked more than 12,500 cases and 580 deaths, its largest ever outbreak. The WHO previously warned that sexual transmission could mean the disease is spreading in

'Katespiracy' explodes after UK royal photo gaffe

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: The picture was meant to douse speculation about the whereabouts and health of Britain's Catherine, Princess of Wales, but instead her manipulated image unleashed a torrent of internetbreaking rumors and con-

spiracy theories.

The storm in the royal tea pot erupted after Kate, 42, on Monday apologized and admitted to editing a palace-issued photograph of herself with her three children after the altered image was withdrawn by news agencies including

The fiasco gave way to a fresh swirl of speculation about the British royal dubbed online as

"Katespiracy" – laying bare the fragility of the digital landscape in the age of rampant disinformation that has eroded trust and turned social media users into amateur sleuths.

The internet guessing game had already begun after the princess was not seen in public since attending a Christmas Day church service and underwent ab-

dominal surgery in January. Amid a vacuum of information, online posts speculated whether her marriage to William, heir to the British throne, was on the rocks. Others pondered whether Kate was recovering from an eating disorder or the cosmetic procedure known as a Brazilian butt lift - while some wondered whether she were even

Proof of life landed on Sunday, when the palace released a photograph they said was recently snapped by William, but eagle-eyed social media users began tearing it apart for inconsistencies, such as a misaligned zipper on Kate's

The inconsistencies were so clear that several global news agencies, including AFP, pulled the picture from publication.

Then the rumor mill began spinning even faster after the princess declared in a statement that, whoops, she had edited the photograph - without disclosing the reasons for doing so or what she had edited out.



People wait for a bus next to electronic screens on the facade of a building showing an image of Russian President Vladimir Putin and a quote from his address to the Federal Assembly, in Moscow, Russia.

ment for a nation uneasy

doubt that the fall election

will feature a rematch be-

tween two flawed and un-

popular presidents. At 81.

Biden is already the oldest

president in US history, while the 77-year-old

prison as a defendant in

ing two US presidents since 1912 — will almost cer-

tainly deepen the nation's

searing political and cultural

divides over the eight-

month grind that lies ahead.

celebrated the nomination

while casting Trump as a

serious threat to democracy.

has been unable to return

to the shop or the

neighbourhood of the capi-

war, which pits the regular

the paramilitary Rapid

Support Forces (RSF) of

Mohamed Hamdan Daglo

has killed tens of thousands.

displaced millions and re-

duced much of the country's

state, where the RSF holds

Soleiman insists on keep-

In North Kordofar

Mohammed

infrastructure to rubble.

former

The nearly 11-month

In a statement, Biden

Trump, Biden said,

There is no longer any

with its choices in 2024.

Biden and Trump clinch nominations, setting election rematch

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump clinched their parties' presidential nominations on Tuesday with decisive victories in a slate of low-profile primaries, setting up a general election rematch that many voters do not Trump is facing decades in

tests across Georgia, Mississippi and Washington state was never in doubt. Neither Biden, a Democrat, nor Trump, a Republican, faced major opposition. But the magnitude of their wins gave each man the delegate majority he needed to claim his party's nomination at the summertime national conventions.

Not even halfway through the presidential primary calendar, Tuesday

Russian military cargo plane crashes with 15 people on board **Monitoring Desk**

MOSCOW: Russia said one of its Ilyushin Il-76 military cargo planes crashed shortly after takeoff on Tuesday with 15 people on board due to a fire in one of its engines.

Russia's defence ministry said the crash took place in the Ivanovo region. Russian online news services said there were no

four criminal cases. Their rematch — the first featur-Unverified videos on Russian social media networks showed a plane with one engine on fire heading downwards. A dark plume of smoke was shown rising into the sky as a helicopter circled.

Russian media broadcast a video showing the aircraft heading down with at least one of its engines ablaze. The four-engine Il-76 is a heavy-lift transport plane that has been in service since the 1970s with the Soviet and then Russian air force.

Romanian **President Iohannis** to run for NATO leadership

Monitoring Desk BUCHAREST: Romanian President Klaus Iohannis said on Tuesday he has decided to run for NATO's leadership, a position for which many member states support outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark

Rutte. In February, the United States, Britain, France and Germany backed Rutte to succeed Jens Stoltenberg as the head of NATO, putting him in a strong position to win the leadership of the transatlan-

tic alliance.
On Tuesday, however, Iohannis said he will compete for the post, arguing Eastern European states need better representation in Euro Atlantic leadership roles. "The time has come . for our country to take on greater responsibility within euroatlantic leader-

ship structures

Monitoring Desk BATAM: A Japanese man accused of helping to run a \$90 million investment scam will be sent home after four years on the run, Indonesian authorities said Tuesday.

Yusuke Yamazaki, 43, was arrested off Bulan island in Kepulauan Riau province on Jan. 31, while attempting to cross into Malaysia in a small wooden boat, said Nyoman Gede Surya Mataram, who heads the provincial office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. He's expected to be deported by the end of the day.

was handed over to the Immigration Office in Batam on Feb. 2. Yamazaki initially gave a false name and detained on suspicion of visa violations, Mataram said, but police later identified him as an international He was an executive at

Rescue personnel and local residents gather near a firecracker plant follow

four undocumented Indone-

sian migrant workers and

two crew, Mataram said.

The others were detained

by police for further inves-

tigation while Yamazaki

Indonesia to deport Japanese

man accused of role in \$90

million investment fraud

Nishiyama Farm, an Okayama-based company that ran farm tours across Japan and collapsed amid allegations of fraud in Feb-The boat also carried ruary 2019.

SpaceX mega rocket lost in final phase of successful' test flight

Monitoring Desk ROWNSVILLE: Starship, the world's most powerful rocket, flew further and faster than ever before during its third test flight on Thursday, although it was eventually lost as it re-entered the atmosphere over the Indian

Ocean, SpaceX said. Lift-off from the company's Starbase in Boca Chica, Texas came around 8:25am local time (1325 GMT) and was carried live on a webcast that was watched by millions on social media platform X.

The sleek mega rocket is vital to Nasa's plans for landing astronauts on the Moon later this decade and Elon Musk's hopes of colonising Mars someday. "Congrats

@SpaceX on a successful test flight!" tweeted Nasa administrator Bill Nelson following the test. All eyes were on Thursday's launch after two prior attempts ended in spectacular explosions. But that's not necessarily a bad thing: The company has adopted a rapid trial-and-error approach to accelerate development.

lando Hernandez served as president from 2014-2022. **India's Pant** says doctors considered leg

amputation

after car crash

Honduran ex-first

lady seeks presidency

after husband's

conviction

Monitoring Desk
TEGUCIGALPA: A
former Honduran first lady

said she will contest the

2025 presidential elections,

an announcement that fol-

lows days after her

husband's conviction for

trafficking hundreds of tons

of cocaine into the United

States.
"I have decided to

launch my pre-candidacy

for the Presidency of the

Republic for the National Party," Ana Garcia de Hernandez posted on so-cial media platform X on

Tuesday. The lawyer,

whose husband Juan Or-

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Star Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant says that doctors raised the prospect of amputating his leg after the serious car crash that threatened to end his cricket ca-

The 26-year-old is set to play for the Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League starting this month after a 14-month absence following the accident.

He is also in contention for the T20 World Cup in the West Indies and United States.



PORT SUDAN: Sudan this week entered its second straight Ramazan in the throes of a deadly war that has left much of the country gripped by the spectre tal where it once stood.

"Ramazan? We've been doing that for army of General Abdel months!" said Khartoum Fattah al-Burhan against resident Othman Idriss, referring to the daytime fast observed by the faithful during the Muslim holy

"We have been eating one meal a day for months and we no longer even have the means to prepare it ourselves," he told AFP in a phone call.

"They serve it to us in a soup kitchen organised in a mosque.'





People wait for trains at a station in Shijiazhuang.

The Pakistan Ulema Coun-

cil (PUC) is set to lead the

charge in commemorating

the International Day to

Combat Islamophobia on

Friday with a nationwide

campaign in a bid to raise

awareness and foster soli-

darity against discrimina-

This day, designated by the United Nations in

2022, is commemorated in

140 countries on March 15,

worldwide, coinciding with

the anniversary of the

Christchurch mosque shootings, where 51 indi-

viduals lost their lives dur-

Talking to Arab media, PUC Chairman Hafiz

Mehmood Ashrafi under-

scored the alarming rise of

Islamophobia as a global

threat to Muslims. He

urged world powers to ac-

celerate their efforts in

eradicating Islamophobia,

emphasizing the urgent

ing Friday prayers.

Muhammad

tion targeting Muslims.

PUC spearheads nationwide

observance of 'Intl Day to

Combat Islamophobia' today

collective responsibility of

the United Nations, the

Organization of Islamic Co-

operation, and other inter-

national entities to spear-

head initiatives aimed at

eliminating all forms of

discrimination. He em-

phasized the importance

of fostering a culture of

love, tolerance, and coexist-

ence as fundamental pillars

of a harmonious global so-

gravity of the situation and

urgent need for concerted

efforts at both the national

and international levels to

address the scourge of

Islamophobia and uphold

the principles of equality

and mutual respect among

diverse religious communi

holds significant impor-

tance, particularly for the

PUC, which has long been

at the forefront of advocat-

ing for religious tolerance

and understanding.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad

Com-

Ashrafi said the day

Ashrafi underscored

Ahsan Iqbal says:

Govt to start work on five new economic corridors

ISLAMABAD (Online): Minister for Planning, Dévelopment and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal has directed to expedite the implementation on CPEC project as no further hindrance will be tolerated.

He was chairing a meeting to initiate work on the five new corridors in the second phase of CPEC.

During the meeting, a comprehensive briefing was given to the minister on the

progress of CPEC projects. Planning Minister added that Gwadar is the best tourist destination, emphasizing the need for a solid and effective strategy to promote investment in Gwadar. He also directed stakeholders to devise a strategy for increasing Pakistani exports in Chinese markets.

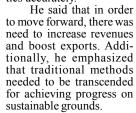
INP adds: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday chaired a meeting to expedite the implementation of the 5 Es

Decision to organize ties accurately. one day workshop was made during the meeting with top officials of the ministry, to gather recommendations from experts including from academia and the private sector, said press statement issued by the ministry.

Additionally, future agenda would also be devised for the implementation of the 5 Es (Export Energy, Equity, E-Pakistan, and Environment) Framework so that long-term policies can be formulated for implementation in these

The Ministry of Planning, under the leadership of Ahsan Igbal had formulated 5 Es Framework during the tenure of previous government which was also approved by the National Economic Council (NEC).

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Iqbal said that it was top responsibility of the Planning Commission to determine the economic taking the entire system and developmental priori- towards new stability



He said, the entire Ministry of Planning will be shifted to a digital system in next six months adding it would fully activate the e-governance system.

Citing examples of Indian and Bangladesh, he reiterated that continuation of policies were prerequisites to lead the country towards stability and development. He said, Pakistan was currently facing economic challenges and highlighted the need to increase revenues and exports.

He said the principles of development have drastically changed worldwide as artificial intelligence, big data, and automation are

PHC directs

the name of former minis-

ter religious affairs Noor ul

Haq Qadri from Exit Con-

According to details, Justice Sahibzada Asadullah

and Justice Waqar Ahmed

of PHC heard the petition

filed against inclusion of

name of PTI leader Noor ul

yer Sikander Hayat Shah

Advocate said that the

name of Noorul Haq Qadri

has been included in the

his client has been invited

by Saudi Arabia and he was

set to leave for KSA at 6

pm today but due to inclu-

sion of his name in ECL, he could not leave for abroad.

India using

children as

human shield

during CASOs

in IIOJK: Wani

The petitioner's law-

The lawyer said that

Haq Qadri in ELC.

trol List (ECL).



UNITED NATIONS

steps up from the 2021/22 ranking, according to a new UN Development Programme (UNDP) report. The HDI is a composite of statistics measuring such factors as per

HDI ranking, Pakistan was placed at 164, amid global fall in development set off by the COVID-19 pan-

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Quetta dis-

trict administration is con-

tinuing its crackdown

against the profiteers in the

metropolis. According to

the official sources, at least

38 shopkeepers were ar-

rested during the crackdown

carried out in different parts

were sealed while a shop

keeper was charged fine on

violation of the official

Similarly, 19 shops

The price control

committees comprising As-

of the metropolis.

profiteers continues; 38

shopkeepers arrested

The first UNDP Hu- tails, yet half of the world's man Development Report (HDR) was prepared and launched in 1990 under the leadership of the late Dr. Mahbubul Haq, a former

The latest report, 'Breaking the gridlock', revealed widening disparities between the haves and the have-nots, despite record high global human develop-

at a new high following steep decline during 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the report said. Rich countries experienced unprecedented development, the Human Development Report de-Crackdown against

magistrates conducted raids

on airport road, Satellite

Town, Nawan Kili, Bacha

Khan chowk, Kasi road,

here that the Commissioner

Hamza Shafqat and Deputy

Commissioner Quetta, Saad

bin Asad had issued special

directives to the price con-

trol teams to take stern ac-

tion against the profiteers.

It may be mentioned

Muhammad

Sariab road and Kuchlak.

poorest nations continue to languish below their pre-COVID crisis levels. India ranked at 132nd

on the HDI index; Sri Lanka: 73rd; Bangladesh: 129th; Maldives: 90; Nepal: 143; Bhutan 127 and Afghani-

Tarar felicitates Gilani on becoming Senator

ISLAMABAD (APP) Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday congratulated former prime minister Syed Yousuf Raza

He said Yousuf Raza Gilani's experience and knowledge would bring positive changes in the po litical and economic land-

need for swift action.

The minister, in a news statement, welcomed the victory of Yusuf Raza Gilani as a Senator and called him a senior and seasoned politician.

scape of the country.



Guard, General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, called on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu here at Air Headquarters on Thursday and praised the exceptional professionalism of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) personnel and the re-

markable progress achieved by the PÂF. During the meeting, various areas of shared interest aimed at bolstering government-to-government nerging technologies emphasis on drone technology

and collaboration within the

mains were discussed, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release

The Air Chief stressed the deep-rooted brotherly relations between both na-

The Commander Bahrain National Guard also visited PAF Cyber Command where he was briefed about the operational capabilities of Pakistan Air Force. Expressing profound interest in the strides made by PAF in the Cyber domain, the visiting dignitary conveyed his intention to dispatch a specialized cooperation in the realm of team to PAF to assess and address any existing gaps within the emerging technologies architecture of the

Cyber and Networking do- Bahrain Armed Forces. PML-N clinches NA-81 after vote recount

GUJRANWALA (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) clinched one more National Assembly seat following a vote recount of 75 polling stations in NA-81

Gujranwala. As per details, PML-N's Azĥar Qayyum requested that the ballots be recounted, and the Returning Officer (RO) granted his request. Following the vote tally, Azhar Qayyum defeated independent candi(PTI), by a margin of 3197 votes. After the recounting, Azhar Qayyum secured 110,057 votes while Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent candidate Bilal Aîjaz bagged got 106,860 votes.

It is pertinent to mention here that earlier Bilal Aijaz was declared the winner with 117,717 votes while the PML-N candidate finished as runner-up with 109,926 votes Agdate Bilal Aijaz, backed by grieved with the results.



ISLAMABAD: Commander Bahrain National Guard, General Shaikh Mohammed Bin Isa Salman Al Khalifa called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar Sidhu Chief of the Air Staff Paki-

EC issues election schedule for 48 vacant seats of Senate

EC will start receiving nomination papers from today (March 15) Voting till

The nomination pa-

19 and voting will take place on April 02.

As per election schedule the appeals against acceptance or rejection of nomination papers can be filed till March 21. Decision on appeal will be announced on March 25.



ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, delivers a speaks to the senior management at the Ministry

Pakistan ranks 161st on UN's **Human Development Index, as** rich-poor nations' gap widens

(APP): Pakistan was ranked at 161st position among 191 countries on UN's 2022/23 Human Development Index (HDI)'s annual rankings—three

capita income, educational attainment and life expect-In the last (2021/22) ment scores in 2023. The 2023 HDI stands

Pakistan finance minister.

stan 180. Switzerland tops this year's rankings, followed by Norway and Iceland, while Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan and Somalia lagged the furthest behind. "The widening human development gap revealed by the report shows that the two-decade trend of steadily reducing inequalities between wealthy and poor nations is now in reverse," said UNDP

Gilani on becoming Senator.

The Commissioner said that different teams have been formed to take action against those in-



QUETTA: Newly elected Senator of PPP Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo in a group photo with PPP Provincial President Mir Changez Jamali, MPAs Mir Ali Madad Jattak, Mir Asim Kurd Gailo, Mir Umar Bangulzai and others.

Cancel arrest warrants Court ends proclaimed offender status of Hassan, Hussain Nawaz

Hussain Nawaz and Hassan Nawaz who had absconded in these references appeared in the court Thursday and surrendered them before judge Nasir Javed Rana of the court.

Judge Nasir Javed Rana said court has given them before the court.

On resumption of hearing Hassan and Hussain Nawaz appeared in the court along with their law-yer Qazi Misbah.

ing ;previous hearing request was made to cancel

Judge Nasir Javed inquired how many cases are. Oazi Misbah said there are three references and we have filed petition in all the three cases. Two

decisions regarding acquittal in two among three references have come from high court. I n one case AC No 2

had given the decision of acquittal. NAB challenged acquittal decision and later withdrew the appeal. Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz and Capt Safdar have been acquitted in Even field reference. Islamabad high court had acquitted her father in Alazizia reference. Trial court had acquitted Nawaz

said his client be given exemption regarding Friday hearing.
The court while can-

celling arrest warrants of Hassan and Hussain Nawaz approved bail against surety bonds worth Rs

AJK President calls for EU's role to help resolve Kashmir conflict MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir State President Barrister Sultan

Mehmood Chaudhry has

said that the European Union can play an important role as a mediator between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. He ex pressed these views while talking to the Ambassador Dr Riina Kionka and Political Consul Rukiye Komurcu, who called on him at the Presidency in Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis on Thursday, the AJK President's office later said Thursday evening. Speaking on the occasion, the AJK president said that the long-running dispute posed

Stressing the need for early settlement of the dispute, Barrister Chaudhry said that the Kashmir conflict could lead to a nuclear war between the two nuclear powers, Pakistan and India. "Any mishap, no matter how small or big, can be a precursor to a nuclear war.

a serious threat to peace

and security in South Asia.

stan Air Force at Air Headquarters.

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has issued election schedule of 48 seats of

take place on April 2.

pers cane be filed on March 15 and 16. The initial list of candidates will be put to display on March 17. The scrutiny of nomination papers will be held on March

The revised list of the candidates will be published on March 26. The nomination papers can be withdrawn till March 27. Polling for Senate

seats will be held at 5 sites.



to remove of meeting on ministry Noor Qadri of aviation from ECL PESHAWAR (INP): The While being briefed on Peshawar High Court has issued directives to remove

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Khawaja Muhammed Asif presided over

meeting wherein he was given detailed briefing on role of Ministry of Aviation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence, Defence Production and Aviation Khawaja Muhammed Asif on Thursday chaired a meeting and detailed briefing was given by the secretary aviation on role of aviation ministry, National Aviation Policy 2023, the challenges faced by Paki-

and it's attached entities.

Khawaja Asif chairs

stan Aviation industry. The minister was also briefed on the entities working under the ministry including Pakistan Airlines corporation Ltd, Pakistan Pakistan Airport Authority, Bureau of Air Safety Investigation, Air Port Security Forces and Pakistan meteorological department, said a

privatization of PIACL would be the priority of this government. He also commended the joint venture for mix use re-development of Roosevelt Hotel. Khawaja Asif showed his resolve to grow the aviation industry of Pakistan in terms of enhancing its contribution to country's GDP. International Finance Corporation (IFC) apprised the minister about latest development of Civil Aviation Authority, outsourcing of three major airports including Islamabad International Airport Jinnah International Airport Karachi and Allama Iqbal International Airport Laĥore

EU denies PTI contact regarding Pakistan's **GSP** plus status

European Union Mission in Pakistan has refuted claims that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) contacted them regarding the country's GSP Plus status. Samar Saeed Akhtar, a spokesperson for the EU Mission, clarified their position, stating that they haven't received any official communication from PTI on the matter. This comes after a press conference by Pakistan's Federal Information Minister, Attaullah Tarar, where he accused PTI of attempting to get ness for causing delays.

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan's GSP Plus status revoked by contacting the EU. He further claimed these actions were part of a "false campaign" to harm the economy. Responding to these accusations. PT spokesperson Hassan categorically denied them, calling them "false allegations." He emphasized that PTI neither wrote nor intended to write any letter to the EU. Hassan further criticized the government, specifically veteran Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, blaming his "incompetence and stubborn-



JAMAICA: Ambassador Masood Khan presenting Letter of Credence as Non-Resident High Commissioner to the Most Honorable Sir Patrick Linton Allen, Governor General of Jamaica.

US Navy ship arrives Pakistan to conduct sea exercise with Pak Navy

KARACHI (APP): US ning and coordination meet-Navy Ship USS INDIA-NAPOLIS, Freedom Class Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) here on Thursday visited Karachi Port and conducted a sea drill with the Pakistan Navy. According to the Inter Šervices Public Relations (ISPR), upon arrival at Karachi, ÚS Navy Ship was received by senior officials of Pakistan Navy.

During the stay at

Karachi, activities included

professional interaction

with PN officials and Ship's

crew in the form of table

top discussions on contem-

ing for conduct of joint sea exercise. At sea Pakistan Navy Ship ALAMGIR with embarked helicopter carried out sea exercise with visiting US Navy ship to enhance interoperability between both navies.

The sea exercise was aimed to strengthen mutual professional skills through cooperation and learning from each other experience.

Pakistan Navy, in line with government policy, has always contributed significantly towards safety, security and freedom of

GENEVA (INP): India is using Kashmiri children as human shield during cordon and search operations (CASOs) in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, said Altaf Hussain Wani, Kashmiri representative. Altaf Hussain Wani was speaking on behalf of

World Muslim Congress during 55th session of United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva during debate under agenda item 3 on the report of Secretary General's special representative on children in armed conflict. He said that India was still involved in grave violations against Kashmiri children. "I wonder what obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law were met by India which is still using children as human shield during search and cordon operations.

Pervez to contest by-polls; family signs nomination

GUJRAT (INP): Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Chaudhry Pervez Elahi has announced his participation in the upcoming by-elections, as confirmed by sources. Elahi's family members reportedly visited him in jail and formally endorsed his candidacy by signing the nomination papers for the by-election.

The decision comes as the seat of PP 32 became vacant following the elevation of Chaudhry Salik Hussain, leader of the Muslim League (Q) and Federal Minister for Overseas, to the position of MNA. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has scheduled by-elections nationwide for April 21, encompassing vacant seats across

the country.

permanent arrest warrants.

ISLAMABAD (Online): Accountability Court (AC) Islamabad while ending proclaimed offender status of Hussain and Hassan Nawaz sons of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in three references of Avenfield, Alazizia and flag ship has cancelled their arrest warrants and approved their bail against surety bonds in the sum of Rs

relief to Hassan and Hussain Nawaz till today. They should surrender

Qazi Misbah said dur-

Sharif in flagship. Counsel Qazi Misbah