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Pakistan carries out operation inside Afghanistan to target terrorist sanctuaries

Target of operation was Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group militants; Pakistan has repeatedly conveyed serious concerns to Afghan govt; Islamabad urges Afghan govt on effective action against terrorists.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Monday carried out intelligence-based anti-terrorist operations in the border regions inside Afghanistan.

In a statement, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said the target of today's operation was the terrorists belonging to Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group, which along with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), is responsible for multiple terrorist attacks inside Pakistan, resulting in deaths of hun-

dreds of civilians and law enforcement officials. The latest attack took place on 16 March 2024 at a security post in Mir Ali in North Waziristan and claimed the lives of seven Pakistani soldiers.

Over the past two years, she said Pakistan has repeatedly conveyed its serious concerns to the Interim Afghan Government over the presence of terrorist outfits including TTP inside Afghanistan. These terrorists pose a grave threat to

Pakistan's security and have consistently used Afghan territory to launch terror attacks inside Pakistani territory.

Pakistan accords prime importance to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. It has, therefore, always prioritized dialogue and cooperation to confront the terrorist threat, she added.

Pakistan had repeatedly urged the Afghan authorities to take concrete

Continued on page 2

PM felicitates President Putin on his re-election

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on his re-election.

On his X account the prime minister further posted that he looked forward to working with him (President Putin) to further strengthen Pakistan-Russian relations.

Federal Interior Minister visits Quaid's mausoleum

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi on Monday visited the mausoleum of father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah and paid rich tributes to him.

The Minister laid a wreath and offered فاتحہ at the mausoleum. He also prayed for the development and prosperity of the country.

Later, he inked his impressions in the visitors' book.

Elder brother of former DG ISI Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed arrested

RAWALPINDI (Online): Najaf Hameed, elder brother of former DG ISI Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed has been arrested on corruption charges.

Anti corruption arrested Najaf Hameed from Rawalpindi court. Najaf Hameed was wanted by anti corruption in a case. Najaf Hameed had got bail before arrest. The court rejected the bail before arrest and later Najaf Hameed escaped from the court. However police chased him and arrested him again.

Later Anti Corruption staff took him to Chakwal under their custody.

Six killed in roof collapse in South Waziristan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): At least six people of a family were killed and others injured when the roof of a house collapsed in Barmal Tehsil of South Waziristan, Lower.

According to reports quoting rescue sources, the incident occurred in the Raghzai area of Barmal Tehsil, when members of the family present in the room after Iftar.

Local residents promptly rushed to the site and retrieved bodies and the injured.

The injured were shifted to nearby hospital for medical treatment.

The local authorities and police also reached the site and started investigation into the cause of the incident.

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, Donald Blome, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

X already banned when new govt took over: Information Minister Tarar

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Monday acknowledged that social media platform X was already banned when the new government took over the reins from the caretaker setup, saying there was no official notification for the clampdown.

Access to X has been disrupted in many areas of Pakistan since February 17, when former Rawal-pindi commissioner Liaquat Chattha accused the chief election commissioner and chief justice of Pakistan of being involved in rigging the February 8 general elections.

Similar disruptions were also observed during the general elections.

The information minister had himself pushed back last week against the disruption and claimed X was

still working, calling on those questioning otherwise to present a notification for the ban.

However, in an interview today with media platform World Echo News, Tarar contrasted his own statement, saying: "Twitter was already banned when we came into government. There is no official notification for it but obviously, everyone can see that its signal and frequency are not working as normal and it is being used through virtual private networks. This is correct."

The information minister suggested that there should be a charter on "dos and don'ts of the red lines that should not be crossed", adding that political parties should discuss issues such as misogynistic abuse of women, cursing and mockery of martyrs, etc



BEIJING: Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Khalil Hashmi and Vice Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, Sun Weidong cutting the cake in celebration of Pakistan National Day reception organised by Pakistan Embassy.

China to continue to be main driver of global economic development: Ambassador

BEIJING (APP): While commenting on China's economic growth target of 5% proposed for this year, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi said that this makes it clear that China will continue to be the main driver of global economic development, main trading partner of most countries in the world, and an important source of stability, peace and prosperity.

China's growth will drive the growth of the rest of the world. For example, the miracle of China's electric vehicles has promoted the development of renewable energy and had a great impact on the rest of the world, he said in an interview with Beijing Daily.

Hashmi, who assumed as Pakistan's ambassador in

China in November last year, was invited to listen to China's Two Sessions for the first time.

He said that the Two Sessions are an important embodiment of China's democratic practice and attract attention at home and abroad.

In Hashmi's view, there are many highlights of this year's Two Sessions. First of all, of course, China's economy. Despite the face of some "backwinds", such as geopolitical tensions, industrial chain, supply chain adjustment and other factors, China's economy still achieved 5.2% growth in 2023. By any standard, this is very good news for China and the rest of the world.

China contributes 30% of global economic growth.

Continued on page 2



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offers condolences to the family of Lt. Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed at their residence in Chaklala.

President for enhanced trade, investment ties with US

Pakistan's prosperity, security top priority of US: Ambassador Blome

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has underlined the need to enhance trade and investment relations with the United States of America, besides exploring collaborative opportunities in diverse sectors.

He said that American enterprises should be encouraged to invest in the Pakistan Stock Exchange as well as bring innovative business ideas to the country's economy.

The president made these remarks while talking to Ambassador of the USA to Pakistan Donald Blome who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the president said that Pakistan had enjoyed a long-standing

and broad-based relationship with the USA spanning over seven decades, which needed to be further strengthened.

He said that top priority of Pakistan was to put its economy on the right track and overcome economic and security challenges. He highlighted that climate change was a global issue, and Pakistan was among the countries most vulnerable to its adverse impacts. He said that Pakistan wanted to improve its agricultural sector by adopting modern irrigation techniques to conserve water and reduce reliance on flood irrigation.

Ambassador Donald Blome said that Pakistan and the USA could enhance

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar presiding over 4th meeting of Senate of Bolan University of Medical & Health Science

Governor stresses need to do a lot to provide strong base to first medical university of Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stressed the need to do a lot to provide strong base to the first ever medical university of the province.

The Governor was presiding over the meeting of senate of Bolan University of Medical and Health Sciences here on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that issues are not resolved by overlooking the same, rather these increases and aggravate further with passage of time.

He stressed that at the moment we have to con-

struct the new building of Medical University immediately after acquiring the possession of it's land.

This would pave the way for running the academic and administrative affairs better by launching different health disciplines.

The Governor said that heavy responsibilities rest with the Vice Chancellor of Bolan Medical University and his whole team for making modern and scientific health management system in the province.

He said that Balochistan is a poor province, therefore, the funds should be spent carefully.

He said that one thing is very clear that if we didn't create new means of income at the level of universities then our higher educational institutions could face new threats. Those who were present in the meeting were included: Judge of High Court, Mr Justice Abdullah Baloch, Vice Chancellor of Bolan Medical University, Professor Dr Shabbir Lehri, Director General Higher Education Commission, Dr Zahoor Bazzi, Principal Secretary to Governor, Muhammad Hashim Ghilzai, Additional Secretary Finance and other members of the senate of Medical university.

Secretary Health

Continued on page 2

Balochistan Govt to establish modern-style BICD: Secretary Health

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Health Abdullah Khan on Monday said that the provincial government would establish a modern-style Balochistan Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (BICD) to be consisted of 200 beds.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting for the establishment of Balochistan Institute of Cardiovascular Disease.

Head of Department of Cardiology Professor Dr.

Jalaluddin, Additional Secretary Health Arif Khan, Additional Secretary Health, Abdul Hameed Zehri, Chief P&D Health Sekes Marzia, Assistant Professor Cardiac Surgery Dr. Asmat Achakzai, Divisional Director Quetta Dr. Lubna Khalil, Director Admin Balochistan Health were present in the meeting.

Secretary Health

Continued on page 2

SC orders re-election in PB-50

ISLAMABAD (INP): Supreme Court (SC) on Monday ordered to hold re-election in PB-50 Qalaabdullah, Balochistan. As per details, the top court heard the plea filed by Zamrik Khan, challenging the ECP order.

At the outset of the hearing, Supreme Court annulled the Election Commission of Pakistan's recount order in PB-50 Balochistan. The top court also directed the ECP to ensure transparent election as per the constitution of Pakistan.

PM vows to completely eradicate menace of terrorism

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the residence of Captain Ahmed Badr Shaheed who embraced martyrdom while gallantly fighting the terrorists in district North Waziristan of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The prime minister while expressing his sympathies with the bereaved family said that he was very impressed by their patience and determination. He said the whole nation was proud of the sacrifice, Captain Ahmed has rendered for the cause of the country.

Interacting with the local elders on the occasion, Premier Shehbaz Sharif said these martyrs were the pride of the nation and the entire nation was indebted to their sacrifices.

He reaffirmed the national resolve to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country and said the sacrifices of our martyrs will not go in vain.

The prime minister especially acknowledged with pride, the courage and patience of Shaheed Captain Ahmed's parents.

He announced to establish a school in the area which will be named after the Shaheed Captain as per the desire of his father.

Earlier, the prime minister also visited the residence of Lt. Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed in Rawalpindi and offered his heartfelt condolence to the family.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant eternal peace to the martyrs and patience to the bereaved families to bear the loss with courage. He said the brave jawans and officers of Pakistan Army had sacrificed their lives to safeguard their motherland.

PM Shehbaz further said that the entire nation including himself pay tributes to them. "The families of martyrs are a matter of pride for the entire nation", he remarked.



KARACHI: The Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi offering فاتحہ at the mausoleum of father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah during his first visit to the city.

Jam Kamal concerned about slow pace of work on construction of Bela-Jhao-Awaran road

Independent Report QUETTA: The Federal Minister for Commerce and Trade, Jam Kamal Khan has expressed deep concern over the slow pace of work on the construction of Bela-Jhao-Awaran road.

In this regard, Jam Kamal contacted the Chairman, National Highway Authority (NHA), Arshad Majeed Mehmand and discussed with him the matter about expediting work on the road.

While diverting the attention of Chairman NHA towards the important project, the Federal Minis-

ter for Commerce and Trade pointed out that the people are facing hardships due to the dilapidated condition of road.

Jam Kamal directed the NHA chairman to expedite pace of work on the construction of road in view of the public issues.

On this, Chairman NHA assured to expedite pace of work on the road project. He said that the concerned high ups are being issued necessary directives in this regard so as to complete the project at the earliest and public miseries may be alleviated.

Terrorist Commander Sehra among eight others killed in N Waziristan

RAWALPINDI (APP): The security forces have killed a high value target identified as terrorist commander Sehra alias Janan among the eight other terrorists during an Intelligence Based Operation (IBO) conducted on the night of March 17 and 18th in North Waziristan District.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations

(ISPR) news release, after an intense fire exchange, eight terrorists including Terrorist commander Sehra alias Janan were killed during the operation. The terrorist commander was involved in orchestrating the terrorist attack on Security Forces' Post in Mir Ali on March 16 and was highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies.

We will have to part ways with the past if we want to set right future: Khawaja

ISLAMABAD (Online): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said if we want to set right future then we will have to part ways with the past.

He said this in a statement issued here Monday. He held if you want that rules and regulations are annulled which were used for expulsion of Nawaz Sharif then the court should ask from Gen

Bajwa, Saqib Nisar, Asif Khosa, Gen Faiz Imran Khan and all those who played role in this conspiracy as to why a running economy was devastated.

An elected prime minister was relieved and sentenced by enacting dramas. Why the country was handed over to looters.

He underlined some one should accept mistake.



QUETTA: Provincial Election Commissioner Farid Ahmed Afridi checking documents papers of candidates submitted for Senate seats at election office

SECP issues advertisements, call centre management guidelines for digital lenders

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued guidelines to Non-banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) involved in digital lending to ensure best practices in advertisements and call centre management.

The guidelines were designed to prioritize borrower protection and to prevent deceptive marketing and unethical call centre practices, said a news release here on Monday.

Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) licensed by the SECP are extensively promoting their loans products through various social media platforms.

Digital lending NBFCs are dependent on call centre infrastructure, whether owned or outsourced, to conduct verification, manage recovery collection and provide customer services. Consequently, call centers have become an integral aspect of their business operations.

The SECP recognizes the need for responsible and ethical marketing practices and call centre operations. Responsible and ethical behavior necessitates that NBFCs use transparency and honesty in their advertising, and that they make these standards a requirement for their call centres.

The guidelines will aid NBFCs in adopting best practices in advertising and call centre management while ensuring borrower safeguards.

All NBFCs, involved in digital lending must adhere to these guidelines for marketing through various channels. This includes influencers and content creators, and call centre services, both in-house and outsourced. These guidelines are available at SECP's website at <http://surl.li/rrfqv>

Petition filed against LTV license fee hike in LHC

LAHORE (INP): A legal challenge has been mounted in the Lahore High Court against the decision to raise the fee for Light Transport Vehicle (LTV) driving licenses.

The court, presided over by Justice Shahid Karim, has issued notices to the Home Secretary, IG Punjab, and CTO, seeking their responses to the petition filed by Syed Muhammad Aftab Shah, represented by Advocate Mazhar Amin Chadhar.

The petition highlights that the fee for an LTV driver's license has seen a substantial increase from Rs. 950 to Rs. 10,000. This hike is deemed unbearable for LTV car drivers, as stated in the petition.



TALAGANG: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offers condolences to the family of Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed at their residence.

Nowshera police target drug trafficking

By M.Ilyas
PESHAWAR- District Police Officer Muhammad Azhar Khan has launched a determined crackdown on drug dealers in Nowshera, emphasizing the imperative to safeguard the youth from the pernicious influence of narcotics.

Under the banner of the "Drug-Free Nowshera" initiative, a ten-day operation has been launched across the district, targeting drug trafficking at the grassroots level. The campaign, spearheaded by District Police Officer Muhammad Azhar Khan, aims to combat the menace of drug trafficking, which poses a grave threat to the future of the nation's youth. Various police stations throughout the district have reported significant seizures as a result of the intensified efforts.

According to official reports, several police stations have made substantial seizures during the ongoing operation. Notable among these are Nowshera Cantt police station, which seized 4.757 kilograms of hashish and 421 grams of ice; Badrashi police station, which confiscated 1.01 kilograms of hashish and 925

grams of ice; and Azakhel police station, where 7.21 kilograms of hashish and 1.37 kilograms of ice were seized. Furthermore, Klan police station reported the seizure of 23.243 kilograms of hashish, 2.367 kilograms of heroin. Similarly, Pabi police station seized 1.61 kilograms of hashish, 1.196 kilograms of ice, and 190 grams of heroin, while Jalozai police station recovered 8.47 kilograms of hashish and 112 grams of ice.

The crackdown extended across the district, with Akbarpura police station seizing 4.803 kilograms of hashish and 510 grams of ice, and Akora police station recording a significant seizure of 29.751 kilograms of hashish and 1.114 kilograms of ice. Nizampur police station also contributed to the efforts, seizing 8.671 kilograms of hashish and 170 grams of ice, while Misri Banda police station recovered 12.886 kilograms of hashish and 268 grams of ice. In addition to the seizures, law enforcement authorities have taken stringent action against suspects involved in drug trafficking.

Corneal donations transform thousands of lives, 9000 people await transplant, says President Al-Shifa

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: President Al-Shifa Trust, Maj. Gen (Ret) Rehmat Khan has said that said that corneal contributions had the potential to give a fresh lease on life to thousands of people as nine thousand people were on the trust's waiting list for corneal transplants.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he noted that the trust receives 800 corneal donations annually and has increased its capacity accordingly. However, the majority on the waiting list have to wait for years to get their vision restored and become useful citizens.

According to Maj. Gen (Retd) Rehmat Khan, there was a significant disparity between supply and demand of cornea in Pakistan and throughout the world, with corneal blindness accounting for up to 15% of all cases of blindness.

He urged the masses to donate corneas, pointing out that in the previous thirty years, only two people had donated cor-



neas, and people were reluctant to do so for various reasons. The President Al-Shifa informed the media representatives that Americans provide corneal donations for Pakistani patients because residents are reluctant to volunteer for this charitable endeavor.

According to him, in August 2018, the first-ever eye bank was formed at the trust's Rawalpindi premises with the assistance of the American organization EverSight. There, individuals can submit their wills to donate corneas.

He continued by saying that because corneal donations in the country are so few, 53% of eye patients lack access to do-

nated corneas; as a result, corneas must be imported from the USA and Sri Lanka.

A cornea is one of the simplest tissues to transplant because the donor and recipient do not need to match. He said it is a bloodless tissue that absorbs oxygen straight from the atmosphere.

He went on to say that corneas from the elderly can be removed and transplanted into the eyes of much younger people.

According to Maj. Gen (Ret) Rehmat Khan, the Al-Shifa Trust has begun corneal transplants at its Sukkar hospital in addition to its Rawalpindi facility. In Sukkar Hospital, 50 corneal transplants have been completed successfully to date at no cost.

Eighty percent of all surgeries performed at the Al-Shifa eye hospitals in Rawalpindi, Sukkur, Kohat, Muzaffarabad, and Chakwal are free of charge. So far, the trust has performed over one million different eye surgeries.



BEIJING: A troupe of Chinese and Pakistani children jointly perform at Pakistan National Day reception organised by Pakistan Embassy, symbolizing the enduring bonds of friendship between the two countries.

No dialogue with Govt sans release of PTI leaders

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI leader Umar Ayub said that as long as PTI leaders were not released, there will be no dialogue with the government.

He claimed that Shehbaz-led government has no knowledge of the economy therefore there was no use to discuss economic challenges with him.

He said Shehbaz led government destroyed the economy in the past and this time they will do the

PM grieved over sad demise of PML-N leader Raja Waqar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the sad demise of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Islamabad District President Raja Waqar Mumtaz.

In his condolence message on Monday, the prime minister expressed his sympathies with the bereaved family and prayed for the departed soul to rest in eternal peace.

Pakistan carries out...

Continued from page 1

and effective action to ensure that the Afghan soil is not used as a staging ground for terrorism against Pakistan. Pakistan has also called on them to deny safe havens to TTP and to hand over its leadership to Pakistan.

The Spokesperson said Pakistan has great respect for the people of Afghanistan. However, certain elements among those in power in Afghanistan are actively patronising TTP and using them as a proxy against Pakistan.

"Such an approach against a brotherly country, which stood with the people of Afghanistan through thick and thin, manifests shortsightedness. It ignores the support ex-

pected by Pakistan to the people of Afghanistan over the last several decades."

She said, "We urge these elements in power to rethink the policy of siding with Khwarij terrorists shedding the blood of innocent Pakistanis and to make a clear choice to stand with the people of Pakistan."

"Terrorist groups like TTP are a collective threat to regional peace and security. We fully realize the challenge Afghan authorities face in combating the threat posed by TTP. Pakistan would therefore continue to work towards finding joint solutions in countering terrorism and to prevent any terrorist organization from sabotaging bilateral relations with Afghanistan," she added.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Quaid Muslim League-Nawaz Muhammad Nawaz Sharif chairing a meeting about transport

China to continue to be main...

Continued from page 1

This year's growth target is also about 5%, which once again proves China's self-confidence.

Hashmi believes that diversification is crucial to the current Chinese economy. While providing policy support to traditional industries, we should also diversify to high-quality development, constantly innovate, and promote Chinese-style modernization.

When it comes to Pakistan, people will think of the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. This year, the Belt and Road Initiative has entered a new decade, Hashmi said.

"We are very confident that on the basis of the progress made in the first decade, we will reach a new height in the second decade of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. As we know, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the pearl in the crown of the Belt and Road Initiative," Hashmi said.

President for...

Continued from page 1

bilateral collaboration in the fields of trade & investment, climate change, renewable energy, agriculture and security.

He informed that the USA had completed the Sindh Basic Education Programme to build climate-resilient schools to strengthen Pakistan's education sector. He also congratulated the president on assuming the office for a second time.

Ban on two political parties in Occupied Kashmir condemned

BRUSSELS (INP): Chairman Kashmir Council Europe (KCEU) Ali Raza Syed has strongly condemned ban on two more pro-freedom political parties in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The Modi government in its continued campaign to subdue the freedom voices in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir has banned two more organizations; Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League for five years. Indian Home Minister Amit Shah also declared extension in ban on Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) for another five years. The JKLF headed by imprisoned leader Muhammad Yasin Malik was first banned in March 2019. In a statement, Ali Raza Syed said that it was not for the first time, India was suppressing the political voices of the Kashmiri people struggling for their right to self-determination.

He said, the people of occupied Kashmir have been struggling for the right to self-determination for the past 76 years in the light of the United Nations resolutions and would continue their struggle till taking the freedom movement to its logical conclusion at all costs. The KCEU Chairman said that by banning political parties in IIOJK, New Delhi was aiming to subjugate the Kashmiris and consolidate its illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. Ali Raza Syed made it clear that India with use of such coercive methods can't detach the Kashmiri people from raising their voice for political rights, including their inalienable right to self-determination.



KARACHI: Sind Prisons Minister, Ali Hassan Zardari interacts with prisoners during his surprise visit at Malir Jail to review the facilities in the jail, in Karachi.

Balochistan Govt to establish modern-style...

Continued from page 1

Abdullah Khan said that the establishment of BICD in Quetta was a great development.

It will be modeled after the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD). The provincial government will establish a modern-style BICD, he said.

He said that BICD would also be provided with modern medical machinery and equipment by the provincial government.

BICD will consist of 200 beds where the people of the province would be provided modern treatment facilities for heart diseases, he men-

tioned.

He said that people would not have to go to other cities for treatment, the province's BHCs would initially be linked to the institute via satellite.

The institute will have facilities for cardiology, cardiac surgery, electrophysiology, pediatric cardiology, radiology and pathology, he said.

Secretary Health said that according to the vision of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, measures must be made effective to provide quality and reliable health facilities in Balochistan.

The establishment of BICD is a long-term welfare project of the provin-

cial government which will directly benefit the poor and the common man, therefore, it is important to remove the obstacles in the implementation of the project and start its implementation without any delay, he noted.

He said that the construction of BICD was an extraordinary project in the medical history of the province saying that with the completion of which, the expensive treatment of heart diseases would be possible at the local level only with government expenditure.

Steps are underway to provide better medical services through reforms in the Health Department of Balochistan, he said.

After taking up his new duties, Hashmi has visited seven provinces in China. He said that although he has been to almost all parts of China, for him, China is still a diverse and culturally rich country with countless food, music and art.

He is looking forward to exploring more villages in China, meeting friendly people, and tasting delicious food.

"Progress made in diverse fields and ways and means to further enhance the bilateral ties were also discussed," it added. Separately, the US envoy also met President Asif Ali Zardari and underlined the need to enhance trade and investment relations with the USA, besides exploring collaborative opportunities in diverse sectors.



QUETTA: Food items are being selling before Ifar times (breaking fast meal), as demand of food items increased in city during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, at Prince road in Quetta.

President for further boosting bilateral ties with UAE in diverse fields

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday emphasised the need for further boosting of bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the areas of trade, economy, aviation, renewable energy, climate change and human resource development for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries.

The president expressed these views while talking to Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Talking to the ambassador, the president urged the need to increase collaboration in the aviation industry to facilitate the Pakistani diaspora in the UAE, including the initiation of commercial flights of Airbus A380s.

He said that Emirati businesses should be encouraged to invest in the Pakistan Stock Exchange to infuse innovative ideas and more capital in Pakistan's economy.

Talking about Sindh, the president apprised that Pakistan had started investing in mangrove forests and was trading carbon credits in the international market. He suggested that Pakistan and the UAE should mutually benefit from this opportunity. He said that projects had been undertaken for the lining of canals to overcome seepage and boost agricultural production. He maintained that Pakistan and the UAE needed to collaborate in the agricultural sector by sharing new technologies as food security was a growing concern for the region due to climate change.

During the meeting, the ambassador highlighted that the UAE was committed to Pakistan's development and would continue to stand with Pakistan. He stressed the need to transform the existing bilateral relationship into a strategic partnership between Pakistan and the UAE.

He also called for focusing on economic diplomacy, adding that big com-



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, Mr Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

APHC flays ban on Hurriyat parties in IIOJK, urges UN to intervene for Kashmir resolution

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has called upon the United Nations to impress upon India to grant Kashmiris their inalienable right to self-determination recognized in the relevant resolutions of the World Body.

APHC spokesperson Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas in a statement in Srinagar, condemning the ban on Hurriyat parties in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, termed it political terrorism by the BJP-led Indian government against freedom-loving organizations, said a press release.

He also denounced the termination of a government teacher Manzoor Ahmed Laway of Kulgam, saying these terminations are being done by invoking the draconian laws against the people of Kashmir. The authoritarian move was part of India's settler colonialism policy to strangle Kashmiris economically, he added.

The spokesperson said the vicious campaign, aimed at marginalizing the majority community in oc-

On the eve of Ramadan QC supports communities with 1800 food packages

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a gesture of solidarity and compassion, the Qatar Charity (QC) Pakistan has distributed 1800 Ramadan food packages across several districts of Balochistan province to support and uplift the deserving families during the holy month.

The distribution, organized by Qatar Charity Pakistan, was carried out in collaboration with local partners and authorities. Around 300 food packages were allocated to each of the following districts such as Quetta, Pishin, Chaman, KillaSaifullah, Loralai, and Chaghi, said a press release issued here on Monday.

The food packages contain essential items to assist families in observing the fasting month with dignity and ease.

Speaking on the occasion, Regional Head of Qatar Charity Quetta, Ejazur-Rehman said, "Qatar Charity is committed to serve communities in need, and we are honored to extend our support to the people of Balochistan. Through initiatives like these, we aim to alleviate the hardships faced by deserving families, especially during the sacred month of Ramadan."

Qatar Charity Pakistan utilized its own resources to orchestrate this benevolent endeavor, reflecting the organization's dedication in fostering sustainable development and social welfare in Pakistan. By providing essential food supplies, Qatar Charity seeks to alleviate hunger and promote a sense of solidarity among communities, fostering a spirit of compassion and support during Ramadan.

This distribution represents just one facet of Qatar Charity's broader commitment to humanitarian assistance and community development in the country and around the world.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddique officially assumed charge.

DC issues directives for anti-dengue operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad has chaired a high-level meeting to address the looming threat of dengue fever in the federal capital and directed the concerned to initiate a drive without any delay to combat the potential outbreak.

According to the spokesman of ICT, Dr Abdullah Tabassum, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad emphasized the unwavering commitment to deploy all available resources in the fight against the dengue virus.

Notably, special attention would be given to rural areas to safeguard all citizens from potential harm.

On the occasion, he issued instructions to the department concerned to start the surveillance drive against dengue to control the hazard in the area.

Meanwhile, he said that the safety of citizens was the topmost priority of the district administration and the department would leave no stone unturned to maintain a healthy atmosphere in Islamabad. The meeting was attended by the officials of Local Government, CDA Sanitation, CDA Environment, Endowments Department, Union Council Sectors, MCI Health Services, Surveillance teams, District Health Officers, Assistant Commissioners, Magistrates and other stakeholders.

CDA to construct 374 km long cycling track in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA), is taking measures to provide a healthy environment to the citizens. In this regard, it has been decided to construct bicycle lanes along the highways in different sectors and areas of Islamabad in order to promote the bicycle culture in the city by implementing the instructions of the Chairman CDA. According to the details, under the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Bicycle Lab Project (BLP), 374 km long cycling track would be constructed in different areas and sectors of Islamabad in a period of 18 months at a cost of 2.4 billion rupees.

This cycling track will be constructed on highways connected to Purple Line Metro Bus project including Khayaban Iqbal, Sector G-6, G-7, G-8, Green Double Lane, Jinnah Avenue, Red Double Line, so that the passengers leaving the metro bus could also use the cycling track. Similarly, under this project, every sector of Islamabad would be connected with a cycling track. Moreover, 150 parking stands will also be constructed under the Bicycle Lab Project (BLP) so that the citizens can benefit from the facilities like bikes.



ISLAMABAD: Per Albert Ilsaas, Ambassador of Norway meet Chairman Red Crescent Pakistan Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari.

SC issues notice to govt on petition against imposition of further taxes, other taxes

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has issued notice to federal government and all other respondents on the petitions against imposition of further taxes and other taxes in electricity bills.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah took up the case for hearing Monday.

The counsel for the petitioners took the plea that registration law is not applicable to the institu-

Determination of sugar prices: Matter referred to SC admin committee for constitution of larger bench

ISLAMABAD (Online): The matter has been referred to Supreme Court (SC) Administrative Committee for constitution of larger bench in the case pertaining to determination of sugar prices.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah took up the case for hearing Monday.

Shahzad Ata Elahi counsel for sugar mills took the plea in the court that act-1977 pertaining to determination of prices of sugar has been challenged. As per SC Practice and Procedure Act, larger bench should be constituted. The federal government issued order for fixing the prices of sugar in the country in July 2021 and September 2021. He further said government notification was challenged in high court. The decision came in favor of sugar mills. Government had enacted law for determination of sugar prices in 1977. The government issued notification keeping in view the 1977 law.

As per federal legislative list parliament had no powers to determine prices of food items.

Dry weather to prevail in most parts of country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mainly dry weather is expected in most parts of the country during the next 24 hours according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) forecast.

As per the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country.

The weather will remain dry in most parts of Punjab, Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during the next 24 hours.

During the last 24 hours, dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country while the weather remained cold in upper areas.



ISLAMABAD: Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Federal Minister for Housing and Works, chaired a meeting of Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA). Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, Secretary Housing and Works, was also present during the meeting.

Contempt of court case IHC orders Chairman CDA, others to appear before court next week

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered Chairman CDA Anwar ul Haq and other higher authorities to appear before it in next week in contempt of court case.

The contempt of court case against chairman CDA for not complying with court's orders came up for hearing Monday.

Justice Babar Sattar heard the contempt of court plea.

IHC summoned chairman CDA Anwar ul Haq, Chairman CDA, Member Estate Board and DG Land should appear before the court next week.

The court remarked transferring properties to citizens according to law is responsibility of CDA. IHC had issued order which was not implemented. Upon it contempt of court petition was filed against Chairman CDA and others. The court while issuing this order adjourned the hearing of the case till next week.

Ramesh urges all parties to forge unity to address challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Minister for Minorities Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora on Monday stressed that all political forces should work together to address the challenges faced by the people as solving the problems of the people is the top priority of the present government.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that all stakeholders should work together to revive the economy, adding that all these measures will be taken to reduce the burden on the poor people.

"Political stability leads to economic stability and sincere efforts are being made in this regard," he added.

PML-N's top agenda is to deliver, he said, adding, now under the leadership of Shahbaz Sharif, PML-N will drive the country out of the existing issues.

He said that the performance of the PML N was proof of its commitment to public service, honesty, hard work, and transparency.

PML N government will make all our efforts to make Pakistan a developed, peaceful, and prosperous country, adding, that our practical initiatives will boost the economy and the nation will hear good news soon. Replying to a question, he said the government is well aware of the economic challenges.

PTDC, Pakistan Embassy in Syria organized virtual tourism forum

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) in collaboration with Pakistan Embassy in Syria organized a 'Virtual Tourism Forum' between Pakistan and Syria to enhance bilateral tourism and foster B2B linkages between the two countries.

The esteemed gathering witnessed the participation of Minister of Tourism Syria Muhammad Radwan Rami, Ambassador of Pakistan to Syria Shahid Akhtar, Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan Dr Ramez, Director of planning of Syrian Ministry of Tourism Ahid al-Zaeem, Managing Director of PTDC Aftab Ur Rehman Rana and representatives of both sides including national tourism organizations, tour operators associations and tourism committees of Chamber of Commerce, said a press release issued here on Monday. Engaging discussions underscored the mutual commitment to fortify bilateral ties, with particular emphasis on hosting delegations of tourism professionals from both sides for fostering closer cooperation. During the event, the Syrian Minister for Tourism expressed keen interest in bolstering bilateral linkages, while the Managing Director of PTDC delivered a compelling presentation showcasing Pakistan's diverse.



Federal Minister of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain being presented shield by Federal Secretary of Overseas Pakistanis Dr. Arshad Mehmood on his visit to Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution in Islamabad

KSA to establish a state-of-the-art skill university in Pakistan to meet skilled workers demand

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development recently has planned to propose the dedication of a special quota for Pakistani skilled and semi-skilled workers for NEOM and other upcoming projects.

Additionally, a proposal for Saudi Arabia to establish a state-of-the-art Skill University in Pakistan further aligns the two nations in their pursuit of economic transformation, an official source told APP.

He said that collaboration in the training of Pakistani workers to meet the rising needs of the Saudi labor market and enhance their skills and capabilities were also key points of discussion.

The Ministry has proposed collaborative efforts between the Embassy of KSA in Islamabad, the Consulate General (CG) Karachi, and Pakistani authorities to facilitate the entry of new Overseas Employment Promoters (OEPs) into the Saudi sector.

The high-level delegation visit aims to align Pakistan's workforce with Saudi Arabia's economic transformation program under Vision 2030, fostering a strong partnership for mutual benefit.

The visit aims to enhance crucial remittances, contributing to the stability of Pakistan's economy and supporting the economic well-being of families that rely solely on these financial inflows.

Which was aimed at fostering collaboration and exploring employment opportunities for the Pakistani workforce in the Kingdom.

LoU signed to improve health & well being of school children

ISLAMABAD (APP): Directorate General of Basic Education Community Schools (BECS) and Project Planning and Development Unit (PPDU) under the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (M/oFE & P.T) and Muslim Hands Pakistan on Monday signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) here on Monday.

The LoU is aimed at establishing a framework for cooperation to improve health and well-being of school children and staff by enhancing access to clean water, sanitation facilities, hygiene education, and basic education necessities, said a press release.

Director General of BECS, Hameed Khan Niazi and Executive Director Muslim Hands Syed Javed Gillani signed on the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations.

As per the agreement, both sides parties shall collaborate on initiatives and projects related to the School WASH Programme in Islamabad Capital Territory. This partnership shall commence on 20th March 2024 and shall remain in force for the next 01 year, unless terminated earlier by mutual agreement or due to specific circumstances as outlined herein.

The Directorate General of BECS and PPDU shall identify and provide a list of 25 schools in Islamabad in need of WASH interventions (out of school children). Further, they would be required to facilitate the coordination with school administrations for the smooth execution of WASH projects.

BECS and PPDU would support monitoring and evaluation activities to assess the impact of the interventions, besides assisting in organizing hygiene education sessions by providing access to students and staff.

The Muslim Hands shall fund the WASH interventions in the identified 25 schools, including the procurement of materials.

11th death anniversary of 1965 War Hero MM Alam observed

ISLAMABAD (Online): The 11th death anniversary of 1965 War Hero Muhammad Mahmood Alam, popularly known as M M Alam was observed on Monday.

Pakistan Air Force legendary war hero M M Alam, nicknamed while piloting an F-86 Sabre, shot down five Indian war planes in less than a minute during 1965 Pak-India war and altogether, downed nine war planes in the aerial fight.

MM Alam was the first ever fighter pilot for PAF, listed on top in the hall of famers' list at the PAF Museum in Karachi.

Alam is considered as a national hero for Pakistan, most significantly, for his remarkable show of brilliance in the war of 1965. He was awarded the 'Sitara-e-Jurat' and also the BAR medal.

He died in Karachi on this day in 2013 at the age of 77 after a protracted illness.



ISLAMABAD: A view of banner fixed on Faisal Avenue ahead of the Pakistan Day parade, in the Federal Capital.

Defining extremism

The British government's recent decision to redefine extremism has stirred up debate about the motives behind the move, and the greater ramifications it may have for those who disagree with state policy. There are genuine fears that the British decision could prompt other Western states — pandering to populist constituencies — to take similar steps.

Much like the global debate regarding the elusive definition of terrorism, overly broad interpretations of extremism could be used to haul up those critical of the state in the name of making the world safe from extremists. There is reason to be wary as leading members of the UK's ruling Conservative Party, including the prime minister, have termed pro-Palestine marches in the country 'extremist'. Some Muslim groups have already been named by British officials as falling under this new definition, and others may be next. Redefining extremism may well be the first step to clamping down on advocacy for Palestine. Ironically, many Western governments are rattled by the pro-Palestine 'from the river to the sea' chant, deeming it extremist, yet fail to see the monstrous, genocidal extremism of the Israeli state.

While states need to act against radicalised actors that preach violence against non-combatants, it must be ensured that national liberation movements, such as the Palestinian struggle, are not tarred as 'extremist', and that governments don't use broad powers to lock up those who criticise the official line. This grand crusade against 'extremism' could meet the same fate as the 'global war on terror', an endless campaign which, while claiming to fight terrorism, ended up destroying countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq. The new anti-extremism campaign could disproportionately target Muslims and others in Western societies simply for speaking up for Palestine, or criticising the war-mongering of Western governments. It could also influence right-wing actors, such as India's BJP, to tighten the screws on their own Muslim populations in the name of fighting 'extremism'. Instead of coming up with narrow definitions, the international community should deliberate on what exactly qualifies as hate speech and extremism. Certainly, violence and threats of violence and intimidation against religious groups, sects, or ethno-linguistic communities are unacceptable, and most states already have laws to address these threats. Moreover, antiterrorism legislation has to be accompanied by sufficient legal safeguards so that individuals accused of committing or promoting violence can defend themselves. Bypassing fundamental rights in the name of defending them is inexcusable. Arguably, 'extremism' is an even more subjective term than 'terrorism', which is why it is essential that there is maximum global consensus on what constitutes extremism. If the aim is to stop the demonisation of certain communities, then global consensus should be easy to reach. Otherwise, moves to redefine extremism will remain suspect.

Honoring Leadership: The worldwide response to Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's victory

By **Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal**

In a heartening display of international camaraderie, foreign dignitaries from across the globe have extended warm congratulations to Pakistan's newly elected Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. Sadiq's victory has not only resonated within the political corridors of Pakistan but has also garnered attention and felicitations from leaders worldwide.

The diplomatic community has lauded Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's ascendancy to the esteemed position of Speaker, recognizing his rich experience and unwavering commitment to democratic principles. From capitals in Europe to Asia and beyond, messages of support and goodwill have poured in, underlining the significance of Pakistan's democratic process on the global stage. The outpouring of congratulatory messages underscores the profound significance of Pakistan's democratic in-



stitutions and the pivotal role they play on the global stage.

Among the distinguished well-wishers are prominent figures such as the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, the Speaker of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as representatives from United States, Iran, Iraq, the World Bank, Turkey, UAE, Syria, Yemen, Morocco, and numerous other countries.

In a statement, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China expressed con-

the importance of strengthening parliamentary institutions for sustainable democratic governance and pledged continued cooperation with Pakistan under Sadiq's leadership.

Türkiye, a steadfast ally of Pakistan, reaffirmed its unwavering support for the strengthening of bilateral ties and cooperation in various fields. The United Arab Emirates, a key economic partner in the region, expressed optimism for enhanced collaboration under Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's stewardship, emphasizing the importance of strategic partnerships in driving progress and prosperity.

From the Middle East to North Africa, messages of felicitation have dispensed in, highlighting the esteemed reputation and leadership qualities of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. Representatives from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Morocco extended their sincere wishes for a successful tenure, echoing senti-

ments of solidarity and cooperation in addressing shared challenges and advancing common interests.

The World Bank, an institution committed to global development and poverty alleviation, commended Pakistan's commitment to democratic principles and the peaceful transition of power. The congratulatory message underscored the importance of strong parliamentary leadership in advancing sustainable development goals and ensuring inclusive governance.

The felicitations extended beyond political boundaries, with international organizations such as the United Nations, International Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Secretariat acknowledging Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on his election.

These organizations reiterated their support for Pakistan's democratic journey and pledged assistance in addressing common challenges, including socioeconomic

development and human rights.

As Pakistan embarks on a new chapter under the leadership of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, these messages of goodwill from esteemed international counterparts serve as a testament to the country's growing stature on the global stage. They reinforce the significance of upholding democratic values, fostering diplomatic relations, and working collectively towards a more peaceful and prosperous world.

In response to the overwhelming support, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed his gratitude to all well-wishers, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace, stability, and cooperation on the international front. He reiterated his dedication to serving the people of Pakistan with integrity, diligence, and a steadfast commitment to the principles of democracy.

The writer is Researcher at National Assembly of Pakistan

Doddering doyens

Shahzad Sharjeel

This could be a global election year, as some 60 countries are set to go to polls. Pakistan has crossed the line; India and the US will follow later. The US president is an octogenarian, and his challenger is 77. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is 73. Leaving aside the seat warmers, the real contenders for power in Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan, are both septuagenarians.

Pakistan and India are different from the US because it has a two-term limit on holding the presidency, and no matter who wins this year, it will be his last stint in the Oval Office. One reason why Imran Khan could not wait to become prime minister back in 2018, regardless of the price, was that he would be in his seventies before the next scheduled polls. That

must have appeared a long haul to a 66-year-old novice, his '22 years of struggle' notwithstanding. Imagine his earnestness to lead 200 million-plus Pakistanis, lest they be made to wait till 2029, when the next general elections are due. He will be 76 then. All the treadmill and burpees in the world would not make him a credible choice for the 15- to 20-year reign that he said is required to turn Pakistan around.

Imran is not alone in this predicament. Nawaz is 74. This explains his fervour to oust the PTI government with the establishment's support through a vote of no-confidence in April 2022. He and his party knew full well what havoc the interregnum would wreak on their political capital. The economic reforms that were continuously sacrificed at the altar of populism will now have to be undertaken

behind the fig leaf of an IMF programme. The establishment, too, had no choice but to 'see to it' that a beaten-up submission, non-PTI coalition wins the 2024 elections, as any deviation from the Fund programme would mean that the loan lifeline, now imperative even for paying defence salaries, is withdrawn.

Once lured away from his defiant voteko izzat do (honour the ballot) stance, and in light of the establishment's hard-line stance towards Afghanistan, Iran and India, as indicated by the army chief's address to students in Islamabad, the elder Sharif had no option but to step aside to make way for his younger sibling's ride to the Prime Minister's Office.

PM Shehbaz Sharif is known more for his energy and hands-on administration than being a visionary ready to challenge the security paradigm. His as-

signed role has always been that of a go-between for the House of Sharif and Army House. He can be counted upon to undertake the bare minimum structural reforms to keep international lenders from turning off the taps. However, even some reforms and the stability they afford would be better than what the PTI did to itself and the country. The PTI had promised a team of economic wizards in the run-up to the 2018 polls. They never materialised and led to its leader's desperate stance 'I will commit suicide before going to the IMF'.

Mr Modi, who seems all set to win another stint in office this year, is spearheading an election campaign that his party men are not loath to term as a bid for the 2029 polls; he will be 78 at the end of his third consecutive stay at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, the official residence of the prime min-

ister in Delhi. The Modi-led BJP is said to have a rule of retiring its leaders at 75; however, its latest move to award the party ticket to Hema Malini, 75, to contest a Lok Sabha seat from Mathura, can signal the beginning of an era where popularity trumps all other considerations. At least the 'extension' here is for staying in the fray, and not in office.

Nawaz Sharif, the proponent of regional integration and normalising Pakistan-India relations, will be 79 if he has to wait till he can take an other stab at policymaking in 2029. At the end of that term, he will be 84. In other words, all aspirations to take Pakistan in a new direction are personality-driven. The forces insisting on keeping us bogged down in the morass of a security state mindset have institutional backing behind them.

Asif Zardari has secured the highest constitutional office for a record second time for a civilian; at 68, he is the youngest of the lot and will remain president till he is 73. All these projections matter little as health and lifespan are the two great unknowns. However, office and power are greater predictors of longevity than lifestyle choices and genes.

Imran Khan is the only political prisoner who has so far not developed a list of ailments requiring hospitalisation and treatment abroad. It must be mentioned, however, that he is also the only one to have worn a cast over gunshot wounds for months. The die may have been cast for the people; for the real and pretend rulers, there are options galore at home and abroad. — Courtesy Dawn

Huma Yusuf

Thank goodness journalist Asad Toor was finally released on bail on Saturday. But his ordeal is not over as he battles numerous charges under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) for allegedly peddling a 'false narrative' against the judiciary and military. His horrific harassment in the form of lawfare and prolonged detention highlights the degraded state of press freedom in Pakistan.

It was not long ago that the Supreme Court sought to defend free speech, with the chief justice indicating that 'fair criticism' of court judgements — and the freedom of expression underpinning that criticism — was a basic right.

Unfortunately, Pakistan ranks 150th out of 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index. Ac-

ording to Freedom Network, the impunity rate for journalist killings remains shocking: 53 journalists were killed between 2012 and 2022, with no convictions in 96 per cent of these cases. Legislation relating to the protection of journalists remains unenforced — commissions meant to oversee journalists' safety have not been established or remain unfunded.

Meanwhile, the state is expanding its legislative toolkit to harass, intimidate, detain and thereby silence journalists. Ambiguous definitions of disinformation, cyberterrorism, false news, public order and national security litter the Pemra Amendment Act, Official Secrets Amendment Act, Peca, the E-Safety Bill and the Personal Data Protection Bill. These, along with proposed requirements for data localisation (giving the state easy access to indi-

viduals' online activities), are designed to suppress freedom of expression.

The state is particularly threatened by Toor because of his 300,000 followers on X and 160,000 YouTube subscribers. Pakistan's best journalists, bullied off the airwaves, now speak truth to power online. And that explains the month-long ban of X in the wake of our flawed elections.

The fact that media censorship and the targeting of journalists are not more widely condemned by Pakistan's political and business elite highlights the lack of understanding of the fourth estate's criticality and the willingness to accept state-driven conspiracies of the press as a fifth column.

It may be too much to ask an extractive elite to defend journalists' safety and press freedom on democratic principle alone. But it is in the broader na-

tional interest for them to take it seriously. The economy is on the brink, and political acrobatics are underway to secure international financial support. But there is decreasing global appetite to prop up pariah states that quash basic freedoms. Many have dismissed the upcoming US congressional hearings on the future of democracy in Pakistan, arguing that they are driven by domestic politics rather than a strategic review of Pak-US ties. This is correct. But it doesn't mean that Western governments won't be held to account for ignoring a fundamental democratic principle: that of free speech and expression, manifest in the ability of journalists to hold their state accountable.

Moreover, there is growing evidence that press censorship correlates with poor economic performance. A 2021 research article by Nguyen, et al,

found that deteriorating press freedom is detrimental to a nation's economy. This correlation is intuitive — where perverse market interventions and economy-stagnating corruption are rife, the press is more likely to be under fire for fear of accountability. But going forward, it is likely that the lack of press freedom itself will have negative economic impacts.

International companies that are the source of FDI have mounting environmental, social and governance responsibilities and are under pressure to ensure their activities don't violate rights. Increasing reputational sensitivities in the private sector would lead to hesitancy in investing in places like Pakistan, especially given the negative attention around social media bans.

This may seem an overstatement. Readers' minds may be straying

across the border to India, where excessive press censorship has not deterred economic growth. India currently ranks at 161 in the Press Freedom Index (lower than Pakistan and Afghanistan), reflecting growing censorship, cyberbullying and digital surveillance of journalists, and even a rising trend in physical attacks against reporters. Pro-Modi business tycoons have been buying up news outlets to ensure pliancy. Journalists are also silenced through the deployment of money laundering and anti-terrorism laws. But India has much more to offer than Pakistan from an economic and geopolitical perspective, and in the balance, media censorship and related rights violations are discounted on the global stage. Until Pakistan has a better value proposition, press freedom and prosperity will likely go hand in hand. — Courtesy Dawn

Terms of re-engagement

Maleeha Lodhi

With a new government in place in Islamabad, what is the outlook for Pakistan-India relations? Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's congratulatory message to Shehbaz Sharif on his election as prime minister generated speculation in both countries about the future of ties between the two neighbours.

The message, however, was terse by past standards, as it contained no reference to any desire to improve relations. Sharif's response was equally curt. In any case, reading anything more into a perfunctory exchange of messages would be a mistake given the complex and fraught nature of the relationship.

The diplomatic impasse between the two countries has persisted since August 2019, when relations plunged to a new low with India's illegal annexation, bifurcation and absorption of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian union — in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions. Formal dialogue and the peace process were suspended by India long before this. But Delhi's

2019 action, accompanied by a prolonged lockdown in occupied Kashmir and sweeping restrictions, prompted Pakistan to suspend trade and downgrade diplomatic ties by recalling its high commissioner.

Islamabad made the resumption of dialogue contingent upon India rescinding its August 2019 action. Delhi showed no interest in any talks, and instead, continued its repressive policy and human rights violations in Kashmir. It undertook a slew of legal, demographic, and electoral changes aimed at disempowering and dispossessing Kashmiri Muslims, dismissing Pakistan's protests in this regard.

However, back-channel communication between the two countries during 2020-2021 raised hopes of a limited thaw. This led to the re-commitment by both neighbours in February 2021 to observe the ceasefire on the Line of Control, in accordance with a 2003 understanding. This was not unimportant, as only two years earlier, the nuclear neighbours were locked in a dangerous confrontation in the Pulwama-Balakot crisis, triggered by Indian air strikes inside Pakistani ter-

ritory.

The LoC truce has mostly held for the past three years. But back-channel talks made no headway on any other front, including Kashmir, that could pave the way for a resumption of talks. The diplomatic deadlock continued even though sporadic communication on practical issues did take place, including on exchange of prisoners and visas for visits to religious sites.

In January 2023 Shehbaz Sharif, in his first stint as prime minister, called for "serious and sincere talks" with India to resolve "burning issues", including Kashmir. In an interview with Al Arabiya, he said neighbours needed to live peacefully and voiced his willingness for talks. A subsequent official clarification reaffirmed Pakistan's position that talks could only take place if India reversed its August 2019 action. Delhi responded by saying the atmosphere wasn't conducive for talks.

Nevertheless, foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's May 2023 visit to India to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit offered an opportu-

nity for at least some tentative re-engagement. But this proved a lost opportunity as no bilateral meeting took place on the sidelines. Instead, both sides engaged in mutual recriminations, with India's foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, accusing Bilawal of being the "spokesperson of a terrorism industry".

Meanwhile, another irritant was added last year to the troubled relationship already burdened by several unresolved disputes. This was over the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, which for six decades has survived wars, confrontations and tensions between the two countries. The stance Delhi adopted raised questions about the fate of the treaty that governs the sharing and management of trans-border rivers.

In early 2023, India notified Islamabad of its intention to modify the treaty's dispute settlement provisions. It also boycotted a court of arbitration hearing at the Hague on Indian hydroelectric projects on Chenab and Jhelum rivers disputed by water-stressed Pakistan. The matter remains unresolved.

It is against this

fraught backdrop that prospects for Pakistan-India relations have to be assessed. For a start, India is about to go to the polls with general elections expected in April-May. So, any diplomatic move would have to wait until after the outcome of the election. Whether Modi's BJP resorts to its usual Pakistan-bashing during the election campaign may provide an indication of its intentions. Election rhetoric apart, India has already made it clear that Kashmir will no longer figure as a subject in any bilateral dialogue with Pakistan and that it is now off the negotiating table.

Dealing with India will pose an imposing challenge for the Sharif government in the face of this intransigent Indian position. There are two views about re-engagement with India. The first is that Pakistan should resume trade, restore diplomatic relations at high commissioner level and put Kashmir aside — a reversal of its well-known position.

This, however, would still be contingent on how serious India is on renewing formal dialogue with Pakistan. The second view is that such engagement will

entirely be on India's terms and tantamount to de facto endorsement of its August 2019 action and virtual abandonment of Kashmir.

The question that arises is whether there is any space between these two views or options that can enable Pakistan to establish some kind of working relationship with India — obviously on the basis of reciprocity, while not compromising on its principled, legal position on Kashmir? The need for a working relationship between the two nuclear neighbours cannot be disputed.

Regular communication is essential to manage tensions and minimise the risk of miscalculation. There are also practical issues that need sustained dialogue. The restoration of high commissioner-level diplomatic relations, for example, can help in this regard and doesn't compromise any of Pakistan's core interests. Even if this space is limited, it is worth exploring to find a way of extricating the relationship from its frozen state but without breaching Pakistan's clearly articulated red lines on core issues.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the 2nd meeting of Provincial Cabinet.

Punjab unveils budget worth over 4,480.7 billion rupees

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Punjab Assembly has presented the three-month budget proposals for the provincial budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 for approval, the total amount of which is 4480.7 billion rupees.

The total income is estimated at 3331 billion 70 crore rupees. 2706 billion 40 crore rupees will be obtained for Punjab from the distributable

income of the federation under the NFC award.

While the provincial revenue has been estimated at 625.30 billion rupees with an increase of 25 percent from last year in which 240 billion rupees are expected to be collected from the Punjab Revenue Authority with a 26 percent increase, 99.20 billion rupees from the Board of Revenue with a 4 percent increase and 45.50 billion rupees from the

Excise Department with a 5 percent increase.

The spokesman said that the non-tax revenue has been estimated at 231.80 billion rupees with an increase of 42 percent. In the current financial year, 513.73 billion rupees for salaries, 392.10 billion rupees for pensions and 627.70 billion rupees have been allocated for local governments.

The development budget for the financial year

2023-24 is estimated at 655 billion rupees, while the amount allocated for projects/programs/grants supported by foreign aid is 113.2 billion rupees. 36 percent of the development budget consists of social sector, 39 percent infrastructure, 8 percent production sector and 4 percent services sector. Similarly, 13 percent of the development budget has been allocated for various programs and public.

CM seeks Turkish help for setting up Sufi university, discusses CPEC with Chinese diplomat

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that his government is working to boost industrial and agriculture sector by inviting foreign investment here to achieve the objectives.

The government will offer different incentives to foreign investors, he said while talking to the Consul General of China Yang Yundong, Japan HATTORI Masaru, Turkey Cemal Sangu, and Russia Andrey Fedorov who called on him separately here at the CM House.

The consul generals congratulated him on his election as Sindh CM for the third time and wished

him all success. Apart from discussing matters of mutual interest, they discussed investment and exchange of trade delegation to promote business, and commerce activity in this region.

The CM Sindh and Consul General of China Yang Yundong, held talks on CPEC projects, the Karachi Circular Railway, and agriculture sector. Syed Murad Ali Shah said that some lines of the BRT bus system have started functioning while two are under construction.

"The KCR would be the feeder of the BRT lines and with its construction, the transport issue would be resolved in this city," he

said.

The Consul General said that KCR was a priority project of the CPEC and it would be approved shortly.

Murad Shah said that during the last tenure of President Asif Ali Zardari, various projects of agriculture were discussed and MoUs were signed to achieve the progress. Now, the time has come to implement the agriculture projects under which scientific methods would be adopted to improve the yields of the crops.

The CM and CG Japan HATTORI Masaru discussed investment in different sectors including electronics and automobiles.

CM Punjab approves metro bus projects in three cities

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved the decision in principle to start the metro bus project in three cities of Punjab.

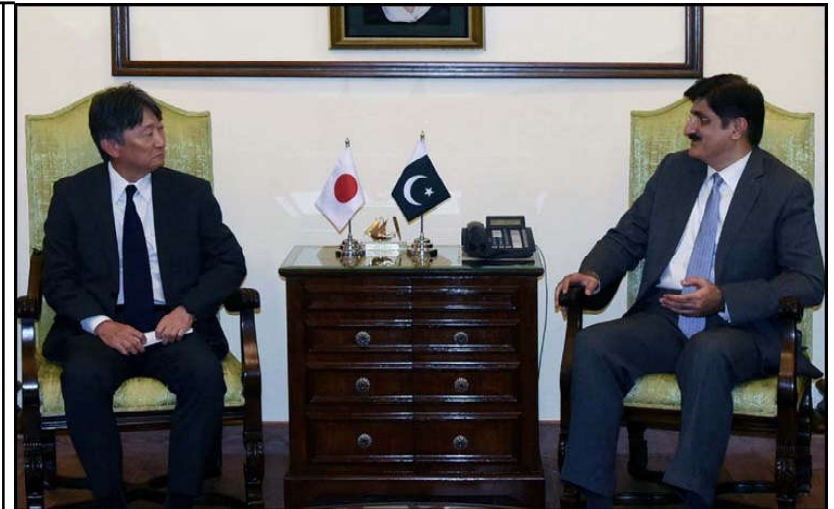
She gave this approval while chairing a meeting with Quaid Muslim League-Nawaz Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, in Lahore on Monday.

The meeting reviewed the transport sector projects in Lahore. The Chief Minister also sought the plan for an underground train project in Lahore. On this

occasion, Quaid Muslim League Nawaz Muhammad Nawaz Sharif directed to increase the number of bikes for students. He said that the monthly instalment of the bike should be kept to a minimum for the students.

The meeting was briefed about a project involving 20,000 electric and petrol bikes and a 657-bus service project in five cities.

The meeting was informed that the delivery of bikes will start in the same month after the draw in May.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Consul General of Japan, Hattori Masaru during meeting held at CM House.

Kidnappers injured youngster Lashari

By Adeel Ahmed
SHIKARPUR: It would be not hard to disclose that the outlaws are most powerful to our Police and Law enforcement Agencies which caused today the gang of kidnappers opened fires on one kidnapped innocent person and shared such video to their parents and on Social Media (Facebook) while asking to pay ransom money at earliest.

The kidnappers have injured the one of kidnapped youngster named Manzoor Lashari while firing upon his leg and also threatening the other kidnapped person Mashooq Lashari for murdering him.

Similarly other kidnapped was seen brutally torturing by the dacoits with the demand of paying ransom money to them if they wanted to see alive their beloveds.

It may be recalled that two youngster labourers identified as Manzoor Lashari and Mashooq Lashari of village Nawab Lashari near Janno Sharif in the jurisdiction of New Faujdari Police Station.

Punjab Governor says: We have to increase number of trees to eliminate effects of environmental pollution

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman along with his wife started the current spring tree planting campaign in Punjab by planting saplings at the Governor House Lahore today.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that there is a need for more trees to protect the future generations from the effects of environmental changes and to control environmental pollution. Governor Punjab said that in the spring, a tree planting campaign will be conducted across the

province.

He said that people from all walks of life should actively participate in this campaign. Governor Punjab said that from the life and Aha Hadees of the Prophet, we get numerous examples about the importance of trees. Governor Punjab further said that according to experts, each tree provides enough oxygen in a day which is equal to meeting the oxygen requirement of forty people.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that we have to increase the number of trees and green areas in cities to eliminate the effects of environmental



LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur-Rehman along with his wife sapling a tree to inaugurate plantation campaign.

Minister commits to implement health System improvement roadmap

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has pledged to achieve a hundred per cent implementation of the health system improvement road map outlined by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Chairing a crucial meeting of the Department of Specialized Health Care and Medical Education on Monday, he emphasized the commitment of the health department towards enhancing healthcare services across the province.

He said that under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a new era of prioritizing public health has commenced, with a

focus on serving the people effectively.

The minister said that Secretary Health Punjab Ali Jan Khan and his dedicated team were tirelessly working towards the betterment of the health system.

He asked the health management to provide superior medical facilities to the patients visiting government hospitals.

The minister directed to improve waste management systems in government hospitals and ordered the timely completion of ongoing developmental projects aimed at improving healthcare infrastructure.

During the meeting, a comprehensive review of the conditions of government hospitals.

CM condoles loss of six lives in roof collapse incident

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur on Monday condoled the tragic incident in which six members of a single family lost their lives due to the roof collapse of a house in the Raghzai area of South Waziristan.

In a condolence statement, he expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious human lives and extended heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the affected family.

He prayed for the departed souls and for patience for the bereaved, as well as for the speedy recovery of the injured.

The Chief Minister directed the relevant district administration to provide immediate relief to the affected family and timely medical assistance to the injured.

Sindh Minister for Interior visits Central Police Office in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Interior, Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar, visited the Central Police Office in Karachi.

On this occasion, IG Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, Additional IG Khadim Hussain Rind, and other senior police officers welcomed the Home Minister. Upon his arrival, the police presented a guard of honor and the Minister laid flowers at the memorial for the martyrs in the CPO, offered prayers, and prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the police martyrs.

During the visit, the IG Sindh briefed the Provincial Minister on the law and order situation in the province and police measures related to it. SSPs from all districts of the province were also present in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the Home Minister said that the law and order situation in the upper areas of Sindh and Karachi is not satisfactory. Efforts to combat dacoits need to be intensified. It is imperative to rid the areas of Kashmore, Ghotki, and Shikarpur districts of dacoits. He addressed the officers, stating that those SSPs who fail to perform their duties will be replaced. Moreover, the transfer posting of SHO's will be conducted by SSPs of all districts, including Karachi, who will be held accountable for their performance.

During the visit, IG Sindh also briefed about the Karachi Safe City Project, informing that cameras are being installed under the Sindh Smart Surveillance System.

Interprovincial drug trafficking gang members busted by SIU

KARACHI (APP): In an operation conducted by the Special Investigation Unit (SIU)/ Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) of Karachi Police, two individuals allegedly members of an interprovincial drug trafficking gang were apprehended.

The operation was prompted by intelligence suggesting that the suspects were stationed under a bridge near Qalandria Chowk, Shahr-e-Noor Jahan.

The arrested individuals, identified as Khalil and Aamir, were found in possession of approximately 4 kilograms and 215 grams of hashish. Following their apprehension, a case has been filed against them for their involvement in drug trafficking.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the suspects sourced their drugs from individuals known as Kakkhi and Bhai Jan in Quetta. The accused operated in Faqir Colony, Orangi Town. Subsequently, the drugs were distributed to various consumers in areas including Katti Pahari, Nazimabad, Baldia, Sultanabad, and others.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan addressing during the 1st sitting of 18th Assembly session of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly under the chair of Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir Ahmad Advocate.

KP Health Minister chairs review meeting of Sehat Card Plus

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: KP Minister for Health, Qasim Ali Shah chaired a review meeting of the Sehat Card Plus programme here on Monday. Besides, the Chief Executive Sehat Card Plus Dr. Riaz Tanoli, DG Health Dr. Shaukat Ali, Director Sehat Card Dr. Ijaz and Fiaz Noor representative State Life Insurance Corporation, others officials also attended the meeting.

After the briefing, Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah informed that from 1st Ramadan to March 16th, the treatment of over 8,000 individuals across various hospitals nationwide has commenced under the Sehat Card Plus Programme, with expenditures exceeding Rs.

172 million. Soon State Life Insurance staff will be available 24/7 at health card counters at hospitals.

He revealed that since the reforms in July 2023, expenditures in both public and private hospitals under the Sehat card, have been proportionate.

"The highest expenditures on the Sehat Card have been for heart diseases, amounting to Rs. 18 billion, followed by Rs. 4 billion on C-sections, and over Rs. 3 billion on chemotherapy. Entries show that Peshawar's MTI tops the list," he added.

He further mentioned that options are being considered to bring further improvements to the project to ensure free and standardised healthcare access to the people.

Youth allegedly abducted from Mathelo By pass

By Tanveer Ahmed
MIRPUR MATHELO: According to details, 22-year-old Hasan Ashfaq son of Ashfaq Arain of Kausar Colony, who left his brother at Ice Factory bus stand of Mirpur Mathelo city, was allegedly kidnapped by bandits. His motorcycle was dumped on the National Highway near FFC.

After the incident, hundreds of people reached the Mirpur Mathelo police station, demanding the police to recover the young man. On behalf of the citizens, Ashfaq, Gul Hasan Soomro, Ejaz Channa and others said that the young Hasan Ashfaq Arain should be recovered.

He further said that he should be recovered by the evening, otherwise we will block the national highway and stage a dharna for the recovery of the youth.

Pakistan army martyrs honored; unity urged against terrorism

TOBA TEK SING (APP): Pakistan People Party (PPP) Pirmahal tehsil president Musharrarf Ghous paid rich tribute to Pakistan army martyrs and calls for national unity against terrorism.

Speaking to the (APP), Musharrarf Ghous, hailed the fallen soldiers of the Pakistan Army as national heroes for their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism.

Ghous expressed deep condemnation for the recent terrorist incident in North Waziristan, stressing that no amount of condemnation could

suffice. He remained optimistic, asserting that the sacrifices of the martyrs would ultimately lead to the eradication of terrorism from Pakistani soil.

Addressing recent statements by an Indian Army general regarding Pakistan's economic strength posing a threat to India, Ghous called for national unity against anti-national elements.

He emphasized the need for all political factions to set aside their differences and come together for the country's development.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Excise and Taxation, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses to media persons during press conference.

Best facilities await Vaisaiki Mela visitors

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Chairman & Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora on Monday strongly condemned the recent attack on the Mir Ali check-post and said that such cowardly acts cannot dampen the spirit of the nation. At a press conference at the Evacuee Trust Property Board office along with ten other committee members, Arora expressed determination to provide better facilities to Sikh pilgrims, and affirmed plans to operationalize three Gurdwaras. He added that the Sikh Marriage Act had been passed in 2018 and now it would be implemented soon after the approval of the provincial cabinet.

He said that the Pakistan Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee had been notified and the ten-member committee would be responsible for all its affairs and a secretariat would be established soon.

Ramesh Singh emphasized that land of Gurdwaras would be reclaimed from squatters and special trains would be run to ensure best transportation arrangements for Sikh pilgrims while Gurdwaras would provide the facility of accommodation.

He said that all Sikh pilgrims would be issued visas under the set protocol between Pakistan and India while the government of Pakistan had approved the schedule for holding Vaisaiki Mela celebrations.



LAHORE: Members of Punjab Assembly leaving Punjab Assembly after attending Budget session, in the Provincial Capital.

Karachi: Senate nomination papers scrutiny begins

KARACHI (INP): The scrutiny of nomination papers for Senate election begins today (Monday) and will complete on March 19.

Overall, 35 candidates including from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), MQM-P and other parties as well as independents have filed nomination papers for 12 Senate seats of Sindh. Returning Officer Sharifullah conducting scrutiny of the nomination papers of the candidates.

MQM-P's Rauf Siddiqui and independent candidate Faisal Vawda reached the RO office for scrutiny of their nomination papers. Twenty-one candidates have submitted nomination papers for general seats in

upper house, six candidates file papers for women's two reserved seats, while five candidates have been fielded for technocrats two seats and three candidates filed papers for the minorities reserved seat. According to the election schedule appeals can be filed upto March 21 against approval or rejection of nomination papers. The election tribunals will decide appeals by March 25.

A revised list of candidates will be released on March 26. Candidates can withdraw their nomination papers till March 27. The Senate election will be held in national and provincial assemblies will be held on April 02.



MULTAN: Members of Pakistan Saraiki Party are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held in Multan.

Jam Kamal engages with sugar mills, ethanol manufacturers to overcome challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan here on Monday convened significant meetings with representatives of the Sugar Mills Association and Ethanol Manufacturer Association separately to address pressing concerns affecting their industries.

The meetings, held in the Ministry of Commerce, aimed to foster dialogue and find feasible solutions to the challenges faced by these sectors.

The associations appreciated the act of calling stakeholders before making any major decisions.

During the discussions, Minister Jam Kamal assured the industrialists of his commitment to advocate for their interests and address their concerns to support the local industry while simultaneously

enhancing export volume to increase foreign reserves.

The Sugar Mills Association voiced apprehensions regarding the anticipated increase in tariffs for Molasses exports. Members of the association highlighted the importance of encouraging Molasses exports to bolster foreign reserves.

They underscored the need for infrastructure improvements to enhance terminal capacity, facilitating greater access to international markets.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, chairs significant meetings with representatives from the Sugar Mills Association and Ethanol Manufacturer Association to address pressing concerns affecting their industries.



FAISALABAD: USAID Mission Director Veeraya Kate Somvongsiri and Director Office of Democracy, Rights and Governance Shally Prasad are visiting wheat field at University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

Pak earns \$1,719m from IT services' export in 7 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$1,719.921 million by providing different Information Technology (IT) services to various countries during the first seven months of the current fiscal year 2023-24.

This shows a growth of 12.78 per cent as compared with the US \$1,524.969 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding months of the last fiscal year 2022-23, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During the months under review, the export of computer services grew by 14.09 per cent as it surged from US \$1,224.499 million last year to US \$1,397.051 million during July-January 2023-24.

Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 1.14 per cent, from US \$3,502 million to US \$3,542 million this year while the export of hardware consultancy services also surged by 4.73 per cent, from US \$454.283 million to US \$475.783 million.

PHSA welcomes PM's measures for agriculture and seed sectors

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Hi-tec Hybrid Seed Association (PHSA) has hailed the multiple measures announced by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to boost the ailing agriculture economy of the country and underdeveloped seed sector in his inaugural speech on the floor of National Assembly after assuming charge of his office on March 3.

Speaking at a joint press conference along with LCCI President Kashif Anwar here at LCCI on Monday, PHSA Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik said the pronouncements made by the premier underscored his government's deep commitment with the agriculture and seed sector.

"Agriculture is the main pillar of Pakistan's economy, and the seed sector is the backbone of the agriculture economy. We, therefore, strongly appreciate the premier's plans to import the world's best quality, high-yield seed to enhance the farm output, as well as his commitment to take action against seed mafia responsible for wheat hoarding, cotton ginners selling banola as seed, and others who violate rules, regulations and code of ethics."

LCCI President Kashif Anwar also appreciated the government's resolve to economic challenges through sectoral reforms and support. He said that increase in yield was dire need of the hour.



LAHORE: Women look at shoes at Anarkali Bazaar during shopping ahead of the upcoming festival of Eid al-Fitr in the Provincial Capital.

SBP keeps policy rate at 22 per cent with emphasis on continued fiscal consolidation

Independent Report
KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), on Monday, cautiously decided to keep policy rate at 22 per cent on pretext of elevated inflation expectations that required continuity of the current monetary stance to bring inflation down.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) also emphasized on timely realization of planned external inflows along with continued targeted fiscal consolidation for ensuring overall macroeconomic and price stability, said a statement issued after the MPC meeting here at SBP.

The MPC noted that headline inflation registered a broad-based and considerable year on year decline from 28.3 per cent in January to 23.1 per cent in February, food inflation continued to trend down and core inflation also decelerated to 18.1 per cent in February from 20.5 per cent in January.

Shaza, Huawei delegation discuss various, programs, initiatives, ICT infrastructure

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja met with a delegation from Huawei Pakistan and discussed about various programs, initiatives, and ICT infrastructure.

The meeting was attended by Mr Jahanzeb Rahim, Member Telecom, Mr Faisal Ratyal, DG Telecom, Dr Babar Majid Bhatti, CEO, NITB, Mr Ahmed Bilal Masud, Director Subsidiary Board, Mr Shahzad Rasheed, CEO Huawei Cloud, Mr Yu Shaoning, Deputy CEO Public Affairs and Mr Saad Talha Saeed, Director Public Affairs Government Relations.

Shaikhani lauds federal Govt corporate farming policy

HYDERABAD (APP): The President Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry (HCSTSI) Muhammad Farooq Shaikhani has lauded the federal government's initiative in crafting a corporate farming policy aimed at advancing Pakistan's agriculture sector, deeming it commendable.

Profiteers and hoarders should be dealt with iron hands: Bilal Yasin

Independent Report
LAHORE: An important meeting was held at the Livestock Complex under the chairmanship of Food Minister Punjab Bilal Yasin in which the price and quality of chicken meat was reviewed.

Food Minister Punjab expressed concern over the recent rise in prices of chicken meat. He urged the representatives of the Poultry Association to bring down the prices substantially to ensure relief for the people during the holy month.



RAWALPINDI: People arrive Ramadan Bazaar to purchase Fruits and Vegetables on subsidized rates near Shamsabad.

Food exports grew by 54.05% in 08 months, reached \$4.969 bln

ISLAMABAD (APP): Food group exports from the country during the first 08 months of the current financial year grew by 54.05 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period under review, the exports of fruits and vegetables grew by 13.89 per cent and 39.27 per cent respectively as 688,950 metric tons of fruits valued at \$246.463 million and 724,252 metric tons of vegetables worth \$277.064 million were exported. The other commodities that witnessed positive growth in their respective exports included pulses 268.68 per cent as pulses valued at \$173,000, tobacco 32.09 per cent worth of \$60.581 million and the exports of spices grew by 21.10 per cent and recorded at \$78.107 million.



HYDERABAD: A worker is preparing vermicelli at a workshop, during the holy fasting month of Ramadan, which is a very popular food in the month of Ramadan.

CDNS achieve Rs 1050b targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 1050 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to March, 15.

The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Monday.



KARACHI: Consul General of Thailand, Narut Soontarodon in a group photo with the guests during an Iftar-Dinner in honor of top travel agents at a local hotel hosted by Thai Airways.

Slash spending-ramp up income way forward to boost economy: Qaiser

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said on Monday that the government was keen to reduce the expenditure and increase the means of income by introducing the favorable environment for businesses and industries.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the Punjab government provided relief to the people during the holy month of Ramadan.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was optimistic to improve the economy through the growth of business and industries, he added.

MNSUA, OGDCL sign MoU for establishing urban forest

MULTAN (APP): A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture (MNSUA) and Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) regarding the establishment of an urban forest here on Monday.

Regional Chief of OGDCL, signed the memorandum. Under the agreement, a Miyawaki forest will be established at the varsity for which OGDCL, under its corporate social responsibility, will also provide funding of Rs one million. On this occasion, Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad Rajwana appreciated OGDCL's efforts and pledged to undertake more projects like this in the future.

Meanwhile four more ships, MSC Precision-V, Kotka, Pindos and Umm Bab scheduled to load/offload Container, Cement and LNG also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today morning.



KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, Wan Hai-316, Maersk Chicago, Meratus Jayakarta, Hafnia Shanghai, Bateleur and Elephanta, carrying Container, Gas oil, LPG and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, FOTCO Terminal, Southern Gas Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

A total of eleven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Wan Hai-316, Fame and Oceanic Dream left the Port on today morning, while four more ships, Meratus Jayakarta, Maersk Chicago, Hafnia Shanghai and Melody are expected to sail today afternoon. Cargo volume of 164,823 tonnes, comprising 125,841 tonnes imports cargo and 38,982 tonnes export cargo carried in 5,748 Containers (3,697 TEUs Imports and 2,051 TEUs export).

Given the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added.

"At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. Replying to a question, he said the CDNS had collected an investment of Rs 60 billion by March 15th, 2023-24, through Islamic investment bonds.

Vladimir Putin wins Russia election in landslide with no serious competition

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin won a record post-Soviet landslide in Russia's election on Sunday, cementing his already tight grip on power in a victory he said showed Moscow had been right to stand up to the West and send its troops into Ukraine.

Putin, a former KGB lieutenant colonel who first rose to power in 1999, made it clear that the result should send a message to the West that its leaders will have to reckon with an emboldened Russia, whether in war or peace, for many more years to come.

The outcome means Putin, 71, is set to embark

on a new six-year term that will see him overtake Josef Stalin and become Russia's longest-serving leader for more than 200 years if he completes it.

Putin won 87.8 per cent of the vote, the highest-ever result in Russia's post-Soviet history, according to an exit poll by pollster the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM).

The Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM) put Putin on 87pc. The first official results indicated the polls were accurate.

The United States, Germany, the United Kingdom and other nations have said the vote was neither

free nor fair due to the imprisonment of political opponents and censorship.

Communist candidate Nikolai Kharitonov finished second with just under 4pc, newcomer Vladislav Davankov third, and ultra-nationalist Leonid Slutsky fourth, partial results suggested.

Putin told supporters in a victory speech in Moscow that he would prioritise resolving tasks associated with what he called Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine and would strengthen the Russian military.

"We have many tasks ahead. But when we are

consolidated — no matter who wants to intimidate us, suppress us — nobody has ever succeeded in history, they have not succeeded now, and they will not succeed ever in the future," said Putin.

Supporters chanted "Putin, Putin, Putin" when he appeared on stage and "Russia, Russia, Russia" after he had delivered his acceptance speech.

Inspired by opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who died in an Arctic prison last month, thousands of opponents protested at polling stations inside Russia and abroad.



CAIRO: Austria's Chancellor Karl Nehammer, Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Cyprus's President Nikos Christodoulidis, Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, and Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni posing for a photograph during their summit.



Palestinians gather to receive aid outside an UNRWA warehouse as Gaza residents face crisis levels of hunger, in Gaza City.

Iran signs deals to boost oil production

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iran on Sunday sealed contracts worth billions of dollars with domestic companies to boost its oil production in the face of Western sanctions.

In a ceremony broadcast on state TV, the oil ministry and Iranian businesses signed deals worth \$13 billion to increase daily oil production in six major fields. Shana, the official news agency for the oil industry, labelled the deals as Iran's biggest oil contracts in the past decade and said they aimed to add 350,000 barrels per day to the country's daily production.

In October, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji promised the country's oil production would reach 3.6 million barrels per day by the end of the Persian year on March 19.

In the new year under the Persian calendar, "production will reach four million barrels per day", he added. Iran's oil sector suffered a blow in 2018 when Western sanctions were reimposed, forcing foreign companies to leave the country, after the United States withdrew from a landmark deal designed to curb Tehran's nuclear programme.

World Court to hear Nicaragua-Germany dispute over Israel aid in April

Monitoring Desk

THE HAGUE: The International Court of Justice has said it would hold hearings on April 8 and 9 in Nicaragua's case against Germany for giving military aid to Israel and defunding the UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA). Nicaragua asked the ICJ, also known as the World Court, earlier this month to issue emergency measures requiring Berlin to stop military aid to Israel and reverse its decision to stop funding UNRWA.

Its statement did not specify when the delegation would leave for the latest round of talks which comes after Hamas submitted a new proposal for a pause in fighting and release of prisoners.

Hunger soars and aid dwindles as gangs in Haiti suffocate the country

Monitoring Desk

PORT-AU-PRINCE: A crowd of about 100 people tried to shove through a metal gate in Haiti's capital as a guard with a baton pushed them back, threatening to hit them. Undeterred, children and adults alike, some of them carrying babies, kept elbowing each other trying to enter.

"Let us in! We're hungry!" they shouted on a recent afternoon. They were trying to get into a makeshift shelter in an abandoned school. Inside, workers dipped ladles into buckets filled with soup that they poured into Styrofoam containers stuffed with rice to distribute to Haitians who have lost homes to gang violence.

About 1.4 million Hai-

tians are on the verge of famine, and more than 4 million require food aid, sometimes eating only once a day or nothing at all, aid groups say. "Haiti is facing a protracted and mass hunger," Jean-Martin Bauer, Haiti director for the United Nations' World Food Programme, told The Associated Press. He noted that Croix-des-Bouquets, in the eastern part of Haiti's capital, "has malnutrition rates comparable with any war zone in the world." Officials are trying to rush food, water and medical supplies to makeshift shelters and other places as gang violence suffocates lives across Port-au-Prince and beyond, with many trapped in their homes.

Russia's ruling party 'hit by cyberattack' during polls

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia's governing party United Russia said on Saturday that it was facing a widespread denial of service attack — a form of cyberattack that snarls internet use — against its online presence, and had suspended non-essential services to repel the attack.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is running in Russia's presidential election as an independent candidate with United Russia's support, has accused Ukraine of seeking to sabotage the polls, which he is virtually certain to win. Overall turnout — an important indicator for Putin as he attempts to demonstrate the whole country.

Aid reaches northern Gaza with famine looming in the enclave

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Trucks of flour have reached northern Gaza for distribution to areas that have had no aid in four months, Palestinian media reported on Sunday, with famine looming in the enclave. A convoy of 12 trucks arrived in the north — six in Gaza City and six in the Jabalia refugee camp — carrying supplies to also be distributed to the northernmost areas of Beit Lahya and Beit Hanoun, the media and residents said.

The Hamas-linked Home Front media outlet reported that the aid was distributed by the "Popular Committees", a group

that includes leaders of powerful clans in Gaza. A Hamas source said the route was secured by Hamas security personnel.

Aid agencies have warned that pockets of Gaza already face famine, with hospitals in the north reporting children dying of malnutrition and dehydration.

The hunger crisis has piled international pressure on Israel more than five months into its ground and air campaign in Gaza. Israel's Western allies have warned it against attacking Rafah, however, unless it is able to protect civilians.

EU and Cairo sign €7.4bn deal focussed on energy, migration

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: The European Union and Egypt on Sunday signed a 7.4-billion-euro financial package to support the indebted north African country, boost energy sales to Europe and stem irregular migrant flows.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was joined in Cairo by the leaders of Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and Italy for the signing ceremony with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

The strategic partnership deal includes billions in credit over coming years and stepping up gas and other energy flows to help Europe "move further

away from Russian gas", said a senior European Commission official.

Von der Leyen said that "today we elevate the relationship between the EU and Egypt to a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership and we agree on a package ranging from trade and investment to low carbon energy, managing migration, and education, culture and youth".

The agreement includes five billion euros in loans over four years, 1.8 billion euros in investment and hundreds of millions for bilateral projects including on migration, said the European official.

Egypt, mired in a painful economic crisis, borders war-battered Libya and the

centres of two ongoing conflicts — the Israeli aggression in Gaza Strip and Sudan's war between the regular armed forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

"Egypt is a critical country for Europe today and for the days to come," the commission official said. Egypt already hosts around nine million migrants and refugees, including four million Sudanese and 1.5 million Syrians, the UN's International Organisation for Migration says. The EU official said the deal includes steps to cooperate on "security, counter-terrorism cooperation and protection of borders, in particular the southern one" with Sudan.

Explosion reported near ship off Yemen coast, UKMTO says

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: The captain of a merchant ship east of Yemen's Aden has reported an explosion near the ship, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said early on Sunday.

"No damage to the vessel has been reported and the crew are reported safe."

Blinken arrives in S. Korea to attend democracy summit

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived on Sunday in South Korea on the first stop of a brief Asia tour also including the Philippines, as Washington moves to reinforce ties with two key regional allies.

Blinken landed on Sunday afternoon ahead of

the third Summit for Democracy on Monday, an initiative of US President Joe Biden, which Seoul is hosting this week.

The summit, which runs from March 18-20 will bring together government officials, NGOs and civil society members. Seoul is one of Washington's key regional allies.



Turkiye's coast guard personnel operate a drone for victim search, after the boat accident in the Aegean Sea.

Ukrainian authorities launch mass evacuation in northern region

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukrainian authorities have begun mass evacuations of communities in the country's northern Sumy region close to the Russian border after extended periods of intense shelling of the area, local officials said on Friday.

The military administration of Sumy region, writing on the Telegram messaging app, said more than 180 residents of areas near the Velikopysarska community, next to the border, had been evacuated over the past three days. Authorities in Sumy have long been issuing daily reports of Russian shelling, but the attacks have intensified.

Niger revokes military accord with US, junta spokesperson says

Monitoring Desk

NIAMEY: Niger's ruling junta has revoked with immediate effect a military accord that allows military personnel and civilian staff from the US Department of Defense on its soil, junta spokesperson Colonel Amadou Abdramane said on Saturday.

The decision follows a visit by US officials this week which was led by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Molly Phee and included General Michael Langley, commander of the US Af-

rica Command.

Abdramane, speaking on television in the West African nation, said the US delegation did not follow diplomatic protocol, and that Niger was not informed about the composition of the delegation, the date of its arrival or the agenda.

He added that the discussions were around the current military transition in Niger, military cooperation between the two countries and Niger's choice of partners in the fight against militants linked to al Qaeda and Islamic State.

Indian mob attacks foreign students over namaz

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Students from different countries were assaulted on Gujarat University campus on Saturday evening, allegedly by a group that did not want them to offer namaz at the hostel. The Wire said on Sunday. It said some injured students have been admitted to SVP Hospital in Ahmedabad.

"Around 300 foreign students from Africa, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and other countries study here at the Gujarat University," Ahmedabad Police Commissioner G.S. Malik said, according to The Hindu.

"In Block A, around 75 foreign students, who live there, were offering prayers at their hostel yesterday around 10:30pm.

"Some 20-25 people entered the hostel premises and objected to the international students offering namaz there, asking them to do so in a mosque. They argued over the issue, assaulted them and hurled stones."

However, the police commissioner claimed, the situation was under control. An FIR was registered against 20-25 suspects and they would be arrested soon, the officer said.

Aid group says 'unloading' food barge in Gaza

Monitoring Desk

GAZA CITY: A United States charity said on Friday it was unloading the first shipment of food aid sent via a maritime corridor from Cyprus to war-ravaged Gaza.

"World Central Kitchen is unloading the barge connected now to the jetty," said Linda Roth, a spokesperson for the group. The Israeli military confirmed that the vessel, the Open Arms, had arrived in Gazan waters and said Israeli troops had "been deployed to secure the area." "The vessel underwent a comprehensive security inspection," the military said.

Rights body denounces 'systemic abuse' in Israeli prisons

Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: In the shadow of the Israeli aggression in Gaza, record numbers of Palestinian detainees are filling Israeli prisons, where they face "systemic abuse" and torture, rights advocates warn, calling for international action.

Members of several Israeli NGOs travelled to Geneva this week to raise concerns before the United Nations about a major "crisis" inside the country's prisons. "We are extremely, extremely concerned," said Tal Steiner, the executive director of the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI). "What we're looking at is a crisis," she said.

She said nine people had allegedly died behind

bars since Oct 7, according to Israeli sources. And "there are almost 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli custody right now... a 200-per cent increase from any normal year."

While the UN and others have long raised concerns about conditions for Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, Steiner said the situation had worsened dramatically since crisis erupted in Gaza.

"During the military onslaught on Gaza, there's been a crisis within Israeli detention facilities and prisons that has been really left ignored," said Miriam Azem of the Adalah legal centre. The centre is dedicated to protecting the rights of Israel's Palestinian citizens.

French govt 'weathered' 48-hour cyber attack

Monitoring Desk

RENNES: A cyber attack of "unprecedented intensity" against the French government claimed by pro-Russian hackers this week failed to stop state operations running, a minister said on Friday. The attack came just months before Paris hosts the Olympics Games. The 48-hour effort, which started on Sunday, "hit 800 administrative centres at once", but "at no moment were communications down... every civil servant was well-informed in real time and it did not destabilise the functioning of the state".

Firefighters put out Russian refinery blaze after Ukraine strike

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: A Ukrainian drone attack caused a fire at a Russian oil refinery that burned for hours on Saturday before it was brought under control in the latest of several damaging strikes this week on Russia's crude oil processing plants.

Interfax news agency quoted the emergency ministry as saying that "open burning" at the Syzran refinery had been halted, but measures were still under way to extinguish it completely.

It was not clear how the fire would affect production at the plant, which has the capacity to process 8.5 million metric tons of crude oil a year, or 170,000 barrels per day.

An attack on another refinery, Novokuibyshevsky, on Saturday was thwarted, the local governor said. Both plants are owned by Rosneft and located in the Samara region southeast of Moscow, some 800 km (500 miles) from the nearest Ukrainian-controlled territory.

A Ukrainian source told Reuters that Kyiv's SBU intelligence agency had struck three Samara region Rosneft refineries: Syzran, Novokuibyshevsky, and Kuibyshevsky. Russian media have not reported a strike on the Kuibyshevsky refinery, which is located in the city of Samara.



Women shop at a street market ahead of the presidential election in Banjul, Gambia.

PM expresses desire to bolster Pak-UAE economic ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister thanked the U.A.E. leadership for their warm messages of greetings and conveyed his best wishes for President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan...

other and there was a strong desire on both sides to elevate the relationship to a higher level, the PM added. The Prime Minister further said that Pakistan wanted to translate the tremendous political goodwill into a stronger economic partnership...



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Amb. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, in the Provincial Capital.



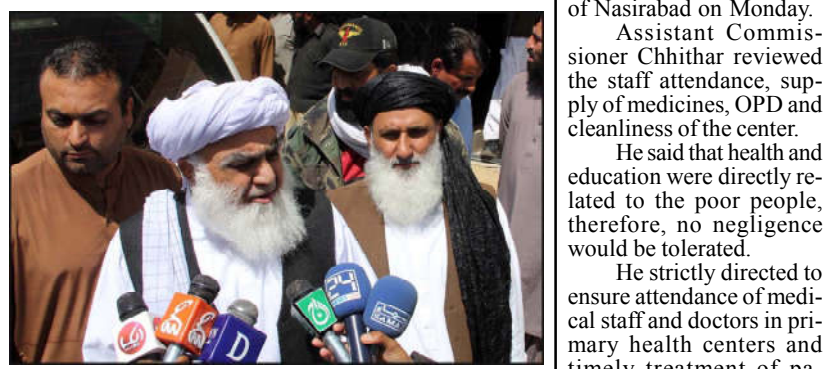
QUETTA: Members of Joint Action Committee University of Balochistan are holding protest demonstration against non-payment of their salaries.

FM vows to make joint endeavours for further deepening Pak-China ties

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has said Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Co-operative Partnership is indispensable for the progress and prosperity of the two countries and an anchor of regional peace and stability.

Shaukat Yousafzai ordered to pay Rs150m to Asfandyar Wali in defamation case

PESHAWAR (INP): The district and sessions judge on Monday ordered PTI leader and former provincial minister Shaukat Yousafzai to pay Rs 150 million to Chief of Awami National Party (ANP) Asfandyar Wali Khan in defamation lawsuit.



QUETTA: Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) Provincial Chief, Maulana Abdul Wasay talking to media persons after submitting his nomination papers for Senate, at Election Commission Office.

Six shopkeepers held on violation of price control in Chaman

QUETTA (APP): Assistant Commissioner Sadar Habib Ahmad Bangalzar arrested six shopkeepers, including butchers, other and a tailor on violation of official price control list in Chaman area.

AJK President urges strengthening of freedom movement

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, speaking at an Iftar party in his native village Khari Sharif near Mirpur city, emphasized the importance of strengthening the ongoing freedom movement against India on Monday.

Shoab Nausherwani slams terrorists attack at security forces in North Waziristan

QUETTA: The Member Provincial Assembly and former Minister for Home, Mir Shoab Nausherwani has strongly condemned the terrorists attack at security forces in North Waziristan.

Fake NAB chairman arrested for extorting money

LAHORE (INP): The intelligence wing of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) arrested an impostor, pretending to be chairman of NAB, along with his accomplice here on Monday.

Senate elections on 11 seats of Balochistan: Two appellate tribunals established for appeals against decisions on nomination papers of candidates

QUETTA: Two appellate tribunals have been established for hearing of the appeals against decisions on the acceptance or rejection of the nomination papers of candidates contesting Senate elections from Balochistan.

MQM-P divides over Sindh Governor appointment, Faisal Vawda's senate ticket

KARACHI (INP): There were serious differences in the Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) erupted and the party has been split over the change of the Governor Sindh and Faisal Vawda's senate ticket on Monday.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding strengthening of B-TEVTA.

Pakistan set to host an event focusing on women's plight under foreign occupation

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The Pakistan Mission to the U.N. will be hosting an event on Monday afternoon that is aimed at spotlighting the plight of women and girls in situations of foreign occupation.

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Preparations underway to scale up gas tariff in Punjab, KP

LAHORE (Online): Preparations are underway to scale up gas tariff in Punjab and KP after Sindh and Balochistan.

ECP directs RO to accept Qaisera Elahi's nomination papers for PP-32

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday issued orders to the Returning Officer (RO) of Gujrat, for immediately accepting the nomination papers of four candidates, including Qaisera Elahi, the wife of former chief minister Pervaz Elahi.

Tarar grieved over demise of PML-N President Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataulah Tarar on Monday expressed his grief over the death of Raja Waqar Mumtaz, Islamabad District President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

Visits Shaheed BB Hospital Abdullah expresses anguish over absentee medical staff, poor cleanliness

QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan has expressed anguish over the absence of medical staff and poor cleanliness situation in the Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Hospital Quetta.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Commander Karachi (COMKAR), Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.



QUETTA: Baloch Human Rights Activist, Mama Qadeer along with relatives of Khudadad Siraj addressing a press conference, at Quetta press club.