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LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting with Mines and Minerals of Balochistan with special context to Reko Diq Project.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti's directives:

Work started on comprehensive reforms in health sector of Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The work has been started on bringing comprehensive reforms in the health sector of Balochistan in order to provide quality healthcare services to all including rich and poor.

Needless to mention here that the comprehensive reforms are being brought in the health sector on directives of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

The high ups of government of Balochistan met the higher authorities of Sindh government for introducing the model of standard health institutions running with assist-

stance of Sindh government in Balochistan.

During the course of meeting, there was consensus on bringing the model of Sindh health institutions in Balochistan under mutual partnership.

It may be mentioned here that Secretary Health, Abdullah Khan and Secretary Finance, Babar Khan are on detailed visit to Sindh.

During the visit, they met Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah and discussed with him about the progress for establishing quality health institutions in Balochistan in backdrop of the meeting and consultation held between the Chairman Paki-

stan Peoples' Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

The Chief Minister Sindh had directed the heads of all health institutions and other concerned high ups to extend full cooperation to make healthcare system more effective in Balochistan.

After meeting with Chief Minister Sindh, the administrative secretaries of the Government of Balochistan also had meeting with Secretary Health Sindh, Rehman Iqbal Baloch and discussed with him about making healthcare system effective through mutual cooperation and partnership.



Balochistan's Secretary Health Abdullah Khan and Secretary Finance Babar Khan exchanging views with Secretary Health Sindh Rehman Iqbal Baloch about medical facilities

Balochistan cabinet yet to be formed despite CM Bugti's taking oath 22 days ago

Independent Report

QUETTA: Despite taking his oath of office 22 days ago, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti is yet to form the provincial cabinet.

During interaction with media last week, the Chief Minister had announced that the process will take another two weeks with the cabinet taking oath on April 4.

The provincial lawmakers have, however, claimed that the delay in cabinet's formation is linked with the Senate election which, according to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), is set to take place on April 2.

It should be noted that a total of 57 lawmakers in the province were administered oath by Zamrak Khan Achakzai, who was appointed the presiding officer for the maiden session of the provincial legislature on February 28.

Members who took oath included the elected lawmakers from Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl and Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and others.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti, who was elected for the coveted CM post unopposed, took oath of office on March 2, facing hydra-headed challenges as the province remains badly impacted by terrorism.

Meanwhile, the Senate elections will take place next month with the ECP set to issue the revised list of the candidates on 26th of this month.

It is pertinent to mention here that 52 seats in the upper house of parliament fall vacant after the expiration of the 6-year term of the incumbent Senators.

Tribal clash claims 7 lives, 6 injured

NAWABSHAH (APP): Seven people were killed and more than 6 injured as a result of clash and firing between two groups of Dahri community in the dispute over agricultural land in village Haji Wahid Bakhsh Dahri near Nawab Shah.

The situation in the area became tense and the police force of the entire district was called.

The clash between the Dahri community started

when an armed clash broke out between two groups on agricultural land in the morning. On the information that 6 people were injured, the police of the entire district were called. A heavy police force has been deployed to prevent any situation.

According to the police, two groups of the Dahri community clashed over a dispute over agricultural land in the neighbouring village of Qazi Ahmed.

Foolproof security of Reko Diq project personnel, logistics must be ensured: PM

A strategy should be formed for the feasibility of a rail and road network from Reko Diq to Gwadar port

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday directed that security should be ensured for those working on the Reko Diq mining project and for the logistics and transport from Reko Diq to the Gwadar seaport.

He was chairing an important meeting regarding the Reko Diq mining project.

A delegation of Barrick Gold company led by its Chief Executive Officer Mark Bristow took part in the meeting through video link.

The PM said consultations should be held with all stakeholders regarding

the project at the official level and all the obstacles should be removed.

He said planning should be initiated for improvement in the communication infrastructure especially railway lines for utilising the minerals of Balochistan, adding work for the upgradation of the road network to link Reko Diq project with Gwadar port by road, should be completed at the earliest.

Wherever new roads were being constructed, the pace of construction should be increased, he remarked.

The PM said a strategy should be formed for the feasibility of a rail and road

network from Reko Diq to Gwadar port.

He said the railway line project from Reko Diq to Gwadar would make access to the port short and easy and as compared to Bin Qasim port the distance would also be less.

The new railway line would be beneficial for the mineral-rich district of Chaghi and the mining industry would expand, he added.

He sought a detailed briefing next week on the Reko Diq road and rail connectivity project.

He also instructed that

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Revolutionary Reko Diq project to change fate of Balochistan: Bristow

ISLAMABAD (INP): President and Chief Executive of Barrick Gold Corporation, Mark Bristow has said that the revolutionary Reko Diq project would change the fate of Balochistan by revolutionizing the local economy.

He expressed these view in an interview with a private news channel here on Sunday.

Mark Bristow stated that an estimated \$10 billion would be invested in Reko Diq project during next eight to nine years, which would boost the mining industry and the local economy.

The President Barrick Gold Corporation said that he underscored the company's commitment to sustainable development, job creation and community empowerment.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring the insignias of Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon officers of the Pakistan Armed Forces, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President confers military awards upon officers of Pakistan Armed Forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday conferred insignias of military awards upon 42 officers of Pakistan armed forces.

The Presidential Investiture ceremony was held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in connection with Pakistan Day and was attended by senior officers of Pakistan armed forces, government officials and families of the recipients of the awards.

The recipients of Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) included Lt. Gen. Mohsin Muhammad Qureshi, Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan, Air Marshal Tariq Zia, Air Marshal Ghulam Abbas Ghuman, Major Gen. Shoaib Ahmed, Major Gen. Naseer Ahmed Samore, Rear Admiral Habibur Rehman, Major Gen. Shazia Nisar, Major Gen. Ejaz Ghani, Major Gen. Nadeem Ahmed Rana, Major Gen. Waseem Ahmad Khan, Major Gen. Arshad Naseem, Rear Admiral Syed Ahmed Salman, Major Gen. Arshad Mehmood, Major Gen. Muhammad Atif Mansha, Major Gen. Javed Dost Chaudhry, Major Gen. Muhammad Irfan Khan,

Major General Syed Asif Hussain, Major Gen. Sheheryar Parvez Butt, Air Vice Marshal Zaffar Aslam, Major Gen. Imranullah, Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed, Rear Admiral Abdul Munib, Rear Admiral Faisal Amin, Major Gen. Muhammad Raza Aizad, Major General Muhammad Ishaq Khattak, Major Gen. Ch. Amin Ajmal, Major Gen. Jawwad Ahmed Qazi, Major Gen. Ahmad Bilal, Major Gen. Ifikhar Hassan Chaudhry, Major Gen. Ehsan Ali, Major Gen. Kamran Nazir Malik, Major Gen. Wajid Aziz, Major Gen. Muhammad Umer Bashir, Major Gen. Asad ur Rehman Afzal Cheema, Major Gen. Mushtaq Ali, Major Gen. Muhammad Imtiaz, Major Gen. Muhammad Farhan, Major Gen. Ahsan Ali Shah, Major Gen. Ahsan Altaf and Major Gen. Aabeena Choudry.

The president also conferred Sitara-i-Basalat (posthumous) upon Captain Abdul Wali Shaheed, who embraced martyrdom during an operation against terrorists in North Waziristan.

PM Shehbaz reconstitutes ECC with Aurangzeb as its chairman

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif reconstituted the federal cabinet's Economic Coordination Committee (ECC), ARY News reported.

According to the official notification, the Economic Coordination Committee has been reconstituted and Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb was appointed as its chairman.

The notification stated that the finance minister will head the panel with the four other ministers including economic affairs, commerce, power, petroleum, and planning, development and special initiatives, notified as its members.

It is pertinent to mention here that before the reconstitution of the ECC, Prime Minister used to hold the chairmanship of the Economic Coordination Committee.

Earlier, Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif formed a steering committee for reforms and automation in Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR).

As per details, PM Shehbaz will be chairman of the 10-member steering committee and a formal notification has also been issued in this regard.

The Federal Ministers of Finance, Industry, Commerce and Production, and Law will be members of the high profile Committee.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia stand proudly together at all times: PM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stated that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia stand proudly together at all times and on all occasions.

In a tweet, he recalled his meeting with Minister for Defence of Saudi Arabia Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud who was Guest of honour at the Pakistan Day parade in Islamabad.

The Prime Minister expressed his delight over meeting the visiting Saudi dignitary and said he conveyed his warm wishes to the Saudi King and Crown Prince.

Shehbaz Sharif said he also congratulated the Saudi Defence Minister on receiving Pakistan's highest civil award 'Nishan-e-Imtiaz' for his invaluable contribution in strengthening Pak-Saudi fraternal ties.

CM Balochistan greets Hindu community on Holi festival

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has extended warmest congratulations to the Hindu community on their Holi festival being observed today (Monday). A felicitatory message issued here on Sunday, the Chief Minister said that the Muslims also share the joys of Holi with the Hindu community.

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti stressed the need to generalize the message of peace of Hindu religion to cope with the severe challenges being faced in form of terrorism and law and order. He said that the Hindu community had been utilizing their full capabilities for development and reconstruction of the country and their role is appreciable in this regard.

He also said that the government is ensuring protection of the rights of all minorities including Hindu community in the province.

Pakistan mulling over resuming trade with India, says Ishaq Dar

LONDON (INP): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar hinted at Pakistan mulling over trade relations with India.

He was talking to media in London after his participation in the Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels. Ishaq Dar, a former finance minister of Pakistan, remarked that the trade with India via Dubai and Singapore has been much expensive.

Trade relations with India were suspended since India's controversial move to revoke the special autonomous status of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. He said Pakistan's business class was eager for restoration of direct trade with India. "We will take a decision after consultations with all stakeholders," he added.

He said the government would implement a five-year road map to put Pakistan on the road of economic progress and bring down inflation to lessen economic difficulties of the common man. He said the 16-month government of Shehbaz Sharif saved Pakistan from economic collapse after the bad policies of the previous government which devastated economy of the country. He said Pakistan had vision for nuclear energy since 1960s and despite the scrutiny of the world it continued to harness the benefits of nuclear energy. "Now the world is saying that nuclear and hydro energy are the safest and best for taking on the challenge of climate change."

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More than 8,89,000 kids to be vaccinated: Special anti-polio campaign to be kicked off in 11 districts of Balochistan today

QUETTA: The special anti-polio campaign is scheduled to be launched in 11 districts of Balochistan today (Monday).

The Coordinator, Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for polio eradication, Syed Zahid Shah informed that all the necessary arrangements have been made for the special immunities for development and reconstruction of the country and their role is appreciable in this regard.

He also said that the government is ensuring protection of the rights of all minorities including Hindu community in the province.

According to EOC Coordinator, it has been targeted to vaccinate more than 8,89,000 children below five years of age during the five-day special immunization campaign.

Islamabad DC denies PTI permission to hold rally

ISLAMABAD (INP): The district administration of Islamabad on Saturday refused to grant permission to the PTI for a rally on March 30.

In response to a letter written by the party, the administration said that at the district intelligence committee's meeting, the police, Special Branch and Intelligence Bureau (IB)



QUETTA: A large number of vehicles stuck in traffic jam before Iftar time due to negligence of traffic police staffs and illegal parking, need attention of concerned department

Pak-Saudi diplomatic exchange strengthening bilateral ties for future cooperation: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi has said the recent exchange of visits between high-ranking officials from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has underscored the burgeoning alliance between the two nations, setting a robust foundation for future cooperation.

Talking to media the other day, he said Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister, Prince Khalid bin Salman, graced Pakistan Day parade

as a distinguished guest and was honored with the prestigious Nishan Pakistan by the president of Pakistan.

Similarly, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir, reciprocated the gesture with a significant visit to Saudi Arabia, engaging in crucial discussions with Saudi Crown Prince, Muhammad bin Salman, and other key leaders, Ashrafi said adding that these diplomatic endeavors not only reinforced the bonds between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia but also sent a resounding mes-

sage of stability and progress to the global community.

The PUC chairman said General Munir's steadfast efforts in fortifying relations with Saudi Arabia and other Islamic Arab countries had been commendable, reflecting Pakistan's commitment to fostering solidarity within the Muslim world.

He said the reciprocal visits served as tangible evidence of the success of diplomatic initiatives aimed at enhancing Pakistan's stature internationally.

Ashrafi said the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, characterized by robust cooperation and mutual consultation, remained unwavering.

He said in the wake of recent developments concerning Palestine issue after October 7, General Munir's proactive engagement, alongside Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman had further consolidated the partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on critical regional issues.



ISLAMABAD: Christian devotees attend a Palm Sunday Ceremony at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Painters busy coloring a pedestrian bridge at Expressway.

Grand Mufti of Bosnia & Herzegovina calls on Rector IIUI

ISLAMABAD (APP): The esteemed Grand Mufti of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr Hussein of Kavazovic called on Professor Dr Samina Malik, Rector, International Islamic University, Islamabad at her office in the new campus of the university.

During the meeting issues pertaining to expanding bilateral educational ties between IIUI, Bosnia and Herzegovinian universities especially in the fields of Islamic studies, training of Aima, Jurisprudence and law were discussed, said a press release here yesterday.

The grand Mufti appreciating the role of IIUI in serving the Muslim world said that there are a number of learned scholars, bureaucrats, Aima and researchers in Bosnia who have benefited from the IIUI.

He said the university has close objectives akin to the Islamic studies faculties of the Bosnia and Herzegovinian universities.

He also expressed appreciation for the deep bonds of friendship between the peoples of Bosnia and Pakistan. The grand Mufti was accompanied by the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Emin Cohodarevic.

It was agreed in the meeting that an MoU for the mutual cooperation in the field of education and exchange of experiences shall be materialized soon to enhance these bilateral ties practically.

During the meeting, The IIUI Rector extended a warm welcome to the Grand Mufti, expressing heartfelt congratulations on his forthcoming receipt of the Sitare-e-Quaid-e-Azam Award on March 23rd, conferred by the President of Pakistan.

She appraised him about the services, role, vision and future goals of university as well as briefed about the faculties of the universities in addition to the presence of international teachers and students.

Disbursement of quarterly tranche of Benazir Kafaalat continues smoothly

ISLAMABAD (APP): The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (Jan-March) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to beneficiaries is continuing smoothly across the country.

The payment process is continued across the country, including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan simultaneously to disburse the increased payment of Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine million registered beneficiary families. Chairperson, BISP, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib has said that the quarterly payment has been disbursed among 50 percent of the total beneficiaries of Benazir Kafaalat while those remaining will also receive their amounts soon. Dr. Saqib advised the BISP staff to show respect and tolerance to the women while disbursing payments and remain polite to them. He also urged the bank staff to ensure transparency in the payment process.

The beneficiaries are also advised to receive their full payment through the agent/representative of their nearest designated bank and contact the toll-free number 080026477 or the nearest Tehsil offices in case of any deduction.

Besides Benazir Kafaalat stipend payments, the disbursement of education stipends is also being carried out across the country. In some areas, the special Ramzan grant is also being issued to the beneficiaries. It is pertinent to mention here that the special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly. However, the beneficiaries can also contact them on WhatsApp numbers including 03018472836/03028240958 (Sindh), 0318472831 (South Punjab-I), 03175370095 (South Punjab-II), 03028240972 (Central Punjab), 03028240977 (North Punjab), 03185761507 (Balochistan), 03175370081 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

J.Salik to share his greetings of Palm Sunday

ISLAMABAD (APP): Convener World Minorities Alliance, Human Rights Activist, Nominee for Nobel Peace Prize, and Former Federal Minister of Pakistan Mr J Salik share his good wishes on the day of Palm Sunday.

In his message here on this Sunday he said that Palm Sunday, also referred to as Passion Sunday, holds significant importance of peace in the Christian calendar as it marks the commencement of Holy Week.

He further added that the most sacred period for Christian communities worldwide Observed on the Sunday before Easter Sunday, Palm Sunday's date varies annually, contingent upon the date of Easter.

Palm Sunday, also referred to as Passion Sunday, holds significant importance in the Christian calendar as it marks the commencement of Holy Week, he added. He pray for the happiness of all Christian community on the festival of Palm Sunday.

Writer, journalist Ahmad Bashir remembered on birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Writer, journalist and intellectual Ahmed Bashir was remembered on the occasion of his birth anniversary on Sunday.

Born in Aimanabad near Gujranwala on March 24, 1923, Ahmed Bashir obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree from Srinagar and went to Bombay for a career in acting but soon started writing for film magazines.

After the partition of India, he came to Pakistan settle permanently here.

Ahmad Bashir worked for several newspapers. However, he is remembered for his days at Daily Imroze where he introduced feature writing in Urdu press. He also obtained training in film direction from Hollywood on a state scholarship. He also worked for the Department of Films & Publications and later for the National Film Development Corporation (NAFDEC). Bashir was also a portrait writer.

His book "Jo Milay Thay Raaste Mein" contained pen sketches of eminent literary personalities including Mumtaz Mufti.

Govt cognizant of addressing TB as public health priority: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that provision of universal access to quality essential health services was the constitutional responsibility of the Government that recognized the importance of addressing Tuberculosis (TB) as a public health priority.

The government has implemented various programmes and policies to combat this disease, the prime minister said in a message on World TB Day.

"On this World TB Day 2024, I applaud the

services of everyone committed to the fight against tuberculosis and reiterate our Government's resolve towards supporting the initiatives aimed at eradicating TB and improving the health and well-being of our citizens," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

The prime minister said Tuberculosis remained a significant global health challenge, causing immense suffering and claiming far too many lives every year.

"It is crucial that we prioritize TB elimination in our global health agenda and

allocate resources accordingly. Together, we can harness innovation, research, and technology to accelerate progress towards a TB-free world," he added.

The prime minister said that while they strived to provide equitable health services to their citizens, they deeply appreciated the role of the private sector and our global partners.

"I call upon all partners, organisations, healthcare professionals, and individuals to unite in our efforts to end TB. We must work collaboratively to strengthen healthcare systems.

Govt committed to provide low-cost, affordable living opportunities: Pirzada

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada has said that the government is committed to providing low-cost and affordable living opportunities to the poor and vulnerable segments of society.

While chairing a meeting of the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA), he emphasized the importance of ensuring that plots are allocated strictly on merit.

During the meeting, Riaz Pirzada was apprised about the management and working of the department by Director General FGEHA Capt. ®

Muhammad Zafar Iqbal.

The minister urged the identification and removal of any irregularities to uphold transparency in the allotment process. Furthermore, he directed the Director General to conduct a thorough and transparent audit of the authority stressing the need for stringent measures against corruption, as no one will be spared on any irregularity.

"We must deliver what we committed to the allottees and highlighted the urgency of completing ongoing and stalled development projects to facilitate the government employees and the general public.

CDA imposes heavy taxes on properties in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) has imposed heavy taxes on real estate properties in federal capital Islamabad. According to notification, owners of 140 square yards plots in sectors and housing societies like Shehzad Town, Margala Town, and Rawal Town will now pay Rs24,000 in taxes. Farmhouse owners with eight kanals will pay Rs180,000, while those with 90 to 120 kanals will pay Rs442,000. Commercial properties in the blue area will be taxed at Rs32 per square foot for ground floor, Rs22 per square foot for basement.

Islamabad Capital Police continues its campaign to check traffic rules violations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The campaign of Islamabad Capital Police to check violation of traffic rules is in full swing and special efforts are being made to maintain traffic discipline in the city. The main objective of this road safety campaign is to ensure safety to the people while road users are being educated for lane discipline during driving.

Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has constituted special teams to control lane violations on various

present on all important roads and boulevards of the city in order to educate road users about traffic rules. FM Radio 92.4 is also disseminating the messages about road safety and to educate the audience about traffic rules.

Citizens are urged to cooperate with the Islamabad Capital Police by following traffic laws. He said that action would be taken against those not following lanes while the sole purpose is to ensure a safe road environment in the city. Islamabad capital police hoped citizens will follow traffic rules and help police through their coop-



roads and ensure smooth flow of traffic in the city. Strict checking is being made against those not using helmets during bike ride.

Police teams remain

eration in ensuring a secure traffic system in the city. Those violating traffic rules will be fined and a safer road environment would be ensured through constant monitoring.

Interfaith Iftar Dinner: A symbol of unity amidst conclusion of Lent season; says IRCRA president

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA) is set to host its annual Interfaith Iftar Dinner on Friday, March 29, at the prestigious Islamabad Club.

IRCRA President Muhammad Israr Madani, in an exclusive talk with APP, said this event would serve as a beacon of religious harmony, fostering dialogue and understanding among diverse communities.

He emphasized the significance of this event in promoting religious tolerance and bridging differences through dialogue.

He reiterated that such initiatives are integral to creating an environment of mutual respect and understanding among people of different faiths.

Highlighting the international dimension of the

event, Israr noted that the Interfaith Iftar Dinner would attract participation from diplomatic communities, showcasing Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace and tolerance on the global stage.

The presence of diplomatic representatives would underscore the country's efforts to portray a positive image and strengthen its ties with the international community, he added. Israr also acknowledged the ongoing Lent fasts observed by the Christian community, which culminate on March 30.

"The timing of the Interfaith Iftar Dinner holds special significance as it coincides with the conclusion of the Lent period, symbolizing solidarity and unity among followers of different faiths," he emphasized.

Campaign for registration of house servants and tenants data in full swing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Following the special orders of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in

full swing, a public relations officer said.

He said that, during this campaign various teams of Islamabad Capital Police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as to inquire about the problems faced by the citi-

campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital adding that the registration of tenants and domestic workers could not only keep a close watch on miscreants but also prevent the elements involved in any kind of suspicious activity.



IOJK people struggling for UN-pledged right to self-determination

ISLAMABAD (APP): People in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) are engaged in a struggle for the exercise of their United Nations-pledged right to self-determination.

Kashmiris' freedom struggle is an indigenous popular movement and has been accepted as a just struggle at the global level, said a press release.

It said indigenous character of the Kashmir freedom movement is evident from the sacrifices rendered by Kashmiris on daily basis, adding the Kashmiris' struggle against Indian ille-

FGEHA launches operations against illegal construction in G-12

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) has launched an encroachment operations against illegal construction in the Mauve Area of G-12. The operation was launched on the direction of the Director General FGEHA. The Enforcement Wing of the Authority headed by the Director (Enforcement) along with the Deputy Director, Assistant Directors and their team were directed to monitor new illegal constructions and encroachments by local people.

He said that India cannot befall the world by terming the homegrown Kashmiris' freedom struggle as sponsored and the Modi regime will fail in its nefarious design to label Kashmiris' indigenous movement as sponsored.

Human Rights activist for improving physical, mental health of PWDs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Human Rights activist Ayub Malik on Sunday stressed the need to focus on improving the physical and mental quality of life for people living with disabilities. Talking to APP, he said that people with disabilities (PWDs) face a variety of structural and ideological challenges that have little to do with their actual limitations. These societal stigmas were often at the root of poor mental health among individuals with disabilities, rather than their

disability itself, he added. However, he said that this can be lessened by focusing on ways to promote good mental health and people with disabilities.

He said that some encouraging steps have recently been taken in Pakistan, such as the introduction of special identity cards for PWDs to enable them to access a range of concessions. It is also no longer legal to use derogatory terms such as 'disabled', 'physically handicapped' or 'mentally retarded'.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers working on new gas pipeline project along Sector G-8 in the Federal Capital.

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Moscow carnage

The monstrous terrorist attack targeting a concert hall near Moscow on Friday night should alert the international community to the threat the self-styled Islamic State's Khorasan chapter poses to global security.

While the 'original' IS may have been largely defeated in the battlefields of Iraq and Syria, IS-K is proving itself to be a 'worthy' successor to its parent outfit's blood-soaked legacy. Over 140 people were mowed down in the Moscow attack, which IS-K has claimed, while Russian authorities say several suspects, including some of the attackers, have been apprehended. While Russian intelligence agencies claim the perpetrators have links to Ukraine, Kyiv has denied this. IS-K, believed to be operating out of Afghanistan, has been slowly building its profile. It has staged several attacks in Afghanistan as well as Pakistan. In January, it bombed the commemoration ceremony of Iranian Gen Qassem Soleimani in Kerman, causing a high number of fatalities.

With the Moscow attack, the terrorist group seems to be expanding its geographical scope. Russia had in decades past dealt with religiously inspired militancy, including in Chechnya and Dagestan. In more recent times, Vladimir Putin's forces intervened to turn the tide in favour of Syrian forces fighting both their political opponents and jihadists. Moreover, thousands of Russian — Chechens and others — jihadists had fought against Bashar al-Assad's regime during the Syrian civil war. Now that the Syrian front is largely quiet, these militants, under the IS-K flag, may have decided to take their fight to Russia proper to avenge their defeat. Just as it took a multinational effort to defeat IS, a similar endeavour will be needed to destroy IS-K before it spreads its deadly wings any further. This will require the international community to closely coordinate with the Afghan Taliban, whom IS-K opposes. Afghanistan, and those states that border it, particularly Pakistan, need to be in the forefront of the fight against the Khorasan faction, as these countries are the most vulnerable to IS-K's bloody forays. Iran, the Central Asian states, China and Russia should also be on board to contain the regional threat, and neutralise it.

Moreover, the Taliban need to understand that letting militants operate on their soil — including TTP terrorists — will jeopardise the security of their own country, as well as that of the greater region. Counterterrorism assistance should be extended by foreign states to the de facto Afghan regime in the fight against IS-K, TTP and others. Pakistan has reiterated the need for collective efforts. Also, further investigation is needed to probe Moscow's claims of state support for IS-K. Needless to say, supporting such bloodthirsty actors would be a folly of monumental proportions. Some foreign actors made similar mistakes in Syria by financing and arming anti-Assad extremists. Such dubious manoeuvres should not be repeated.

Ramifications of Terrorist Attack in Russia on Pakistan

By Qamar Bashir

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



The devastating attack on a music concert in Moscow, Russia, resulting in the tragic loss of over 133 lives, sent shockwaves reverberating across the globe. This heinous act has deeply wounded the collective spirit of the Russian nation and stirred anguish among people worldwide. The brazen assault on innocent concertgoers, unprecedented in Moscow, strikes at the heart of a city known for its robust security measures, fortified by Russia's formidable security apparatus and renowned intelligence agency, the KGB.

This time, it appears that the attackers managed to breach the legendary security of Moscow, the capital city of one of the world's most powerful nations. This breach may have occurred due to various factors, including intelligence failures, potential inside collusion, or complacency within the security apparatus. Alternatively, the perpetrators might have been exceptionally well-prepared, possessing high levels of skill, resources, and connections both inside and outside the country. These factors likely facilitated their undetected entry into Russia, circumventing border security measures. Once inside, they could have arranged transportation, acquired funds, weapons, and even concert tickets with ease. This enabled them to carry

out their heinous act, indiscriminately firing upon concertgoers, resulting in the tragic loss of over 133 lives, and later setting fire to the venue.

The four terrorists were apprehended along with eleven accomplices; their confessional videos are available on social media platforms. It's possible that they were not as ready to leave as they were to enter Russia. The US quickly announced that ISIS, specifically the ISIS Khorasani Group, or ISIS-K, was behind the attack. They claimed that Russian intelligence had been tipped off by the US about an impending terrorist strike in Moscow, but they dismissed the information as a false flag.

Vladimir Putin disputed the US's claim that ISIS was to blame, placing the responsibility instead on Ukraine, the West, and the US and all those countries which have been supporting Ukraine against Russia.

He also warned that anyone who planned, encouraged, assisted, supported, or funded this heinous act would face consequences, but the way he intended to carry out that punishment would send shockwaves around the globe.

The vows made by Putin have put Ukraine, the entire West, and the US on edge. Unlike weaker and less resourceful countries like Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Syria, Iran and Afghanistan, or Pakistan, the US and the West now facing Russia possess a formidable war machine. It boasts a

highly trained and battle-hardened army, a feared intelligence agency in the form of the KGB, and nuclear capabilities that could devastate the world multiple times over. As a member of OPEC, Russia stands as one of the top exporters of oil, petroleum products, wheat, and other essential crops, as well as industrial products, weapons, and weapons systems. Its self-sufficiency in food, industrial goods, military hardware, and energy makes Russia one of the most secure countries in the world.

To counter any potential Russian attempts to retaliate against those it accuses of masterminding the attack, the US, Ukraine, and Western countries have started mulling on ways and means to defuse Russian anger and putting all safety and defense mechanism in place to minimize the impact of imminent Russian attempt to take revenge of the attack from perceived masterminds, abettors and facilitators.

They are fiercely engaged in diplomatic dialogue with Russia to de-escalate tensions and prevent further escalation of the situation involving direct negotiations, diplomatic channels through international organizations such as the United Nations, and diplomatic initiatives led by neutral parties.

They are thinking of building a coalition of international allies to demonstrate solidarity and support for Ukraine and rallying support from NATO allies, European Union member states, and other countries sharing

similar concerns about Russian impending actions.

They are mulling over ways and means to maintaining a strong military presence in the region to deter potential Russian aggression and respond effectively to any hostile actions involving deploying additional troops, conducting military exercises, and enhancing defense capabilities to ensure readiness to defend against any threats, besides, intensifying intelligence-sharing mechanisms among allied countries to gather information on Russian intentions and activities involving sharing intelligence on potential threats, monitoring Russian military movements, and coordinating efforts to counter any hostile actions.

Moreover, to deter Russia from taking retaliatory actions, they are lining up targeted economic sanctions against Russia if it escalates tensions or takes aggressive actions against Ukraine or other countries. This could involve imposing sanctions on key Russian individuals, entities, and sectors, as well as restricting trade and financial transactions to exert economic pressure on Russia.

Strengthen cyber defense capabilities to protect against potential Russian cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure, government institutions, and private sector entities may also be on the cards. This could involve enhancing cybersecurity measures, investing in advanced technologies, and conducting cybersecurity exer-

cises to prepare for potential threats.

If the security situation escalates, and Russia decides to retaliate on a large scale deploying kinetic means, and to use oil, wheat, and gas as weapons and disrupt maritime trade, it would pose a significant global repercussions, extending to countries like Pakistan, which has a historical legacy in the Afghan conflict against the USSR.

In the event of maritime trade route disruptions, Pakistan would confront economic challenges, including higher prices for essential commodities, decreased exports, and overall economic instability. Additionally, as a nation heavily reliant on imports for its energy needs, Pakistan could face shortages and increased prices of oil and gas, precipitating energy crises and economic strain.

An escalation in commodity and oil prices would profoundly impact Pakistan's economy, primarily through inflationary pressures and widening trade deficits. As a nation heavily reliant on imported commodities and oil, Pakistan would face increased production costs, leading to higher prices for goods and services, ultimately affecting consumers' purchasing power. Moreover, the country's trade deficit could further expand as the prices of imported commodities rise, straining its balance of payments and potentially depleting foreign exchange reserves.

Additionally,

Pakistan's energy sector, which heavily depends on imported oil and gas, would bear the brunt of escalating oil prices. Higher energy production costs would translate into increased electricity prices and transportation expenses, posing challenges to industrial productivity and economic growth. The government, meanwhile, may face heightened fiscal pressures to maintain subsidies on essential commodities, potentially straining public finances and diverting resources from other development priorities.

Furthermore, the escalation in commodity and oil prices could exert pressure on Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, affecting the country's ability to meet external debt obligations and finance imports.

To counteract these potential ramifications, Pakistan would need to engage in diplomatic efforts, collaborating with regional and international partners to mitigate the impact of maritime trade disruptions and ensure the security and stability of trade routes. Pakistan would also need to implement effective economic management strategies, policy interventions, and efforts to diversify its energy sources and reduce reliance on imported commodities. Such measures are crucial to navigating the economic impacts of rising global commodity prices and ensuring the stability and resilience of Pakistan's economy in the face of external shocks.

Xi Jinping's Vision for China's Future

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

This week, 'Two Sessions-2024' in China unfolded against a backdrop of heightened party control and consolidated authority. With the passage of a revised law granting the Communist Party greater influence over the State Council, effectively merging party and state powers, the sessions underscored a significant shift towards centralized leadership. While General Secretary Xi Jinping did not personally address the meetings, his pervasive influence was unmistakable.

In a noteworthy display of Xi's dominance, Premier Li Qiang, China's second-ranking leader, referenced Xi's name a staggering 16 times in the government work report—a frequency surpassing any previous year since Xi assumed office over a decade ago. Li's explicit acknowledgment attributed China's accomplishments in 2023 to Xi's leadership and the guiding principles of "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era," solidifying Xi's ideological imprint on governance.

The ramifications of these developments are profound, reverberating both domestically and internationally. Domestically, the reinforced grip of the Communist Party over governmental affairs signals a consolidation

of power unseen in recent years. This heightened centralization aligns with Xi's broader agenda of promoting party loyalty and reinforcing ideological cohesion within the political apparatus.

On the global stage, China's shifting power dynamics attract close observation as the country's economic and geopolitical clout steadily grows. This expansion of influence prompts a reassessment of China's role in international affairs. The growing alignment between the Communist Party and state institutions has the potential to redefine China's interactions with the global community, impacting decisions related to trade, diplomacy, and overall international relations strategy.

China's economic ascent, coupled with its assertive foreign policy, has positioned it as a significant player in global trade and investment networks. As the convergence between party and state authority deepens, the international community anticipates adjustments in China's approach to trade agreements, investment partnerships, and economic diplomacy. These shifts may influence trade dynamics, market regulations, and the distribution of economic benefits on a global scale.

Moreover, China's diplomatic outreach and

engagement with other nations are subject to scrutiny amid evolving power dynamics. The consolidation of party leadership within state institutions could lead to a more cohesive and assertive foreign policy stance.

This may manifest in China's approach to regional disputes, multilateral negotiations, and global governance structures. The international community closely monitors China's diplomatic initiatives for indications of strategic priorities and potential areas of cooperation or contention. Additionally, the evolving alignment of party and state authority in China could have implications for broader international relations frameworks. China's growing influence may prompt adjustments in global governance mechanisms, international norms, and the distribution of power within existing institutions. As China asserts itself as a major global player, its engagement with multilateral forums and global initiatives may reflect its evolving domestic political dynamics.

Ultimately, the outcomes of the Two Sessions and the ensuing policy directives bear significant implications for China's trajectory, both domestically and on the global stage. The continued dominance of Xi Jinping's ideological framework underscores a deliberate strategy

aimed at consolidating power, shaping national identity, and asserting China's position as a formidable player in the international arena.

China strides forward along its economic journey. It finds itself at a juncture, surrounded by a rapidly shifting global landscape. Within this context, the outcomes of the Two Sessions and the subsequent policy decisions wield profound influence, not only within the borders of the Middle Kingdom but also resonating across international markets and geopolitical arenas.

Central to China's vision is a steadfast commitment to innovation, self-reliance, and the pursuit of high-quality growth. These pillars not only serve as guiding principles for domestic policy but also serve to define China's evolving role on the world stage. Innovation stands as the cornerstone of China's economic strategy, propelling the nation towards the forefront of technological advancement and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and creativity. By nurturing an ecosystem conducive to innovation, China aims not only to bolster its domestic industries but also to assert its position as a global leader in cutting-edge technologies.

Equally integral to China's economic nar-

ative is the notion of self-reliance. As the world witnesses an era of heightened geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainties, China seeks to fortify its resilience by reducing reliance on external sources and fostering indigenous capabilities across various sectors. This pursuit of self-sufficiency is not merely an economic strategy but also carries profound implications for China's geopolitical standing, positioning the nation as a formidable force capable of charting its own course amidst global turbulence.

China solidifies its position as a global economic powerhouse, its policies and actions carry significant implications for international trade, investment flows, and geopolitical alignments. The continued emphasis on innovation and self-reliance may reshape global supply chains, with repercussions felt by businesses and consumers around the world. Moreover, China's commitment to high-quality growth may set new standards for sustainable development, influencing global norms and policies in areas such as climate change and corporate governance.

The recent Two Sessions in China have provided key insights into the direction of the China's economic and

political strategy. President Xi Jinping's vision for China's future economic trajectory was a focal point of the meetings, emphasizing the importance of innovation, self-reliance, and high-quality growth.

Looking ahead, attention is now focused on the upcoming Third Plenum of the Party's Central Committee, where significant economic reforms may be unveiled. Xi Jinping's statements suggest that these reforms may align with his current economic strategy, focusing on achieving "high-quality development." China navigates its economic path amidst changing global dynamics, the outcomes of the Two Sessions and the subsequent policy decisions will have far-reaching implications for both domestic and international stakeholders. The continued emphasis on innovation, self-reliance, and high-quality growth will shape China's economic trajectory and its role on the world stage in the years to come.

(The author is a foreign affairs analyst, media advisor, political commentator based in Peshawar, and serves as the Secretary General of the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Chapter of the Pakistan China Friendship Association. He can be contacted via email at syed.gilani@gmail.com.)

Punjab CM orders crackdown on chemical string, kite flying

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has ordered a crackdown on the making, selling and buying of chemical string. The CM presided over a meeting in which law and order of the province was reviewed. The IGP Police gave a briefing about the law and order.

The CM sought a report on the crime situation on a daily basis and directed to submit a report after evaluating performance of police officers. Maryam Nawaz ordered a zero tolerance policy about chemical string.

The CM ordered immediate action to ensure implementation of the law to stop open display of arms. It was agreed to formulate a foolproof mechanism against drug peddling during the meeting.

Maryam Nawaz directed to frame cases

with an irrefutable evidence against big drug peddlers, adding that the need to formulate a legal mechanism in order to check the online supply of drugs in educational institutions should be reviewed.

The CM stated that permission to establish no-go areas anywhere in Punjab will not be granted. She expressed her concern over the frequent occurrence of kite flying incidents and stated that she felt heartily grieved over witnessing the video of a child due to chemical kite string, adding that the lives of parents of the innocent child were ruined as well. She maintained that a law exists for the eradication of kite flying but even then people were losing their lives. There is a need to undertake steps on a war footing to ensure implementation of the prohibition of the kite flying law. Mere a case is

inadequate, the accused must also be punished, she added.

The CM directed to take stern action for reduction in molestation cases. The accused should be awarded strict punishment in molestation cases. The unending torture incidents of children, servants and domestic violence are highly deplorable, she added.

Senior Provincial Minister Mairiyum Aurangzeb, Former Senator Pervez Rasheed, Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari, Special Assistant Zeshan Malik, MPA Sania Ashiq, Chief Secretary, IGP Police, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, CCPO and Advocate General attended the meeting. Secretary Home, Divisional Commissioners, RPOs, Deputy Commissioners, DPOs participated in the meeting via video link.



SIALKOT: Defense Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif is listening to people's problems at his residence.

Measures under way to make Punjab drug-free: police

LAHORE (APP): Following the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab Police have accelerated crackdown across province for making Punjab drug-free.

Under the direction of Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, targeted operations of police teams are ongoing on the bases of drug smugglers and dealers across the province including Lahore.

Punjab Police Spokesman said that during the last 24 hours, 635 raids were conducted on the hideouts of drug

dealers across the province. 247 cases were registered against the accused involved in drug trafficking and 247 accused were arrested and imprisoned. Spokesman of Punjab Police further said that 68 kg of Charas, 01 kg of Ice, 03 kg of heroin and 2465 liters of liquor were recovered from the possession of the accused.

The Spokesman gave details of the crackdown launched across the province from February 26. During this period, a total of 6164 raids were conducted across the province.

Punjab police accelerates crackdown on kite-flying

LAHORE (APP): On the orders of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab Police has accelerated crackdown on the people involved in kite flying. Special police teams are actively engaged in arresting the law-breakers involved in the dangerous game across the province. IGP Punjab Dr Usman Anwar instructed the supervisory officers to self-supervise the crackdown on kite-flying.

He warned that circle officer concerned would be

responsible in case of loss of life due to kite flying. The IGP Punjab directed that all supervisory officers should ensure strict implementation of Anti-Kite Flying Act and adopt zero tolerance against manufacture, sale and use of metal strings and kites. Punjab police spokesman said that in the last 24 hours, 63 cases were registered and 68 people were arrested for violating the Anti-Kite Flying Act across the province. 1,198 kites, 64 metallic string wheels were recovered.



SARGODHA: Pastor Adwar Zafar Akhtar leads Palm Sunday processions at UP Church Noori Gate.

Organic Food: A booming trend in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR (APP): The benefits of organic food and its positive effects on human life have drawn peoples' attention towards safe food that is also rich in nutrients and grown by traditional methods using natural ingredients beneficial for health.

With the new innovation and developments in medical science that unveiled the hazards of inorganic foods to humans is seen. The scientists are still unaware about the real harmful effects of foods grown from unnatural ways but people are preferring food that is simple, pure and less

contaminated by chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides.

"Agricultural products that are grown and processed without use of chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers and genetically modified organisms are referred to inorganic food," said Darya Khan, Provincial Coordinator at Nutrition International Peshawar while talking to APP. He said such food was healthy, full of antioxidants and without allergens besides having lasting effects on immunity and life span.

He said individuals who use inorganic food are

more prone to various kinds of diseases and ailments and the best option was adaptation of home-based agriculture practices to get organic food. He said that survival rate and life expectancy of people living in remote areas is far better as compared to people living in developed cities, adding the average life span of population residing in remote areas of Pakistan like Hunza, Swat and Chitral are significantly longer and healthier due to their reliance on organic food items.

He said the food grown in natural ways was full of nutrients and devoid



LAHORE: Former Governor of Punjab Mr. Shahid Hamid calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

CM KP assures to address problems in metropolis

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur met with Members of National Assembly (MNAs) and Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs) affiliated with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) here on Sunday to discuss public issues and development matters concerning the provincial capital.

The meeting focused on a range of issues including healthcare, security, traffic management, infrastructure improvement, provision of clean drinking water, sewerage, and other related concerns affecting the populace of Peshawar.

CM Ali Amin Khan Gandapur said that Peshawar is everyone's city, and its development is his top priority. "We will strive to make Peshawar once again a city of blossoms", he said.

He added, "We aim to transition Peshawar's street lights to solar energy and are considering projects such as running trains to alleviate traffic congestion".

Discussions also highlighted the possibility of engaging private companies to implement a train system based on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) model.

The issue of sanitation in Peshawar is grave and will be addressed

on a priority basis with sustainable solutions, assured Ali Amin Gandapur. The chief minister also emphasized the need to overhaul the city's sanitation system by shifting it underground.

In order to enhance public services, in all autonomous institutions, the provincial government will appoint hardworking and professional individuals based on merit, CM reiterated. He made it clear that no political recommendations would be entertained in this process.

He said that local governments will be empowered and strengthened to ensure that public issues are resolved at the grassroots level.

Minister visits mausoleum of Bhutto family, Sir Shahnawaz Library

LARKANA (APP): Sindh Minister of Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah on Sunday visited the mausoleum of former Prime Ministers of Pakistan Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, democratic leader Begum Nusrat Bhutto and also laid floral wreaths, offered "Fateha" for them in Garhi Kudabakhsh Bhutto graveyard.

Beside this he also laid floral wreaths on the graves of Shaheed Mir Murtaza and Shahnawaz Bhutto. On this occasion party

workers raise slogans of Bhutto family.

After visited Garhi Kudabakhsh, he arrived along with MPA Jamil Ahmed Soomro, Secretary Culture Sindh Khalid Chachar, Mayor Larkana Anwar Ali Luhar, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Sharjeel Noor Chana and other officials. He also visited, Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto library where he reviewed various parts of the library, adding that furniture should be changed and other facilities including water should be ensured and the various sections available for the students in the library should be upgraded.

5 dead, 1223 injured in 1103 RTCs in Punjab

Independent Report
LAHORE: At least five persons were killed and 1223 injured in 1103 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 568 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 655 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 649 drivers, 41 underage drivers, 144 pedestrians, and 435 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 276 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 319.

CM Sindh takes action on tragic killing of six persons near Nawabshah

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has taken notice of the killing of six persons near Nawabshah.

He said, "I am very sorry that this has happened in the month of Ramadan."

According to a CM Spokesman, the CM had ordered IGP Sindh that a report should be submitted to him after conducting a detailed inquiry into the incident. Murad said that steps should be taken immediately to establish peace in the area.

The incident took

place due to a conflict over agricultural land in the village of Haji Wahid Bakhsh Dahri near Nawabshah.

The IGP had informed the CM that the bodies of the dead and the injured had been shifted to the hospital.

Due to the tense situation in the area, the district police were alerted and a heavy contingent had been deployed.

It is to be noted that 6 people were killed and eight others were injured due to the land dispute in the Dahri community.



HYDERABAD: Provincial President PPP Nisar Ahmed Khoro addressing a press conference at Rizvi House in the city.

Work underway on drainage project in Daska: Minister

Independent Report
SIALKOT: Provincial Minister for Local Government Punjab Zeeshan Rafique has said that under the Punjab Cities Program (PCP) of the Punjab government, work on a comprehensive drainage project in Daska city at a cost of Rs1 billion is going on rapidly.

In January 2025, all projects for the construction of the 26,000-foot long RCC drain will be completed, which would end the long-standing drainage problems of the city. He expressed these views while reviewing the speed and quality of work on the ongoing development project under PCP in his constituency PP-51 Daska.

Zeeshan Rafique said

that in addition to the new RCC drains in the sewage project in Daska of PCP, rehabilitation of 31,507 feet of old drains, 282 feet of drain culvert, remodeling of 4,739 feet of drains and de-silting of 36,000 feet of old drains of Municipal Committee Daska are also part of this project.

He said that it is the responsibility of the Engineering Wing of Municipal Committee Daska to complete the project within the stipulated time and ensure quality.

He said that delay in the completion of development projects will not be tolerated and projects of public welfare will be completed within the stipulated timeline.

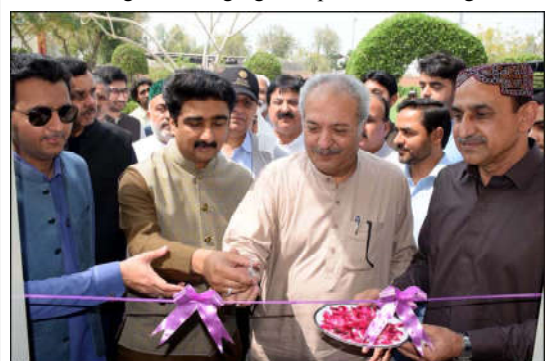
Multan Arts Council signs MoU with WU to promote fine arts in south Punjab

MULTAN (APP): Women University Multan and Punjab Council of Arts Multan decided to make joint efforts to promote education, culture, and fine arts in South Punjab.

According to official sources, the collaboration aims to enhance research activities, develop cultural exchange, and directly engage with students of Women University in literary pursuits. A memorandum of understanding was signed between Punjab Council of Arts Multan and Women University Multan to formalize the partnership for nurturing the emerging

talent of south Punjab.

The agreement not only seeks to promote regional culture and civilization but also aims to provide opportunities for female students to learn on research-based foundations through participation in various conferences, seminars, and lectures. The dignitaries and officials from both sides, including Vice Chancellor of Women University Multan, Professor Dr. Kalsoom Paracha and Director of Punjab Council of Arts Multan Dr. Riaz Hamdani, Registrar/Chairperson Department of English.



LARKANA: Sindh Minister of Culture and Tourism, Antiquities, Archives Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah inaugurating the Book Store at Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto Library.

PFA adopted zero tolerance over sale of unhealthy chicken: DG

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has tightened the noose around the suppliers of dead and emaciated chickens in Lahore by placing screening pickets at the entry points of the provincial metropolis.

To monitor the ongoing crackdown against vendors selling unhealthy chicken, PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid conducted a visit to meat shops in Tollinton Market here on Sunday. He said that PFA imposed hefty fines on two meat shops, served warning notices on 12 food business operators (FBOs) and issued improvement notices to two others.

Moreover, the authority discarded 61kg of stale meat and 400kg of dead chickens during the operation. The meat safety teams will thoroughly inspect the vehicles transporting chicken flocks to local poultry shops in Lahore to meet the daily consumption. He said that the decision was taken to control the sale and purchase of sick, emaciated and dead chickens' meat by following the directions of Punjab Chief Minister.

The DG said that the authority took action against FBOs after recovering hundreds of kilograms dead chickens from chicken-carrying vehicles.

Fazal Karim awarded with TI in recognition of his services

KARACHI (APP): Fazal Karim Dadabhoys revolutionary contributions recognized with prestigious Awards (Tamgha-e-Imtiaz).

Renowned industrialist Fazal Karim Dadabhoys, hailing from a distinguished business family of Pakistan, has been honoured for his exceptional contributions to the industrial and diplomatic sectors.

Dadabhoys, a pioneer in the modification of

cement systems with polymers, has been recognized for his role in developing advanced composite construction materials. These materials have significantly impacted architectural and civil engineering sectors globally, leading to their citation in scientific, engineering and architectural literature worldwide. His innovations have not only revolutionized construction practices in Pakistan.

Faryal wishes Happy Holi to Hindu community

KARACHI (APP): Central President of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Women's Wing and MPA Faryal Talpur has extended Holi greetings to the Hindu community in Pakistan and all those celebrating this festival of colours, lights and the spring worldwide.

In a message on this occasion of the Holi, Faryal Talpur said that the message of Holi was love, brotherhood and peace. She said that the services of Pakistan's Hindu community to the country and nation are unforgettable and prayed that may this Holi bring peace and prosperity to our Hindu brothers and sisters, leading to the interfaith harmony in Pakistan.

Cleanliness work in 325 villages in progress

SIALKOT (APP): The cleanliness of 325 villages of the district was progressing successfully under the 'Suthera Punjab Programme'. This was stated by District Council Chief Officer Ulfat Shahzad while reviewing the cleanliness drive in District Council Sialkot. He said that 1400 trolleys had been deployed to lift garbage from the dumping

grounds. He said that the cleanliness drive in District Council Sialkot was progressing successfully under the 'Suthera Punjab Programme'. This was stated by District Council Chief Officer Ulfat Shahzad while reviewing the cleanliness drive in District Council Sialkot. He said that 1400 trolleys had been deployed to lift garbage from the dumping

Bikulon sees vast scope in Pakistan's pharma, textile sectors

LAHORE (APP): Head of Regional Development and Investment Attractive Department of National Investment Agency Kyrgyzstan Bikulon Damirbek said the pharmaceutical and textile sectors of Pakistan hold vast scope for bilateral trade with Kyrgyzstan, having a wide array of opportunities for economic cooperation between the two countries.

He stated this while talking to a Pak trade delegation led by Kyrgyz honorary Consul Meher Kashif Younis, currently visiting Kyrgyz to explore the potentials of enhancing bilateral trade, said the consul's spokesman here Sunday.

Bikulon said Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector is one of the largest in the Islamic world, with

a diverse range of products catering to both domestic and international markets. Its pharmaceutical companies have developed expertise in producing high-quality generic drugs, which could address Kyrgyzstan's healthcare needs. By exploring partnerships and collaborations in this sector, Kyrgyzstan could gain access to affordable medicines while Pakistan could expand its market presence in Central Asia.

Bikulon said exploring the vast scope of Pakistan's pharmaceuticals and textile industry in Kyrgyzstan requires concerted efforts from both governments to facilitate trade and investment. This could involve initiatives such as trade delegations, joint ventures, and the

establishment of trade agreements to create a conducive environment for business collaboration. He was of the view that enhanced connectivity through improved transportation links and logistical infrastructure would further facilitate trade between the two countries, asserting that investments in transportation corridors and border facilitation measures would reduce trade barriers and enhance the efficiency of cross-border trade.

On this occasion, Meher Kashif Younis said that Pakistan's pharmaceuticals and textile industry in Kyrgyzstan offer a significant opportunity to strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh being briefed about the Port Qasim Authority (PQA) functions in a meeting.

Call for using quality seeds, modern farming practices to ensure food security

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan can harness its agricultural potential to ensure food security, economic prosperity, and sustainable development by promoting horizontal and vertical expansion through the adoption of high-quality seeds and modern farming practices. Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik stated this while talking to a delegation of agricultural experts led by Prof Dr Muhammad Arshad Javed Head of Plant Breeding and Genetics Punjab University here on Sunday.

Malik said that to enhance agricultural productivity, it is imperative to pursue a dual strategy focusing on both horizontal and vertical growth. Horizontal growth entails expanding the

cultivation area, particularly in Cholistan's barren lands, which hold untapped potential. By reclaiming and efficiently utilizing such land, Pakistan can significantly increase its agricultural output.

He said, vertical growth was also equally crucial for enhancing per-acre yield through the adoption of high-yielding quality seeds and modern agricultural practices. "Utilizing advanced seed technology and agricultural techniques can substantially boost productivity without the need for additional land resources. This approach aligns with sustainable farming practices while addressing the growing demand for food security in the country."

Overseas investors increase Chinese interbank bond holdings in Feb

SHANGHAI (APP): Overseas institutions increased their holdings of Chinese interbank bonds in February, official data has shown.

By the end of last month, bonds in China's interbank market held by overseas institutions reached 3.95 trillion yuan (about 556.3 billion U.S. dollars), said a report released by the People's Bank of China Shanghai Head Office.

The figure showed a rise of 80 billion yuan from the end of January.

In February, three new overseas institutional investors entered China's interbank bond market, bringing the total to 1,128, according to the report.

Referring to the SBP data, he unveiled an alarming 39 percent increase in the external debt of the federal government, reaching Rs24.2 trillion within a year. A substantial Rs6.7 trillion increase in external debt was primarily attributed to currency depreciation. As of Dec 2023, external debt stood at Rs17.4 trillion, excluding the International Monetary Fund's liabilities.

Out of the total external public debt of \$85.18 billion, the government owed \$64 billion to multilateral and bilateral development partners including IMF which meant more than two-thirds of the total external public debt was on concessional terms with a longer maturity, 16pc from international capital markets and foreign commercial banks.

Pakistan Day sales compel buyers to shop for Eid-ul-Fitr

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Day's lucrative discounts and special offers by different brands outlets in the federal capital are attracting a number of customers especially women who are eager to buy dresses, shoes and all required stuff for the upcoming festival of Eid-ul-Fitr. The trend of online shopping from the official websites of the famous brands is already in practice by a large number of people especially women in capital city while visiting the shops physically are still preferred by majority of the buyers.

Sania Mushtaq, a house wife said, "I have visited different brands outlets to complete Eid shopping for my family taking advantage of this sale at the start of the summer season".

"The online shopping

facility offered by different brands, shopping malls and food outlets have made the lives of citizens quite easier but still visiting markets for buying clothes and shoes is a better option in terms of checking the sizes and quality of dresses and shoes, she said while talking to APP.

Amina Usman, a government employee said "visiting markets for Eid shopping is a difficult task during the month of Ramadan however the attracting Resolution Day sales by brands offering up to flat 30 has compelled public to rush to the markets". "I always prefer visiting markets myself to shop for my family for any occasion instead of online shopping as visiting markets again and again for changing he purchased items is very annoying for me", she said.

Price control mechanism fully activated: DC

SIALKOT (APP): Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain has said that a price control mechanism has been fully activated to control the prices of food items and all markets are being monitored on a daily basis.

He expressed these views during his visit to the vegetable and fruit market in Sialkot.

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain conducted the auction of vegetables and fruits under his supervision while Secretary Market Committee Muhammad Abdullah gave a briefing.

The Deputy Commissioner later visited different areas of the city and inspected the ongoing activities under the "Suthra Punjab Program" along with officers of the Solid Waste Management Company (SWMC).



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Industries and Production's Rana Tanveer Hussain visit of USC Store at Shadman.

Maritime Minister highlights PQA's role in country's economy

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh on Sunday visited Port Qasim Authority and held meetings with PQA officers.

The Minister highlighted the important role of the Port Qasim Authority in country's economic progress. The chairman Port Qasim Authority Rear Admiral @ Syed Hassan Nasir Shah and other officers briefed the Minister about the mandate and the day to day affairs of the Authority.

Addressing the meeting, the Minister said Asia was progressing ahead on a fast track as compared

to other regions of the world but unfortunately Pakistan has left behind and unable to reap the fruits of this progress. He urged upon the stake-holders to play role in the revival of the economy.

Qaiser Shaikh also cited China's example of bringing 60 million population out of poverty level and suggested that such efforts are needed for the revival of our economy.

As many as 95 million people are still below poverty line here in our country, he deplored. The minister informed the audience about the industrial zones being charted out in PQA where multinational companies

can establish world class Industries.

In order to boost trade, he told that dredging of the channels is being completed and berths are also being updated to facilitate the large ships at the port. In addition to this, other projects such as terminals, industrial zones, berths, additional channel are also under consideration for the revival of economy through this port. Earlier, the Federal Minister was received by Chairman Port Qasim Authority and other members on his arrival at PQA. During his visit, the Minister also planted a sapling at Port Qasim Authority.

Bilal Yasin reviews quality of essential items in Ramadan bazaars

LAHORE: Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin on Sunday visited different Ramadan bazaars, marts and factories and reviewed the prices and quality of essential items.

According to official sources here, the minister reviewed the quality and prices of food items in China Scheme and Sabzazar Ramadan markets and took feedback from the citizens present in the market.

Bilal Yasin said that good quality food items at fixed prices were available to citizens in Ramadan bazaars. Increasing the supply of essential commodities helped bring down the prices, and this is a permanent process that would continue, he added.

The minister said that the sale of low-cost and quality items was being

ensured in the Ramadan bazaars across the province. The food minister also visited leading marts and food factories in Shadman and Gulberg areas where 2 marts were heavily fined for violating laws while huge quantities of substandard oil and spices were discarded on the spot. Bilal Yasin ordered the administration that strict action against adulteration mafia was necessary and all resources must be utilised for this cause. Bilal Yasin said, "Action has been taken on the presence of substandard and expired items in the marts and the administration should ensure that defective, expired and adulterated items are not sold in the markets." Bilal Yasin said that those playing with the health of innocent people deserve no leniency.



ISLAMABAD: Tailors busy stitching clothes for upcoming Eid ul Fitr festival.

Federal minister sees decline in inflation next year

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain expressed optimism about a decrease in inflation within the next year.

Speaking to the media following his visit to a Utility Stores Corporation outlet here on Sunday, he emphasized that despite the current challenges, inflation would be effectively managed within a year and a half. He projected that by the end of 2025, inflation would ideally be reduced to a single digit. Highlighting government initiatives, he mentioned the increase in

the Ramadan relief package to Rs12 billion by the Prime Minister, aimed at providing assistance to the public. He also noted the efforts of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in initiating the Ramadan Nigehban package. Rana Tanveer emphasized the availability of quality goods at affordable prices in Utility Stores, mentioning discounts on flour and the reduction in sugar prices. Additionally, he pledged to discuss with the Prime Minister the possibility of further increasing subsidies post-Ramadan to alleviate the burden on the masses.



HYDERABAD: Wheat crop is ready for harvesting at Latifabad.

UNHCR Commissioner briefed on carpet sector

LAHORE (APP): United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific Damla Bayuktaskin along with the delegation visited the office of Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) here Sunday.

The Association's Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf, senior central leader Abdul Latif Malik, Riaz Ahmed, Major @ Akhtar Nazir and Muhammad Riaz welcomed the delegation. During the meeting, bilateral issues regarding teaching skills to Afghan refugees were discussed.

The UN delegation

was also given detailed information regarding the technical activities of the Carpet Training Institute (CTI), production and exports of hand-made carpets. The delegation was also briefed about the details of the establishment of a center to teach skills to Afghan refugees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and asked for support, on which the Commissioner assured them of all possible support. Usman Ashraf told the Head of the delegation that the industry of handmade carpets is a cottage industry spread in different parts of the country, which directly or indirectly provides employment.

Faheem Saigol says: Fiscal deficit, debt repayments add to financing needs

LAHORE (INP): Chairman Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF), Faheemur Rehman Saigol has observed that persistent fiscal deficits and debt repayments have resulted in consistently high annual gross financing needs, averaging 27 percent of GDP over the past decade. This level was notably higher than the emerging market threshold of 15 percent. He said that the growing debt stock carries significant fiscal costs and exposes the country to debt vulnerabilities.

In a statement here on Sunday, he said that in the past two decades, Pakistan has witnessed two consecutive years of the highest budget deficits in 2022 and 2023. He pointed out that for the current fiscal year, a budget deficit of 7.7 percent of the GDP is anticipated, a staggering Rs1.3 trillion above the government's target.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol expressed concerns over these persistent large budget shortfalls, which

HWA lauds Sindh govt's decision of issuing Kisan Cards to farmers

HYDERABAD (APP): The Hari Welfare Association (HWA) has lauded Sindh government's decision to provide Kisan Cards (Hari Cards) to farmers.

In a statement on Sunday, HWA President Akram Khaskheli said that during the PPP Sindh government's third term in 2021, a promise was made to introduce 'Hari Cards' for underprivileged farmers, along with a subsidy of 3 billion rupees (for those with less than 16 acres of landholdings) which has fulfilled in its fourth term in which government has reiterated its pledge to provide Kisan Cards (Hari Cards) to farmers who would benefit from various government schemes such as subsidies, loans, and insurance. HWA has expressed serious concern about several key points, including the lack of groundwork or documentation and the exclusion of landless sharecropping peasants.

Akram Khaskheli urged the government to conduct a survey to identify and provide benefits to genuinely



LARKANA: Sindh Minister for Energy, Planning and Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah presiding over a meeting at Commissioner's Office.

Undeterred resolve – only way to end economic woes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Given its location, landscape, environment, weather, shores and fertile land, Pakistan had always been the most potential and business friendly destination offering volumes of dividends to investors and businessmen.

Although fluctuating policies of the past landed this potential state into serious economic crunch with putting it back on track becoming a gigantic task, yet it can be vibrant again if consistent, holistic and result oriented approach is adopted.

Even today, the numbers of brotherly countries are waiting for a nod to invest billions of dollars in different sectors of Pakistan economy and

the newly formed government has already tightened belts for a tough ride ahead.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team is also aware that they would be confronting a myriad of daunting economic hurdles, ranging from soaring inflationary pressures and staggering external debt burden to diminished exchange reserves and fluctuating currency values.

As the economic panorama, shrouded in uncertainty and volatility, necessitates adept navigation and resolute action to guide nation towards stability, the government diligently articulated its resolve to fight out this challenge.

At the head PML-N

led new coalition government, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif soon after assuming office, issued directives to pertinent authorities for formulating proposals to reduce government expenditures and undertaking a comprehensive overhaul of country's economic framework. Responding to this exigency, the new government employs immediate measures for bolstering revenues and curbing escalating fiscal deficit with the Prime Minister also mandating commencement of digitization and automation process within the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

"Reducing inflationary burden on

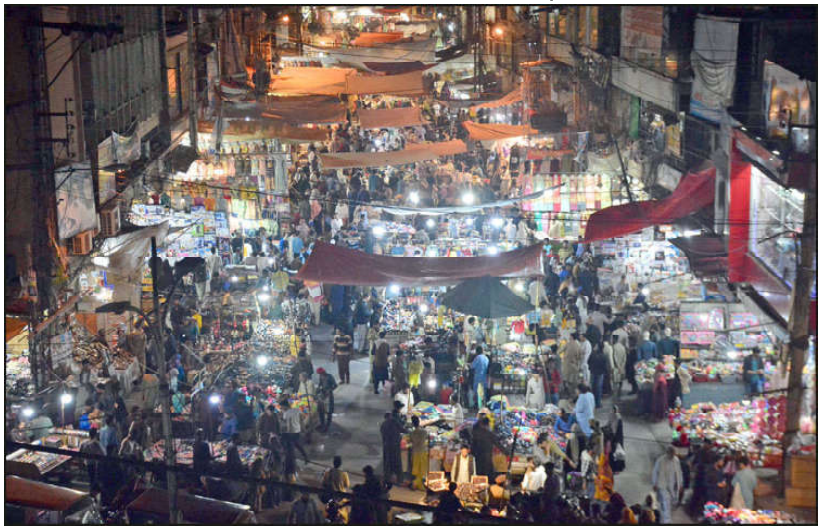
people is one of the most pressing challenges for the government. It would have to go for immediate solutions to ease inflationary burden," said Dr Usman Chohan, Advisor on Economic Affairs at Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS).

He said the situation would be more exigent in an environment where on one hand the people would be expecting to bring down inflation while International Monetary Fund (IMF), in a likely follow-up program, pressurizing the government to extract more from public in terms of revenue collecting and electricity price initiatives.

Identifying global economic slowdown as a

significant contributor to Pakistan's financial woes, with inflation, energy costs and purchasing power constraints exacerbating the situation, Dr Usman proposes a roadmap for economic recovery.

"Mobilization of government-to-government (G2G) investments from friendly nations through the Strategic Investment Facilitation Cell (SIFC) can be very important," he pleaded and underscored the inevitability of domestic stability, particularly in monetary affairs, to reignite local investment. "Then, we must provide overseas Pakistanis a conducive and secure investment climate, thereby stimulating economic activity."



RAWALPINDI: A large number of citizens engaged in Eid shopping in Bara market at night in the city.

UN chief appeals for end to Gaza's 'nightmare'

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, on a visit to the doorstep of devastated Gaza, on Saturday said the world has seen enough of its horrors and appealed for a ceasefire to allow in more aid.

He spoke at the crossing on the Egyptian side of Rafah, where most of Gaza's population has sought refuge but Israel vows to send in ground troops against Hamas fighters, despite the fears of Guterres and other global leaders. "Palestinians in Gaza — children, women, men — remain stuck in a non-stop nightmare," Guterres said. "I carry the voices of the vast majority of the world who have seen enough.

"Any further onslaught will make things even worse."

Despite warnings that a Rafah operation would cause mass civilian casualties and worsen the humani-

tarian crisis gripping Gaza after nearly six months of Israeli bombing, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he will press ahead with the attack.

But his government is under growing international pressure to ease its bombardment and ground offensive, which the health ministry in Gaza says has killed 32,142 people.

Large parts of the territory have been reduced to rubble and the World Food Programme has said Gazans are already "starving to death", with famine projected by May in northern Gaza without urgent intervention. The Gaza health ministry, in its latest toll on Saturday, reported at least 72 people killed overnight.

Israeli forces continued operations in and around Gaza's biggest hospital complex, Al-Shifa, for a sixth day on Saturday. The army claimed it had ques-

tioned more than 800 suspects and found "a large haul of weapons".

The "precise" operation is being conducted without harm to civilians or medical personnel, the Israelis said.

The UN's humanitarian agency, OCHA, said "health workers have been among those reported arrested and detained". Mohammed, 59, who lives a short walk from the Al-Shifa complex in Gaza City, told AFP he had seen "many bodies" in the streets, buildings on fire and tanks blocking the roads.

"I feel that Gaza has become worse than the fires of hell," he said, giving only his first name.

Netanyahu on Friday reiterated his plan to send ground troops into the southern city of Rafah. "I hope to do that with the support of the United States, but if we need to, we will do it alone."



Members of the Civil Defense carry a girl, who remained more than 12 hours under the rubble of her house, which was destroyed by the heavy rains in Petropolis, Brazil.

US Congress passes \$1.2tr bill, averts govt shutdown

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US Congress on Saturday overwhelmingly passed a \$1.2 trillion budget bill, keeping the government funded through a fiscal year that began six months ago and sending it to President Joe Biden to sign into law and avert a partial shutdown. The vote on passage was 74-24.

Key federal agencies including the departments of Homeland Security, Justice, State and Treasury, which houses the Internal Revenue Service, will remain funded through Sept 30 after the bill was passed in the Democratic-majority Senate. But the measure did not include funding for mostly military aid to Ukraine, Taiwan or Israel, which are included in a different Senate-passed bill that the Republican-led House of Representatives

has ignored.

The business community welcomed the passage of the spending bill and committed to continue working with policymakers to advance legislation that would enhance tax breaks for businesses and low-income families.

"A fully operational US government provides important stability for American businesses, workers and families," Business Roundtable CEO Joshua Bolten said in a statement. "We look forward to continuing to work with Members of Congress to advance sound policies, including the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act." Senate leaders spent hours on Friday negotiating a number of amendments to the budget bill that ultimately were defeated.

US forces engage six Houthi unmanned aerial vehicles over southern Red Sea

FLORIDA (INP): US forces engaged six Houthi unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) over the southern Red Sea after the group launched four anti-ship ballistic missiles toward a Chinese-owned oil tanker, the US Central Command said on Saturday.

Iranian-backed Houthis launched the missiles in the vicinity of M/V Huang Pu, a Chinese-owned oil tanker, the Central Command said in a post on X.

A fifth missile was fired toward the oil tanker, which issued a distress call, adding that no casualties were reported in the incident and a fire on board was extinguished. US forces then engaged six UAVs, five of which crashed into the Red Sea, and one flew inland into Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen, the Central Command said.

Indian SC declares preventive detention as black law

NEW DELHI (INP): The Indian Supreme Court has declared preventive detention as a black law.

In a ruling, the Supreme Court discussed the role and duty of the Advisory Boards constituted under the Preventive Detention Laws, on their capricious exercise of power while scrutinising the preventive detention order of the detaining authority passed in a routine and mechanical manner.

"Preventive detention being a draconian measure, any order of detention as a result of a capricious or routine exercise of powers must be nipped in the bud. It must be struck down at the first available threshold and as such, it should be the Advisory Board that must take into consideration all aspects not just the subjective satisfaction of the detaining authorities but

whether such satisfaction justifies the detention of the detainee. The Advisory Board must consider whether the detention is necessary not just in the eyes of the detaining authority, but also in the eyes of law," the Bench comprising CJI DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Paridwala and Manoj Misra said. The aforesaid observation in the judgment authored by Justice JB Paridwala came while deciding a plea preferred by a person who was detained by the Telangana Police on the charge of chain snatching alleging that such an act of the detainee breached the 'public order' in the locality making women unsafe.

Though, the court quashed the preventive detention order citing the reasoning that the activities of the detainee didn't breach the 'public order' to justify his preventive detention.



Accused Somali pirates wait to board a police van at the Indian naval dockyard in Mumbai.

New security law comes into force in Hong Kong

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: A new national security law came into force in Hong Kong on Saturday despite growing international criticism that it could erode freedoms in the China-ruled city and damage its international financial hub credentials.

The law, also known as Article 23, took effect at midnight, days after Hong Kong's pro-Beijing lawmakers passed it unanimously, fast-tracking legislation to plug what authorities called national security loopholes.

Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee said the law "accomplished a historic mission, living up to the trust placed in us by the Central (Chinese) Authorities".



United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres talks to the media during a visit to the Rafah border crossing.

Over 200 Nigerian school hostages released after abduction

MAIDUGURI (INP): Over 200 students and staff abducted by gunmen from a school in northern Nigeria earlier this month have been released, the office of the governor of the state of Kaduna said on Sunday.

The kidnapping, which took place on March 7 in Kuriga, a dusty town in northwestern Kaduna State, was the first mass kidnapping in the country since 2021. Kaduna governor Uba Sani said the country's National Security Adviser had coordinated the release of the children. He did not give details. "The Nigerian Army also deserves special commendation for showing that with courage, determination and commitment, criminal elements can be degraded and security restored in our communities," Sani said.

The gunmen had last week demanded a total of 1 billion naira (\$690,000) for the release of the missing children and staff. Kidnappings by criminal gangs with no ideological affiliation and demanding ransoms have become an almost daily occurrence.

Russia mourns as toll from concert hall massacre climbs to 137

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia observed a national day of mourning on Sunday after a massacre in a Moscow concert hall killed 137 people, the deadliest attack in Europe to have been claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has vowed to punish those behind the "barbaric terrorist attack", saying four gunmen trying to flee to Ukraine had been arrested.

Kyiv has strongly denied any connection, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accusing Putin of trying to shift the blame onto them.

Putin, in his first public remarks on the attack, made no reference to a statement by IS claiming responsibility.

At least 133 people

were killed when camouflaged gunmen stormed the Crocus City Hall, in Moscow's northern suburb of Krasnogorsk, and then set fire to the building on Friday evening.

The Islamic State group wrote on Telegram on Saturday that the attack was "carried out by four IS fighters armed with machine guns, a pistol, knives and firebombs," as part of "the raging war" with "countries fighting Islam".

It is the deadliest attack in Russia for almost two decades.

Russian officials expect the death toll to rise further, with more than 100 wounded in hospital.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said rescue workers were still pulling bodies from the burnt-out building on Saturday.

Israel besieges two more Gaza hospitals, demands evacuations, Palestinians say

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israeli forces besieged two more Gaza hospitals on Sunday, pinning down medical teams under heavy gunfire, the Palestinian Red Crescent said, and Israel said it had captured 480 militants in continued clashes at Gaza's main Al Shifa hospital.

Israel says hospitals in the Palestinian enclave, where war has been raging for over five months, are used by Hamas militants as bases.

Girl buried under rubble rescued after 16 hours as storm kills at least 12 in Brazil

Monitoring Desk
PETROPOLIS: Search teams in southeastern Brazil rescued a girl buried for more than 16 hours in the rubble of a collapsed house, following a powerful storm on Friday that has so far claimed at least a dozen lives.

Authorities have deployed teams to the mountainous areas of Rio de Janeiro state, describing the situation caused by the deluge as "critical". Four of the deaths in Rio state occurred when the storm caused a house to collapse in the city of Petropolis, 70 kilometres inland from the capital.

The girl's father, who was found dead next to her on Saturday morning, had "heroically protected the girl with his body," a neighbour told AFP.

"We are in pain, but grateful for this miracle," said Luis Claudio de Souza, 63. The deluge came as Brazil, South America's largest country, is suffering through a recent string of extreme weather events, which experts say are more likely to occur due to climate change.

At least nine people have been killed in the state of Rio de Janeiro, officials said, while the neighbouring state of Espirito Santo has confirmed at least four dead and seven missing.

Such environmental tragedies "are intensifying with climate change," President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said in a post on X, adding that thousands had been rendered homeless by the storm. He expressed sympathy with the victims and said his government was working with state and local authorities to "protect, prevent and repair flood damage." Espirito Santo governor Renato Casagrande said the situation in the town of Mimoso do Sul was "chaotic," with the number of fatalities there yet to be determined.

Taiwan calls for return of military officer rescued by China

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Taiwan called on Saturday for the swift return of one of its military officers who was rescued by Chinese authorities after losing contact during a fishing vacation.

Two men from Taiwan's outlying Kinmen island were found on March 18 by the coastguard of China's Fujian province after the engine of their boat failed. Chinese authorities said one of the anglers, surnamed Hu, was an active member of Taiwan's military, accusing him of intentionally concealing his identity.

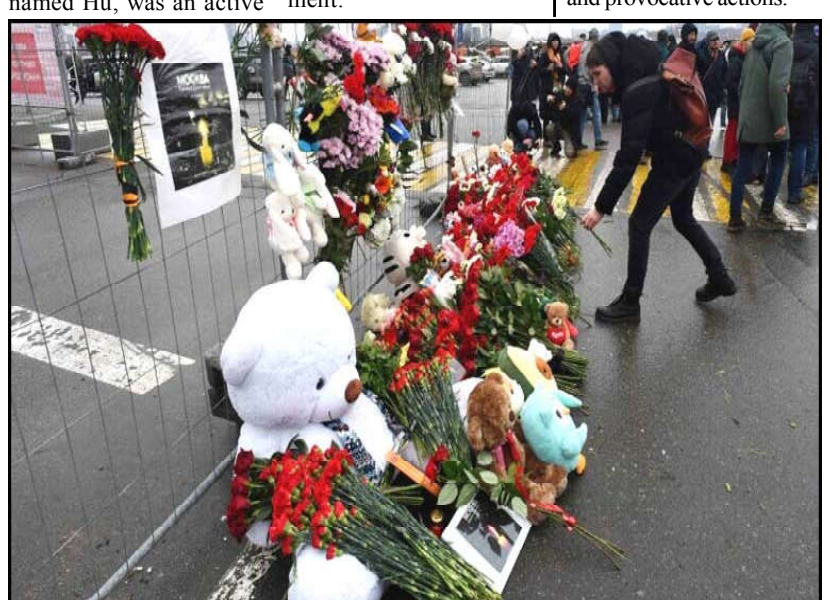
Taiwan's defence ministry confirmed that Hu was part of Kinmen Garrison Brigade.

"(He) went fishing during his vacation and lost contact due to heavy fog. He contacted his family and service unit that he was rescued by the Chinese coast guard and is safe," said Kinmen's Defence Command in a statement.

China vows to safeguard its territorial integrity after South China Sea incident

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's defence ministry warned the Philippines against "provocative" actions and said China would safeguard its territorial sovereignty on Sunday, a day after an incident in disputed waters of the South China Sea.

"We warn the Philippines to stop making any remarks that may lead to the intensification of conflicts and escalation of the situation, and stop all infringing and provocative actions."



A man lays flowers at a makeshift memorial in front of the Crocus City Hall, a day after a gun attack in Krasnogorsk, outside Moscow.

35 Somalis brought to India for trial over ship hijacking

Monitoring Desk
MUMBAI: India brought 35 accused Somalis to Mumbai on Saturday, days after they were apprehended when naval commandos recaptured a hijacked bulk carrier and rescued several hostages.

The December hijacking of the Maltese-flagged MV Ruen was the first time since 2017 that any cargo vessel had been successfully boarded by Somali pirates. Indian commandos boarded and took control of the vessel on March 17 some 260 nautical miles (480 kilometres) off the coast of Somalia.

The destroyer INS Kolkata, which led the rescue operation, arrived in Mumbai early on Saturday carrying all 35 men accused of the hijacking.

A navy statement said the operation "upheld the principles of international law and commitment to ensuring safe seas and maritime security in the region".

A journalist at the scene saw each of the detained men handcuffed to a police officer and taken into police vans. All appeared to be in good spirits although some showed signs of slight injury including visible bandages.

Islamic State still a threat in Iraq, US ambassador says

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: The Islamic State still poses a threat in Iraq and the US-led military coalition's work with Iraq to fully defeat the group is not done, US Ambassador to Iraq Alina Romanowski told this foreign news agency in an interview.

Senior Iraqi politicians, including Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, have repeatedly said that the group no longer posed a threat in Iraq and the coalition was not needed, even as its affiliates continued to carry out attacks elsewhere.

"We both assess ISIS (Islamic State) is still a threat here, much, much diminished, but nevertheless our work is essentially not done and we want to ensure that Iraqi forces can continue the enduring defeat of ISIS," Romanowski said at the US embassy in Baghdad. She was speaking after Islamic State's Afghan branch, ISIS-K, claimed responsibility for Friday's attack at a rock concert near Moscow, in which 137 people were killed.

"As this event reminds us, ISIS is a common terrorist enemy that must be defeated everywhere," she said in an additional comment after the interview.

"That's why the United States and Iraq share a commitment to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS, including by working together to shape the future of a strong bilateral US-Iraq security partnership."

Last week, at least three people died in a suicide bombing carried out by ISIS-K in Afghanistan and in January it claimed responsibility for a twin suicide bombing in Iran, which shares a 1,600 km (994 mile) border with Iraq.

Iraq's prime minister is due to meet US President Joe Biden in Washington on April 15 to discuss the future of the coalition, as well as Iraqi financial reforms and a US push to wear Iraq - a rare ally of both Washington and Tehran - off Iranian power and gas.

Harris pledges 'reset' as he becomes Irish PM in waiting

Monitoring Desk
ATHLONE: Simon Harris became Irish prime minister in waiting on Sunday, pledging to help small business, focus on law and order and tackle migration after his unopposed election to succeed Leo Varadkar as leader of the governing Fine Gael party.

Harris, a 37-year-old minister best known for helping steer the country's initial response to COVID-19, will be voted in as Ireland's youngest ever prime minister when parliament next sits on April 9 thanks to support from coalition partners.

He will have no more than a year to save the coalition from defeat at parliamentary elections. Polls for the last three years have put Sinn Fein, a left-wing party that backs unification with British-run Northern Ireland, as the favourite to head the next government.

"This is a moment for Fine Gael to reset," Harris told hundreds of members at a packed party event in the midlands town of Athlone.

Senegal votes in delayed presidential election

Monitoring Desk
DAKAR: Voting was under way in Senegal on Sunday in a delayed presidential election many hope will bring change after a turbulent political period that triggered violent anti-government protests and boosted support for the opposition.

At stake is the potential end of a regime that has pushed investor-friendly policies but failed to alleviate economic hardship in one of coup-prone West Africa's more stable democracies just as it is poised to become an oil and gas producer.

Nineteen contenders are vying to replace President Macky Sall, stepping down after a second term marred by unrest over the prosecution of firebrand opposition leader Ousmane Sonko and concerns that Sall wanted to extend his mandate past the constitutional limit.

The incumbent is not on the ballot for the first time in Senegal's history. His ruling coalition has picked former prime minister Amadou Ba, 62, as its

candidate.

About 7.3 million people are registered to vote. In the capital, Dakar, hundreds of voters patiently lined up hours before polls opened on time at 0800 GMT.

In the ocean-facing neighbourhood of Ngor, fisherman Alioune Samba, 66, said he was voting for the change everyone wants.

"Food, water, school, everything is expensive with the low income we have in Senegal," said the father of three.

Polls close at 1800 GMT and provisional results are expected by March 26. Voting bureaux will begin posting their tallies from Sunday night.

Sonko, in jail until recently, was disqualified from the race because of a defamation conviction. He is backing the co-creator of his now dissolved Paster party, Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who was also de-stained almost a year ago on charges including defamation and contempt of court.

An amnesty law passed this month allowed their release days before the vote.

Speakers say UN responsible for establishing peace, prevent crimes against humanity in dispute regions

GENEVA (INP): The speakers addressing a seminar in Geneva said the role of the United Nations in peace-building operations is crucial, especially in the context of addressing rights violations as warning signs of conflict. According to Kashmir Media Service, hosted by World Muslim Congress was held on the sidelines of the 55th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and addressed by noted international law experts, rights activists, academicians and journalists, including Dr

Joseph Wronka, Leon Kaulahua Siu, Robert Fantina, Misbah Shafiq, Zafar Ahmed Qureshi and Altaf Hussain Wani, the permanent representative WMC. Throwing light on the UN role and responsibilities to ensure the implementation of international law and enforcement human rights mechanisms, the speakers said human rights components in peace operations play a significant role in advancing inclusive development, rule of law and peace. "These components also help prevent future conflict by addressing grievances", they said, adding ensuring human rights serve as a shared and effective basis for UN's work. They said that maintaining peace and security, protecting human rights, preventing genocide, crimes against humanity, supporting sustainable development and upholding international law were prime responsibilities of the UN. Discussing the failure of the UN peace-building operations in effectively addressing human rights as warning signs of conflict, they said that there was a dire need to enhance strategies to ensure that human



GILGIT: Heavy machinery being used to remove snow from the blocked road of Mir Malik area Astore Valley.



Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E Mr. Khalil Hasmi attended the closing ceremony of China-Pakistan Gandhara Art Exhibition held at Shenzhen Museum, China.

China-Pakistan Gandhara Art Exhibition closing ceremony held in Shenzhen, China

BEIJING (APP): The closing ceremony of the exhibition titled "Gandhara Heritage along the Silk Road: A Joint China-Pakistan Exhibition" took place at the Shenzhen Museum on Sunday. The ceremony was attended by senior Chinese officials including Wang Xudong, Director of the Palace Museum; Zeng Xianglai, Director of Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism, and Sports Bureau of Shenzhen; Jia Jianwei, Director of Gansu Provincial Museum; and Huang Chen, Director of Shenzhen Museum. Pakistan side was represented by Pakistan Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, along with the Acting Consul General of Pakistan in Guangzhou and officials from the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing and the Pakistan Consulate-General in Guangzhou. The ceremony marked the successful culmination of the largest Gandhara exhibition in China's history, showcasing over 170 artifacts from seven different museums in Pakistan. The exhibition debuted last year at the prestigious Palace Museum in Beijing for three months but due to overwhelming interest from the Chinese audience, it evolved into a touring exhibition, making stops in Gansu and finally Shenzhen, following necessary legal procedures. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Hashmi reflected on the significance of the initiative, highlighting the successful collaboration between Pakistan and China in organizing the largest Gandhara Art Exhibition in China's history.

Shaza Fatima says: Provision of maximum facilities top priority

LAHORE (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima has said that provision of maximum facilities to people is top priority of the government. She said this while visiting a Utility Store in Green Town as per the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Sunday. She said that government wanted to improve the system of utility stores. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had started Ramadan Nighban package to facilitate deserving people in Punjab during the holy month of Ramadan, she said and appreciated the initiative. Shaza said that PM Shehbaz Sharif was working hard to control inflation, adding that no doubt country was facing economic challenges but soon with the grace of the Allah Almighty these challenges would be overcome. The state minister said that being a nation, it was a responsibility of the government to steer the country out of economic crises. To a question, she said that some complaints had been received regarding registration at utility stores, adding that "we are in touch with the Punjab government and complaints related to registration would be solved soon".



QUETTA: Heavy machinery removes garbage at garbage dump during cleanliness drive under the supervision of Metropolitan Corporation, at Spinnay road Quetta.

Seminar participants advocate for accessible census 2023 data for development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Participants at the seminar stressed the need for all stakeholders to guarantee the accessibility of detailed and disaggregated Census 2023 data to foster socio-economic development. Participants at the "National Seminar on Utilization of Census Data in Development Planning," organized by the Population Council with support from UNFPA, emphasized the significance of transparent and accessible data. The varied group of stakeholders, including demographers, population experts, data analysts, researchers, and civil society organizations, urged for the prompt release of detailed data from the 7th Population and Housing Census-2023 (The Digital Census). This data is crucial for the formulation of the 13th Five-Year Plan by the Planning Commission, facilitating informed development planning and data-driven policy making, said a news release. They underscored the importance of understanding census statistics for effective socio-economic planning. Ignoring population dynamics in development planning may lead to flawed and inequitable progress.

FIA arrests UK visa fake bank statement accused on British HC request

KARACHI (INP): FIA Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Karachi arrested the accused involved in issuing fake bank statements to citizens for British visas. The FIA team raided and arrested the accused on the complaint of the British High Commission in Islamabad. Zahid Hassan, the suspect was involved in issuing fake bank statements to citizens and the crime of visa fraud. FIA has now launched an investigation into the matter. The UK recently announced significant changes to its visa policies, aiming to facilitate easier entry for citizens of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations and Jordan.

PTI no satisfied with Punjab gov't treatment of Parvez: Saif

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Adviser on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is not satisfied with treatment provided by Punjab government to party President Parvez Elahi. In a statement issued here on Sunday, he talked about the reported accident of former Punjab chief minister Elahi. It has been reported that the PTI leader suffered injuries after falling on the ground Adiala Jail.

Govt making efforts to reduce electricity prices, inflation: Riaz Pirzada

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Sunday said that the government was making all-out efforts to reduce the electricity prices and inflation. The minister visited the utility stores in Vehari district, checked the quality of the food items provided at cheap prices under the prime minister's Ramadan Relief Package. He directed the administration of Utility Stores Vehari to provide complete relief to the people of the district under the subsidy given by the prime minister so that they do not face any difficulties in buying daily items during Ramadan. Talking to the media on this occasion, Riaz Pirzada said that supply of cheap flour is being ensured, efforts are being made to reduce electricity prices and inflation, staff at utility stores are working in the best way. He said the government has taken a revolutionary step for the citizens by giving Ramadan package and expressed the hope that they will get the country out of crises in two years through hard work and struggle.

Embassy holds exhibition in Tehran to mark Pakistan Day, Nouroz celebrations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of Pakistan in Iran organised a photo exhibition titled "Khoosurat Pakistan" as part of the Pakistan Day and Nouruz celebrations at Buraj Azadi to promote Pakistan's culture and tourism. Ambassador of Pakistan Mudassar Tipu inaugurated the exhibition along with Ali Raza Dabbaghi, a representative of Iran's Ministry of Culture. The Iranian Ministry of Culture accorded special permission to the Embassy of Pakistan to hold this event at the venue which signifies the close cultural ties and brotherly relations of both the countries. The representative of Ministry of Culture appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan Embassy and called it a milestone towards the promotion of tourism and people to people contact, which will further strengthen the brotherly relations of both countries. A m b a s s a d o r Mudassar thanked Ali Raza for all the support of the Iranian government.



H.E Ambassador Mudassar Tipu inaugurating Photo Exhibition held at Burj Azadi, Tehran to show case beauty of Pakistan.

Speakers urge world powers to help resolve Kashmir dispute

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): The Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Peace & Justice Organization (JKPO), Tanveer-ul-Islam, has urged the world powers to help resolve the lingering Kashmir dispute. According to Kashmir Media Service, Tanveer-ul-Islam, speaking to a webinar "Voices for Kashmir: Seeking Truth, Justice, and Dignity," organized by Jammu and Kashmir Peace & Justice Organization, Tanveer-ul-Islam called for immediate international intervention to address the escalating humanitarian catastrophe in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said Kashmiri Muslims have faced systemic human rights transgressions, including arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances for decades. He condemned draconian measures such as arbitrary detentions and violent repression, along with the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution affecting the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. President of the Pak Kashmir Solidarity Council Syed Arif Bahar called for halting Indian atrocities in the occupied territory and resolution of the long-pending Kashmir dispute according to the United Nations resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Professor Shahid Hassan Mir highlighted the pressing need for international intervention in confronting human rights abuses in occupied Kashmir, advocating for global accountability and solidarity.

USAID chief calls her high Pak Day award 'testament' to enduring Pak-US ties

WASHINGTON (APP): The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Samantha Power, has thanked Pakistan for conferring Hilal-e-Quaid-i-Azam, a high civil award, calling it a testament to the enduring partnership between her organization and the Pakistani people. The President of Pakistan conferred that award on her on the Pakistan Day in recognition of her "outstanding contribution" towards strengthening Pakistan-US relations. "The efforts by Ms. Power are a reflection of her commitment to assist the people of Pakistan and forge a strong and deep partnership between Pakistan and the US," stated the citation that was read out the occasion. Ms. Power, who has been serving as USAID chief since May 2021, is a proponent of strong Pakistan-US cooperation in humanitarian and socio-economic sectors like health, education and climate change and promoting people to people exchanges. "As USAID administrator, she was instrumental in the provision of significant life-saving US humanitarian assistance to mitigate the disastrous impacts of the floods in 2022," the citation said. In a video message, she also recalled the devastation when one-third of Pakistan was inundated due to devastating floods in 2022. "I will never forget visiting Pakistan in September of 2022. Flying over the floods, feeling sure that I was flying over an ocean, only to be reminded that the ocean was in fact hundreds of miles away. And there were entire towns submerged under the seemingly infinite expanse of water below." She spoke about the support from the highest levels of the White House and both houses of the US Congress that facilitated an assistance of \$215 million to the flood affected people.

Sanjrani, Dr. Malik condole with Aimal Wali

PESHAWAR (INP): Former Chairman of Senate Sadiq Sanjrani, former Senators Behramand Tangi, Dilwar Khan and former Chief Minister of Balochistan Dr Abdul Malik Baloch on Sunday visited Wali Bagh, Charsadda, and offered Fatiha for departed soul of mother of Aimal Wali Khan, provincial president Awami National Party (ANP).

Heavy bike of Quetta biker recovered by Levies from Barkhan after CM's notice

QUETTA: The heavy bike snatched from a guest biker from Barkhan area the other day was recovered by the Levies force on Sunday. According to the Barkhan administration, a heavy bike was snatched by some unknown accused from a biker namely Inayatullah along with his mobile and other valuables from Chhapar area of Barkhan on Saturday. The assailants fled from the scene carrying the snatched bike. However, the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti strictly ordered the district administration to get the bike recovered. On this, the Levies force took immediate action cordoning off the area. Meanwhile, the heavy bike was recovered by the Levies force from the mountainous area near Taghiao road. The Chief Minister appreciated the immediate action taken by concerned Barkhan force. Meanwhile, the biker Inayatullah thanked the Chief Minister for immediate response to the incident of snatching of his bike.

Minorities demand to increase 5% job quota

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minorities on Sunday have demanded to concerned authorities and stake-holders to implement 5 percent job quota for minorities. According to them the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 guarantees fundamental human rights and freedoms and also ensuring the full participation and protection of minorities. Talking to APP here Sunday Ramaish Kumar a minorities representative has said that at present the quota in government jobs for the minorities is five per cent but only two to three per cent was being implemented. He said that only lower grade jobs were being offered such as sweepers and other sanitary workers or jobs below Grade 14. He said that the voices are being raised by the minority community for the violation of rules and implementation of Quota. He further added that the job quota for the minorities in government service remains restricted to the sanitary workers. Ramsh Kumar requested that the government should give quotas to the educated youth of the minority community in jobs on a priority basis.



KACCHI: Levies force personnel being trained by Pakistan Army.

Attract investment Qaiser for developing world-class industrial zone at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh while stressing the need for developing a world-class industrial zone at Port Qasim has said that the zone will attract international investment and benefit the country. While talking to media after getting a detailed briefing about the operations of Port Qasim Authority (PQA) here on Sunday, he said that the Port Qasim had much developed by time. He said we had to develop land for industrial area and invite the international recognized companies for a world-class industrial zone. The minister said that many projects of PQA were in the pipeline. Shaikh said that the international big ships were not able to visit the port due to lack of dredging. He said, "Dredging work is needed, which will be completed soon." He said that the completion of dredging work will help attract the international big ships and increase the freight.



QUETTA: MPA Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani visiting different departments during her visit to Civil Hospital.