



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan offering Fataha at the Mausoleum of Father of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

PCB announces 29 player for physical fitness camp at Kakul

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced the names of 29 players who will be participating in an intensive physical fitness camp set to kick off tomorrow at Kakul. Leading the group are Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan, joined by talents like Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, and Saud Shaqueel.

The camp aims to enhance physical fitness and performance as players prepare for international representation. Stay tuned for updates on their progress.

The players are Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, Sahibzada Farhan, Haseebullah, Saud Shaqueel, Usman Khan, Mohammad Haris, Salman Ali Agha, Azam Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Irfan Khan Niazi, Shadab Khan, Imad Wasim, Usama Mir, Mohammad Nawaz, Mehran Mumtaz, Abrar Ahmed, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Hasan Ali, Mohammad Ali, Zaman Khan, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Aamir Jamal, Haris Rauf and Mohammad Amir.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti attending meeting of Judicial Commission through video link

UNSC demands immediate...

Continued from page 1
ing frustration with leader Benjamin Netanyahu as the civilian death toll in the Gaza Strip mounting. Unlike Friday's text, the call for a ceasefire in the new resolution is not directly linked to ongoing talks, led by Qatar with support from the United States and Egypt, to halt fighting. Israel has criticized the Security Council for previous resolutions. The October 7 attack by the fighter group on Israel resulted in the deaths of about 1,160 people, according to an AFP tally of Israeli figures. Israel's mili-

itary campaign in response to eliminate fighter group, has killed more than 32,000 people, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Palestine territory. The Security Council has been divided over the Israel-Gaza war since the October 7 attacks, only approving two of eight resolutions, which both mainly dealt with humanitarian aid. And those resolutions seem to have had little effect on the ground, where UN personnel say Israel continues to block aid convoys as experts warn of looming famine.

PM urges electronic media to...

Continued from page 1
Mehmood and Sultan Lakhani. The PM said he formed the government at a time when the country was faced with immense difficulties. The biggest challenge was to put the economy back on track, he said and informed the delegation about the economic priorities of the government. He said a committee had been formed to bring down the expenditure of the government and it would soon present its recommendations which he would put before the nation. The federal cabinet had decided not to take salaries and perks, he told. He said the services of international experts were being hired for complete digitalization of Federal Board of Revenue, adding the government would duly recognize the top taxpayers, exporters and women entrepreneurs of the country. He said media was the

fourth pillar of the state and the role of electronic media in the progress and development of society and mental and intellectual training of people was of great importance. He said the government believed in the freedom of expression and freedom of media and in this regard all possible steps were being taken. Fake news was a big challenge and the mainstream media had a very important role in stopping the fake news, he continued. He expressed hope that media would play its role in the stability of democracy through impartial reporting. The PM said the state had the responsibility to protect mediemen. He urged the electronic media to support the efforts of the government for progress and prosperity of the country. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and high-level officials attended the meeting.

CM vows to....

Continued from page 1
absentee teachers within two months. It was also decided to install the biometric system in all the schools in phases for ensuring attendance of the teachers in their respective schools. The biometric system would be restored by head of the concerned head of the institution at every cost and he would be the responsible for any disorder in this regard. Primarily the pilot project of the biometric system would be started from Dera Bugti and Musakhail districts, it was decided further.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister directed to the concerned high ups to include the local bodies representatives in the district education groups for ensuring attendance of the teachers and making the local education officers answerable. He said that the bright future of our coming generations is linked with quality education and as such no compromise would be made in it, hile warning the concerned authorities, the Chief Minister said that he would personally pay surprise visit to the remote areas, and if there was any negligence and absence from duty, would take stern action. Earlier, Secretary Education informed that there are 80,000 government teachers in the province. There are 7,000 single room schools in the province, however, 3,300 non-functional schools have been identified. He also informed that 5,000 attach teachers have been sent to their actual places of postings as a result 729 nonfunctional schools have been made functional.



ISLAMABAD: The Iranian winning team of 12th UAE Ambassador's Football Tournament 2024 receiving Winning Trophy from Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghaddam and Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi at UAE Embassy in Federal Capital.

Four terrorists killed, ex-govt official martyred in D.I Khan operation

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): Four terrorists were killed and a former government official martyred in operation of the security forces against extremists.

According to details, the armed forces, CTD and police conducted joint operation against militants in Kot Kundian area of Kulachi located at Dera-Tank border.

During intense exchange of fire, four terrorists were killed while arms, explosives and other material were also recovered from their possession.

A former director of agriculture department, Ahsanullah Gandapur was also martyred in fire exchange.

China-Pakistan Gandhara Art Exhibition held in Shenzhen

BEIJING (INP): The closing ceremony of the exhibition titled "Gandhara Heritage along the Silk Road: A Joint China-Pakistan Exhibition" took place at the Shenzhen Museum.

According to China Economic Net (CEN), the ceremony was attended by senior Chinese officials including Mr. Wang Xudong, Director of the Palace Museum; Mr. Zeng Xianglai, Director of Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism, and Sports Bureau of Shenzhen; Jia Jianwei, Director of Gansu Provincial Museum; and Mr. Huang Chen, Director of Shenzhen Museum.

The Pakistani side was represented by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, along with the Acting Consul General of Pakistan in Guangzhou and officials from the Pakistani Embassy in Beijing and the Pakistani 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.



TOKYO: Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan Raza Basher Tarar addressing an iftar-cum-dinner reception hosted at the Chancery to Pakistan National Day.

Power struggle causes disarray in....

Continued from page 1
The minister said that American diplomat Donald Lu had called the PTI founder as a "certified liar". He urged the PTI leaders to join mainstream politics and contribute to the nation building process. "We need to create unity and consensus at the national political scenario", he opined. The minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the government was fully committed to the agenda of economic reforms. He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was holding meetings on the economy on a daily basis as the government's focus was on solving the people's problems. "We are focusing on measures like privatization, reduction of government expenditure, tax reforms, digitization of FBR, expansion of tax net and reduction of tax burden on the poor segments of the society." He said that for the first time in the history, taxpayers would be honored with awards in the coming days. "The government of Pakistan will, for the first time, give awards to businessmen who increase the tax volume," he remarked. He said that in this regard, there would be a formal ceremony at the Prime Minister's House soon. The process of economic reforms is continued at a rapid pace, he added.

Tarar said that to provide relief to the people during Ramadan, the Prime Minister had assigned the duties of ministers across the country. He said yesterday and today also federal ministers visited the utility stores and reviewed the arrangements to ensure relief to the masses. He said that a road map was being made and all measures were being taken to improve the country's economy as the focus of the PM was on economic reforms. Besides economic revival, he told that eradication of terrorism from the country was also the top priority of the incumbent regime. He said that in the past, the PML-N government under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif established peace and now peace would be established under the leadership of Shehbaz Sharif. Paying homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country, he said, "in the war against terrorism, we have full confidence in the security forces, armed forces and police and law enforcement agencies", he maintained. He said Gwadar Port Authority was attacked and responsibility for this attack was accepted by the Balochistan Liberation Army. The terrorist Karim Jan killed during the attack on the Gwadar Port Authority was included in the missing persons list, the

PRs extends office timings for Ramadan, announces 'Eid Special Trains' schedule

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Railways has extended the office hours for ticket booking counters for consumers during the holy month of Ramadan besides announcing the schedule of the 'Eid Special Trains'.

The spokesperson of Pakistan Railways said on Monday that the railway has extended the ticket reservation office hours till 19th of Ramadan.

As per the schedule, ticket booking offices will operate from 06 am to 1 pm during the first shift while the second shift will start from 1 pm till 6pm.

Earlier, Pakistan Railways has announced ticket booking office hours during the holy month of Ramadan.

According to the details, Pakistan Railways spokesperson in a statement said that the ticket booking offices will be open from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday during the first 15 days of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak.

Citizens could book tickets for the afternoon shift Monday through Friday between 1 and 6 p.m.

There will be a Friday prayer break from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. After the 15th of Ramadan, the reservation

office would be open till 9 pm with Iftar break.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Railways also announced the schedule of the 'Eid Special Trains' which will only operate on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr to cater the rush and provide opportunities to celebrate the Islamic festival with their loved ones across the country. As per the announced schedule, the first Eid special train is scheduled to depart from Karachi to Peshawar on April 7 at 6 am, while, the second Eid special train will depart from Quetta to Rawalpindi at 10 am on the same day.

Moreover, the Eid festivities continue with the third special train departing from Karachi Cantt to Lahore at 9 pm on April 8.

Lastly, the fourth Eid special train is set to depart from Lahore to Karachi at 5 pm on April 9, allowing passengers to return home after celebrating the joyous occasion with their loved ones.

These special train services aim to accommodate the increased travel demand during the festive period and ensure a smooth and comfortable journey for passengers across Pakistan.



FAISALABAD: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz and PMLN Supremo Nawaz Sharif are visiting the residences of WASA workers Asif Masih and Shan Masih to condole with their family as the both sewer men were killed due to toxic gas while cleaning a sewerage line few days ago.

Wafaqi Mohtasib....

Continued from page 1

He said the ombudsman was using the latest technology to help in the speedy redressal of cases and to enhance its outreach to the people in remote areas of the country.

The mohtasib highlighted that the opening of new regional offices, holding of Khuli Katcheries, launching of the Informal Resolution of Disputes mechanism, and visits of mohtasib's inspection teams had helped in addressing complaints, besides leading to an increase in the registration of complaints. He further said that the office of Overseas Pakistanis in the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat had processed a record 202,367 complaints received through Pakistan Missions abroad, and one window facilitation desks at all international airports of the country.

Nawaz, Maryam condole family of youth killed by kite string in Faisalabad

Independent Report

LAHORE: PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday visited the family of a young man, Asif, who died last week after his throat was slashed by a kite string.

Both Nawaz and Maryam expressed condolences to the family for this tragic loss.

Last Saturday, Chief Minister Maryam took immediate action after the

incident, ordering a province-wide crackdown on kite-flying. Prior to visiting the deceased youth's family, Maryam convened a high-level meeting at Faisalabad International Airport, attended by MPAs, PML-N leaders and law enforcement officials.

Similar to other parts of Punjab, authorities in Faisalabad are conducting a crackdown on kite and string manufacturers.

Hearing of petition seeking registration of case against Bajwa, Faiz Hameed adjourned for indefinite period

ISLAMABAD (Online): Hearing of the petition seeking registration of case against Gen (Retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa and former Lt. General (Retd) Faiz Hameed for violating laws pertaining to retired servicemen by misrepresenting various events during media interviews after their retirement has been adjourned for indefinite period in Islamabad High Court (IHC).

Hearing has been adjourned due to non availability of the counsel Raja Rizwan Abbasi.

A single bench of IHC led by Chief Justice (CJ) Aamer Farooq took up for hearing Monday a petition

filed by a citizen Atif Ali seeking registration of case against Gen (Retd) Bajwa and Lt Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed.

Barrister Umar Ejaz Gillani appeared on behalf of former army chief Gen (Retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa.

The petitioner prayed the court to adjourn the hearing. The court was told that senior counsel Raja Rizwan Abbasi is not present. The court adjourned the hearing of the case for indefinite period.

The citizen has filed petition for registration of case in FIA against Gen (Retd) Bajwa and Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed and others.

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232403386113 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Project Director Chief Minister Package for Quetta Development invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates Tender Fee Rs.1000/- and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	PARK AT ANSCOMB ROAD, CONSTRUCTION / REHABILITATION OF MAINTENANCE OFFICE AND MISCELLANEOUS WORKS	77,408,780/-

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 40,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-4 and above (Upto 200 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE10(I) (General Civil Engineering Works) , CE10(vii) (General Buildings and Maintenance). Bid Security of 2% of estimated cost Tender processing fee of amount Rs. 1000 in account No. C02716 having head, PD, CMPQD. **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk **Issuance of tender Documents:** Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk **Last Date of bid submission:** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by **22 April, 2024** till 12:00 PM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at 01:00 PM on EPS System **Address:** House No. 81-A Chaman Housing Scheme Airport Road Quetta **Phone No. 03337868226-03108259192-03337971122** **Fax No. 0812664466** Email: dpquettacity@gmail.com

Project Director
Chief Minister Package for
Quetta Development

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SIFC gives go ahead for establishing largest IT Park in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Standing Investment Facilitation Committee (SIFC) has given the green light to establish the country's largest IT Park in the G-10 sector of the federal capital, covering an expansive area of 3.3 acres. This landmark decision marks a significant stride forward for Pakistan's burgeoning tech landscape, promising unparalleled opportunities for innovation and progress.

Negotiations are already underway with key stakeholders such as Pakistan Software Export Board and the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication to ensure the successful execution of the IT Park project. These collaborative efforts underscore the government's commitment to nurturing a conducive environment for technological

innovation and entrepreneurship, positioning Pakistan as a regional leader in the digital arena, PTV reported on Monday.

The envisioned IT Park is poised to become a nucleus of technological advancement, boasting a comprehensive array of facilities aimed at fostering creativity and entrepreneurship. Among its features will be a state-of-the-art research center, a well-stocked library, software houses, conference rooms, dedicated work spaces for freelancers and start ups and an exhibition area for showcasing cutting-edge IT products.

The IT Park project, operating under a public-private partnership framework, holds immense promise for the country's burgeoning freelance economy. Approximately six thousand freelancers are slated

to benefit from access to top-notch facilities, empowering them to contribute significantly to Pakistan's economic landscape through the provision of e-services.

Crucially, the construction of this pioneering IT hub will be financed through collaboration with private IT companies, which will also lease office spaces within the premises. This synergistic partnership model is anticipated to invigorate Pakistan's tech ecosystem, driving economic growth and job creation in the digital sphere.

With the impending realization of the IT Park in Islamabad's G-10 sector, Pakistan stands on the cusp of a transformative era in its tech evolution, poised to harness the boundless potential of the digital age for the betterment of its people and economy.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan, Alfred Grannas calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

HEDP steering committee reviews progress on investment in HEIs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The members of Steering Committee of the HEC's Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) on Monday reviewed the progress of investment in the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) so far.

The eighth Steering Committee (SC) meeting held at the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Secretariat, Islamabad. SC is the highest forum of the project comprising senior officials from federal ministries, provincial higher education departments, vice chancellors, and private sector representatives. HEDP is a five-year US\$ 400 million national flagship project (2019/20-2023/24) of HEC to implement key higher education priorities. The committee members reviewed the progress made so far on the project.

Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, Executive Director, HEC chaired the meeting saying that HEDP is a key investment for higher education

as it is supporting HEC in its various areas of research, quality assurance, IT initiatives and capacity building. "I am glad to share that HEDP has a good standing of achieving 81% of its targets, and this has also been validated by the recent World Bank mission that has improved the project rating."

Project Coordinator HEDP Dr. Mehmood ul Hassan Butt gave an overview of the HEDP project, its history, progress, plans, and the recently held World Bank Mission that has further improved the project rating to satisfactory in seven components.

He along with his team briefed the committee on the key project initiatives, including the physical and financial progress. In addition, it was apprised that the project is moving towards its last year and the team is working closely with HEC officials as eventually these will be taken over by the HEC staff to sustain these initiatives.

Technical heads of the project components updated members on the progress of each of their components of the project. Component 1 has recently completed award of 10 Rapid Technology Transfer Grants (RTTG) - focused on addressing Pakistan's current financial distress by encouraging industry-academia collaborations to enable import substitutions. It is also working to gather the outputs and impacts of the grants awarded in last years in terms of research publications, recognitions, awards, and innovative ideas/products developed.

Component 2 team has recently completed the establishment of 41 Quality Enhancement Cells in Affiliated Colleges (QECACs) as well as training faculty of affiliated colleges on General Pedagogy across Pakistan. It is also working closely with the HEC QAA division to facilitate implementation of new HEC QA policy.

PM, German envoy discuss relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Germany Alfred Grannas called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday and discussed matters of mutual interest. The prime minister thanked German Chancellor Olaf Scholz for sending a congratulatory message to him on his reelection.

The prime minister emphasized that Pakistan deeply valued its longstanding ties with Germany and considered it an important partner in Europe.

While noting the positive trajectory of bilateral ties, the prime minister expressed the desire to expand existing level of bilateral trade and investment,

stating that there was great potential for enhanced German investments in Pakistan.

The prime minister welcomed the German side's initiative to send a business delegation to visit Pakistan soon and assured the German Ambassador that the delegation would be facilitated in every way to ensure a successful visit.

He also extended an invitation to the German Chancellor to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

The ambassador assured the prime minister that Germany was keen to work closely with Pakistan to strengthen bilateral ties, especially in trade and investment.

President emphasises increasing eco, cultural ties with Cote d'Ivoire

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday said that Pakistan enjoyed cordial rela-

Mahmood who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

During the meeting, the president asked the am-



tions with Cote d'Ivoire and underscored the need to enhance economic and cultural ties with the West African nation for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

The president said this while talking to the Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Cote d'Ivoire Mahmood Akhtar

to explore opportunities for advancing trade and economic relations with Cote d'Ivoire. He said that there was great potential to increase the exports of Pakistani rice, medical and surgical equipment, pharmaceutical products and sports goods to Cote d'Ivoire.

MoIT introduces standardized quality test to ensure job opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoIT) has introduced a standardized quality test in all universities across Pakistan to enhance job opportunities for fresh graduates.

An official from the Ministry of IT said that this decision aims to revamp IT education in collaboration with various entities, including the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the National Computing Accreditation Council, the Examination Testing Council, the Pakistan Software Export Board, and the Pakistan Software Houses Association.

Students who successfully pass the test will be eligible for job opportunities through the Industry Placement Program.

He said, funds will be allocated to support special industry courses in universities, with the goal of preparing students to meet current industry trends and demands.

The official explained that the National Computing Accreditation Council will consider the pass rate of students to determine a university's rating and the permissible enrollment of IT students.

He said that Pakistani universities currently produce 20,000 to 22,000 IT graduates annually, but only 2,000 of them manage to secure employment.

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ISLAMABAD: Women queuing up outside Benazir income support centre to receive cash money at Sitara Market.

Kashmir historian blames India for committing 'memoricide' in disputed IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Kashmiri historian Hafsa Kanjwal has blamed India for committing "memoricide" and repression in the disputed territory of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

According to Kashmir Media Service, in a media interview, Kanjwal said that India is trying to erase the history of the Kashmiri struggle for self-determination and to suppress dissent in the region.

"India has always tried to domesticate what was

always an international issue," Kanjwal said. "It's completely rewriting that entire history, engaging in something that Kashmiri scholars have called memoricide."

Memoricide is referred to the destruction of the memory, extermination of the past of targeted people.

Kanjwal said that the Indian government is using various tactics to suppress dissent in Kashmir, including arbitrary arrests, detentions, and internet shutdowns. She also said that

the government is trying to change the demographics of Kashmir by allowing Indian settlers to move into the territory.

"So Kashmiri Muslims face an immense dispossession of their land and their resources and the demographic threat now of being made into a minority," Kanjwal said. "And once that happens, then the calls that Kashmiris have been making for all of these decades for self-determination will be rendered obsolete."

Court orders to present Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi on April 04

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad court while issuing production order in the matter of bail before arrest has ordered to present PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi on April 04.

The matter of bail before arrest in respect of PTI founder Imran Khan in 6 cases and his wife Bushra Bibi in one case came up for hearing in district and sessions court Islamabad Monday.

Additional Sessions

Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra heard the case.

The attendance of Imran Khan could not be got marked through video link on Monday despite court's orders.

Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry and Muhammad Saeed Khan Sadozai counsel for PTI founder Imran Khan appeared in the court.

Adiala jail authorities filed their reply and technical report in the court in connection with contempt of court notice.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used for construction under the bridge at IJP Road in the Federal Capital.

ICCPO issued guidelines regarding complaints against police officials

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has issued new guidelines regarding complaints against Islamabad Capital Police officials, a public relations officer said.

He said that, according to the issued guidelines, if any Dolphin Force personnel, checkpoint staff, or traffic police officials exceed their authority, solicit bribes, or demand gratuity during checking, citizens should immediately call 1715.

If you have any photographic or video evidence, also upload it immediately on the "ICT-15"

app. All these complaints will be monitored by the Accountability Unit under the supervision of the AIG Investigation, ensuring strict accountability of Islamabad Capital Police.

The purpose of this action is to ensure rigorous enforcement of accountability measures and timely resolution of citizens' issues.

Moreover, the Islamabad Capital Police is taking comprehensive measures to protect the lives and property of citizens. Citizens should report any emergencies or suspicious activity on emergency helpline "Pucar-15" or via "ICT-15" app.

AC arrests 16 people on price list violation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Assistant Commissioner Potohar along with the Magistrate on Monday visited various areas of the Potohar Sub-division, checked the rate list in the vegetable market and arrested 16 people for price list violation.

According to an ICT spokesman, the AC conducted a surprise visit on the special directives of Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon and checked the displayed rate lists.

During the visit, he nabbed 16 people and transferred them to the police station for charging excessive prices, and said that strict actions would be taken against the rate list violators.

It is pertinent to mention here that the operation against price increases, encroachment and others is ongoing daily to discourage and eliminate this practice in the future.

AIOU to establish a state-of-the-art campus in Mardan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will establish a state of the art campus in Mardan.

In this regard, Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood called on Mayor of Mardan, Hamayatullah Mayar, and Additional Deputy Commissioner, Naik Mohammad Khan.

While giving a detailed briefing on the educational services of the university, Dr. Nasir said that if AIOU could get land at a suitable place in Mardan, the University will build a state-of-the-art campus of the university, which will provide a lot of convenience to the students of Mardan.



ISLAMABAD: Country Director of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Gier T. Tonstol calls on Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Saik Hussain.

Pakistan selected to lead training of African countries on Mosquito identification

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan based on its wealth of data and expertise has been preferred to lead the International Exchange Program Anopheles stephensi Africa - South Asia familiarization Program.

The Directorate of Malaria Control (DoMC), Ministry of National Health Services has been selected for the exchange program under which it will host a training and capacity building program of nine African countries for Anopheles stephensi surveillance and control, a senior DoMC official told APP.

He said, "As you know that historically south-Asia and parts of the Middle East, has been endemic to Anopheles stephensi an efficient vector of malaria that has gained notoriety because of its spread to number of African countries since 2013, particularly in Djibouti, Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan."

He added that the biggest threat posed by this range expansion was that this mosquito was able to flourish in urban environments, thus representing a paradigm shift in malaria epidemiology from being a primarily rural disease in Africa to potentially also infecting millions of city dwellers across Africa.

However, based on decades of experience in surveillance and control of this mosquito, both India and Pakistan were asked to share their experience with malaria control colleagues in Africa offers major benefit for control programmes in Africa to rapidly improve preparedness and response activities. "Pakistan also has highly advanced control practices, research capacity and also operational research infrastructural facilities. A number of selected high-level influential and decision-making candidates from affected African countries will visit Pakistan to learn from vast experience of Pakistan."

ICP will collaborate with ZARRA alert for missing children recovery

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, a delegation from Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Agency (ZARRA) visited the Central Police Office Islamabad. Senior officers of Islamabad Capital Police, DG ZARRA alert, and repre-

entatives of social organization Roshni were present at the occasion.

During the meeting, it was decided to initiate an awareness campaign to provide more information to citizens about the ZARRA alert. Additionally, awareness material will be available for the citizens visiting police stations of Islamabad. The aim of all these measures is the recovery and guidance of missing and abducted children.

Moreover, following the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has taken special measures in the federal capital to recover missing and abducted children.

While utilizing this new digital platform, resolving the issues of missing and abducted children is among the top priorities of Islamabad Capital Police. In this regard, Islamabad Capital Police will take effective measures to combat crimes against children and ensure that those involved are brought to justice.



Representatives of social organization Roshni were present at the occasion.

Mohsin Naqvi greets Hindu community on Holi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotic Control Mohsin Naqvi on Monday sent greetings to the Hindu community on the festival of Holi.

"Happy Holi to the Hindu community living in Pakistan" he wrote in his message and said that Holi is the festival of colors and colors always last only with love.

He said that the festival of Holi is a wonderful occasion to unite hearts and spread love and harmony because today's society is suffering from hatred and ugliness.

He said that one should put aside mutual bitterness and join in the joy of this colorful festival.

He further said that the festival of Holi promotes feelings of brotherhood and goodwill and celebrating joyous festivals together promotes love and relationships.

All minorities including the Hindu community are equal citizens of Pakistan, Mohsin Naqvi added.

ATC grants bail to Shireen Mizari in May 9 cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has granted bail to former federal minister Shireen Mizari in different cases of vandalism and attacks on government buildings related to May 9.

ATC Judge Malik Ijaz heard the bail plea of the former minister on Monday and granted bail against Shireen Mizari's personal surety bonds.

It may be mentioned that Shireen Mizari was implicated in fourteen different cases related to the May 9 vandalism.

Hindu community celebrates Holi in twin cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Hindu community in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi celebrated the spring festival of Holi.

Pakistan Hindu and Sikh Welfare Association organized special worship services at the temple and distributed parashad among the devotees. A large number of Hindu community participated in the festivities and later they threw colour at each other. Member National Assembly and patron-in-chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council Dr Ramesh Kumar said that the purpose behind celebrating the Holi festival.

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Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Tuesday March 26, 2024

Smog country

As if all of Pakistan's other troubles were not enough, the country has now been named the second most polluted in the world — trailing only behind Bangladesh — in the 2023 World Air Quality Report published by IQAir. We are smack-dab in the middle of a huge environmental crisis. Pakistan has average PM2.5 concentrations at 73.7 micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) — a staggering 14 times higher than the World Health Organisation's guideline of no more than 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

It is critical to comprehend the gravity of these statistics. PM2.5, or particulate matter 2.5, refers to tiny particles or droplets in the air that are two and a half microns or less in width. These particles are so small that they can penetrate deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream, causing severe health issues, including respiratory infections, heart disease, and strokes.

Moreover, it makes other non-communicable diseases such as mental health issues, diabetes and infertility more likely, besides affecting the cognitive development of children. The fact that all Pakistani cities included in the study had PM2.5 concentrations at least six times above the WHO's recommended levels is a glaring indictment of the country's air quality and demands immediate intervention at the highest levels.

The causes of such severe air pollution are manifold, with agriculture practices, industrial emissions, vehicular pollution, and geographical and climate conditions playing significant roles. Specifically, winter temperature inversions in Punjab, combined with emissions from crop burning and industry, as well as activity from brick kilns, have created a smoggy, health-damaging environment.

Despite measures such as banning crop burning and initiating public transportation projects, the air quality continues to deteriorate, signalling that current efforts are not enough. And time — quite literally — is running out. Based on data from the Pakistan Air Quality Initiative, hazardous air quality is shaving off an estimated 4.4 years from the life expectancy of Pakistan's inhabitants.

The new government needs to rise to the occasion and take bold steps. It must urgently overhaul environmental regulations, aggressively invest in renewables, and champion public transportation. It is not just regulations that are needed: enforcement is paramount. There is an urgent need to enhance the capacity for monitoring and managing air quality. Public awareness campaigns are crucial to educate citizens about the sources of pollution and the steps they can take to reduce their personal contributions to air quality degradation. Vehicles must undergo mandated smoke checks, as is done in developed countries. Moreover, collaboration with neighbouring countries is essential, given the transboundary nature of air pollution. We face a stark choice: enact decisive, immediate measures or suffer irreversible damage to our health and environment. Pakistanis' life expectancy isn't stellar as it is; it needn't be cut any shorter.

Usama Khilji

X, formerly known as Twitter, was blocked in Pakistan on Feb 17, 2024. It took more than a month and several petitions in high courts across the country for the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority to finally admit, after blatantly distancing itself from the ban, that the PTA did indeed block X on the directions of the interior ministry. The PTA presented a document in the Sindh High Court that showed a letter from the interior ministry signed by a section officer of the Federal Investigation Agency, dated Feb 17, but the serial number, which also includes the date, is from Oct 25, 2023.

Here is a timeline of the denial pertaining to the blocking of X that Pakistani citizens faced until PTA's much-needed but delayed transparency on March 20.

March 13, 2024: Asked when X would be unblocked, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar says X is working in Pakistan and "people are tweeting", adding that he has not seen any notification banning it.

March 18, 2024: The information minister finally admits X is banned (something every X user knew since Feb 17, which is when it became accessible only via Virtual Private Networks), and says there is no notification on blocking it.

March 18, 2024: PTA spokesperson Malahat Obaid tells Dawn.com the following regarding the disruption of X: "We can't say anything on this matter because we don't know. Will share with you if any statement comes." On being asked why the interior ministry should be approached regarding the ban, the spokesperson says that "because the instructions are from the government", but does not answer, when asked, if the interior ministry had written to the PTA.

March 19, 2024: In an interview with Dawn.com, PTA chairperson retired Maj-Gen Hafeez Ur Rehman says: "The closure of social media forums is always directed by the interior ministry."

It is important for the PTA to understand the laws and court orders that

pertain to its jurisdiction.

First, Section 37 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), 2016, which itself is problematic, vests the authority to block or remove online content in the PTA.

Second, the Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content Rules, 2021, that stipulate the process of censorship, were deemed, prima facie, unconstitutional by the Islamabad High Court in 2022; the court had directed the federal government to revise the rules, which has still not happened.

Third, even if the rules and Section 37 were read, as they currently exist, unrevised, they stipulate that the PTA follow due process by sending a notice to the platform or website where content is deemed "objectionable", offer a time period to reply from the platform or website, and provide the option of appeal. The law does not allow the PTA to be judge, jury or executioner, nor does it make it binding on it to follow instructions from the federal government.

There has been no indication the PTA — that took the disproportionate action of blocking the entire platform without affording any transparency until a month later after several hearings in courts — sent even a notice to X, as it is bound by the law to do regarding specific content. The Islamabad High Court in a 2019 judgement in the Awami Workers Party case adjudicated that the blocking of websites without notice or opportunity of hearing was a "flagrant violation of fundamental rights".

Although for a month it pinned the blame on the interior ministry for instructing it to block X, the sole authority to block or restrict content lies with the telecom authority itself, as per an Islamabad High Court ruling in 2018 (Bolo Bhi vs Federation of Pakistan) that it is supposed to exercise its powers "independently and without being influenced by any direction or information laid before it by the federal government".

It is unacceptable that an entire social media platform with significance in the democratic political discourse, a platform that

gives citizens a voice, and the ability to access information, be blocked right after elections when credible evidence of rigging surfaces. The blocking, without any transparency, with no reference to the law, no public notice and no logical justification, makes a mockery of all state institutions concerned in the country that function on the taxpayers' money. The new government must not take this lightly, and see this as an assault on its legitimacy and writ.

There also have to be consequences for the interior ministry and the PTA for hiding the truth from citizens, for misleading the public, and then going back on their word to admit and show a dubious, backdated notice a month later, conceding that the directions from the interior ministry were acted upon on Feb 17, 2024. Why did it take a month of public and private resources being used in court cases for this notice to be made public? Is it honourable to continue to hold office after this disaster?

More than 27 CSOs, including digital rights groups, human rights groups, lawyers and journalists collectives, and prominent activists, wrote an open letter to the prime minister, the PTA, and the government, asking them to immediately lift the ban on X, repeal Peca's draconian Section 37 that gives unfettered powers of censorship to the PTA in contravention of constitutional rights, act transparently, take back problematic laws like the e-safety law proposed by the PDM government, and amend the draft personal data protection law floated during the PDM government to make it rights-friendly.

Problematic legislation takes a toll not only on basic rights, but also on the economy as the impact on the IT sector is immeasurable. Uncertainty and arbitrary actions should concern the SIFC that wants foreign investors to take an interest in Pakistan. The rule of law and upholding rights and transparency benefits all citizens. Let us stop the slide into authoritarianism. -- Courtesy Dawn

The hopeful future of the Supreme Court

Dr Naazir Mahmood

It is a new day in a new Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP). Led by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, the SCP now appears to be making noble efforts to reintroduce some order into our judicial system.

Not that there was no order previously, but the steps that some of the former chief justices took betrayed their innocence.

On March 22, the Supreme Court set aside the dismissal of former Islamabad High Court (IHC) judge Shaikat Aziz Siddiqui, and by doing so added another feather to its cap. Just to recap: in January this year, a five-member bench including the CJ and Justices Aminuddin Khan, Jamal Mandokhel, Syed Hasan Rizvi, and Irfan Saadat reserved its verdict on Siddiqui's plea against his removal.

Credit goes to the court for broadcasting the proceedings of the case live on the SC's website. The former judge had challenged a decision by the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), dismissing him from service.

It is worth recalling that right after assuming

power in 2018, the PTI government and its leader, Imran Khan, initiated a relentless attempt to acquire absolute power by crushing the opposition and intimidating other state organs. In its effort, the PTI government reportedly had support from the most significant quarters of power in the country.

Even the SJC, willingly or unwillingly, appeared to be toeing the official line. Accusations against Justice Siddiqui revolved around a speech he delivered at the Rawalpindi Bar Association. A major charge against Justice Siddiqui was that he had accused intelligence services of influencing the court proceedings and forming benches of choice. It was not an entirely new accusation, as in the past, we had seen the judiciary of Pakistan crack under pressure from the civil and military bureaucracy.

In the 1950s, the CJ Munir-led Supreme Court that Chief Justice Munir led set the tone for the future line of action that successive chief justices followed — of course, barring a few exceptions. In the 1960s, CJ AR Cornelius, otherwise a decent judge, could

not stand up against the wrongdoings of the first military dictator of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan. In the 1970s, Justice Hamoodur Rehman, again not a bad judge, wrote the daring Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report exposing the misdeeds of military action in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) that led to the breakup of the country in 1971. But the same judge buckled under pressure from the ZA Bhutto government and validated its decision to impose a ban on the only major left-wing and progressive party that Abdul Wali Khan was leading in Pakistan.

Justices Maulvi Mushtaq and Anwarul Haq denied ZA Bhutto a fair trial and, in collusion with the military regime of General Ziaul Haq, hanged the former prime minister. In the 1980s, Justice Haleem, so far the longest-serving chief justice of Pakistan, did not challenge the usurper General Zia in any significant way. He did not object to the sham referendum and the unlawful imposition of the eighth amendment in the country. In the 1990s, then CJ Naseem Hasan Shah acknowledged there were

pressures from the usual suspects during the Bhutto trial. This has now proved to be true, as a recent opinion by the SC confirms that the ZA Bhutto did not get a fair trial.

In the 2000s, Justice Irfan Hasan Khan emerged as yet another judge who could not resist, or willingly accepted, military intervention. Then the Imran Khan project of the 2010s had full support from many serving and retired generals who had like-minded judges in the courts. So given this background, when Justice Siddiqui levelled certain accusations against some officers, ideally there should have been a thorough investigation. Instead, Justice Siddiqui lost his job as a result of a controversial decision against him by the SJC in 2018, just weeks after the PTI assumed office.

Siddiqui nominated seven individuals in his amended plea, including the former chief of army staff and two retired brigadiers. The SC remarked that these three army officers had no direct connection with the case. Earlier this year, former ISI director general Lt-Gen Faiz Hameed admitted his response to Jus-

tic Siddiqui's petition and rejected the allegations of his involvement in constituting IHC benches to prolong the detention of former premier Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz.

It is true that spymasters all over the world indulge in political shenanigans not only in their own countries but also in other countries. They make frequent attempts to dent people's freedom and democratic processes, while also trespassing into the judicial domain. On various occasions, many of our high-level officers have displayed a particular type of self-deception that was not in good faith. History has more abundant evidence than what they can counter. In February 2024, a 23-page statement that Gen Faiz and Irfan Ramay submitted to the SC through their counsel, Khawaja Haris, said that the constitution does not provide for the continuation of the SJC proceedings against judges who either resigned from office or retired on reaching superannuation prior to the conclusion of such pro-

ceedings. This did not carry much weight as the SC raised questions about whether the SJC followed due process before ordering Siddiqui's termination and reserved the verdict in the case.

Now this country and all its institutions must realize that if any allegations become known to the public, it is unfair to punish the whistleblower for highlighting wrongdoings at the highest level. If an impartial inquiry finds the allegations to be false, the inquiry committee can declare the whistleblower guilty of misconduct.

It is unjust and unfair to punish without first ascertaining the veracity of the allegations. Hitherto, the practice at the highest level is that if an allegation is against a politician, a JIT comes into being and the entire state machinery springs to action, but if the allegation is against an officer, it seldom gets a JIT.

In this particular case, the SJC did not even state what misconduct Justice Siddiqui was guilty of, apart from speaking publicly, which is not a crime. -- Courtesy Dawn

The TikTok problem

Zarrar Khuhro

Typically, you can't get the red and blue tribes that make up the legislative branch of the American Empire to agree on anything at all, and so it came as a surprise to some when the now infamous TikTok ban bill passed through the House of Representatives with all the ease of a super-heated knife through a soft slab of butter. With 352 votes in favour and 65 against, the bill enjoyed the kind of bipartisan consensus that less important issues (like providing affordable healthcare, or pardoning student debt, or funding Ukraine's unending war) rarely get.

The bill requires TikTok's owners ByteDance to sell the social media platform by September or face being banned in the US. The reason being given by the bill's supporters is that the Chinese government is able to access the data of the roughly 170 million TikTok users in the US and is able to "tweak" the algorithm in its favour, thus subtly controlling the kind of content American TikTok users get to see. This is a direct threat to national security, claimed Nancy Pelosi and others, and thus could not be tolerated.

In one sense you could look at this as a continuation of the aggressive US stance against China, which includes posturing in the South China Sea in line with the Asian Pivot, the building of anti-China alliances with the aim of 'containment' and the attempted hobbling of Chinese technology, as we saw with the measures taken against Huawei.

But what explains the urgency and the remarkable agreement across a deep political divide to vote for this measure, and that too by many representatives who have themselves built a massive fol-

lowing on TikTok? Take a deeper look and it turns out that it's not so much about the national security of America, as it is about the national security of Israel.

After the Oct 7 attacks, as Israel jumped on the chance to fulfil its genocidal agenda by massacring the population of Gaza, a change was noticed among populations in the West. Young people took to the streets and protested with increasing determination and volume against what they clearly saw as barbarism perpetrated by a Western-supported Zionist regime steeped in the traditions of colonialism and apartheid. Western elites and their affiliated media outlets at first dismissed the protests, then demonised them and seemed agnostic when they not only continued, but increased in frequency and volume.

What could the reason be? Zionist-allied political and media establishments in the West asked themselves. Could it be that young people didn't like seeing Palestinians starve, bombed and slaughtered before their eyes? Could it be that they were repulsed by images of Israeli soldiers triumphantly looting and blowing up homes and posing with the lingerie of killed and displaced Palestinian women? Could it be that these same people now actually wanted to learn the truth about this longstanding occupation?

No, decided the ruling classes, the problem was social media and TikTok in particular where, as with every other social media platform, pro-Palestinian voices, videos and hashtags far outnumbered pro-Israeli ones.

Jonathan Greenblatt, director of the pro-Zionist Anti-Defamation League, admitted as much in a leaked audio call when

he warned that they (pro-Israeli groups) "had a serious TikTok problem". Then, when the bill was drafted it quickly received the backing of the powerful pro-Israel lobby groups, the Jewish Federations of North America.

And, of course, when we look at Mike Gallagher, the Congressman who wrote the bill, we find that the all-powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee was his top funder in the last election cycle. AIPAC, concerned about the drubbing that Israel's reputation is deservedly receiving, is breaking out the chequebook in the coming election sea-son and has put together a war chest of \$100m to defeat candidates they deem insufficiently worshipful of Israel.

But a pushback is starting: a group of prominent Jewish-Americans, including educators, actors, writers and professors signed an open letter condemning AIPAC, and Pam Keith, a former US Congresswoman from an overwhelmingly Jewish district, used some very colourful language while calling out AIPAC on X. Mainstream media in the US is also plucking up courage, with MSNBC doing a whole six-minute segment on how AIPAC influences US politics.

However, the hold of the Israeli lobby on American politics remains unshakable for now; the House of Representatives recently passed a measure in a 286 to 134 vote banning aid to UNRWA and also providing an additional \$14 billion to Israel. AIPAC, for its part, touted the success of its backed candidates in the Democratic primaries, leading one to wonder whether America is the only country where a foreign power can openly boast of buying politicians. -- Courtesy Dawn

Turbulent Sahel

Mohammad Ali Babakhal

The Sahel, a vast stretch of land below the Sahara and extending from Burkina Faso to Eritrea, has become the global epicentre of terrorism. The Global Terrorism Index reports that in 2022, this region witnessed more terrorism-related fatalities than both South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa combined, underscoring a grim escalation in violence. A staggering 65 per cent of terrorist attacks targeted 10 countries within the Sahel, marking it as a focal point of global concern.

Amid this backdrop of escalating violence, the humanitarian situation in the Sahel is becoming increasingly dire. Over 33 million people in the region are in desperate need of life-saving assistance, grappling with the repercussions of intensified conflict and insecurity. The educational infrastructure has also taken a massive hit, with the UN reporting more than 10,000 schools shuttered, affecting millions of children and undermining future prospects for stability and prosperity.

The year 2022 spotlighted the Sahel in the global terrorism landscape, with four out of the 10 countries most affected by terrorism found in this region. Terrorism fatalities in the Sahel accounted for 43pc of the global total, a stark rise from just 1pc in 2007. Burkina Faso registered the largest increase in terrorism-related deaths during the year, rising from 759 to 1,135. The country, along with Mali, in particular, has become a hotbed of terrorism, accounting for 73pc of terrorism-related deaths in the Sahel in 2022, and 52pc of all such deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. Most attacks in the Sahel are attributed to unknown groups, though

both IS and JNIM (Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen) are active there. The complex challenges exacerbating the security situation include political instability, food shortages, ethnic tensions, rapid population growth, environmental degradation, etc. The region harbours 58pc of the global population facing food insecurity, with its countries languishing at the bottom of the Human Development Index. These factors together contribute to a fertile ground for terrorism and conflict. The operational strategies of militants in the Sahel mirror those seen in other conflict zones, with groups exploiting weak governance and rural vulnerabilities to enforce control. The shifting dynamics of terrorism from north-eastern Nigeria to the Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger tri-border area, alongside the spread to coastal West Africa, illustrate the evolving and expansive nature of the threat. The departure of French forces from Mali has led to a surge in violence, highlighting the Sahel's geopolitical significance and the international ramifications of local conflicts. Militant groups in the Sahel are broadly categorised into local and transnational factions, with the latter including affiliates of Al Qaeda and IS. These groups have exploited the region's political instability to recruit members and expand their influence. The formation of JNIM, an umbrella organisation for Salafi-jihadist groups, marks a strategic attempt to consolidate various factions under a unified command, aiming to challenge regional states and international interests. The political land-

scapes in the Sahel has been further destabilised by a spate of military coups, attributed to widespread dissatisfaction with governance and economic conditions. These coups, while promising reform, often exacerbate the underlying issues that fuel extremism and conflict. Environmental challenges and rapid population growth compound the Sahel's security dilemmas. The Ecological Threat Report by the Institute for Economics and Peace highlights severe water and food risks, stressing urgent comprehensive strategies to address these threats. With some countries in the Sahel projected to experience dramatic population increases, the pressures on already scarce resources will intensify, and may fuel further conflict and displacement.

Addressing the crisis in the Sahel demands a multidimensional strategy that extends beyond military solutions. Efforts to deradicalise and prevent the recruitment of the region's youth are essential, considering the Sahel's demographic profile with 64pc of the population under 25. Building an inclusive social contract between governments and their citizens is crucial to addressing grievances and restoring trust, which are fundamental to achieving lasting peace.

The Sahel's trajectory is a critical concern for both regional and global security. For any long-term plan, preventing violent extremism is the best antidote to defeat terrorism. The world must prioritise a coordinated, comprehensive response that tackles the root causes of instability, from governance failures to socioeconomic disparities, to reverse the tide of violence and terror in the region. -- Courtesy Dawn

Faisalabad to be transformed into modern city: CM Maryam Nawaz

Independent Report
FAISALABAD: Faisalabad would be transformed into a modern city by introducing an innovative mass transit system, said Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz.

Presiding over a meeting of local parliamentarians and PML-N leaders at Faisalabad Airport here on Monday, she said that the Punjab government has planned to provide hundred speedo buses in Faisalabad in addition to bringing metro bus system in this metropolis.

She said that Faisalabad was also included in 100,000 house project which would be

constructed for low income people. She said that rural and primary health centers across the province would be revamped within 6 months in addition to constructing and repairing 600 roads, 5 expressways and 3 motorways.

She said that 100 percent free medicines would be started across the province soon in addition to its home delivery. She said that all districts of the Punjab would be included in safe city program whereas this project would be launched in 18 cities within next 3 months.

She said that more than 4.8 million packets of Ramadan Negahban package were distributed so far across the province

while 3,000 motorbikes would be provided to male and female students in each district.

She said that students would also be given laptops and iPads whereas a comprehensive system of solid waste collection was being implemented in 36 districts. The government has also set a target to introduce waste management system on PP mode in all districts of the Punjab including its rural areas within next 3 months, she added.

She also condemned the killing of a youth with kite string and said that this incident was very painful which could not be ignored rather its responsible would be taken to task.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui visits PCSIR Laboratories Complex.

Advisor Tourism says: Providing relief to govt employees in budget seriously considered

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Zahid Chanzab, Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Tourism, Culture and Archives has said that the KP government is seriously considering providing relief to the govt employees in the new budget and improving their working conditions side by side with its efforts for the welfare of other segments of society.

He was talking to the delegation of the clerks' community that called on him under the headship of Mubashir Aftab Dalazak, district president of APCA from Mansehra at his office, Civil Secretariat here on Monday. The delegation congratulated the provincial advisor on taking over the portfolio of tourism and culture as well as apprised him of certain issues faced by the clerk community of Mansehra.

Zahid Chanzab listened to their grievances

very patiently and assured them that they would be resolved at an appropriate level while contacting the relevant authorities on the spot to resolve some of the issues.

The CM's Adviser clarified that he has a heart and soul connection with Mansehra, where he was born and raised, and his heartfelt desire is that this backward district must be included in the national mainstream of development and prosperity in all respects.

He will endeavor to repay their debt in the coming days for how the people came out and made him successful during the one day of the general elections.

The delegation appreciated the developmental and people-friendly policies of the tourism advisor as well as the provincial government and assured their full cooperation in its implementation.

PHC issues detailed judgment on allocation reserved seats

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court on Monday issued a 30-page detailed judgment in the case filed by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) regarding allotment of reserved seats and rejected the petition of SIC.

A five-member bench of the Peshawar High Court gave a brief verdict on March 14 while the judgment was written by Justice SM Atiq Shah.

The court maintained that it had the authority to hear cases of reserved seats up to the provincial level, adding that the Election Commission's decision to allocated reserved seats to other political parties was in accordance with Article 51 of the Constitution.

It said that SIC was not entitled to reserved seat for women as the party submitted a list after the prescribed time.

CG of China calls on Sindh Chief Secretary

Independent Report
KARACHI (APP): The Consul General (CG) of China Yang Yundong called on the Sindh Chief Secretary (CS) Syed Asif Hyder Shah at the Sindh Secretariat here on Monday.

They discussed issues of mutual interest including the promotion of bilateral relations. On the occasion, the Sindh Chief Secretary assured the Chinese Consul General of the Sindh government's support and said that the provincial government and the people of Sindh valued their brotherly relations with China.

He further said that there were very good investment opportunities for Chinese companies and businessmen in energy and waste-water treatment plants as well as agriculture sectors in the Sindh province.

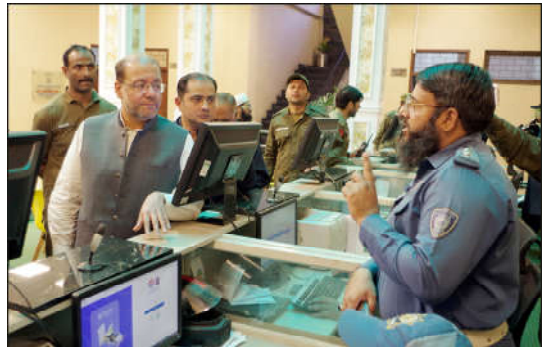
LHC summons AG, AAG on SIC petition

Independent Report
LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) while hearing the petition filed by Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) against not giving reserved seats to them has summoned Attorney General (AG) and Additional Attorney General (AAG).

The hearing of the case has been adjourned.

The state counsel while giving arguments during the hearing of the case said a petition like this has been filed in Peshawar High Court (PHC) too. Judgment on it is reserved.

The counsel for SIC requested the court to hear the AG too.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhary Shafay Hussain inspecting the driving license issuance process at Khidmat Markaz during his visit to Model Police Station Mazang.

4.8 mln ration bags distributed, 6132 profiteers arrested

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): On the instructions of the Chief Minister Punjab, the provincial government is successfully continuing the Nighaban Ramzan package for providing relief to deserving families during the holy month of fasting and so far 4.8 million ration bags have been delivered to the needy people at their doorsteps.

Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman chaired an important meeting held at the Civil Secretariat to review the Ramzan package and price control measures.

The administrative secretaries of departments of industries, agriculture, additional IG Special Branch, Chairman PITB and officers concerned attended the meeting, while the additional chief secretary, all divisional commissioners and deputy

participated through video link.

Officials briefed the meeting that 6,132 person were arrested and 2109 cases were registered in the crackdown over profiteers in Ramzan, and the price magistrates checked nine hundred thousand places and imposed fines of Rs. 75 million over violations.

The Chief Secretary said that the delivery of ration bags at doorsteps under the Ramzan package was a big challenge, adding that the role of administrative officers in the successful implementation of the program was commendable. He also praised the Punjab Information Technology Board for ensuring transparency in the Ramzan package through digital monitoring. The meeting decided that certificates of appreciation



FAISALABAD: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz and PMLN Supremo Nawaz Sharif are addressing a meeting of local parliamentarians and PMLN leaders at Faisalabad Airport.

Khalid Maqbool vows to play proactive role for improving education in Sindh

Independent Report
KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Monday said that federal government will play proactive role for improvement of education sector in Sindh with an aim of creating job opportunities for the youth.

The minister while talking to media persons during visit of Pakistan Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) Laboratory Complex Karachi said that a large chunk of country's population was consisted of youth and ministry of Science and Technology was ready to take measures in coordination with the provincial government for training the youth in skills

required in the global market.

All the organizations working under the ambit of MOST as well as higher education institutions will start technical courses for secondary and higher secondary students having proficiency in subjects of English and Mathematics, he said and added that after the skill building the trained students will be able to acquire jobs around the world.

"It will not be brain drain but actually it will be brain train" as they will be able to practically contribute in development of the country, he said and elaborated that highly skilled workers from Pakistan will not only send precious foreign exchange to the homeland but they

will also get the first hand knowledge of latest developments in different fields.

Stressing the need of unified efforts to deal with challenges confronted by the country Khalid Maqbool said that we may steer the nation out of crisis if every stakeholder prioritize state over political or individual motives.

We have to set our direction towards an inclusive and participatory democratic approach by going into the masses for strengthening the democratic system in the country, he opined and added that his party was playing a constructive role to bring democratic stability in the country.

Minister inaugurates SSC at UET

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): Minister for Higher Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Meena Khan inaugurated the Student Service Center (SSC) at University of Engineering Technology (UET) here Monday. It is a newly established one-stop solution center, equipped with modern technology to facilitate the students in their academic matters such as transcripts, course registration and degree clearance etc.

The Minister Higher Education was received by Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali, Vice Chancellor UET Peshawar who apprised him of his

vision to facilitate the students on top priority with his student centric approach.

He told that the SSC will be equipped with modern technology to reduce the wait time and well trained staff. The Deans, senior faculty and administration were present on the occasion.

Meena Khan said that promoting engineering education and facilitating the students to the remote areas of KP was a sacred mission of UET Peshawar which was appreciable. He congratulated Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali and his team for opening up a center.

Body of missing youth found in sewerage drain

Independent Report
FAISALABAD (APP): The body of a youth was found in a sewerage drain, three days after he went missing, in the area of Bachiana police station. Police said on Monday that 28-year-old Waqas-ul-Haq, resident of Chak No.564-GB had gone missing three days ago. His relatives searched him here and there but in vain and they reported the matter to the area police.

After three days, some passersby spotted the body lying in a sewerage drain passing through Chak No.586-GB and informed the police.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique presides over the meeting at Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department.

Appellate Tribunal approves nomination papers of Azam Swati

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): The judge of Appellate Tribunal, Peshawar, in a short judgment on Monday approved the nomination papers of PTI backed candidate for the general seat of Senate on his appeal and reserved the judgment on technocrat seat.

Azam Swati had filed an appeal against the rejection of his nomination papers for the general seat.

The hearing was conducted by Appellate Tribunal judge Justice Shakeel Ahmed.

The counsel of Azam, Barrister Waqar Ahmed informed the Tribunal that three persons raised objections on the nomination papers of Swati including the two who were

not candidates in the election. He said one objection was that Azam Swati had now provided the details of the cases filed against him and he did not provide this in the general election NA-15.

He argued that after the general election, Azam Swati filed petitions in the High Court and was provided with the details of the cases and the same was provided in the Senate election papers.

Similarly, the objection was that Swati did not qualify as a technocrats, to which the counsel said that his client had been a member of the Senate for 18 years, twice as a technocrat and once as a general.

ANF arrests 13 drug smugglers in 13 operations

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its ongoing operation against drug trafficking managed to recover over 44 kg drugs in 13 operations and arrested 13 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He said that 1.8 kg Ice and 1 kg heroin were recovered from a passenger going to Dubai at Islamabad Airport. In another operation at Islamabad Airport, 1.8 kg heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar.

In third operation, 1 kg heroin was recovered from a parcel sent to UK at a courier office in Rawalpindi. In another operation at Islamabad Airport, 135 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of two passengers going to Sharjah.



HYDERABAD: Holi celebrations in full swing as the Hindu community gathers at Sir-e-Ghat.

Health minister reviews projects of hospitals

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education (SH&ME) Khawaja Salman Rafique on Monday chaired a meeting to thoroughly assess the progress of ongoing revamping projects in government hospitals across Punjab.

During the meeting, SH&ME Special Secretary Syed Wajid Ali Shah provided a comprehensive briefing to the minister regarding the status of the revamping initiatives.

Emphasising the government's commitment to swiftly completing these projects, the provincial health minister underscored that any delay

in providing treatment to patients visiting government hospitals was unacceptable. He urged hospital heads to actively contribute to the expedited completion of the revamping endeavors.

Khawaja Salman Rafique reiterated the government's zero-tolerance policy towards negligence in patient care, inadequate sanitation facilities, medication shortages, and doctor absence.

He pledged to personally oversee the implementation of the revamping plans across all government hospitals and directed the special secretary to ensure daily monitoring of the projects.



LAHORE: Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Minister visits PSRA; directs for provision of quality education

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister Elementary and Secondary Education Faisal Khan Tarakai visited the Private Schools Regulatory Authority (PSRA) on Monday and directed for provision of quality education.

Managing Director Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat and her team gave a detailed briefing to the provincial minister about the performance of the institution and the goals achieved.

The minister was briefed that the work of our institution is registration, regulation and supervision of private schools.

Fees are determined by classifying the schools on the basis of various facilities in the schools.

They briefed that a total of 10,907 schools are registered with us in which more than 3,100,000 male and female students were getting education.

Provincial Education Minister Faisal Khan Tarakai issued instructions to the authorities to form region-wise competitive registration campaigns for the registration of more schools and the unregistered schools have unnecessarily increased the fees. If there is a lack of facilities in the schools and there is a writ challenge of the government, immediate action should be taken against them.

He said that private schools are also our institutions and we are providing all kinds of support to them.

PPP government ensures protection of temples: Mayor

Independent Report
SUKKUR (APP): Mayor Sukkur Barrister Arslan Sheikh on Monday congratulated the Hindu community on the occasion of the Holi festival. In a message on the occasion, the Mayor Sukkur said that the re-tival of Holi was the day of victory of truth and truth for Hindus and the use of colours in it was a symbol of the arrival of spring, saying that the Hindu community settled in Sukkur and all other areas of Province for centuries has become a part of our traditions and culture.

The minorities in Sindh have full religious freedom and full and equal rights, he said, adding that the Hindu community has always played an important role in the development of Pakistan. Arslan said that the re-ligion of Islam guaranteed the protection of the rights of people belonging to all religions and their religious freedom. The mayor said that the PPP government has also ensured the protection of temples and gurdwaras across the province by taking special measures.



SIALKOT: Member Punjab Assembly Faisal Ikram Chaudhary and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain inaugurates the tree planting campaign in educational institutions of Sialkot District by planting saplings in Centers of Excellence Lady Andersen Girls Higher Secondary.

PDMA releases Rs.348m for TDPs of North Waziristan

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday released an amount of Rs 348 million as monthly financial assistance (sustenance allowance) to the affected families of Operation Zarb Azab in North Waziristan who have not yet returned to their homes. Each and every verified family will receive it through SIM messaging within a day or two.

In a statement issued by the office of The

Director General PDMA Qaiser Khan, it has been said that the said financial assistance is being given to more than 17 thousand families of North Waziristan who are duly certified by NADRA and registered as temporarily displaced persons (TDPs).

On this occasion, Director Complex Emergencies Wing PDMA for merged Tribal Districts Subia Hussain Toru said the receive release is the 114th installment of the series in which each verified family will receive a total of Rs 20,000 as cash assistance and ration allowance.

Taxing cigarettes in Pakistan declined smoking by 20 to 25 percent, reveals IMF

ISLAMABAD (INP): February. Earlier, the global lender advocated imposition of uniform excise rates on both local and foreign cigarette manufacturers. The IMF's proposal, which advocates for equal taxation measures for all cigarette producers, aims to address health concerns associated with smoking while ensuring fair taxation practices. It suggests subjecting e-cigarettes to similar taxation as traditional tobacco products, citing comparable health impacts. Capital Calling, an Islamabad-based think tank, has endorsed the IMF's recommendation, aligning it with the guidelines set forth by the World Health Organization (WHO). The objective behind these proposals is to establish equitable taxation across all cigarette products, regardless of their origin.

Health activists have rallied behind the IMF's stance, emphasizing the need for restructuring tobacco taxation in Pakistan. At a recent event organized by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), activists urged the Government of Pakistan to transition to a Single Tier Tobacco Taxation System, thereby eliminating the existing dual-tier system.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan Chairing a meeting at Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP).



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh is presented with memento during his visit Pakistan National Shipping Corporation.

Ministerial Committee reviews Ramadan package

Independent Report
LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain chaired a meeting of Ministerial Committee to review Ramadan Relief Package here at Civil Secretariat on Monday. Provincial Ministers Bilal Yasin, Ashiq Hussain Kirmani, Azma Bokhari and the secretaries of the relevant departments were also present, while divisional commissioners attended the meeting through video link. In the meeting, implementation of Ramadan Relief Package, availability of essential items, prices and monitoring process were reviewed. The committee expressed concern over the increase in the prices of chicken during the last three days and directed the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to reduce the prices of chicken.

Ch. Shafay said that the supply of poultry in the market should be closely monitored during the last 10 days of Ramadan. He said that on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, largest Ramadan package in the history of Punjab is being successfully delivered at the doorsteps of people. More than 4.9 million families have been provided ration at their doorstep. People are getting quality essentials at subsidized rate in the holy month. Due to the improvement in the supply situation, the prices have come down significantly. Chaudhry Shafay Hussain said that the officers of the Food Authority need to be more active in the districts. Model and Ramadan markets are proving to be a major means of providing relief to the people, he added.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, MSC Bremen, MSC Lome-V, Bekforest, Paloma and Mackenzie, carrying Container, Canola Seed, Gas oil and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Grain Terminal, Oil Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Sunday. Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Spring-III, Taxidiara and Shiva scheduled to load/offload Container, Cement and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on today. Ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, MSC Lome-V, MSC Bremen and Al-Wajbah left the Port on today morning while two more ships, Forshun and Bharadwajare expected to sail on today afternoon. A cargo volume of 126,368 tonnes, comprising 86,443 tonnes imports cargo and 39,925 tonnes export cargo carried in 3,820 Containers (1,892 TEUs Imports and 1,929 TEUs export).

Minister for Maritime Affairs visits PNSC headquarters

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, conducted an official visit to the main office of the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) on Monday. The minister received a warm welcome from PNSC officials upon his arrival. During the visit, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh was briefed by PNSC's Director Project and Planning, Khurram Mirza, alongside other key officials including Director Finance, Syed Jarrar Ahmed Kazmi, Director Ship Management, S.M. Babar, and Director Commercial, Captain Mustafa Qazibash. Addressing the gathering, the Minister

underscored the necessity for collaborative efforts to steer the nation's economy in a positive direction, emphasizing the importance of building a better Pakistan for future generations. He also pointed out the significant progress in the Asian region while noting the country's lag in development. In discussions with the media, the minister outlined plans to finalize the PNSC board and appoint a CEO from the private sector, aiming to enhance the corporation's efficiency further. While expressing satisfaction with PNSC's current performance, the minister stressed the potential for further improvements.

Azam assesses prices, facilities at utility store

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tarar, conducted a thorough inspection of a utility store in the provincial capital on Monday, focusing on product quality, facilities, and sales mechanisms. During his visit, Minister Tarar diligently observed the sales activity, assessed the availability of facilities, and scrutinized the stock of discounted products. Engaging with store staff, Minister Tarar inquired about any existing challenges and checked the rate list to ensure transparency. Speaking to the media, he emphasized the government's commitment to prioritizing economic improvement, citing Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's leadership as pivotal to the nation's economic

progress. Minister Tarar underscored the government's dedication to providing essential facilities, highlighting the announcement of the largest Ramadan package in the country's history. He elaborated on the inclusivity of the package, emphasizing special discounted rates for both Benazir Income Support Program beneficiaries and the general public. During the visit, utility store staff presented a comparative analysis of prices, reassuring the Minister that essential items such as ghee and sugar are being offered at affordable rates - Rs. 335 per kilogram for ghee and Rs. 109 per kilogram for sugar. Additionally, they assured special arrangements for BISP beneficiaries.

Data availability vital for better service delivery: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, on Monday said that availability of data in the digital era is crucial. During a meeting with the Country Director of Teradata Global Consulting Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd, Haroon Kanth, Shaza Fatima highlighted the significant role of data in decision-making processes. She said that a stable

database is essential for enhancing service delivery, emphasizing the importance of a credible database for capacity building within government organizations. Shaza Fatima urged Teradata to collaborate with the Ministry of IT and Telecom to achieve these objectives. In response, Haroon Kanth assured that Teradata is prepared to work closely with the government of Pakistan.

Pakistan, Iran trade expansion discussed

KARACHI (APP): Kafeel Hussain Group CEO, and renowned architect Kafeel Hussain recently held a meeting with Iran's Counsel General in Karachi Nourian Hussain Nourian, to discuss mutual interests. During the meeting, Kafeel Hussain highlighted the strong commercial and business relations between Pakistan and Iran. He mentioned that Pakistan has experienced a 13.5% annual increase in imports from Iran over the past 24 years and efforts are being made to further enhance

this growth. Kafeel Hussain emphasized the importance of formalizing free trade agreements to boost bilateral trade between the two countries. He emphasized that such agreements would facilitate easier access to markets for products and services from both nations, thereby promoting economic stability. In 2022, Pakistan's imports from Iran reached \$1.448 billion, while exports to Iran amounted to \$842.8 million.

PM 'Ramadan Relief Package' to provide relief to the people: Jam Kamal

KARACHI (Online): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan said that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has increased the amount of Ramadan Relief Package from Rs7.5 billions to Rs12.5 billions to provide relief to the common-men. He stated this while talking to media persons on the occasion of his visit to Utility Stores here on Monday. The Minister said that the federal government was taking initiatives for the provision of relief to the public. He said that around all

the items were available at the Utility Store in reasonable prices. The Utility Stores were not meant for solution to beat the inflation, he said adding that these were merely a step for relief. Kamal said that there was a need to balance the Price Control Mechanism. He said that the onus was on the government to put the house in order. He said that the government had to boost the industry and manage the matter of energy crisis in the country. He further said that there were six to seven projects in the pipeline. Replying to a question

about law and order situation, he said that there was a need to review the issue of unemployment and address the law and order situation. He further said that the federal and provincial governments were on the same page regarding the law and order situation and other challenges. Replying to another question, he said when we borrow from IMF then we had to return it in a good manner. Earlier, the Minister Jam Kamal visited the Utility Store and took details of the relief being provided to the people.

CS Sindh for collecting data to issue Kisan Card

KARACHI (APP): The Chief Secretary Sindh, Syed Asif Haider Shah, Monday, instructed provincial agriculture secretary to obtain data required for issuance of Kisan Card with the help of available database of different government departments and organizations within 15 days.

The CS Sindh was presiding over a meeting held here to review the matters pertaining to issuance of Kisan Card. Secretary Agriculture Rafiq Ahmed Burro, Senior Member Board of Revenue Baqaullah Uner, CEO Sindh People's Housing Foundation Khalid Mehmoood Sheikh and other officers attended the meeting. Syed Asif Haider Shah informed the meeting that Sindh Cabinet in its recent meeting taken a decision to issue Kisan Card to farmers and growers owning 12.5 acres of land. He said that the farmers will be assisted through the Kisan Card during wheat procurement process or in case of any natural calamity or disaster.

facilitating convenient payments through a dedicated computerized system using a Payment Slip ID (PSID) generated by the Tajir Dost module or the FBR's online portal a private news channel reported. Traders and shopkeepers participating in the scheme will be required to make monthly advance tax payments, serving as a minimum tax on income derived from covered businesses. The FBR will specify the calculation method for monthly advance tax, aiming to provide a simplified tax regime to encourage compliance and bolster the country's economic development.

FBR to Launch Tajir Dost Scheme for Small Traders, Shopkeepers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has announced the initiation of tax collection under the newly proposed Tajir Dost Scheme for small traders and shopkeepers, slated to commence on July 15, 2024. The scheme, initially launched in six major cities including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, and Peshawar, holds potential for future expansion. Under the Tajir Dost Scheme, monthly advance tax payments will kick off on July 1, 2024, with the first payment due on July 15, 2024. Subsequent payments will be due on the 15th of each following month.

Subsequent payments will be due on the 15th of each following month.

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 373 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Monday, gaining 373.82 points, a positive change of 0.57 percent, closing at 65,525.65 points against 65,151.83 points the previous trading day. A total of 261,194,334 shares valuing Rs. 945 billion were traded during the day as compared to 208,408,686 shares valuing Rs. 7,149 billion the last day. Some 332 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 144 of them recorded gains and 168 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 20 remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were P.T.C.L with 27,177,895 shares at Rs.15.70 per share, Hascol Petrol with 21,377,000 shares with 8.08 per share and K-Electric Limited.



LAHORE: Chairman of All Punjab LPG Distributor Association Mian Muhammad Ajmal, Ghulam Mustafa, Tehsil Khan and others addressing a press conference.

PM's decision to put burden of tough decisions on elite hailed

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rashid Butt has lauded the decision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to transferring the burden of difficult decisions on the elite instead of the poor masses. In a statement issued here on Monday, he said that the state of the economy and the general populace would have been much different if a decision of this nature had been made several decades earlier. Shahid Rashid Butt said that the prime minister understands the importance of the National

Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) which was poised to promote investment in the country. The PM also understands the importance of cordial relations between the center and provinces and with neighboring countries and he was aware of the impact of inflation and people's worries, he added. The business leader said that PM Shehbaz Sharif also knows that running the country was impossible without painful reforms and improving infrastructure. He said, "The PM is making serious efforts to bring investment into the country while increasing the tax base."



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

Pak needs clear policy guidelines, legislation to control iTFA risks

ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts at a launch of a policy document on Monday demanded a multi-stakeholder engagement intended to increase awareness of risks due to Industrial Trans Fatty Acids (iTFA) proliferating in the food range of the country. The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with Cargill launched the policy brief on Reducing Industrial Trans Fatty Acids in Pakistan. It chalked out the regulatory landscape and actionable recommendations to curb iTFAs in the country. Usman Qaiyyum, Country Lead, Cargill-Pakistan said public awareness of iTFAs was very crucial, whereas the SDPI has been making relentless efforts to address this issue at the relevant forums. "The SDPI team deserves appreciation for successfully formulating this document which will serve for a long time to carve policy actions on controlling iTFAs," he said. He mentioned that almost one billion people

were obese in the world making it 13-14 percent of the total population with more trend of obesity in the new generation, which is found less in the older generation due to the shift towards fast foods and bakery items having a higher ratio of iTFAs. "Obesity alone incurred \$2 trillion economic impact around the world that includes medical cost, number of other things, low productivity of obese individuals, employment and mental health challenges and is expected to reach beyond \$3 trillion by 2030," he said. Dr Tahira Siddiqui, Deputy Director, Islamabad Food Authority said that the unsaturated naturally produced trans fatty acids (TFAs) mainly acquired from meat and dairy sources were healthy, but the saturated TFAs produced industrially by hydrogenation of palm oil were causing serious dietary risks leading to cancer and ischemic heart diseases. "Pakistan is the second highest consumer of trans fats in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Rupee gains one paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday gained 01 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.12 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.13. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278.25 and Rs281, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by 19 paisa to close at Rs300.84 against the last-day closing of Rs301.03, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.83, whereas a decrease of 06 paisa.



Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, convened a meeting with a delegation from the National Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority (NEECA) in Islamabad.

Russia casts doubt on Islamic State responsibility for concert attack

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia on Monday challenged assertions by the United States that the Islamic State (IS) militant group orchestrated a gun attack on a concert hall outside Moscow that killed 137 people and injured 182 more, accusing Washington of covering for Ukraine. In the deadliest attack inside Russia for two decades, four men burst into the Crocus City Hall on Friday night, spraying the crowd with bullets during a concert by Soviet-era rock group Picnic.

Four men, at least one a Tajik, were remanded in custody on terrorism charges. They appeared separately, led into a cage at Moscow's Basmanny district court by Federal Security Service officers. IS has claimed responsibility for the attack, a claim that the US has publicly said it believes, and the militant group has since released what it says is footage from the attack. US officials said they had warned Russia about an imminent attack earlier this month.

President Vladimir Putin has not publicly mentioned the militant group in connection with the attackers, who he said had been trying to escape to Ukraine. Putin said some people on "the Ukrainian side" had been prepared to spirit the gunmen across the border. Ukraine has denied any role in the attack and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has accused Putin of seeking to divert blame for the attack by mentioning Ukraine.

Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova called into question US assertions that IS, which once sought control over swathes of Iraq and Syria, was behind the attack. In an article for the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, she said the US was evoking the "bogeyman" of IS to cover its "wards" in Kyiv and reminded readers that Washington had supported the mujahideen fighters who fought Soviet forces in the 1980s.

Two US officials said on Friday that the US had intelligence confirming IS's claim of responsibility. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov later told reporters that Russia could not comment on the IS claim while the investigation was ongoing and would not comment on US intelligence, saying it was sensitive information.



Presidential candidate Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who is backed by Senegalese opposition leader Ousmane Sonko, walks with one of his wives after casting his vote at the polling station at Ndiaganio in Mbour, Senegal.

Forced Rafah population transfer would be a 'war crime', Macron warns Israel

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that any forced transfer of people from the southern Gaza city of Rafah would constitute "a war crime".

In a telephone call between the two leaders, Macron also "strongly condemned" Israel's announcement Friday of the seizure of 800 hectares of land in the occupied West Bank for new settlements, said his office.

Activists say Israel's declaration that the land in the northern Jordan Valley was now "state land" was the single largest such seizure in decades.

Macron also repeated his opposition to any Israeli military operation to fight Hamas in Rafah, where most of Gaza's population has taken shelter after months of fierce fighting in the besieged territory.

In the call, Macron told Netanyahu he intended to bring a draft resolution to the UN Security Council calling for "an immediate and lasting ceasefire".

He urged Israel to immediately open all crossing points into Gaza. Macron also had talks with Jordan's King Abdullah II, during which they discussed the "unjustifiable humanitarian situation in Gaza", said the Elysee Palace. Forcing civilians to run the risk of famine was "unjustifiable", the two leaders said.

They also agreed on the need for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one that "implied the creation of a Palestinian state including Gaza".

Serbian angry at Trump family deal for site of Nato bombing

Monitoring Desk
BELGRADE: A bombed-out building in Belgrade, which has stood as a national symbol of the 1999 Nato strikes on Serbia, might soon become a luxury hotel financed by Donald Trump's son-in-law — much to the anger of locals.

Jared Kushner, who also served as an adviser to his father-in-law during his US presidency, confirmed in mid-March his plans to invest in luxury real estate in Serbia, including the old site of the Yugoslav army headquarters. Serbian opposition member of parliament Aleksandar Jovanovic Cuta and an investigation by the New York Times revealed that the Serbian government was going to transfer the building and the surrounding land to a company owned by Kushner.

Leaked plans indicated the building will be replaced by three large glass towers a few metres from the Serbian defence and foreign ministries.

Three Philippine soldiers hurt by China water cannon

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: Three Philippine troops were injured in the latest China Coast Guard water cannon attack on a Filipino supply vessel near a South China Sea reef, Manila's national security adviser said on Sunday.

The Philippine government said Saturday's confrontation caused severe damage to the Unaiyah May 4 vessel while it was on its way to deliver troops and provisions to a Philippine navy ship grounded atop the Second Thomas Shoal.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, brushing off rival claims from other countries, including the Philippines, and an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

Beijing told it faces 'fork in the road' as China Development Forum opens

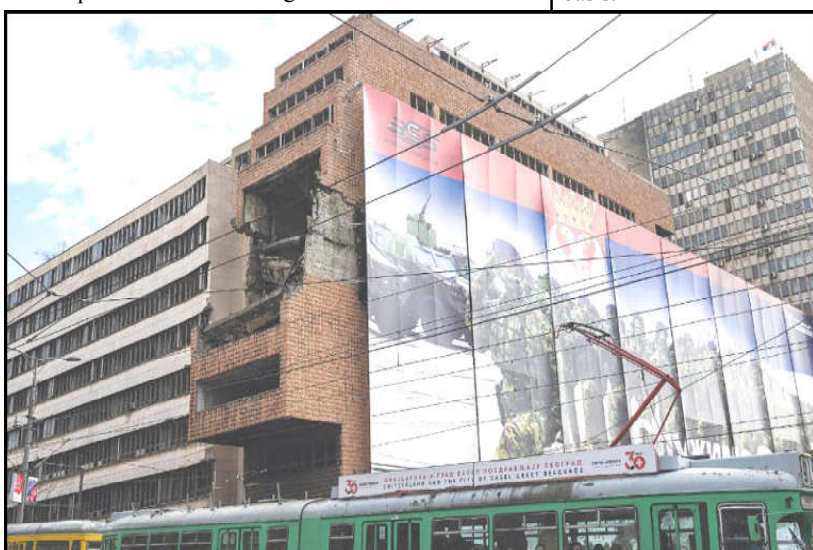
Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China needs to "reinvent itself" with economic policies to speed resolution of its property market crisis and boost domestic consumption and productivity, the International Monetary Fund's Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said on Sunday.

"China faces a fork in the road rely on the policies that have worked in the past, or reinvent itself for a new era of high-quality growth," Georgieva said in remarks to a meeting of senior Chinese officials and executives from global companies.

A day ago, Commerce Minister Wang Wentao also said China was committed to opening up its economy and offered growth opportunities for multinationals.

Officials who spoke at the opening of the China Development Forum expressed confidence China would hit its economic targets, including growth of about 5pc this year, and pledged further support for companies in strategically important sectors, an area Chinese President Xi Jinping has dubbed "new productive forces".

But those commitments stopped short of the more sweeping changes urged by the IMF. Georgieva said an analysis by the IMF showed a more consumer-centered policy mix could add \$3.5 trillion to China's economy over the next 15 years. If achieved, that boost would be equivalent to adding output equivalent to more than the size of South Korea's economy. To do that, China would need to take "decisive" steps to complete unfinished housing stranded by bankrupt developers and to reduce risks from local government debt.



BELGRADE: A tram rides past the bomb-damaged building which was the old site of the Yugoslav army's headquarters.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (C) inspecting the First Tank Armored Infantry Regiment, which is under the direct control of the Seoul Ryu Kyong Su Guards 105th Tank Division of the Korean People's Army (KPA) at an undisclosed location in North Korea.

Israel pounds Rafah in southern Gaza despite ceasefire calls

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israel's military carried out new airstrikes in Gaza and laid siege to two hospitals on Monday, despite what the UN chief called a growing international consensus to tell Israel a ceasefire is needed.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also issued a new call to Israel to allow aid in to northern Gaza to combat starvation after more than five months of war and not to carry out a threatened assault on the southern Gazan city of Rafah.

"It is absolutely essential to have a massive supply of humanitarian aid now," Guterres said during a visit to Jordan.

Rafah, the last refuge for about half of Gaza's 2.3 million population after many people arrived in search of shelter after being displaced by fighting elsewhere, came under heavy fire in the latest Israeli attacks, witnesses said.

Palestinian medics said 30 people had been killed in the previous 24 hours in Rafah.

Turkey heads to local elections as Erdogan seeks to avenge 2019 defeat

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Turks will vote next Sunday in local polls as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, buoyed by a strong showing in last year's general elections, sets his sights on winning back Istanbul. The secular opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) seized back control of the city — Turkey's economic powerhouse — in 2019 for the first time since before Erdogan ruled it as mayor in the 1990s.

Those watershed 2019 elections also saw the opposition win back the capital Ankara and keep power in the crucial Aegean port city of Izmir, shattering Erdogan's image of political invincibility.

Erdogan has entrusted his former environment minister Murat Kurum to run for mayor of Istanbul in the March 31 election.

He is seeking to avenge the worst political defeat of his two-decade rule, when CHP arch rival Ekrem Imamoglu took the town hall.



Shamsidin Fariduni, a suspect in the shooting attack at the Crocus City Hall concert venue, is escorted before a court hearing at the Basmanny district court in Moscow, Russia.

Lebanon's Hezbollah says 2 fighters killed in Israeli attacks

Monitoring Desk
BEKAA VALLEY: Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement on Sunday announced the death of two of its fighters in attacks by Israel, accusing the country of trying to expand its strikes.

The accusation came after security sources reported two Israeli air raids deep inside Lebanon, in the country's east.

Israel and Hezbollah, a Lebanese militant group allied to Hamas, have been exchanging cross-border fire almost daily since the Gaza war between Israel and Hamas militants began last October.

But fears have surged of an all-out conflict in recent weeks with Israel launching air strikes deeper into eastern Lebanon, targeting Hezbollah strongholds in the Bekaa Valley area several times.

"Today the enemy is trying to expand its attacks against civilians in Baalbek, in the western Bekaa or elsewhere," Hezbollah's deputy chief Naim Qassem said Sunday.

"There will be responses to each of them," Hezbollah did not say where its two fighters died or give other details but said they "died as martyrs" in Israeli attacks.

Four children dead after phone charger catches fire

NEW DELHI (INP): In a horrific incident, four children were killed and their parents injured in a fire at their home in the Pallavapuram area of this Uttar Pradesh district.

The incident occurred in the Janata Colony of Pallavapuram. The fire started from a short circuit while a mobile phone was being charged, they said.

The victims have been identified as Sarika (10), eight-year-old Niharika, six-year-old Sanskar alias Golu and four-year-old Kalu. Their parents Johnny (41) and Babita (37) were injured, they added.

They were rushed to a hospital where the four children died during treatment. Johnny is said to be out of danger but Babita's condition is critical, the police said.

Johnny told the police that the fire broke out while charging a mobile phone. There was a short circuit and the bed sheet caught fire. A probe is underway, the police said.

Simon Harris set to become Ireland PM

Monitoring Desk
ATHLONE: Simon Harris is set to become Ireland's next prime minister after the governing Fine Gael party appointed him as its leader on Sunday, following an uncontested election.

The 37-year-old said it was the "absolute honour of my life" to be appointed party leader, and his rise to the country's top job is expected to be confirmed when the Irish parliament returns from recess early next month. He will take over from Leo Varadkar, who announced his resignation on Wednesday.

Myanmar's next election may not be nationwide, junta chief says

Monitoring Desk
MYANMAR: Myanmar plans to have an election if there is peace and stability, but may not be able to hold the vote nationwide, its ruling military general said, according to Monday's state media.

In a transcript of an interview with Russia's Tass news agency carried by Myanmar's state media, Min Aung Hlaing said the military, which took power in a 2021 coup, still planned to hold an election to return to democratic rule.

North Korea says Japan PM requested summit with Kim Jong Un

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister said on Monday that Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has requested a summit with her brother, adding a meeting was unlikely without a policy shift by Tokyo.

Relations between the two countries are historically strained, including by a long-running kidnapping dispute and North Korea's banned weapons programmes, but Kishida has recently expressed a desire to improve ties, which Pyongyang has hinted it is not opposed to.

Last year, Kishida said he was willing to meet Kim "without any conditions", saying Tokyo was willing to resolve all issues, including the abduction by North Korean agents of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, which remains an emotive issue in Japan.

"Kishida... conveyed his intention to personally meet the President of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as soon as possible," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

Kim Yo Jong — who is one of the regime's key spokespeople — had hinted last month at a possible future invitation for the Japanese leader to visit North Korea.

But she said the "history of the DPRK-Japan relations gives a lesson that it is impossible to improve the bilateral relations full of distrust and misunderstanding," without a substantive policy change on Tokyo's part.

Palestinians describe bodies and ambulances crushed in Israel's ongoing raid at Gaza's main hospital

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: Palestinians who fled an ongoing Israeli raid of Gaza's main hospital described mass arrests and forced marches past bodies in interviews on Sunday, while the United Nations said Israel is now blocking its main agency helping Palestinians from sending food aid to the enclave's devastated north.

Israel's military says it has killed more than 170 militants and detained about 480 suspects in the raid on Shifa Hospital that began Monday, calling it a blow to Hamas and other armed groups it says had regrouped there as the war nears the six-month mark.

The fighting highlights the resilience of Palestinian armed groups in a heavily destroyed part of Gaza where Israeli troops have been forced to return after a similar raid in the war's earliest weeks. Kareem Ayman Hathat, who lived in a five-story building about 100 meters from the hospital, said he huddled in the kitchen for days while explosions sometimes caused the building to shake.

Early Saturday, Israeli troops stormed the building and forced dozens of residents to leave. He said men were forced to strip to their underwear and four were detained. The rest were blindfolded and ordered to follow a tank south as blasts thundered around them.

"From time to time, the tank would fire a shell," he told The Associated Press. "It was to terrorize us." Israeli jets on Sunday launched several strikes near Shifa Hospital, which largely stopped functioning following the November raid. After claiming that Hamas maintained an elaborate command center there, Israeli forces months ago exposed a single tunnel leading to a few underground rooms.

Several blasts heard in central Kyiv, mayor urges residents to take shelter

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Several blasts rang out in central Kyiv on Monday, AFP journalists reported, as air raid sirens sounded in the Ukrainian capital and officials urged residents to take shelter.

The explosions sounded at around 10:30am (0830 GMT) after almost a dozen people were wounded in a Russian drone strike on southern Ukraine overnight.

"Explosions in Kyiv. Go to shelters immediately," Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko wrote on social media, adding in a later post that emergency services had been dispatched to three districts of the capital.

The head of Kyiv's military administration said a Russian missile had damaged a residential building in the Pechersky district and details were being confirmed.

US Ambassador Bridget Brink said on the X social network on Monday that Russia had used hypersonic missiles. "Loud explosions in Kyiv. Over the last 5 days, Russia has launched hundreds of missiles and drones against a sovereign country," she said. "Ukraine needs our assistance now. There is not a moment to lose."

Again this morning Russia is attacking Ukraine with hypersonic missiles.

Loud explosions in Kyiv. Over the last 5 days, Russia has launched hundreds of missiles and drones against a sovereign country.

Ukraine needs our assistance now. There is not a moment to lose. Ambassador Bridget A. Brink (@USAmbKyiv) March 25, 2024

Russia has escalated air attacks on Kyiv in recent days, targeting key infrastructure in the wake of fatal Ukrainian bombardments on Russian border regions.

Former Taiwan president Ma to make second trip to China

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Former Taiwan president Ma Ying-jeou will make his second trip to China next month, leading a group of students on an 11-day journey to visit locations including Beijing, his office said on Monday, at a time of continued tension across the Taiwan Strait.

Ma, president from 2008 to 2016, last year became the first former Taiwanese leader to visit China. Since the defeated Republic of China government fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war to Mao Zedong's communists, no serving Taiwanese leader has visited China.

China considers democratically-governed Taiwan its own territory, and has ramped up military and political pressure to assert those claims.

Apart from Beijing, Ma will also visit the southern province of Guangdong and the northwestern province of Shaanxi, going to historic sites, visiting companies and leading student exchanges at Beijing's elite Peking University and Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, his office said in a statement.

Asked by reporters about arrangements for who Ma would meet while there, Ma Ying-jeou Foundation director Hsiao Hsu-tsen said they would be "at our hosts' disposal".

Ma met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Singapore in late 2015 shortly before the current Taiwan president, Tsai Ing-wen, won an election.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office, which referred to him as "Mr. Ma Ying-jeou" rather than former president given neither the Chinese nor Taiwanese government recognise each other, said it welcomed his visit.

The civilian vessel was hired to resupply a small number of Filipino troops stationed on a grounded ship the Philippines uses to reinforce its sovereignty claims.

PM directs swift action against tax defaulters, evaders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed initiation of action against tax defaulters and evaders on emergency basis.

The prime minister directed for constitution of a committee to identify the hurdles and responsibilities in the track and trace system. The committee would identify the hurdles and people involved in tax theft within seven days. The prime minister chaired a meeting regarding implementation of Track and Trace System in Islamabad, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The committee would be tasked to submit future proposals over enforcement of automatic tax system in factories and industries.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers including Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzaib Khan, Chairman

FBR Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana and other senior officials.

The prime minister questioned as to why the system was still inactive?

He observe that this system should have been made functional in tobacco, sugar, cement and fertilizer industries in the

last two years, adding that the system should be placed in other important sectors of the economy.

He said that all the legal impediments in the enforcement of track and trace system should be removed.

The prime minister directed that the system should be enforced at all the production lines of cement factories, besides he summoned a comprehensive plan over digital strategy and automated track and trace system.

He further directed that all those factories that resisted the implementation of track and trace system should be immediately sealed.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding implementation of Track and Trace System.

Crackdown started against illegal & unauthorized rickshaws in Quetta

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Regional Transport Authority and Traffic Police have started crackdown against the illegal and unauthorized rickshaws in Quetta city.

The crackdown is in line with the vision of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and on directives of the Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat and supervision of Secretary Regional Transport Authority, Waheed Sharif.

The teams comprising Secretary RTA and Traffic Police Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti launched crackdown against the illegal rickshaws.

In this regard, nine illegal rickshaws were impounded from Brewery road, BMC stop and old bus stop double road.

Moreover, 41 rickshaws were also challaned in violation of the traffic



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain in a meeting with the President Pakistani Overseas Community, Malawi Country in East Africa Chaudhry Karamat.

FIA assures SC to withdraw cases against journalists Amir Mir, Imran Shafiqat

ISLAMABAD (Online): FIA has assured Supreme Court (SC) to withdraw cases against Amir Mir and Imran Shafiqat in notices case issued to the journalists.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa remarked no one will be allowed to use the court.

A 3-member bench presided over by CJP heard the case Monday.

At the inception of hearing of the case Attorney General (AG) Mansoor Khan and barrister Salah ud Din of Press Association of SC came on the rostrum.

The CJP inquired from the counsel we see the date first. A two members bench had taken notice in 2021. Had this matter been resolved at that time then you would have not seen this day. Now this case has come from 2-member bench to 5-member bench. It was said only chief justice can take suo motu notice. That matter was more grave than issuance of notice by FIA.

Barrister Salah ud Din said both the matters have their own gravity.

The CJP remarked we cannot say both matters are having gravity of the same nature. If FIA notice is completely illegal it can be challenged. Charge is levied but stance is not presented by appearing in the court.

The CJP while moving to lawyer Haider Wahid said you are talking of media regulation. We will not allow the court to be used. Have you freedom of press case or you have some other agenda.

He inquired FIR was registered against Imran Shafiqat in the tenure of which government.

Attorney General (AG) replied during PTI founder government FIR was registered. Imran Shafiqat had made vlog against state institutions and high officials.

The CJP remarked we know it how the FIR is registered. People forget the past soon. Is there any solid case against Imran Shafiqat. Was there any serious case or FIR was lodged to harass.

AG replied Imran Shafiqat did not commit some serious crime. To me there is no such thing in this case.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari distributing commendation shields among military and civil officers who successfully organized Pakistan Day Parade, in a shield distribution ceremony held at Aiwan-i-Sadr.

Saudi Envoy calls on Minister for Power

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki Monday called on Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari.

During the meeting, the minister acknowledged the steadfast support of the brotherly country in all challenging situations, said a news release.

Awaiz Leghari highlighted various investment opportunities, particularly in the transmission sector, and assured the ambassador of investor-friendly policies under the current government.

The ambassador pledged support for Saudi businesses to explore Pakistan's investment potential.

JC recommends appointment of Justice Hashim as BHC CJ

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Judicial Commission of Pakistan recommended the appointment of Justice Hashim Khan Kakar as Chief Justice of the Balochistan High Court (BHC) on Monday. The judicial commission meeting under the chairmanship of Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa was held and reviewed the appointment of judges. The commission also recommended the permanence of six additional judges of the Sindh High Court (SHC) in the meeting and sent the matter to the Parliamentary Committee for final approval.

It is worth mentioning that Justice Hashim Khan Kakar is currently the Acting Chief Justice of the Balochistan High Court.

Court allows PTI leaders Murad Saeed to contest Senate polls

PESHAWAR (INP): Peshawar High Court's (PHC) appellate tribunal on Monday allowed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Murad Saeed, Khurram Zeeshan, and Azam Swati to contest the Senate elections. After rejection of their nomination papers by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the PTI leaders had approached the Appellate Tribunal.

The nomination papers of Azam Swati, Murad Saeed, and Khurram Zeeshan were rejected by returning officer for various reasons. The tribunal pronounced a verdict that was reserved earlier after the conclusion of the arguments from both sides. The tribunal comprising Justice Shakeel Ahmed allowed Murad Saeed and Khurram Zeeshan to contest the Senate elections on general seats while Azam Swati.

Siraj rejects trade with India

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq has rejected the statement made by the foreign minister regarding the revival of trade relations with India.

He emphasized that the nation would not entertain any form of relationship with the neighboring country at the expense of the blood of the Kashmiri people.

"We will adamantly oppose any trade or other engagements with India until the Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with the United Nations resolutions," he stated during a media interaction on Monday, prior to departing for Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah. In the meantime, JI vice-emir Liaqat Baloch has assumed the role of acting emir.

Sirajul Haq asserted that India has been complicit in the bloodshed of the people of Occupied Kashmir, citing its unilateral revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status five years ago, in violation of international and bilateral agreements.

CM calls for finding sustainable solution to financial matters of PSUs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti had underlined the need to find sustainable solution to the administrative and financial matters of the public sector universities.

In this regard, viable strategy would be prepared after consultation with the stakeholders.

The Chief Minister said that the concerned authorities would be issued directives to make payments of the salaries of the employees of universities.

However, in addition to this, effective system of

financial and administrative answerability would also be ensured in the universities.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the delegation of Joint Action Committee of University of Balochistan who called on him under leadership of Professor Kalimullah here on Monday.

During the course of meeting, the matters about nonpayment of the salaries and other related issues were discussed.

Also present on the occasion were members of the provincial assembly Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi and Ali Madad Jatak.

Ishaq Dar, Britain's FS discuss ways to further enhance bilateral relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Monday received a telephone call from Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs Lord David Cameron, and expressed resolve to enhance bilateral relations in diverse areas. "Today, I received a telephone call from Lord David Cameron, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of Great Britain," Ishaq Dar wrote on X (formerly Twitter).

During the conversation, they discussed bilateral relations and regional issues. They also resolved to continue working closely to further enhance strong bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, education, climate change & people-to-people contacts.

Meanwhile, according to a press release issued by the Foreign Office spokes-

person, the Foreign Minister, reiterating the importance of Pakistan-UK relationship said that Pakistan and the UK had longstanding, historic relations with multifaceted cooperation. The Foreign Minister emphasized the early conclusion of the Enhanced Strategic Partnership (ESP) agreement to take relations to the next level.

The foreign minister stressed on the need to enhance bilateral cooperation in trade and investment, people to people contacts and climate. He stressed on the need for early resumption of PIA flights between Pakistan and the UK which would further bolster linkages, particularly in view of the large Pakistani diaspora in the UK.

The two ministers also discussed important regional issues including Afghanistan and the situation in Gaza.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti along with MPA Sanjay Kumar and others cutting cake to mark celebrations of Holi at CM Secretariat.

Polio outbreak response campaign launches

ISLAMABAD (APP): A crucial polio campaign to immunize more than 8.8 million children under the age of five against the paralyzing poliovirus has begun in 26 districts from Monday.

This polio outbreak response campaign is being held in 11 districts of Balochistan, seven districts of Sindh and five districts of Punjab after the detection of polio cases in Dera Bugti and Chaman and the detection of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in sewage samples of several districts of these provinces.

Urging parents to vaccinate their children, Federal Secretary for Health Iftikhar Ali Shallwani said, "Protecting children from incurable polio is a top priority for the government, which is why in response to virus detections, we are deploying polio teams during Ramadan to vaccinate children and keep their immunity against polio high."

He added, "Poliovirus can leave your child para-

lyzed for life and it is critical for children to have the immunity to fight off infection."

He said, "I urge all parents in these districts where the virus has been found to open your door to vaccinators and ensure that your children receive two drops of this essential vaccine."

Dr Shahzad Baig, Coordinator for the National Emergency Operations Center for Polio Eradication, said that WPV1 has been detected in 71 environmental samples so far this year, mostly in Balochistan and Sindh, and has paralyzed two children in Balochistan. "This vaccination campaign is specifically being held in districts where there have been virus detections ahead of the high travel season of Eid to prevent any further spread of the virus as people travel for the holidays."

He said that the Polio Programme has a rapid response system in place and has already conducted two nationwide campaigns.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta and Administrator Quetta, Muhammad Hanza Shafiqat exchanging views with a delegation of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) led by Jehanzaib Khan during meeting held in Quetta.

Fostering parliamentary diplomacy; essential for world peace: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): While appreciating the IPU's efforts for peace and understanding across the globe, he said that upholding values of democracy, peace and the rule of law are essential for global growth and development. "Pakistan is a peaceful country that believes in dialogue for cooperation and understanding," he expressed while addressing the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva on "Parliamentary diplomacy: building bridges for peace and understanding". The Speaker said that fostering bilateral and joint partnerships through the Parliamentary Friendship Groups among parliaments of the world would strengthen the parliament-to-parliament contacts, said a press release issued here Monday.

During his speech, he also reiterated strong and unequivocal condemnation of the indiscriminate use of force by Israel and call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza.

"We have always and will continue to stand by our Palestinian brothers and sisters for the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination for a viable, secure, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital."



QUETTA: A representative delegation of Joint Action Committee University of Balochistan led by Prof. Kaleemullah Bareech meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

China says: PLA participation in Pak Day parade displays unique bonds

BEIJING (APP): The Guard of Honor of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) participation in the Pakistan Day military parade in Islamabad fully demonstrated the unique bonds between the two countries and contributed a colorful chapter of military-to-military relationship, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Monday.

At the invitation Pakistani military, a delegation of PLA Guard of Honor participated in the military parade in Islamabad, celebrating the 84th Pakistan Day. Lin Jian said during his regular briefing in response to a question raised by APP.

The participation of PLA contingent fully demonstrated the unique bonds between the two countries and contributed a colorful chapter of mil-to-mil relationship, he added.

Ahsan opens development work at Narowal University

NAROWAL (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal attended the foundation stone-laying ceremony of various schemes including roads, sewerage and water supply at the University of Narowal.

Member National Assembly (MNA) Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, Member National Assembly (MNA) Wajiha Akram Chaudhry, Provincial Minister for Religious and Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Rana Manan and former Chairman Municipal Committee Narowal Syed Azhar-ul-Hassan Jilani also attended it.

No leniency for those accused of releasing girls' objectionable photos: Islamabad High Court

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday observed that the people accused of sharing objectionable pictures of women with others and similar offences do not deserve any leniency. The remark came during the hearing of a plea seeking bail of a man, Muhammad Haseeb, who is accused of sharing objectionable pictures of a girl on social media site Facebook and her father and husband

on WhatsApp. The court rejected the bail plea, stating that such offences have become very common in the society for the reason that girls send "their objectionable pictures" to boys or friends when in a relationship, which are later shared on social platforms in case of a breakup. The court termed the sharing of private pictures a very heinous crime. "[...] as these pictures become stigma throughout the life of girls

and in many cases their family life has destroyed; the girls have also committed suicide, hence the accused committing such offences are not entitled for any leniency," the court stated in a written order. The case against Haseeb was registered at the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Cybercrime Reporting Centre, Islamabad, under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, alleging that the accused "disgraced and destroyed."

While mentioning the grim situation of violations of humans rights in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, he said that Kashmiris had been suffering the indignity and oppression over seven decades.

During his speech, he also reiterated strong and unequivocal condemnation of the indiscriminate use of force by Israel and call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza.



LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb.

Maryam vows to end economic woes jointly

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb discussed the country's economic challenges and vowed to pull Pakistan out of economic crisis through joint efforts.

M u h a j m e d Aurangzeb congratulated the Chief Minister on assuming charge of her office, and termed her election as country's first female Chief Minister as a great milestone in the democratic history of Pakistan, according to a handout issued here

CP of JUI candidate for against Langove: BHC issues notices to both parties to appear on next hearing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has issued notices to both parties on the constitutional petition of JUI-F candidate, Sardarzada Saeed Ahmed Langove for PB-36, Kalat.

The Judge of BHC, Mr. Justice Abdullah Baloch heard the petition filed against the candidate of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), Mir Ziaullah Langove.

The petitioner had raised objection on the notification of dated February 22, 2024 issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan under Section of Elec-

tion Act 2017, 98 (2).

Mir Ziaullah Langove was declared successful candidate from PB-36 Kalat. The petitioner Sardarzada Saeed Langove had levelled serious allegation of big scale irregularity in the election process.

The petitioner secured 10,654 votes from 85 out of 92 polling stations, as per the Form 47 issued by the concerned Returning Officer on 09.02.2024.

The Returning Officer issued another list from 47 polling stations on 11.02.2024 under which, Mir Ziaullah Langove was declared successful with 14,670 votes.



DERA BUGTI: MNA Mian Khan Bugti along with Coordinator EOC Syed Zahid Shah in inaugurating polio campaign. Deputy Commissioner Azhar Shahzad is also present.