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Addresses first meeting of the federal cabinet

Elite classes don't require subsidies, tax collection vital for national economy: PM

Says Allah Almighty had bestowed upon them the responsibility to serve the nation and reiterated to meet their expectations by striving day and night

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday regretted that elite classes in the country had monopoly over the 90 percent resources of the country and stressed that they did not deserve any subsidies. The prime minister underscored that they required to control the issue of tax evasion and power and gas thefts to ensure availability of maximum resources for the development of the country. He further said that

the government was ensuring all out efforts for the availability of daily commodities during the holy month of Ramazan at affordable prices and declared that no leniency in this regard would be tolerated.

Addressing the first meeting of the federal cabinet, the prime minister said that Allah Almighty had bestowed upon them the responsibility to serve the nation and reiterated to meet their expectations by striving day and night.

Highlighting the huge economic challenges, he said that the masses had given them the responsibility to address these serious issues and they were equally answerable to the people who had given them a mandate to form the government.

He urged the members of the cabinet to serve the nation and country with new fervor and commitment so that in the history, they could be remembered for delivering on their promises.

After February 8 general elections, the political parties received a split man-

date, the PML-N, PPP and the allied parties were given the mandate to form the government.

Now, this mandate should be respected which also required that they should concentrate their energies and move on the path of progress rapidly, he added.

The prime minister said that during their previous 16-month government, the people had witnessed their performance, adding that they saved the country from running into default.

The prime minister said when they assumed

the reigns of the previous government, they had two choices; either to sit as silent spectators or be counted, at that time they had decided to take responsibility of the country.

Then the interim government followed them but the economic situation in the country was stable and did not worsen, he opined.

The prime minister said that once more, they took the responsibility of steering the country out of the huge challenges and without wasting time, they should tread upon that path leading to destination.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari administering oath of office to members of Federal Cabinet at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was also present on the occasion.

CM directs to PDMA, district administration to remain alert in rain & snowfall situation

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), district administration and local bodies institutions to remain fully alert in the situation of rain and snowfall in the province.

The Chief Minister directed to all the administrative officers including Commissioner/Administrator and Deputy Commissioners to ensure their presence in the field.

He also directed to all Deputy Commissioners and Municipal heads to

take speedy measures for draining out of the rain water from the human settlements and localities in their respective areas.

In addition to this, the heavy machinery must be kept ready at the sites for restoration of the communication means in case of the blockage.

The Chief Minister also directed to remove the encroachments and hurdles created in the streams and nullahs so as to drain out the rain water from there.

Similarly, there should be quick response in case of any emerging situation while monitoring the whole situation from control room, adding he stressed.

He also stressed the

need to make the municipal services effective for draining out the rain water in the low lying areas.

He directed to keep a vigil on the electricity installations besides restoring the power system while mobilizing the staff of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO).

While on the other hand, the general public should also adopt precautionary measures in situation of rain, he advised.

They (general public) should also keep themselves away from the drain passages, muddy walls and constructions besides electricity installations, the Chief Minister stressed further.



ISLAMABAD: The Honourable Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr. Justice Qazi Faez Isa administering the oath of office to Honourable Mr. Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan, Chief Justice, High Court of Balochistan as Judge of the Supreme Court at the Supreme Court.

19-member federal cabinet takes oath

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Asif Ali Zardari on Monday administered oath of office to a 19-member Federal Cabinet at a ceremony here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The event began with the playing of the national anthem followed by recitation from the Holy Quran. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, leadership of mainstream political parties, parliamentarians and senior government officials attended the event. The cabinet members who took the oath included

Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Abdul Aleem Khan, Jam Kamal Khan, Engr. Amir Muqam, Sardar Awas Ahmad Khan Leghari, Attaullah Tarar, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Musadik Malik, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, and Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

Moon sighted, first Ramazan to begin from today

PESHAWAR (APP): The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad on Monday announced that the moon of holy month of Ramazan has been sighted at various nook and cranny of the country and the first of Ramazan, 1445 AH would fall on Tuesday, March 12.



Addressing a press conference, he said despite cloudy weather condition at various areas of the country, the committee had received solid testimonies of moon sighting from a number of areas.

Maulana Azad informed that the meeting witnessed the participation of esteemed members from both Central and Zonal Ruet-e-Hilal Committees, including Director General Syed Mushahid Hussain Khalid from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Ghulam Murtaza from the Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission, Dr Sardar Sarfaraz from the Pakistan Meteorological Department, and Zainul Abedin from the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Heavy rains lash various parts of Balochistan, Met office predicts more rains

GWADAR (INP): Heavy rains continued in Quetta, Gwadar, Chaman, and other parts of Balochistan during the last 24 hours, creating urban flooding like situation with reports of house collapsed in various incidents in the province.

According to details, heavy rains in Quetta, Gwadar, Turbat, Naushki, Pashin, Chaman and others areas in Balochistan have aggravated the woe of the resi-

dents and suspended normal life in the province. The rain left roads and streets flooded with water and submerged low-lying areas. Light rain was also reported in several areas of Karachi during the past 24 hours.

According to Met office, 21 millimetres of rainfall was recorded in Gwadar over the last 24 hours, 10mm in Turbat and 2mm in Ormara, Turbat and Jiwani.

Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan takes oath as judge of SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan has taken oath as judge of Supreme Court (SC).

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has administered oath to Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan.

The oath taking ceremony took place in SC.

SC judges, senior lawyers and court's staff attended the oath taking ceremony.

Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan has served as chief justice of Balochistan High Court (BHC). National Judicial Council (NJC) had recommended to make him judge of SC.

With the elevation of Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan, the number of judges of SC has reached 14.

Zardari presented guard of honour at Aiwan-e-Sadr

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Asif Ali Zardari was presented guard of honor at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad as he assumed office of the President of Pakistan Monday.

During the ceremony, the national anthem was played while smartly turned-out contingents of the Armed Forces of Pakistan presented him salute. The President inspected the guard of honor.

Later, the President Zardari was introduced with the staff of the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Wife of ANP chairman passes away

ISLAMABAD (Online): Wife of Awami National Party (ANP) chairman Asfand Yar Wali Khan has passed away.

President, Prime Minister, speaker National Assembly, chairman Senate and other political leaders have expressed condolence over the death of wife of ANP chairman.

Zahid Khan spokesperson ANP has confirmed the death of wife of ANP chairman.

President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday expressed condolence over the death of Awami National Party leader Asfand Yar Wali Khan.

"My sympathies and prayers go to the bereaved family," he said, according to a President House press release.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant peace to the departed soul and patience to the grieving family members to bear the loss with fortitude.



QUETTA: Justice Muhammad Ijaz Swati administering oath to Justice Hashim Khan Kakar as acting Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court

President Zardari, Tajik President reaffirm to further strength bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon on Monday reiterated their desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan in the areas of mutual interest.

Tajik President made a telephone call to President Asif Ali Zardari and extended his warmest felicitations to him on becoming the President of Pakistan, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Talking to his Tajik counterpart, President Asif Ali Zardari said that Pakistan highly valued its ties with the brotherly country of Tajikistan which were based on shared religion, culture and history.

He said that both countries needed to work together for further improving bilateral cooperation.

While appreciating Tajikistan's high potential in hydel resources, President Zardari expressed Pakistan's desire to work with Tajikistan in this important area for the mutual advantage of the two brotherly countries.

The president also exchanged greetings on the advent of the holy month of Ramazan and also felicitated the Tajik President on the upcoming Nowruz, Persian New Year celebrations.

The Tajik President also extended an invitation to President Asif Ali Zardari to visit Tajikistan.

President Zardari fondly recalled his earlier visits to Tajikistan and accepted the invitation.

PM says: Transforming Pak-Saudi ties into strategic, economic partnership govt's priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that his government's priority was to transform the time-tested Pakistan-Saudi Arabia ties into a mutually beneficial, strategic and economic partnership, with a focus on attracting Saudi investment for bankable projects in Pakistan.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Saudi Ambassador in Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy, who called on him, thanked Saudi authorities for expanding the scope of the "Road to Makkah" initiative, that would facilitate

Pakistani Hajj pilgrims. He thanked the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdul Aziz, and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, for their kind wishes on his re-election as prime minister. Given the special fraternal relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the prime minister said the Saudi ambassador was the first envoy he received after assumption of office.

Extending an invitation to the prime minister to visit Saudi Arabia, the ambassador assured him of the Saudi leadership's full support.

Justice Hashim Kakar sworn in as Acting Chief Justice BHC

Strictly directed to avoid any traditional protocol during his movement; acting CJ BHC issues first order after taking oath

Independent Report lawyers. Meanwhile the acting Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court (BHC), Mr Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar has issued first order after taking oath of his office and strictly directed to avoid any traditional protocol during his movement.

According to an official press release issued here by the High Court, the acting Chief Justice also directed to completely avoid hooter. Moreover, the traffic may continue to ply during his movement as per routine so that the general public may not suffer and cause inconvenience to them.

QUETTA: Justice Hashim Khan Kakar, on Monday took oath as Acting Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court. Justice Hashim was sworn-in after Chief Justice Balochistan High Court Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan was elevated as Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Justice BHC Muhammad Ejaz Swati administered oath to the acting Chief Justice also held at Court No. 1, High Court of Balochistan.

The ceremony was attended by Judges of the High Court of Balochistan, Registrar, High Court of Balochistan and renowned



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Saudi King greets Zardari on taking oath as President

ISLAMABAD (INP): Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz has congratulated Asif Ali Zardari on taking oath as President of Pakistan.

In an official message to the President, he wished him success, and further progress and prosperity to the people of Pakistan. The Saudi King also highlighted the depth of brotherly relations between the two countries and expressed the keenness to further develop these ties.

Time schedule of NA March 13 session changed

ISLAMABAD (Online): Time schedule of National Assembly (NA) session to be held on March 13 has been changed.

According to notification issued by NA Secretariat the NA session on March 13 will commence from 4 p.m instead of 2 p.m.

CM greets Muslim Ummah on beginning of Ramadanul Mubarak

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has greeted the Muslim Ummah on beginning of holy month of Ramadanul Mubarak and stressed that we have to make pledge to eliminate every kind of negative activities together that otherwise creates hurdles in development and prosperity of the country and nation besides the law and order.

In a felicitation message issued here on Monday, the Chief Minister said that the holy month of Ramadanul Mubarak is the best opportunity for everyone to start their lives afresh and that in a best manner.

Everyone should correct oneself as the fasting is

truly source to seek taqwa. He said that the objective of fasting is to make the human being obedient to the orders of Allah Almighty. The Chief Minister said that the fasting also plays basic role in promoting the positive thinking, brotherhood and mutual sense of feeling in the society besides enabling to face the extraordinary circumstances.

In addition to this, the fasting make us realize the hardships of underprivileged people and those deprived of the basic necessities. Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti urged the philanthropists to take special care of the labourers and poor segments of the society in the holy month.

China welcomes new Govt to carry forward traditional friendship: Spokesperson

BEIJING (INP): China attaches high importance to promote its relations with Pakistan and stands ready to jointly work to carry forward traditional friendship and advance practical cooperation between the two countries, a Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesperson said on Monday.

"We send our warm congratulations to Mr. Zardari on assumption as president," Wang Wenbin said in his regular briefing while commenting on oath-taking of Asif Ali Zardari as President of Pakistan.

The spokesperson re-

marked that President Xi Jinping has already sent a congratulatory message to President Zardari on his oath-taking as the 14th President of Pakistan. He reiterated that China attached high importance to promote its relations with Pakistan and stands ready to work with Pakistan to carry forward traditional friendship, advance practical cooperation in various fields and upgrade China Pakistan All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership to building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Caretaker debate

As the dust settles on the post-election process, there is increasing public discussion about the concept of caretaker governments, and their utility in Pakistan's political milieu.

Much of this talk has been sparked by the problematic performance of the interim set-up that oversaw last month's general elections. In a recent Senate debate, there were calls to do away with the system of caretakers, with lawmakers saying that it had no place in a parliamentary democracy.

Furthermore, according to some media reports, the PML-N and PPP have decided to jettison the caretaker system. It should be remembered that in the 2006 Charter of Democracy, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif had endorsed the idea of a "neutral caretaker government" to hold free and fair polls. Apparently, events in Pakistan's political history in the years since the Charter was signed have made both parties reconsider their positions.

There was no concept of a caretaker set-up conducting polls in the 1973 Constitution. The idea emerged after the debacle following the 1977 polls, which were widely seen as manipulated. Yet most caretaker governments in the country — with the exception of a few — have failed in their basic task of conducting fair polls accepted by all stakeholders. Criticism of the last caretaker government has been particularly acute, centring on the fact that the administration overstepped its bounds, and did not provide a level playing field. Elsewhere, few established democracies bring in caretaker set-ups; the incumbents go into 'caretaker mode', with certain restrictions imposed on them to ensure transparency. In our region, two examples stand out: Bangladesh had introduced the caretaker system, but later scrapped it. However, elections under the incumbents have hardly been free. On the other hand, India has held regular general elections, largely free of controversy, without an interim set-up, mainly because the Indian election commission is suitably empowered. The new parliament should extensively debate the proposal of eliminating the caretaker set-up before making a decision. While the system in vogue is clearly not delivering, perhaps the reason for this is the weakness of the ECP and its inability to hold polls that all parties consider above board.

While the ECP has been empowered on paper, on the ground its performance, particularly in last month's polls, has been disappointing.

The key to meaningful election reform lies with the politicians. They must build trust amongst each other and empower the ECP so that there are no major complaints about the polls' process. If they are able to pull this off in the current legislature's term, the next general elections may no longer require a caretaker set-up.

While there should be no constant constitutional flip-flopping, laws can certainly be amended to fix the major bugs in Pakistan's electoral system.

Leaving the past behind

Haris Zaki

On Feb 25, 2024, a video surfaced of an assistant sub-inspector from Rawalpindi beating a local man with a metal object in a crowded police station, for selling kites. This incident came on the heels of a video of a police officer assaulting an elderly woman in Taxila. Rawalpindi's top cop CPO Khalid Hamdani took notice of both incidents, and has since dismissed the concerned officers and ordered inquiries against them. It is laudable that these measures have been taken, but clearly more needs to be done to address the root causes of police excesses.

The 1857 War of Independence had left the British Raj scratching their heads about how they would quell any mutinous sentiments still smouldering in the hearts of the Indian people, and prevent any future uprisings. Revolution, after all, is bad for business, and the colonial overlords in London were loath to suffer any further threats to their rapacity in the subcontinent.

Using the British Royal Irish Constabulary as a blueprint, the Indian Imperial Police was founded in 1861, a decentralised force that existed within a provincial administrative structure. The high-ranking officers were almost entirely Europeans and British, with Indians recruited as the rank and file (largely from the working class). Its raison d'être was the exertion of tight control over the populace, by smothering dissent and enforcing Pax Britannica across the Indian subcontinent through often violent policing methods.

It may come as no

surprise that, similar to many of its institutions, Pakistan's policing system has had a hard time shedding its colonial legacy. It has proved resistant to any meaningful reform, despite numerous attempts over the decades to overhaul and revamp its structure befitting a modern democratic state. It is favourable for the ruling elite to preserve the anachronistic structure of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the NCHR (which have been given investigatory powers under the Act).

The use of torture to extract confessions and punish suspects is an everyday reality that many Pakistanis will face when in conflict with the law, depending on their class, gender and political affiliation. This is to be somewhat expected, given the lack of any meaningful forensic investigative capabilities and limited institutional accountability under the law. Deep-rooted systemic flaws have birthed an unfortunate culture of impunity; one which the half-measures taken in the past will not eradicate.

Research by Justice Project Pakistan into instances of torture by Faisalabad police in 2014 unveiled conclusive signs of torture in 1,426 out of 1,867 medico-legal certificates. When the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) launched an inquiry based on this research in 2018, they found that none of the officers responsible had been dismissed, and in some cases, had even received promotions.

In November 2022, Pakistan passed the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act. This historic development was a paradigm shift,

an unprecedented step towards concrete, human-rights based police reform. Over a year later, however, the Act has not been implemented. It is unclear whether there have been any investigations or prosecutions, given the absence of clear rules that operationalise the Act and define the roles and responsibilities of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the NCHR (which have been given investigatory powers under the Act).

We no longer exist as a colonial subject that must be made to walk in line with a lathi over our heads. Both Pakistan's citizens and its police force deserve to exist in a system that is founded on mutual trust and respect, not fear. What is needed more than ever are rules under the Act, which devise a system for independent investigation of incidents of police torture and an accessible complaint mechanism for the public. The government must allocate sufficient resources to, and build the capacity of, the FIA and the NCHR, and spread awareness among the general public about their rights and protections under the new legislation.

It is not this writer's intention to point any fingers at individual police officers or paint the entire force with one brush. Rather, the Rawalpindi incidents have underscored the need to change the way we police our society. Accountability is paramount if there is to be any trust between the people and their watchmen. It is about time CPO Hamdani's commendable measures became an institutionalised, legal norm. -- Courtesy Dawn

Facing the Shadow

Zarrar Khuhro

It has been over five months since Israel's genocidal war on Gaza and the Palestinian people began. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been massacred, and hundreds more die daily. Millions are homeless and at risk of death from starvation, exhaustion and disease. Every day, we hear of more horrors and there is no end in sight. There are sights that we can never un-see, images that have seared themselves in our minds — children reduced to skin and bones, people crushed flat under tanks.

Across the world, and in particular in the same Western capitals that bankroll this war and provide diplomatic cover for Israel, we have seen millions pour out onto the streets calling for a ceasefire and for a free Palestine. The actions taken have been many and varied. Pro-Israel businesses have been boycotted, and weapons manufacturers sending arms to Israel blocked.

But what 25-year-old Aaron Bushnell — an active-duty member of the US Air Force and a resident of San Antonio, Texas — did was something entirely. He recorded himself walking up to the gate of the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C. — dressed in full combat fatigues — and saying that he would not be complicit in the genocide supported by his country's government. He then poured petrol over himself and set himself on fire. With his dying breath, he screamed, "Free Palestine".

The morning before this act, he wrote on Facebook, "Many of us like to ask ourselves, 'What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or the Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I

do if my country was committing genocide?' The answer is, you're doing it. Right now."

This wasn't the first such attempt to draw attention to Palestine. In December last year, a protester set themselves on fire outside the Israeli consulate in Atlanta, Georgia, surviving with severe burns. However, there has been no follow-up on the story. We don't even know the protester's name or how they are because this story, like so many others that go against the prevailing pro-Israel narrative in the Western media, was buried.

Bushnell's actions bring to mind others who have given their lives in protest for a cause they believed in, or against an action they could not bring themselves to commit. People like Franz Jägerstätter, an Austrian Roman Catholic, who refused to serve in the Nazi army in World War II, saying it was against his moral and religious beliefs. Despite being sentenced to death, he refused to serve the genocidal regime that ruled him and was executed. Like Bushnell, he gave his life for a cause he believed in.

Bushnell also reminds us of Thich Quang Duc, a Buddhist monk who set himself on fire in 1963 in protest against the anti-Buddhist policies of the South Vietnamese government. His picture made history, and the man who took the picture, Malcolm Browne won the World Press Photo of the Year.

No less a person than John F. Kennedy said of the photograph, "No news picture in history has generated so much emotion around the world as that one." Will Bushnell's picture be treated the same way? Certainly not by the Western media. On the day of his death, no Western media network even

bothered to write in the headline which cause he had died for. NPR went a step further, saying that they could not 'verify' Bushnell's motives, despite him having quite literally spelled them out on camera. Newsweek's headline ran: "Bushnell death report reveals police call about 'mental distress'." The headline implies Bushnell had previously suffered from 'mental distress', inviting the reader to think of him as unstable and un-ba-lanced, but if you read the article, you find that the 'police call' in question is about him setting himself on fire.

Then there's the Washington Post, that hallowed torch-bearer of American 'journalism', whose headline reads: "Airman who set himself on fire grew up in religious compound, had anarchist past." What they do not tell you, however, is that the religious compound was that of the Church of the Transfiguration — a twisted pro-Israel, Christian Zionist cult that his own parents were members of. It was this indoctrination that Bushnell rebelled against but the headline makes it seem as though Bushnell was the fanatic.

As for 'anarchist', the term conjures up images of nihilistic terrorism in most minds but what Bushnell espoused was a life-affirming ideology; he spent hours every week helping homeless persons and marginalised communities, who are now paying tribute to this great man.

Will the spark he lit take hold? Will his sacrifice go in vain? We do not know. But we do know that Bushnell, like myself and many others, was a huge fan of Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. It is perhaps fitting, then, that he gave his life fighting the Shadow that threatens to consume us all. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

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

BEIJING (APP): China and Pakistan can engage in more comprehensive cooperation on joint marine energy exploration and development, and strengthen the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, said Yan Hongtao, a deputy to the National People's Congress and the general manager of China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Tianjin.

As the pioneer of offshore oil and gas resource exploration in

China, CNOOC has actively participated in the construction of the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". In a bid to enhance bilateral friendly cooperation in science, it also took part in the 91-day China-Pakistan joint marine geological survey in the Indian Ocean starting from December 2019.

During the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2023, the two heads of state hope that both sides will seize the 10th

anniversary of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as an opportunity to develop an "upgraded version" of the corridor focusing on growth, livelihood, innovation, greenness and openness. They aim to enhance cooperation in areas such as industrial parks, agriculture, mining, and new energy, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) framework, if we continue to conduct geological

surveys and research in Pakistani waters, we will undoubtedly establish a robust data foundation for delineating potential oil and gas areas, selecting favorable zones, evaluating resources, and analyzing the oil and gas potential in this region. It will promote our all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to a new level," said Yan.

Firstly, Yan suggested to promote China-Pakistan joint energy exploration and development cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding petroleum sector in Federal Capital.



Member (Power) WAPDA Jamil Akhtar watching various equipments of Power plants during his visit to Hydel Museum.

Minister Agriculture for responsible role of officers to develop agriculture sector

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Minister for Agriculture Muhammad Sajjad Monday said that the agriculture sector is very important and to make the province self-sufficient in agriculture and increase agricultural production urging all the officers of the department to play an active role in this regard.

He further said that

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa soil is very fertile and there was a vital need that we should pay special attention to the agricultural sector.

He expressed these views while presiding over an introductory meeting with the officers of Agriculture department.

Secretary Agriculture Javed Marwat, DGs of all wings of the department and relevant officers were also present on this occasion.

Gold rates stay constant at Rs230,200

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold in the local market remained constant Rs230,200 on Monday, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat and 10 gram 22 karat gold also remained unchanged at Rs197,360 and Rs180,913 respectively. The price of per tola and ten gram silver witnessed no change and was traded at Rs2,600 and Rs2,229.08 respectively.

WAPDA establishes Hydel museum at Tarbela

ISLAMABAD (APP): WAPDA has established the Hydel Museum at Tarbela 4th Extension Hydel Power Station comprising equipment of hydropower plants, aimed at preserving and portraying the tremendous heritage of WAPDA hydel power stations.

The vintage electro-mechanical equipment and parts of Jabban, Warsak, Tarbela, Renala, Kurrum Garhi and Chitral hydel power stations have been showcased in the museum, said a press release.

Besides, the model of Jabban Hydel Power Station (1937) and the structural model of Tarbela

Dam have also been displayed there.

Member (Power) WAPDA Jamil Akhtar inaugurated the WAPDA Hydel Museum. The inaugural ceremony was also attended by GM Hydel (Development) Ihsanullah, GM (Power) Tarbela Nasrum Min Allah, GM Tarbela Dam Project Anwar Shah, Chief Engineer (O&M) Tarbela 4th Extension Hydel Power Station Muhammad Tariq, Chief Engineer Tarbela 4th Extension Suresh Kumar, Chief Engineer (Power) Tarbela Naseem Khan, Principal, WAPDA Cadet College Tarbela Brig (Retd) Rafaqat Islam.

CCRI suggests measures to get bumper cotton crop

MULTAN (APP): Director Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) Dr. Muhammad Naveed Afzal said that selection of suitable land for cotton cultivation was very much important to achieve maximum yield. In a statement issued here, he observed, the fertile land, which efficiently absorbs

water and maintains moisture for extended periods, is ideal for cotton cultivation. Dr. Afzal stressed that not all types of land, such as clayey, sandy, or saline, are suitable for cotton cultivation, but with the expert advice of agricultural specialists, cotton can be grown on ridges within such lands.

Agriculture infrastructure handover ceremony held in district Mohmand

Independent Report

PESHAWAR: The USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (USAID-ERDA) on Monday formally handed over nine completed agriculture infrastructure schemes to the farming communities of tehsil Safi and Ambar, District Mohmand in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

The ceremony was attended by representatives from

USAID-ERDA, the local government, and community members.

These interventions irrigating 200 acres of barren land in tehsil Ambar and Safi of Mohmand District, will significantly improve the agricultural productivity of the region.

USAID-ERDA provided vegetable and maize seeds to the farmers community, further supporting the program's goal of enhancing agricultural productivity.

On this occasion, Shakil Ahmad, Additional Deputy Commissioner, District Mohmand said, the Government of Pakistan deeply appreciates the continued support of USAID-ERDA in developing our communities. These infrastructure projects will have a lasting positive impact on the lives of the farmers in Mohmand District. This project is a game-changer for our community, he said.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Seven ships, Eagle, Crested Eagle, Yongheng Ocean, Madison Eagle, Ullswater, Houyoushi Park and CMA CGM Nabucco scheduled to load/offload Rice, Steel coil, Palm oil, LPG, Chemicals and Containers, berthed at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Liquid Terminal, HF Terminal, Engro Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Mobilink Bank, BizB partner to empowering women micro-entrepreneurs

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

endeavours of female entrepreneurs in the growing e-commerce landscape, said a news release. Through this partnership, women micro-entrepreneurs under BizB's W-Empower will not only have access to a platform for buying and selling preloved apparel but will also enjoy the full range of features provided by the Dost App.

CM KP decides to include seminaries in solarization project

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Monday decided to include seminaries (Deeni Madaris) in the project regarding solarization of mosques and worship places in the province.

He directed the authorities concerned to take necessary steps for this purpose and to ensure that all the registered seminaries of settled and merged districts are included in the solarization project.

It is inevitable to convert these seminaries to solar energy for facilitating thousands of students studying and residing there. Under this initiative, solarization of 1000 to 1500 seminaries would be carried out across the

province. He was presiding over a meeting of Energy & Power Department held here at Chief Minister's House.

Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Anjad Ali Khan, Secretary Energy & Power Nisar Ahmad and other officials concerned attended the meeting. The meeting was briefed in details about the development projects, administrative and financial affairs and other related matters of the department.

The chief minister has directed the quarters concerned to ensure appointment of Chief Executive Officer and Executive Committee Members of Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) as

soon as possible. He termed the timely completion of ongoing Hydel Power Development Projects as of vital importance and directed the authorities concerned to ensure that the projects are completed within the stipulated timelines.

He further directed them to fix the priorities in this regard and added that revenue generating projects be funded on priority basis.

Meanwhile, chairing a meeting of the Local Government Department, the Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to release special funds for the payment of salaries and pensions to the employees of financially weak Tehsil Municipal Administrations.



FAISALABAD: A large number of women are waiting for registration at Salimi Chowk Al Fateh Sports Complex to get the Ramadan package.

Minister chairs meeting of health deptt; seeks details of Sehat card

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for health Qasim Ali Shah on Monday chaired the meeting of the department after assuming charge of the Minister office.

Upon the arrival, the Minister was welcomed by the Secretary and the DGs and heads of different programmes.

An introductory session was held with the staff of the Health Department.

Secretary Health Mehmood Aslam Wazir presented a detailed review

of the health department, an overview of all ongoing development projects and the current situation in the health department.

The Minister was also briefed about health card, ten MTIs and other independent institutions.

The health minister was told that the budget of the health department has exceeded Rs 207 billion, adding that more than Rs 88 billion have been spent so far under the heads of electricity and development projects.

The Minister sought details of Health Card Plus.

KP CM sets up complaint cell

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has established a complaint cell at CM Secretariat to address public issues.

According to CM Secretariat special staff has been deputed at the cell to receive complains, CM Secretariats on contact numbers: 091-9222461 or 091-9222464.

As per the directives of the CM, immediate action would be taken on citizens' complaints.

CM extends Ramadan greetings

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has extended Ramadan greetings to the people, emphasizing the significance of the blessed hours of Ramadan as a blessing from Allah Almighty. In her message, she urged everyone to remember the deprived and needy during this holy month and encouraged the affluent to share their blessings with the less fortunate for the pleasure of Allah Almighty. Maryam Nawaz Sharif also highlighted the importance of remembering oppressed Kashmiri and Palestinian brothers and sisters during Ramadan. She emphasized that fasting is not only a form of worship but also a means of training in moral discipline.

Governor Punjab greets Kyrgyz Honorary Consul

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman on Monday felicitated prominent businessman Meher Kashif Younis on his appointment as the honorary Consul of Kyrgyzstan in Lahore, including the territory of Punjab province.

He termed it as a recognition of remarkable achievements of Meher Kashif and his dedication to foster international trade relations. He also appreciated his commitment to serving as a bridge between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The governor emphasized the significance of such appointments in enhancing Pakistan's global outreach and promoting economic growth through collaboration with other countries. He hoped, as an honorary Consul, Meher Kashif Younis would play a pivotal role in strengthening bilateral ties, promoting trade, and facilitating cultural exchanges between the two countries, besides exchange of higher education delegations.

Meher's appointment signifies a testament to his expertise, leadership, and contribution to the business community, reflecting positively on Pakistan's diplomatic endeavors, he remarked.

The governor wished him success in further enhancing the relationship between two countries for mutual prosperity.



KARACHI: Senior journalist Mazhar Abbas speaking at a reference in memory of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists Workers President, Pervaiz Shaukat at Karachi Press Club.

CM Maryam has zero tolerance policy towards violence against Women: Uzma

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Information Minister Uzma Bukhari Monday said that the Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards gender based violence and that the government under her leadership has launched "Never Again" app aimed at enhancing women's safety.

Talking to a private news channel, she said that violence on women is a horrendous crime and strict action will be taken against the people involved in violence against women.

She said CM recognizes the important role women play in the development of society and growth of the nation.

She said on the chief minister's dedication to women's safety, stating the "Never Again" app would be a crucial tool in monitoring.



LAHORE: Secretary Punjab Assembly Chaudhary Amir Habib briefing Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan Mrs. Andrea Wicke during her visit to Punjab Assembly.

Riphah invites applications for faculty recruitment

FAISALABAD (APP): Riphah International University has invited applications for faculty recruitment at its Faisalabad campus. University spokesman said here on Monday that the Riphah University would recruit professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers in medical ultrasound technology, dental technology, operation theater technology, neurophysiology technology, optometry & orthoptics, aesthetic & cosmetics technology, project management, bio-medical engineering, architecture, education, nursing pharmacy, anesthesia technology, cardiology, DVM, poultry, engineering management, public health, management science, sports science & physical education, medical imaging technology.

Blood camp held at SNGPL office

SARGODHA (APP): A blood donation camp was organized with the collaboration of the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited and Ali Zeb Foundation here on Monday.

According to a press release issued by SNGPL office, the camp was held at the regional office under the supervision of Regional Manager Sargodha Region Binyameen Shahid.

Senior Engineer Hassan Raza Kazmi, Executive Engineer Usman Rashid, Executive Engineer Adnan Haider, Executive Engineer Farasat Ali, Senior Officer Umair Ali, Engineer Faheem Sultan, officers and employees donated blood.

The primary purpose of the camp was to maintain a blood reserve for patients suffering from diseases like Thalassemia, Hemophilia, and Leukemia, to meet their blood requirements.

Minister visits PTC office, reviews operational affairs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan conducted a visit to the Punjab Transport Company (PTC) head office here on Monday.

Transport Secretary Dr Javed Ahmed Qazi warmly welcomed the minister on his arrival.

Accompanied by Chairman Board of Directors Rais Abbas Zaidi, the minister inspected various sectors of the Punjab Transport Company.

Later, the minister also presided over a meeting where the in-charges of various departments gave a detailed briefing to the minister about their working. CEO Farrukh Abbas briefed about the Enforcement Wing and Route Permit.

The minister while issuing orders to improve the driving system, saying that records should be fully computerized as soon as possible, adding that the performance of public transport should be improved in other cities of Punjab.

International News

Putin hopes a Trump win would change course for Russia On Russian TV ahead of the election, there's only one program: Putin's

Russia's spy service accuses US of trying to meddle in presidential election

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Thousands of Russians braved the cold for hours earlier this month to honor the opposition politician Alexei Navalny after his funeral. They chanted anti-war slogans and covered his gravesite with so many flowers that it disappeared from view. It was one of the largest displays of defiance against President Vladimir Putin since he invaded Ukraine, and happened just weeks before an election he is all but assured to win. But Russians watching television saw none of it.

A leading state television channel opened with its host railing against the West and NATO. Another channel led with a segment extolling the virtues of domestically built streetcars. And there was the usual deferential coverage of Putin. Since coming to power almost 25 years ago, Putin has eliminated nearly all independent media and opposition voices in Russia — a process he ramped up after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The Kremlin's control over media is now absolute.

President Vladimir Putin has no doubt he will secure another term in Russia's election. The vote that leaves him in suspense, and could do more to change his policies, will occur eight months later in the United States.

Putin has publicly said he prefers US President Joe Biden to his predecessor and aspiring successor Donald Trump, a remark widely interpreted to mean exactly the opposite, as the former KGB man hopes his notoriety will boost the Republican mogul. Trump has voiced admiration for Putin, raged against NATO, the alliance founded to defend against Moscow, and boasted that he within one day would end the war in Ukraine, which Russia invaded two years ago. Trump supporters in Congress, seizing on an unrelated dispute over migration, have held up approval of \$60 billion in military aid for Ukraine, whose troops have faced the first battlefield setbacks in months as ammunition runs scarce.



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg gestures as he attends a press conference on the day of a flag-raising ceremony at NATO headquarters following the accession of Sweden to the alliance, in Brussels, Belgium.

China trying to 'normalise' military drills near Taiwan, island's top security official says

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Taiwan's top security official told parliament on Monday that China runs "joint combat readiness patrols" near the democratic island every 7-10 days on average, saying Chinese forces were trying to "normalise" drills near Taiwan. China has in recent years stepped up military activities near Taiwan, with almost daily incursions into the island's air defence identification zones and regular "combat readiness patrols" that included drills by its air and naval forces.

China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, over the island's strong objections.

Taiwan National Security Bureau Director-General Tsai Ming-yen said Beijing usually dispatches around 10 warplanes and 3 to 4 naval ships on joint patrols near Taiwan, calling them part of a "multi-front" effort that also includes economic coercions and misinformation campaign to pressure the island.

"They are trying to normalise their military activities," Tsai said, adding that the patrols were occasionally timed to coincide with diplomatic events such as visits to the island by foreign lawmakers.

Tsai said that Taipei had "close discussions" with international allies on whether a Chinese invasion is imminent and that tensions across the Taiwan Strait have not escalated sharply. "We do not see any signal of a war in the Taiwan Strait breaking out," Tsai said.

Palestinians prepare for Ramazan in the shadow of Gaza war

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Palestinians prepared for Ramazan in a sombre mood with heightened security measures by Israeli police and the spectre of war and hunger in Gaza overshadowing the normally festive Muslim holy month as talks to secure a ceasefire stalled.

Thousands of police have been deployed around the narrow streets of the Old City in Jerusalem, where tens of thousands of worshippers are expected every day at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, one of the holiest sites in Islam.

The area, considered the most sacred place by Jews who know it as Temple Mount, has been a longstanding flashpoint for trouble and was one of the starting points of the last war in 2021 between Israel and Hamas, the militant movement that controls Gaza.

That 10-day conflict has been dwarfed by the current war, which is now in its sixth month. It began on Oct 7 when thousands of Hamas fighters stormed into Israel, killing some 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's relentless campaign in Gaza has caused increasing alarm across the world as the growing risk of famine threatens to add to a death toll that has already passed 31,000.

In a Ramadan message to Muslims at home and abroad, US President Joe Biden pledged on Sunday (Mar 10) to continue to push for humanitarian aid to Gaza.

China's congress ends with a show of unity behind Xi's vision for national greatness

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's national legislature wrapped up its annual session Monday with the usual show of near-unanimous support for plans designed to carry out ruling Communist Party leader Xi Jinping's vision for the nation.

The weeklong event, replete with meetings carefully scripted to allow no surprises, has highlighted how China's politics have become ever more calibrated to elevate Xi.

Monday's agenda lacked the usual closing news conference by the premier, the party's No. 2 leader. The news conference has been held most years since 1988 and was the one time when journalists could directly question a top Chinese leader.

The decision to scrap it emphasizes Premier Li Qiang's relatively weak status. His predecessors played a much larger role in leading key economic policies such as modernizing state companies, coping with economic crises and leading housing reforms that transformed China into a nation of homeowners.

The nearly 3,000-member National People's Congress approved a revised State Council law that directs China's version of the cabinet to follow Xi's vision. The vote was 2,883 to eight, with nine abstentions. Other measures passed by similarly wide margins. The most nays were recorded for the annual report of the supreme court, which was approved by a 2,834 to 44 vote.

In brief closing remarks, Zhao Leji, the legislature's top official, urged the people to unite more closely under the Communist Party's leadership "with comrade Xi Jinping at its core."

The party leaders who run the State Council used to have a much freer hand in setting economic policy. Neil Thomas, a Chinese politics fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute, said in an emailed comment.



Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi speaks during a joint press conference with Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, the Vatican Secretary for Relations with States, in Amman, Jordan.

Blinken will attend an urgent meeting with Caribbean leaders as Haiti's violent crisis grows

Monitoring Desk
KINGSTON: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is scheduled to meet Monday with Caribbean leaders in Jamaica as part of an urgent push to solve Haiti's spiraling crisis, while pressure grows on Prime Minister Ariel Henry to resign or agree to a transitional council.

Henry, locked out of his own country after surging violence at home, is expected to attend the closed-door meeting.

It was organized by members of a regional trade bloc known as Caricom who for months have pressed for a transitional government in Haiti as protests demanded Henry's resignation.

India moves before election to implement citizenship law opposed by Muslims

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India announced rules on Monday to implement a 2019 citizenship law that critics call anti-Muslim, weeks before Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks a rare third term for his Hindu nationalist government. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) grants Indian nationality to Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians who fled to Hindu-majority India from Muslim-majority Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan before December 31, 2014. Modi's government had not crafted implementation rules for the law after protests and sectarian violence broke out in New Delhi and elsewhere within weeks of the law's December 2019 enactment. Scores were killed and hundreds injured during days of clashes.

US military airlifts embassy personnel from Haiti, bolsters security

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US military said on Sunday it has carried out an operation in Haiti to airlift non-essential embassy personnel from the country and added US forces to bolster embassy security, as the Caribbean nation reels under a state of emergency.

The operation was the latest sign of Haiti's troubles as gang violence threatens to bring down the government and has led thousands to flee their homes. "This airlift of personnel into and out of the embassy is consistent with our standard practice for embassy security augmentation worldwide, and no Haitians were on board the military aircraft," the US military's Southern Command said in a statement. The European Union's delegation in Haiti has temporarily closed its offices and reduced its presence in the country to the minimum, according to a post on social media X, citing security concerns.

Military aircraft from 5 countries drop aid over Gaza

Monitoring Desk
AMMAN: Military planes parachuted aid over Gaza on Sunday, an AFP photographer said, the latest airdrop over the besieged territory's north where famine looms more than five months into the Israel-Hamas war. The photographer, on board a Jordanian military plane, saw hundreds of Palestinians rushing to receive the falling pallets of basic supplies. The Jordanian army said in a statement that US, French, Belgian and Egyptian planes also participated in the relief operation.

President stresses upon empathy for vulnerable sections of society during Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed upon realizing the plight of poor, orphans, destitute and vulnerable segments of society during the holy month of Ramadan by extending all possible support to them.

He also appealed to the well-to-do and prosperous people to contribute towards this noble cause by giving away Zakat and alms and support these strata of society with financial sup-

port and continue this kind gesture throughout the year.

The president, in a message on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan 1445 Hijrah, also urged the international community and the Muslim Ummah to help the oppressed Palestinians and ensure immediate ceasefire and end to their genocide. He observed that the holy month brought with it message of sympathy, affection, sacrifice, brotherhood and coopera-

tion. He also extended his felicitation to the Pakistani nation and the Muslims across the world on the arrival of holy and blessed month, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Monday.

The president observed that the holy month of Ramadan provided them opportunities to realize the real spirit of the holy month. The Muslims follow the commands of Allah Almighty by maintaining

piety with regular praying and obeying which helped them to earn blessings and absolve them of their sins.

He also referred to the Quranic verses which had explained the reasons behind keeping fasts which also saved a faithful from falsehood, use of foul language, cheating, hoarding, adulteration in food stuff and other sins.

The president also prayed for the progress and prosperity of the country.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs inaugural meeting of the Federal Cabinet.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari inspecting the Guard of Honour, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Polling for Senate's 48 vacant seats on April 2

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Elections Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has announced that polling for the 48 vacant seats in the upper house of parliament will take place across the four provinces on April 2.

Candidates interested in contesting the elections must obtain nomination papers from the Election Commission headquarters and provincial election commissioners of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa starting Monday.

Nomination papers can be deposited with the relevant returning officers on March 15 and 16. The ECP will issue the schedule on March 14.

According to ECP, the six-year term of the 52 senators elected in 2018 set to end on March 12, 2024. Additionally, with the merger of erstwhile FATA into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the 25th Constitutional Amendment, the

seats for four senators ceased to exist. As a result, the total number of senators to be elected has been reduced to 48 after the elimination of the four FATA seats. The ECP announced that elections will be held for seven general seats, two seats reserved for women, two for scholars/technocrats, and one non-Muslim seat in Punjab.

In Sindh, there will also be elections for seven general seats, two seats reserved for women, two for scholars/technocrats, and one non-Muslim seat.

In addition to this, lawmakers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assembly would elect members against seven general seats, two women and two seats for technocrats, including Ulema. The lawmakers from Balochistan assembly would elect members against seven general seats, two women and two seats for technocrats, including Ulema.

Air Chief calls on PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal, Zaher Ahmad Babar Sidhu on Monday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here.

The Air Chief congratulated the prime minister on assuming the office, a PM Office press release said.

In the meeting, they discussed the professional matters of the Pakistan Air Force.

Bilawal extends warm wishes to Muslim on Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari extended warm wishes and congratulations to the entire Muslim Ummah, including the Pakistani nation, as they embark on the sacred journey of the holy month of Ramadan.

According to a press release from the Media Cell Bilawal House, he emphasized that the sacred month of Ramadan is a time for introspection, self-discipline, and compassion.

He expressed his earnest hope that the values of Ramadan will illuminate our path towards progress, fostering a nation characterized by peace, prosperity, and inclusive development.

Ramadan sasta bazaar set up in Pishin city

QUETTA: A sasta bazaar was set up to provide relief to the general public during holy month of Ramadan in Pishin on Monday.

The sasta bazaar has been established by Deputy Commissioner Pishin, Captain (Retd) Jumma Dad Khan Mandokhail on special directives of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan.

The Deputy Commissioner Pishin inaugurated the sasta bazaar. He visited the stalls setup in the sasta bazaar and checked the prices of different items. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner said that the sasta bazaar would remain continued till the end of Ramadan.

IHC permits Firdous to meet PTI founder

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has granted permission to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) core committee member Firdous Shamim Naqvi to meet party founder at Adiala Jail, Justice Samman Riffat Imtiaz on Monday heard plea of Firdous Shamim seeking permission to meet the PTI founder. Defense Counsel Babar Awan argued before the court that Firdous Shamim, being a member of the core committee of PTI, was deliberately not allowed to meet the PTI founder by the jail administration.

PM directs uninterrupted gas, power supply during Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed for ensuring uninterrupted gas and power supply to the consumers during the holy month of Ramadan.

He also directed for provision of every possible facilities to the private sector and ensure protection of the rights of the consumers especially the vulnerable segments of the society.

He also asked for taking steps for promotion of global investment in exploration of Tight Gas and undersea oil and gas reserves, regretting that Pakistan's maritime area was huge in size when compared with Balochistan province but no steps were taken to explore its hidden natural resources.

The meeting was attended by Senators Ishaq Dar and Dr Musadik Malik, Sheza Fatima Khawaja, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Jahanzeb Khan, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ali Parvaiz Malik and relevant senior officers.

Addressing the participants, he said that the government was not meant for doing businesses rather its responsibility was to extend all kind of facilities to the private sector and ensure protection of the rights of the consumers especially the vulnerable segments of the society.

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Emphasizing to enhance the petroleum refining capacity of the country, he sought the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to do away with the circular debt of oil and gas sectors and work out a durable solution to the issue.

He also instructed to reduce the gas sector losses through smart metering and identify and take strict action against the thieves of gas and oil.

"I will not allow any more wastage of the people's hard-earned money and the loss to the national exchequer," the prime minister remarked.

He instructed strict monitoring of the LPG sector to ensure provision of the commodity to the consumers at low price.

He stressed upon exploration of undersea natural resources including oil and gas reserves and their full utilization was among the top priorities of the government.

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British Govt announces \$150m for protection of Muslim communities

LONDON (Online): British government has announced 150 million dollars for protection of Muslim communities in the country against Islamophobia.

The funding will be used to protect mosques, Muslim faith schools and other community centers.

Home Secretary James Cleverly said anti-Muslim hatred has absolutely no place in our country.

A group which monitors anti-Muslim incidents said there has been a 335 percent increase in cases of Islamophobia since October 7 last year.

Drainage system restored after heavy rain in Quetta city, Commissioner

QUETTA: The drainage system has been restored after rain in the main city area including Imdad Chowk and adjacent areas on Monday.

The Commissioner having additional charge of Metropolitan Corporation personally supervised the draining of rain and sewerage water and reviewed the activities in this regard.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner directed to the officers of Metropolitan Corporation to make coordinated efforts for restoration of municipal services all over the city.

He also announced to cancel leaves of all staff of the Corporation due to the extraordinary situation of rains.

Therefore, presence of the staff must be ensured in all zones.

He said that the staff of corporation can seek administrative assistance from the office of Deputy Commissioner Quetta.

PPP plans to set up presidential guest house in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has announced intentions to set up a presidential guest house in Lahore following the anticipated election of Asif Ali Zardari as President. This decision, as reported by media sources, aims to bolster the party's presence in Punjab. Once established, the presidential guest house will serve as a hub for PPP leaders and dignitaries, providing a venue for gatherings and meetings. It is expected that President Asif Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto will soon visit Lahore to meet with party leaders. Sources within the party reveal that invitations will also be extended to party officials for dinner at Bilawal House Lahore. Discussions during these gatherings will include plans for organizational restructuring in Lahore and Punjab, particularly in light of former president Chaudhry Aslam Gul's resignation from the party presidency.

China disaster warning technology brings benefits to Pak

BEIJING (APP): Zhang Xingying, a National CPPCC Committee Member and Deputy Director of the Science and Climate Change Department at the China Meteorological Administration, put forth a proposal to enhance early warning capabilities and effectively respond to climate change.

"Meteorology knows no borders and can make the greatest contribution along the Belt and Road," he stated during this year's Two Sessions, the annual meetings of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

His proposal advocates for the establishment of an Asian Disaster Warning Center and Partnership Alliance, with a focus on supporting the development of early warning systems in countries along the Belt and Road Initiative. China aims to contribute its expertise and solutions in weather forecasting, climate prediction, disaster identification, risk assessment and system development, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Over the years, China has provided meteorological disaster warning services to 129 developing countries. "We have been actively assisting more countries, particularly small island nations, in establishing disaster warning systems to benefit people worldwide," said Zhang Xingying. China's expertise in disaster warning technology has also brought significant benefits to Pakistan. Since the establishment of the China Meteorological Administration's satellite broadcasting system in Bangladesh in 2011, its coverage has expanded to most parts of the Asia-Pacific and Africa. The system provides 392 types of data in 12 categories. During the floods caused by heavy rainfall in Pakistan in 2022, the meteorological data provided by this system proved crucial in addressing the immediate crisis.

Anwar Maqsood denies reports of abduction and torture

LAHORE (INP): Anwar Maqsood, Pakistan's legendary scriptwriter, host, satirist, and humorist, has rejected the reports that he was abducted, tortured, and threatened by unknown men a few days ago.

Several social media posts had surfaced in recent days, asserting that Maqsood had been subjected to abduction and mistreatment, sparking concerns among his fans and followers.

Reacting to the reports, the renowned artist mentioned that the news circulating on social media regarding him is unfounded.

Describing it as "fake news," Maqsood advised his fans to disregard the baseless claims. He clarified that he does not have any social media accounts, nor does he follow social media.

The screenwriter also shared that people informed him about the reports through phone calls.

Gorgage greets Zardari for winning president election

QUETTA (APP): Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Ubaidullah Gorgage on Monday facilitated Asif Zardari and termed it a proof of successful democratic process in the country.

In his statement issued here, while congratulating Asif Ali Zardari on being elected as the President of Pakistan for the second time with huge majority, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) said that the President Zardari getting votes from all provinces including Balochistan was a sign that he was a symbol of federalism.

He said that National Assembly, Senate and elected members of the four provinces have expressed their confidence on him.

He said that it is the continuation of democratic values and the victory of democracy, the coalition parties will work together for the development and prosperity of Pakistan, he said. He said that after the arrival of President Zardari in the President's House, a new era of supremacy of constitutional institutions and Parliament would begin in the country.

Governor Balochistan grieved over death of wife of Asfandiyar

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of central leader of Awami National Party (ANP) and senior politician, Asfandiyar Wali Khan. In a condolence statement issued here on Monday, the Governor prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul into its eternal peace and give enough strength and patience to the bereaved family.

Govt stresses uninterrupted gas, power supply during Ramadan

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