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PM Shahbaz calls for strengthening Pak-Saudi defense, economic ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prince Khalid Bin Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here at the Prime Minister House on Saturday and discussed in detail bilateral matters, regional peace, security and situation in the region.



ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee along with Tri-Services Chiefs at Pakistan Day Parade

Pakistan not to compromise its sovereignty, tolerate any destabilizing efforts: President

Says Pakistan is a peace-loving country and responsible nuclear state that wants relations with all its neighbours.

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday said that Pakistan was a peace-loving and responsible nuclear state but it would neither make any compromise on its sovereignty nor would tolerate any efforts of terrorists or any group aimed at destabilising it.

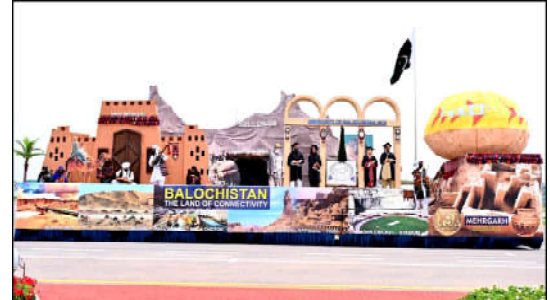
Sharif, federal cabinet members, services chiefs, diplomats, notables from different walks of life and a huge number of citizens attended the ceremony.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Defense of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Saud calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

Nation celebrates Pakistan Day with national zeal and zest

ISLAMABAD (INP): Nation is celebrating Pakistan Day today with a renewed pledge and commitment to transform the country into a true Islamic welfare state as per the ideology of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and ensure its progress, prosperity and a strong defence.



ISLAMABAD: The float of Balochistan Province participates in Pakistan Day 2024 parade ceremony, at Shakarparian Parade Ground

Tarar urges devotion to build an ideal, strong, prosperous Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Saturday emphasized the collective efforts to transform Pakistan into an ideal, strong and prosperous nation.

PM, FM strongly condemn Moscow terror attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Saturday strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Moscow, Russia, last night which resulted in loss of many lives and injuries to several others.



QUETTA: Acting Governor Balochistan Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai conferring Presidential Awards and Tamgha Imtiaz among the personalities for their services

Investiture ceremony held at Governor House, 12 personalities conferred prestigious civil awards

QUETTA: The investiture ceremony was held at the Governor House on Saturday. The acting Governor Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai conferred the prestigious Presidential awards on prominent personalities in recognition of the remarkable services in different sectors.

Governor calls for making joint efforts for stability and development of country

QUETTA: The acting Governor Balochistan, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai has called for making joint conscious efforts for stability, survival and development of the country.

CM Bugti participates in Pak Day national ceremony; greets whole nation

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti participated in the national ceremony held marking Pakistan Day in Islamabad on Saturday.

Saudi Defence Minister thanks COAS for inviting at Pakistan Day Parade

RAWALPINDI (APP): Minister of Defence, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on Saturday attended the Pakistan Day Parade



and thanked Army Chief, General Syed Asim Munir for inviting him as Guest of Honour at the occasion. The Minister of Defence of Saudi Arabia received a warm welcome on his arrival at Noor Khan Air Base specially participated in the Joint Services Pakistan Day Parade of the Armed Forces as Guest of Honour, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

After the witnessing the Parade, Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud met the Army Chief. In the meeting, matters of mutual interest, promotion of bilateral relations and increasing cooperation in various fields, especially defence were discussed.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan NASR missile contingent participate in Pakistan Day 2024 parade march past ceremony, at Shakarparian Parade Ground.

Constitution of steering committee to revamp country's economy

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's decision to constitute various committees with an aim to revamp economy is a positive step to boost country's economic condition.



President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Minister of Defense of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Saud viewing the flypast of jets during the Pakistan Day Parade ceremony, at Shakarparian Parade Ground, Islamabad



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh offers fetea at the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on the occasion of Pakistan Day celebrations.

President confers civil awards on Pakistanis, foreign nationals on Pakistan Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday conferred Pakistan's highest civil awards on a number of citizens of Pakistan as well as foreign nationals in recognition of their distinction, excellence, contributions and show of valour in different fields.

The awards were conferred in an investiture ceremony held at the Aitwan-e-Sadr which was attended by ministers, members of the diplomatic corps and family members of the recipients of the awards.

Following were the recipients of Nishan-e-Imtiaz:-

Muhammad Hafeez Qureshi (late) (nuclear science), Ifikhar Hussain Arif (literature poetry), Islahuddin Siddiqui (hockey), Syed Qaim Ali Shah (public service), Raja Muhammad Zafarul Haq (public service), Dr Shamshad Akhtar (public service), Air Marshal (ret'd) Najib Akhtar (public service).

Hilal-e-Imtiaz:- Brig. Syed Sarfraz Ali (Late) Strategic Planning & Development, Prof. Dr. Shahid Mahmood Baig (Science), Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed (Education), Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan (Education), Prof.

Dr. Muhammad Umar (Education/ Medical Sciences), Rahat Ali Khan Arts (Qawwali/ Singing), Mohammad Ahmed Shah Arts (Culture), Mahmood Ahmed Tahir Bhatti (Film Direction & Fashion Designing), Muhammad Anwar Masood Literature (Poetry), Zahid Malik (Late) (Journalism), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib (Social Services), Ahmad Irfan Aslam (Public Service), Raja Naem Akbar (Public Service), Lt. Gen. @ Muhammad Akram Khan (Public Service), Brig. Atif Rafique (Public Service), Dr. Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan (Public Service), Syed Tariq Fatemi (Public Service), Tariq Bajwa (Public Service), Tariq Mahmood Pasha (Public Service), Shahid Khan (Public Service), Sibtain Fazal Haleem (Public Service), Capt. @ Zahid Saeed (Public Service), Zahid Akhtar Zaman (Public Service), Mufti Abdul Shakoor (late) (Public Service), Nasir Mahmood Khosa (Public Service), Javaid Aslam (Public Service), Fawad Hasan Fawad (Public Service), Dr. Usman Anwar (Public Service), Prof. Dr. Adil Najam (Education), Bilal Siddique Kahmyana, Tanweer Ahmed

HILAL-E-QUAID-E-AZAM:-

Sultan Bin Abdul Rehman, Khalifa Bin Jassim Al-Kuwari, Yong Ye, Knut Ostby, Philippe Steinmetz, Dr. Sebastian Paust, Michal Rossman and Samantha Power.

SITARA-E-SHUJAAT
Tariq Mahmood (Gallantry), Muhammad Amir Nascem (Gallantry), Majid Saleem Malik (Gallantry), Akhtar Hayat Khan (Gal-

lanty), Lt. Cdr. @ Muqaddas Haider (Gallantry), Muhammad Younas (Shaheed), Nizam Ullah (Shaheed), RaHat Saleem (Shaheed), Ghulam Abbas Laghari (Shaheed), Abdul Latif Nok (Shaheed), Muhammad Saeed Ahmed (Shaheed), Ajmal Masih (Late), Muhammad Ramzan (Shaheed), Shams Ullah (Shaheed), Muhammad Sohrab (Shaheed) Gallantry, Asad Ullah Khan (Shaheed), Israr Muhammad, Zia Ullah Khan, Mir Zubair Mahmood and Muhammad Adnan.

Hilal-e-Shujaat:- Mushtaq Ahmed Sukehra (gallantry), Sitara-e-Imtiaz:- Shama Hafeez, Qari

Hafiz Buzurg Shah Al Azhari, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhutta, Faakhir Mehmood, Jharna Basak Shabnam, Naila Kiani, Shoab Anwar Malik, Fahad Haroon, Muhammad Sarwar Gondal, Dr Kazim Niaz, Muhammad Sulah Ahmed Foruqi, Farhan Faruqi, Dr Muhammad Farooque Hassan, Duraid Qureshi, Yasir Malik and Abdul Quddoes Bizenjo.

President Pride of Performance:- Farrah Mahmood Rana, Suhail Sarwar Sultan Warraich, Lt. Gen Ahsan Gulrez and Lt Col. Junaid Ali Zulfiqar.

Sitara-e-Quaid-e-Azam:- Husein EF Kavazovich, Salma Salman Zahid.



Celebrating Pakistan Day with traditional zeal and fervor, Ambassador of Pakistan to Turkey Dr. Yousef Junaid, hoisted the flag to the tune of national anthem in the presence of distinguished guests and Pakistani community in Ankara

Pakistan not to compromise...

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to protect national security and sovereignty.

The president's address encompassed domestic subjects like recent elections, efforts against terrorism, economic challenges, and the establishment of SIFC, and the regional situation including the human rights abuses in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir as well as Gaza.

He told the gathering that the Kashmir dispute was the main reason for instability in the region as the people of Kashmir had been demanding their self-determination rights for the last 76 years.

Condemning the Indian brutalities and the human rights violations in Kashmir, President Zardari urged the international community to play its role in the implementation of the UN Security resolution. He also assured the Kashmiris that the people of Pakistan would continue standing by them till they were given their right to self-determination.

Coming to the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, he appealed to the international community to take measures to ensure that killings of women and children was stopped and a ceasefire was declared, besides establishing a humanitarian corridor.

The president also re-

iterated Pakistan's continued support for the Palestinian people till the resolution of the issue as per their aspirations.

Recounting the country's journey marked with many ups and downs, he said despite numerous challenges, the Pakistani nation achieved distinctions in the fields of defense, agriculture and technology, besides its internationally recognised contribution to fighting against terrorism.

Highlighting the current social, political and economic challenges facing the country, he said following the successful holding of elections and the formation of a democratic government, it was the responsibility of all to seek solutions to all the issues.

"I believe that the way we faced the difficulties in the past, can steer the country out of the pervading problems even today. The Pakistani nation is hardworking and intelligent. The youth, using their mental capabilities, can guarantee a bright future," he remarked.

President Zardari told the ceremony that the Special Investment Facilitation Council had been formed to attract investment in agriculture, livestock, mining, Information Technology and energy sectors.

He also requested all the political parties to set aside their political interests and work unitedly to bring in country's prosperity.

Ex-FS, PCB chairman

Shaharyar Khan passes away at 89

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Foreign Secretary and Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board Shaharyar Khan passed away on Saturday in Lahore after protracted illness. He was 89.

Born in 1934, late Shaharyar Khan had joined the Foreign Service in 1957 and served till his retirement as foreign secretary in 1994.

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, in a statement condoled over Khan's death who "served Pakistan with great distinction both as a diplomat and Chairman PCB."

"He will be greatly missed," Dar said and prayed to Allah to grant him a higher place in Jannah and solace to his family and friends.

Foreign Office paid tribute to the ex-ambassador and high commissioner and honoured his "monumental services in protecting Pakistan's diplomatic interests".

In a post on X, Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Qazi said he was deeply saddened by Khan's passing and lauded him as "one of Pakistan's finest diplomats."

Qazi said Khan left behind a "rich legacy of accomplishment and protecting and promoting Pakistan's interests".

He had earlier served as Ambassador to Jordan and France as well as High Commissioner to London.

Another slot of chairman PC goes to federal minister Aleem

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan has been allocated another slot in coalition government amid the reports that he has been appointed as chairman of Privatization Commission (PC).

The appointment order will take effect immediately.

Establishment division has issued notification with the approval of the Prime Minister.

Minister for privatization has already said the entities running in loss are eroding the economy like termite. In the prevailing situation 15 to 20 percent entities should be privatized forthwith.

Privatization of loss incurring entities is not a problem to convince some one. It is question of survival of national economy. We will have to decide the fate of loss incurring entities immediately.

PM Shahbaz calls for...

Continued from page 1

highly regarded.

He said the people of Pakistan had a special place in their hearts for the Saudi royal family. While mentioning, Special Investment Facilitation Council, the Prime Minister said one window operation was created for the investors through the establishment of the council, which would facilitate business activities and investment.

He said immense opportunities were present in Pakistan in different fields including agriculture, information technology and mining.

He underlined the need for further cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in the fields of defence and economy.

The PM reiterated his earlier invitation and said Pakistan was waiting to welcome the visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

The Saudi Defence Minister felicitated the Prime Minister on assuming his office and expressed best wishes for him.

He thanked Pakistan for inviting him as a special guest for Pakistan Day parade and said he had the opportunity to witness the best capabilities of armed forces of Pakistan during the parade.

He said the recent visit of Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir to Saudi Arabia was very important and fruitful to further promote defence relations of the two countries.

Pakistan Day celebrated across Balochistan



ABU DHABI: Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to the United Arab Emirates hoisting the national flag during the National Day event at the Embassy

Armed Forces show military prowess

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Armed Forces on Saturday demonstrated military prowess marking the 85th Pakistan Day on Saturday in the grand joint services parade witnessed by Defence Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Khalid Bin Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud as the guest of honour and members of the diplomatic corps of the friendly countries.

The theme for this year's Pakistan Day Parade was "Long Live Pakistan" that included foreign military contingents of friendly countries of China and Azerbaijan with the latter participating for the first time in the National Day Parade. The Commander in Chief of the Country, President Asif Ali Zardari was the chief guest on the occasion.

The morning began with special prayers for the country and a 31-Gun salute in the federal capital and 21-Gun salute in all the provincial capitals.

The Rangers Exhibition Drill Squad (REDS) using 303 silver coated rifles commenced the parade with an enthralling performance followed by the drum solos performed by military bands.

The flag bearing contingent entered the parade venue marching in a unique style practically depicting the Quaid's motto of faith, unity, and discipline.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif entered the Parade venue, escorted by the smartly turned-out Core of Military Police contingent led by Major Qasim. The military welcoming committee welcomed the Prime Minister. The trumpeters ushered the arrival of the President into the Parade Venue who was mounted in the traditional Presidential Chariot escorted by the President's Guards riding brilliant black, white and brown horses holding spears and swords by its Commandant Colonel Ayaz Ahmed at the left and Adjutant Major Shah Zaman Ali on the right of the Chariot.

President Guards have the honour to be the security contingent of the President, whereas Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah presented them the national flag by his hand which is hoisting at the Quarter Guard of the Battalion. The President Body Guard is the senior most unit of the Armoured Corps, and has this unique feather in its cap of presenting Guard of Honour to the Father of the Nation and all the Heads of the country so far. The Welcome Committee welcomed the President who was joined by Chief of the Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir; Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Safer Shamsahad Mirza, Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral, Naveed Ashraf, and the Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Hamid Rashid Randhawa and Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

The Presidential Salute was presented to the Chief Guest by the Parade and national anthem was played which was participated by all the spectators and parade contingents.

The parade commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Lieutenant Talat Shehzad of Pakistan Navy. The verses focused on commandments of Allah Almighty while fighting the enemy forces to remain steadfast and obey the Almighty and His Prophet P.B.U.H. and avoid conflict within as it will make them coward and persevere as Allah is with those who observe patience.

Parade Commander Brigadier Shehzad Ali Arshad of 39 Azad Kashmir Regiment sought permission to the President for the review of the Parade.

The Parade review witnessed the marching columns of the Punjab Regiment, infantry's second most senior Baloch Regiment, Frontier Force (FF) Regiment, Azad Kashmir Regiment, Sindh Regiment, Northern Light Infantry Regiment, Mujahid Regiment, Pakistan Navy, Flag bearing contingent, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) contingent, Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan Rangers Sindh, Pakistan Police contingent comprising KP Police, Gilgit Baltistan Scouts, Tri Services Lady Officers contingent, and the Special Services Group (SSG).

A special recognition to the Pride of Pakistan recipients commenced with the announcement of Christian community's Johnson Tariq who protected a woman in Ichra Bazaar of Lahore from goons, Tanveer Ahmed, a philanthropist who rendered huge donations for mosques, schools, the flood-affected, girls education, health, scholarships for poor students, hepatitis treatment, dialysis facility and establishment of girls college etc, Hindu community's Rohan Kathwani who in 1.58 mins assembled periodic table at Islamabad Science Festival and broke the previous world record, Sania Alam from Sindh, a record holder in super learning and had received the Brain of the Year Award from the UK's Brain Trust and was the coach of World Champions and got life time achievement Award from US President Joe Biden, Dr Alia who in 2022 Floods established free medical camps in Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab, whereas the UN in recognition to her services conferred Frontline Climate Health Award at COP-28 in 2023, Syeda Maryam Mir, the first woman commercial pilot of PLA, hailing from AJK, she had been promoted to first officer rank after completing required flight hours, she has been flying in the national flag carrier, Afshan Afridi a social worker, persons with disabilities (PWDs) rights activist and first disabled women of Darra Adam Khel to receive Henry Viscardi Award of US, member HRCP KP and she had trained over 500 PWD girls and women on leadership qualities, and Najeebullah Mohmand who established two free libraries in erstwhile FATA and rendered huge services for children education and ensured 80% school attendance for children in FATA and established Mishal women skill training centers in the former tribal region.

The fly past by PAF and Navy airmen commenced whereas the masses were informed that the PAF under the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal, Zabeer Ahmed Babar Sindhu's leadership has undergone strategic revamp and J-10C induction in the shortest time and its performance in many drills have balanced the power in South Asia with its first shot capability. Moreover, the Fifth-Generation Stealth fighter of JF-17 Thunder induction made the country the first nation in the region to fly it.

The fly past commenced with the precision night attack capability aircraft, three-aircraft formation of Mirages of No. 27 Squadron of Zavar formation led by Officer Commanding, Wing Commander Muhammad Emad Iqbal, flying at 250 feet above the ground, followed by J-10C cobra formation of No. 15 Squadron led by Officer Commanding Wing Commander, Wajeeh Ullah and it was the first squadron of J-10C and the current PAF Chief also started his career from this squadron.

The nations pride of JF-17 Thunder formation of Black Panthers, No. 16 Squadron entered the parade venue led by Officer Commanding, Wind Commander, Arshad Mushtaq, the Griffins three F-16s of No. 9 Squadron led by Officer Commanding, Wing Commander, Hassan Siddiqui who hunted the Indian SU-30 during Pakistan-India skirmish on February 27th, No.7 Squadron formation of the Legendary Deltas Mirage led by Officer Commanding, Wing Commander, Ahmed Waheed, F-7PG Aircraft of No. 20 Squadron, the Cheetahs, led by Officer Commanding, Wing Commander, Muhammad Mohsin, three F-16s of No. 5 Squadron, the falcons led by Squadron Leader, Saad (it's the first jet Squadron of the country), three F-16s from No. 29 Squadron, led by Officer Commanding, Wing Commander, Usman Saeed (this squadron hunted down Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan's Aircraft on Feb 27), J-10C No. 15 Squadron the Cobras under Officer Commanding, Wing Commander, Bilal Raza (it's the first to hunt enemy aircraft in the PAF history) and the force multipliers of PAF, two AWACS comprising Saab 2000 of No. 3 and No. 53 Squadrons, led by C-130 H model of No. 6 Squadron, the eyes and ears of PAF, joined the fly past. The C-130 was led by Officer Commanding, Wing Commander, Ahsan Zafar and Saab 2000 by Wing Commander Omar Safdar and the other second Saab 2000 by Wing Commander Yawar Changhezi. Moreover, the two Long Range maritime Patrol aircraft, PC-3 Orion, the flying destroyers formation led by Captain Yazdan Ali, and the second aircraft led by Commander Waleed Akbar Abbasi, whereas two maritime patrol ATRs of No. 29 antisubmarine squadron of Pakistan Navy aviation was led by Officer Commanding, Commander Usman Butt, whereas the second aircraft by Commander Junaid Mughal which led to the conclusion of the fly past.

Glimpses of Pakistan Day celebrations



FBR declares essential to install point of sale system for dozens of businesses

Announces to start registration under TFS from April 01

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal government has declared essential to install point of sale system for dozens of businesses all over the country. FBR has made point of sale system mandatory for private schools, hospitals, retailers, hotels, fitness centers and other dozens of businesses from July 01, 2024. FBR has issued SRO No 428(1)/2024 in this regard. Under it the business institutions will have to install soft ware and hard ware duly

approved by FBR in connection with; point of sale system. FBR has asked the vendors selling such devices to apply for acquisition of licenses. It has been said that dozens of professional service providers, health care providers including manufacturers cum retailers, whole sale retailers and import cum retailers have been integrated in the list of these businesses where point of sale is mandatory. FBR has directed

foreign exchange companies, clubs, private educational institutions, private hospitals, restaurants, hotels, guest houses, marriage halls, courier services, beauty parlors, medical services, laboratories, chartered accountants and retailers to install point of sale on their installations. It will be connected with FBR system. Meanwhile, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has announced to start registration in connection with Traders Friendly Scheme (TFS)

from April 01 in 6 big cities as per demand of IMF. Retailers will start to get register them from April 01 in the cities of Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Quetta and Peshawar. Recovery of tax will start from them with effect from July 01, 2024. In the SRO issued by FBR special procedure has been proposed for small traders and shopkeepers. Every trader and shopkeeper will have to file application for registration under clause 181 of the ordinance.



Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahmad Khan Cheema welcomed the delegation from Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) led by H.E. Mr. Khalifa bin Jassem Al-Kuwari, Chairman of QFFD, who is on a two-day visit to Pakistan from 23-24 March 2024 in Islamabad.



QUETTA: President Al-Khidmat Foundation Quetta Abdul Majeed and others giving away invitation of 24th March Donor Conference to President Chamber of Commerce Balochistan Abdullah Achakzai.

GDP growth rate below potential despite efforts to boost: APBF

ISLAMABAD (INP): President All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF), Syed Maaz Mahmood has said that country's GDP growth rate has always remained below its potential despite efforts to boost economic growth, as the development of important sectors and investment prospects was hampered by inadequate revenue collection, structural problems, and governance issues.

In a statement issued on Saturday, he asked the government to give priority to the economic recovery, emphasizing the necessity of joint efforts to tackle

Pakistan's economic difficulties. Syed Maaz Mahmood said that since it has been causing serious governance and economic issues for years, the cost of goods, food, petrol, and other necessities has increased, and inflation has almost reached 45 percent, which is not bearable for the common man.

On the other hand, there has been an increase in dissatisfaction among the public that no state institution is performing well and to save them from the haughtiness and bad administration pervasive in the system. The APBF President said that the

only way for this to go from a failure to a success story, as in other countries, is if the federal and provincial governments defy them and pursue fundamental changes in governance, fairness, openness, accountability, and the consistent economic policies minimum for 15 years.

The APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi expressed confidence in the country's ability to overcome these challenges and highlighted the new government should fulfill the commitment to eradicate poverty and unemployment.



ISLAMABAD: People are buying vegetables in a Sunday weekly bazaar, in the Federal Capital.

PCSIR employees face financial crunch over nonpayment of salaries

KARACHI (INP): The employees of the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) were gripped by severe financial crisis over nonpayment of salaries since January 2024.

This dire situation has cast a shadow over the dedicated workforce of PCSIR, an institution of national significance renowned for its scientific research endeavors.

PCSIR, established with the mission to foster scientific and industrial development in Pakistan, boasts a team of highly skilled professionals

including tier-1 scientists and physicists. These individuals are at the forefront of groundbreaking research initiatives, contributing significantly to the advancement of various fields crucial for national progress.

However, the current predicament facing PCSIR employees paints a starkly different picture. Despite their invaluable contributions to scientific innovation, these diligent professionals are facing severe financial strain due to the prolonged delay in receiving their salaries.



QUETTA: Dates are being selling on a shop as a demand of Dates increase on the arrival of the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, located on Qandhari Bazar in Quetta.

Fresh IMF loan needed to support Pakistan's economy: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that Pakistan needs fresh long-term IMF loan for its economic survival.

Talking to business community on Saturday, he said that in the prevailing situation, economic reforms were significant so that the country can become self-reliant, and he said there was no need for further borrowing.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that borrowing should be stopped as soon as possible; otherwise, the entire debt servicing burden will continue to be shifted to industry and the public.

He said that the IMF was the only option to save the country from default.

Due to our continuous breach of promises, the attitude of the IMF has become inflexible, while the attitude of the friendly countries has also become cold, the business leader said.

He said that the IMF not only wants the continuation of strict policies but also wants to see further increases in electricity and gas prices and prolong interest rates in double digits.

The IMF wants to increase the tax base, sell failed enterprises, and bring non-tax-paying sectors into the tax net. However, in Pakistan, governments generally cannot do anything other than increase taxes on certain items, resulting in inflation.

Stocks mixed after rallying over interest rate outlook

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): European and US stock markets were mixed Friday after gaining earlier in the week over expectations of a series of interest rate cuts later this year.

On Wall Street, the Dow fell as it was pulled lower by Nike, which offered a lackluster outlook.

The wider S&P 500 retreated slightly, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq gained to finish at a record for the third straight day. Frankfurt rose after a survey showed improved business confidence, while Paris closed lower.

Markets were "catching their breath after an eventful week," said Charles Schwab analyst Joe Mazzola.

"The market heads into the final week of the first quarter buoyed by optimism over the economy and renewed confidence the Federal

Reserve will embark on a rate-cutting cycle later this year," he said.

London, which has lagged behind most major markets so far this year, was the strongest major market Friday, with the FTSE 100 index closing up 0.6 percent. It had gained almost two percent Thursday as the Bank of England signaled it could start cutting interest rates over the UK summer.

"The FTSE 100 is benefitting more than the other indices because it was cheap," said Kathleen Brooks, an analyst at XTB.com.

"This shift in rate cut expectations from the BOE is like a red flag to a bull, and markets have rallied sharply," she said. The Swiss National Bank on Thursday became the first major central bank to cut rates aimed at combating soaring inflation.



QUETTA: People are busy in Eid shopping ahead of Eid-ul-Fitar during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, at roadside stall located on Jinnah road in Quetta.

Farmers' body demands agri-emergency in Pak

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Kissan Ittehad (PKI) on Saturday urged the federal government to declare an agriculture emergency in the country.

In a statement, Kissan Ittehad Chairman Khalid Hussain Bath demanded the restoration of the Rs1.8 trillion package announced by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the farmers' community.

He said that the farmers will begin a protest after Eidul Fitar if the government fails to address the issues of the community. "A sit-in will be staged in Islamabad if needed." He lamented the hike in the price of the fertilizers, saying that the

farmers were buying urea for Rs6,000 per bag.

The farmer leader claimed that there was not a clear government policy regarding the agriculture sector. He said that his organization could guide the government about the crops that could bring foreign exchange to the country.

Kissan Ittehad President Mian Umer said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has not conducted a single meeting on the agriculture sector.

Criticising the government over its lack of interest in the sector, he claimed that the "sugar mafia" has not paid farmers after buying sugarcane from them.

Qatar Fund keen to increase footprint in Pakistan's power, housing sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer, Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), Khalifa bin Jassem Al-Kuwari here on Saturday showed his interest in increasing the footprint of the fund in Pakistan's power generation and housing sectors.

Both countries would further enhance bilateral cooperation by initiating technical level discussions, said a press statement issued by the Economic Affairs Division. A QFFD delegation, led by Al-Kuwari is on a two-day

visit to Pakistan (from 23-24 March 2024), the statement added. The delegation, along with the Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Pakistan Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khatir called on Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahmad Khan Cheema. On the occasion, the Minister for Economic Affairs highlighted the priority of his government to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the development of mega projects in the water sector. He welcomed the

CEO, QFFD, and appreciated the role of the State of Qatar and QFFD in the development of the country and the longstanding relationship between the two countries. The minister congratulated Al-Kuwari on receiving the Civil Award conferred upon him by the President of Pakistan in recognition of his services to Pakistan. Cheema expressed his gratitude to the State of Qatar for galvanizing international support for the floods 2022 affectees by pledging US\$ 25.00 million.

Small traders reject plan for tax collection thru electricity bills

KARACHI (INP): Small businesses in Karachi have rejected government's proposal for tax collection through electricity bills, adding that such proposals were rejected by the community in the past. President of Anjuman Tajran Karachi Javed Shams told media that government will fail to implement this decision on traders' resistance. He said traders blatantly reject government's proposal and if government tried to impose then traders community will stage.

Advisor Federal Ombudsman assures ICCI of direct access to its Portal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Advisor Federal Ombudsman, Shah Mehboob Alam has assured that the Ombudsman office will provide complete access to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) to its Portal for enabling it to directly file its members' complaints which will fail to implement this decision on traders' resistance. He said traders blatantly reject government's proposal and if government tried to impose then traders community will stage.

Ombudsman office was playing a pivotal role in redressing people complaints with regard to the Government agencies by carrying out independent, quick and free of cost investigations. Ahsan Zafar appreciated the role of the Federal Ombudsman Office in addressing masses' complaints since its inception and briefed the Advisor about the working of the Mediation Council at the ICCI and expressed the hope that by getting a direct access to Ombudsman office's Portal.



ISLAMABAD: Families shopping for upcoming Eid al-Fitr celebrations in Karachi Company Market.

Karachi retailer 'fined' for selling cheaper flour

KARACHI (INP): A retailer in Karachi's Jodia Bazaar, the country's oldest and biggest wholesale market of essential goods, faced penalty for selling flour at "lower price" than the official rate.

Karachi Wholesaler Grocers Group (KWGG) has lamented the fines imposed on the retailer, threatening of a shut-down strike against the 'injustice'.

A team of Deputy Commissioner visited market and checked the prices and food items being sold at various shops in Jodia Bazaar on Saturday. During the inspection, the DC found a retailer selling cheaper flour.

In a statement, Wholesaler Grocers Chairman Abdul Rauf said that the shopkeeper was selling the flour at Rs115 per kg against the official rate of Rs123 per kg.

Lamenting the fine imposed on the shopkeeper, the chairman said that selling cheaper flour to poor citizens became a crime in the country.

FRIA says: IMF's directions to now carry forward fiscal discipline of country

LAHORE (INP): Senior Vice Chairman, Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA), Shahbaz Aslam has said that the economic and fiscal discipline of the country will be driven under the direction of IMF, leaving little room for the government to make its way, which has not come up with any plan to fix the economy and provide relief to the trade and industry.

In a statement issued on Saturday, he said that higher inflation, rising utility tariffs, growing unemployment and, above all, the malaise and despondency among the masses were likely to continue unattended.

Shahbaz Aslam said that economic vulnerability now looms with political uncertainty at its core. The Moody's Investors Service has recently given a 'credit negative' signal to Pakistan in the face of prolonged political ambiguity and social tensions over election results, which will make it tough to approach the IMF for a new program, weaken external

economy and make liquidity management more challenging.

He said that the privatization commission of Pakistan was struggling since months to effectively put in place the privatization of loss-making public sector enterprises; notably, the Pakistan Steel Mills and Pakistan International Airlines despite the urgency and concern expressed, time and again, by the IMF.

The election held on Feb 8th in Pakistan threw up a number of surprises with a significant shift in the country's political landscape, he added.

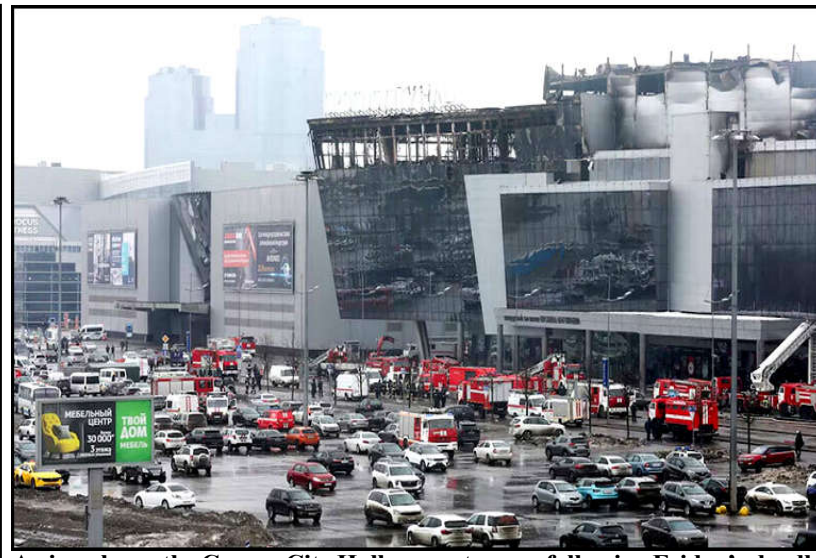
The business leader said that decision-making processes and any constitutional amendment were likely to be driven and influenced more by conflicting self-interests of the coalition partners, watering down the key objectives. This was not what the country needs in these unprecedented times of political and economic challenges confronting the nation.

Russia arrests suspected gunmen as concert death toll soars to 143

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russia said on Saturday it had arrested 11 people, including four suspected gunmen, in connection with a shooting rampage that killed 143 people in a concert hall near Moscow, the deadliest attack in Russia for 20 years.

The militant Islamic State group claimed responsibility for Friday's attack but there were indications that Russia was pursuing a Ukrainian link, despite a statement from Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak that Kyiv had nothing to do with it.

Zakharova said on Telegram. Ukrainian military intelligence spokesman Andriy Yusov told Reuters: "Ukraine was of course not involved in this terror attack. Ukraine is defending its sovereignty from Russian invaders, liberating its own territory and is fighting with the occupiers' army and military targets, not civilians."



A view shows the Crocus City Hall concert venue following Friday's deadly attack, outside Moscow, Russia.

Russia pounds Ukrainian power facilities; Zelenskiy seeks air defences, 'political will'

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Russia pounded Ukrainian power facilities on Friday in an attack described by Kyiv as the largest airstrike on its energy infrastructure in two years of war, and portrayed by Moscow as revenge for Ukrainian attacks during its presidential election.

Kyiv to seek emergency electricity supplies from Poland, Romania and Slovakia, Kyiv officials said. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, speaking in his nightly video address, said the strikes proved again that Russian attacks on infrastructure could be halted only with more air defence systems and that required political will from Ukraine's allies.

We don't have enough modern air defence systems which, to be honest, requires enough political will to provide them," Zelenskiy said. "All our partners know what is needed and who can make truly life-saving decisions."



Vehicle line up, near the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah, Egypt.

Indian court effectively bans madrassas in Uttar Pradesh before election

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: A court in India has essentially banned Islamic schools in the country's most populous state of Uttar Pradesh, a move that could further distance Muslims from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government ahead of general elections.

Friday's ruling scraps a 2004 law governing madrassas in Uttar Pradesh (UP), claiming it violates India's constitutional secularism and ordering that students be moved to conventional schools.

Houthi leader says there has been 'reckless' American-British attacks on Yemen

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: The head of the Houthi supreme revolutionary committee, Muhammad Ali Al-Houthi, said on Saturday there have been "reckless" American-British attacks on Yemen. The American-British attacks aim to break a naval blockade of ships linked to Israel, which is besieging Gaza, Muhammad Ali Al-Houthi said on X. The Houthi-run Saba News Agency said separately that U.S.-British aircraft had launched five raids on Hodeidah, the area where Yemen's main port is located. Iran-aligned Houthi militants have repeatedly launched drones and missiles at international commercial shipping in the Red Sea region since mid-November.

Iraqi PM to visit Washington for troop talks

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden will welcome Iraq's prime minister on April 15 for talks on the US troop presence, the White House announced Friday, as tensions subside following US clashes with pro-Iran militants.

Iraq and Syria. Biden and Sudani will discuss "our shared commitment to the lasting defeat of ISIS and evolution of the military mission," a White House statement said.

Lebanon to complain to UN, saying Israel disrupts navigation systems

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: Lebanon will file an urgent complaint with the UN Security Council over what it called Israel's violation of its sovereignty by disrupting its navigation systems, the foreign ministry said on Friday. In a statement, the foreign ministry said Israel was affecting the safety of civil aviation in the airspace of Beirut's Rafic Hariri International Airport.

It will mark the first trip to Washington by Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani, who took office in October 2022. Sudani in the past has called for an exit of US forces, redeployed nearly 10 years ago as part of a campaign to defeat the Islamic State extremist group, better known as ISIS, which had seized vast swathes of

Sudani's office said that the two would "discuss the future relationship" between Iraq and the United States following the fight against the extremists. Tensions soared amid the Israel-Hamas war with armed groups linked to Iran carrying out a slew of attacks on positions in the Middle East of the United States, the main ally of Israel.



Indian soldiers stand guard next to captured Somali pirates after they were brought in for prosecution by the Indian Navy, at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai, India.

Indonesia recovers two bodies after Rohingya boat capsizes off Aceh

Monitoring Desk ACEH JAYA: Indonesian authorities recovered two bodies from the shores of West Aceh on Saturday and said local fishermen reported several other drowning victims washed up after a vessel carrying Rohingya migrants capsized off the coast earlier this week. More than 70 Rohingya were "presumed dead or missing", which if confirmed would be the biggest loss of life in such an incident so far this year, the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) said on Friday. Seventy-five people were rescued.

"We have evacuated two bodies from the shores. We have identified them both as females," Mirza Sapriyadi, national head of operations at Indonesia's search and rescue agency, told reporters, adding that immigration officers had confirmed the victims as Rohingya. The bodies had been carried by the current and local fishermen reported several other drowning victims found along the western shore of Aceh province, on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, Mirza said.

List reveals Indian firms made big donations to BJP

Monitoring Desk MUMBAI: Huge donations by firms under criminal investigation or suspected of being shell companies have been funnelled to India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and other parties, new data showed, highlighting the backscratching ties between corporate titans and the government. Last week, India's election commission published a list detailing buyers of electoral bonds, a contentious funding scheme that has helped Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party build an immense campaign war.

From Dubai to Chile, Turkish series expand their empire

Monitoring Desk ISTANBUL: In the skies above Istanbul's Tophane neighbourhood, seagulls are sent scattering by a drone that's filming a policeman arresting a young woman on the streets below. But it's for a television series called "Degenler", one of about 60 filmed annually in Turkey that have made Istanbul and other Turkish cities familiar to viewers in nearly 170 countries around the world. Over the past 15 years, Turkey has established itself as the foremost exporter of series after the United States and Britain.

"Latin Americans find Turkish series very close to their culture," said Erdi Isik, development manager at Ay Yapim — Turkiye's leading exporter last year and whose production "Yargi" ("Family Secrets") last November won an International Emmy for best telenovela. "When I show samples to a panel, even if they don't understand a word of Turkish, they catch what it is about because the family culture is very much the same," he said. Censorship constraints in Turkiye also provide more modest material, important for audiences in the Middle East.

UN chief visits Gaza border in new plea for ceasefire

Monitoring Desk ALARISH: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will visit Egypt's border with Gaza on Saturday to renew pleas for a ceasefire that could bring relief to a territory devastated by more than five months of war between Israel and Hamas.

Conflict has ground on. Guterres arrived on Saturday in Al Arish in Egypt's northern Sinai, where much of the international relief for Gaza is delivered and stockpiled. Receiving him, regional governor Mohamed Shusha said some 7,000 trucks were waiting in North Sinai to deliver aid to Gaza, but that inspection procedures demanded by Israel had held up the flow of relief, according to a statement from Shusha's office.

His trip comes as Israel threatens to launch a major military operation in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, just over the border from Egypt, despite international appeals against such an attack.

Guterres is expected to visit a hospital in Al Arish where Palestinians evacuated from Gaza are receiving treatment, and meet UN humanitarian workers on the strip, the plight of civilians across the territory has deteriorated sharply as the

A majority of Gaza's 2.3 million residents are sheltering around Rafah. Though conditions are worse in the north of the strip, the plight of civilians across the territory has deteriorated sharply as the

US Congress averts government shutdown, passing \$1.2 trillion bill

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

Friday midnight deadline. But the White House Office of Management and Budget issued a statement saying agencies would not be ordered to shut, expressing confidence that the Senate would promptly pass the bill, which it did. While Congress got the job done, deep partisan divides were on display again, as well as bitter disagreement within the House's narrow and fractious Republican majority. Conservative firebrand Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene threatened to force a vote to remove Speaker Mike Johnson, a fellow Republican, for allowing the measure to pass.

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

The 1,012-page bill provides \$886 billion in funding for the Defense Department, including a raise for US troops. Biden, a Democrat, has indicated he will sign it. Major League Baseball launched a probe into Shohei Ohtani, one of the highest names in baseball, and his long-time interpreter Ipppei Mizuhara on Friday.

New Hong Kong security law comes into force amid fears for freedoms

Monitoring Desk HONG KONG: A new national security law came into force in Hong Kong on Saturday despite growing international criticism that it could erode freedoms in the city, which is ruled by China but has some autonomy stemming from its history as a British colony. The law took effect at midnight, when it was published on a government website, days after Hong Kong's pro-Beijing lawmakers passed it unanimously, fast-tracking legislation to plug what authorities called national security loopholes.

about the continuing systemic erosion of autonomy, freedoms and rights".

Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee signed the new national security law on Friday evening, saying it "accomplished a historic mission, living up to the trust placed in us by the Central (Chinese) Authorities". Australia and Britain on Friday criticised China for its actions in Hong Kong after a meeting in Adelaide, noting in a joint statement "deep concerns

Australia and Taiwan updated their travel advisories for Hong Kong, urging citizens to exercise caution. "You could break the laws without intending to and be detained without charge and denied access to a lawyer," the Australian government said. Hong Kong authorities, however, in a statement, "strongly condemned such political manoeuvres with skewed, fact-twisting, scaremongering and panicking remarks". Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with the guarantee that its high degree of autonomy and freedoms, including freedom of speech and of assembly, would be protected under a "one country, two systems" formula.

The United Nations and the European Union criticised the extremely swift passage of the law, which was first tabled as a draft bill in early March.

Trial begins for US rancher accused of killing migrant

Monitoring Desk LOS ANGELES: The trial of a rancher accused of killing a Mexican migrant on his property in Arizona began Friday, as tensions mount in the United States over an inflow of migrants across the southern border.

an angle high up so that he knows he's not going to hit anybody. And he fires. He fires until the threat is gone," Larkin said.

George Alan Kelly, 75, is charged with second-degree murder for the death of Mexican Gabriel Cuen-Buitimea, 48, on his property in the border town of Nogales in January 2023.

But prosecutors said the migrants were unarmed and portrayed the incident as the product of a bias in Kelly's mind toward migrants commonly held in regions close to the border with Mexico.

Macron on Tuesday launched a major operation against drug trafficking in the southern port city of Marseille and elsewhere, saying that gangland battles that last year left dozens dead had made life a misery for residents.

"They weren't approaching him. They weren't any kind of threat to him. They were going parallel to his residence," chief deputy county attorney Kim Hunley said. "I want you to consider Gabriel Cuen-Buitimea as a human being, and not as George Kelly described him, an animal," added Hunley, referring to a statement by the rancher on the case.

Following Macron's Marseille visit, La Provence daily published a front page on Thursday showing two people, presumably drug dealers, watching a police patrol.

The prosecutor said that throughout the trial, evidence and testimony will show that Kelly "is guilty as charged."



Tourists are seen next to a sign outside a church in Barcelona alerting them to severe drought in Spain's north-eastern region and urging them to save water due to low reservoir levels.

