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Gwadar

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PTI to boycott Senate chairman, deputy elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): Declaring elections for the seats of Chairman and Deputy Chairman Senate as "unconstitutional", the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) has said that it will boycott these elections.

According to media reports, PTI's core committee told that the party had now decided that it would move a court against these elections.

Sources disclosed that it was an opinion in the party that since the House of federation was incomplete due to the postponement of Senate elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP); therefore elections for these coveted seats were not constitutional. They further said that the PTI leaders were of the view that the upper House of the parliament was presently not functional due to the absence of its chairman, and the Senate Secretariat could not take any decision other than administrative ones.

Meanwhile the regis-

trar of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday raised an objection to the petition filed by five PTI senators in which they had sought a court order for delaying elections for the seats of Senate chairman and deputy chairman unless elections for the Senate seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) are held.

The senators had also prayed to the court to declare the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) notification, dated April 2, 2024, of postponement of the Senate elections in KP as null and void and give order to hold the elections in the province.

The registrar said that since the Peshawar High Court (PHC) was already hearing the KP Senate seats' election case; therefore the PTI was asked to approach the high court for the purpose. Separately, the PTI has also filed a motion against the election of Senate chairman at the Senate Secretariat on Monday.



MAKKAH MUKARAMAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during Ziaaraat of Al Masjid e Haram.

Govt. decides to introduce AI technology for accountability of ghost and absentee employees in Balochistan province

Result-oriented measures and timeframe formulated; Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti announces to enforce AI system all over province in phases; terms corruption as biggest hurdle in way of good governance; vows to restore trust of people on State

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has decided to introduce the artificial intelligence (AI) technology for accountability of the ghost and absentee employees in the province.

This was decided in the first meeting of Reforms Committee held with Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti in the chair at the CM's secretariat on Monday.

The Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development, Abdul Saboor Kakar, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Imran

Zarkoon, Special Secretary, Asfandyar Baloch, Chairman Balochistan Revenue Authority, Noorul Haq Baloch, Secretary IT, Ayaz Khan Mandokhail, besides other high ups. The meeting made certain important decisions besides taking result-oriented measures and formulating timeframe for the reforms.

The meeting decided to hire services of experts from the private sector for making CMDU functional. On the occasion stressed that the experts included in the Reforms Committee to prepare proposals for bringing improvement in their

related sectors.

He also directed the Information Technology department to prepare the pilot project.

He announced that the AI system would be enforced all over the province in phases. However, the AI technology should be commenced from Bolan Medical Complex and Sandeman Provincial Headquarter Hospitals and Balochistan University for improving governance there, he directed further. Speaking on the occasion, Mir Sarfraz Bugti regretfully pointed out that the general public are facing hardships due to weaknesses in the govern-

ance.



JEDDAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is seen off by Governor of Jeddah, Prince Saud bin Abdullah Al-Jalawi at Jeddah International Airport.

CM announces to set up Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Programme in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has announced to set up the Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Programme in the province.

The Chief Minister gave approval to the educational scholarship programme in a review meeting of the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund (BEEF) here on Monday. The Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan and other high ups participated in the meeting. The Chief Minister said that provincial government has taken the responsibility of children of the martyrs under the BB scholarship Programme.

The provincial govern-

ment would pay all the educational expenditures of the children from nursery to the higher education under the programme, he added.

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti also said that the state would see the children of all martyrs as father.

Besides, the Chief Minister also directed the Home Department to collect the data of all those declared as martyrs in the province.

In addition to this, the Chief Minister also announced complete academic scholarship for every student of the province seeking admission for PhD in the modern science subjects in 200 universities of the world.



PESHAWAR: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari condoles with Aimal Wali Khan, KPK President Awami National Party (ANP) over the death of his mother during meeting held in Charsadda.

Arsenic found in letters sent to judges different from ordinary one, say investigators

ISLAMABAD (INP): The investigators have found out that the chemical found in the threatening letters sent to the Supreme Court and the high courts' judges was different from ordinary arsenic, sources said on Monday.

The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) teams went to different stores to purchase arsenic.

And when they looked at it, they found out that unlike the arsenic found in the letter which was white, the one they had purchased was yellow, sources said, adding this led them to decide that now they would seek assistance from drugs and chemicals manufacturing companies.

The investigators had now prepared lists of pharmaceutical companies, they disclosed.

Around six days ago, eight judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC), including the high court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, received letters laced with a chemical, which was initially thought to be arsenic.

The incident took place a few days after six of these judges wrote a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) in which they had alleged interference by the country's intelligence agencies in their work, prompting the Supreme Court (SC) to take suo motu notice of it.



RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) interacting with players of Pakistan cricket team during an Iftar dinner hosted by him

PM returns after concluding visit to KSA

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Monday, arrived here after wrapping up his three-day visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Earlier upon his departure at the Jeddah International Airport, the prime minister was seen off by Governor Jeddah Prince Saud bin Abdullah bin Jalawi, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During his visit, Prime Minister Sharif met with Crown Prince and Prime Minister of KSA Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and discussed further fortifying of the fraternal relations between the two brotherly nations and exploring avenues for enhanced collaboration across various sectors.

Bilawal visits Wali Bagh expresses condolence with ANP leadership

PESHAWAR (APP): PPP's Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited Wali Bagh, district Charsadda on Monday wherein he expressed condolence with the President of Awami National Party (ANP) Asfandyar Wali Khan, the death of his wife.

The PPP chairman met both Asfandyar Wali Khan and Aimal Wali Khan to express condolence with them. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari offered fateha for the eternal peace of the wife of Asfandyar Wali Khan and mother of Aimal Wali Khan and fortitude to her other family members.

COAS hosts Iftar dinner for PCT at Army House

Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) hosted an Iftar Dinner for Pakistan Cricket Team at Army House Rawalpindi. Pakistan Cricket Team underwent and concluded physical training at Army School of Physical Training (ASPT) camp in Kakul, Abbottabad. Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Mohsin Naqvi along with PCB officials also attended the Iftar.

COAS while talking with the players wished them all the best in their future endeavours.

The cricketers thanked COAS for the excellent training provided to them at Kakul and the role Army plays in supporting the games in Pakistan.

WB approves \$149.7m for two projects in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The World Bank has approved 149.7 million dollars in financing for two projects in Pakistan, says in media reports. As per details, the funds were okayed to support the projects related to digital economy and improved flood resilience.

This has been stated in a statement issued by the international financial institution. The allocated funding of 78 million dollars for the Digital Economy Enhancement Project is expected to enhance financial management through technology-driven solutions and data-driven decision-making. The investment in digital economy is also likely to streamline public services, increase transparency and foster economic growth. Simultaneously, the 71.7 million dollars allocation for Sindh Barrages Improvement Project is likely to ensure greater flood resilience.

QUETTA: Woman selecting and purchasing bangles for Eid ul Fitr preparation.

Shehbaz, MBS agree to expedite first phase of \$5bn Saudi investment in Pakistan

Both leaders emphasise kingdom's "supportive role in Pakistan's economy and the mutual desire to strengthen trade, investment ties"; Urge int'l efforts to pressure Israel to cease hostilities in Gaza

MAKKAH AL-MUKARAMAH (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud here wherein the two countries affirmed their commitment to expediting the first wave of the previously discussed investment package worth \$5 billion.

The bilateral ties and regional as well as global developments of mutual interest, including the worrying situation in Gaza were discussed in the meeting that took place at Al-Safa Palace here on Sunday during Prime Minister Shehbaz's three-day visit to the Kingdom, according to a joint

statement issued on Monday.

The discussions centered on fortifying the fraternal relations between the two brotherly nations and exploring avenues for enhanced collaboration across various sectors. Emphasis was laid on the Kingdom's supportive role in Pakistan's economy and the mutual desire to strengthen trade and investment ties, the statement added.

The two countries called for efforts by the international community to halt Israeli military operations in Gaza and mitigate humanitarian impact besides emphasising the need to advance the peace process.

Both sides underscored

the imperative for the international community to pressure Israel to cease hostilities, adhere to international law, and facilitate unhindered humanitarian aid access to Gaza.

Two sides discussed the need for advancing the peace process in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly as well as the Arab Peace Initiative aimed at finding a just and comprehensive solution, to establish an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. The two sides stressed the importance of dialogue between Pakistan and India to resolve the outstanding issues between the two countries.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti chairing first meeting of Reforms Committee

PM Shehbaz performs Umrah

MAKKAH (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has performed Umrah during his visit to Saudi Arabia.

According to the details, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Information and Broadcasting Minister Attaullah Tarar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and other members also performed Umrah along with prime minister.

After performing Umrah, Prime Minister Mian Shabbaz Sharif and the delegation offered special prayers for the security, development and prosperity of Pakistan and the Islamic world.

Nepra hikes power tariff by Rs4.92 per unit

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Another big shock for the citizens as the government on Monday increased electricity tariff by Rs4.92 per unit under the monthly fuel adjustment.

According to the notification issued by the National Electricity Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), the electricity prices are increased by Rs4.92 per unit. The power regulatory body hiked the price for February which would be charged from the consumers from the bills of April 2024.

However, the upward revision in prices of the electricity will not be applicable on the lifeline and K-Electric customers.

Shawwal moon not sighted in Saudi Arabia, Eid will fall on April 10

Monitoring Desk

RIYADH: According to the moon sighting committee in Saudi Arabia, the Shawwal moon was not sighted on Monday (April 8).

As a result, Ramadan will continue until April 9, completing 30 days, and Eidul Fitr will be celebrated on April 10 in Saudi Arabia.

In the UAE, the Emirates Astronomical Society also predicts that Eid will commence on April 10.

Police cop martyred; three officers among 10 injured in Kuchlak explosion

Independent Report

QUETTA: A police jawan was martyred while 10 other persons including three police personnel were injured in an explosion took place in Kuchlak area on Monday night.

According to the police sources, the explosion took place in Killi Kateer located in Kuchlak. The SSP operation told that the explosion was caused due to the gas leakage. However, as a result of the explosion, a police jawan of the Eagle Squad namely Anwar Kakar was killed and three others were injured. Besides, seven other people mostly passers-by were also injured in the blast.

Soon after the explosion, the police, administration and bomb disposal squad reached the spot while the body of deceased

police cop and the injured personnel were shifted to the civil hospital.

The injured persons were being provided medical treatment at the hospital.

Meanwhile the spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind had condemned the explosion in Kuchlak.

In an official statement issued here on Monday, the spokesman said that the Chief Minister has given order for investigation of the incident. He said that a police cop was martyred and three others were injured in the blast.

The bomb disposal squad has reached the spot and reviewing the nature of blast. The Chief Minister has directed to provide best medical treatment facilities to the injured of blast.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta and Administrator Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafqaat along with Jamal Khan Raisani, MNA, Jahanzaib Khan, Director PDMA and others inspecting the cleanliness drive, at Hazarganji in Quetta.

Lawyer gets six months in jail for misconduct towards LHC judge

LAHORE (Agencies): The Lahore High Court has awarded a six-month jail term to a lawyer on a contempt of court charge for his misconduct towards a judge.

During Monday's hearing, LHC Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan sentenced Goraya to six months in jail, fined him Rs100,000 and ordered his immediate imprisonment.

The chief justice had received a reference from Justice Sultan Tanvir Ahmad who alleged that advocate Zahid Mahmood Goraya had misbehaved

during a hearing. After being served a show-cause notice, Goraya appeared before the chief justice and tendered an unconditional apology the previous week, but Justice Khan indicted him under contempt charges.

In a subsequent hearing, Goraya, accompanied by his lawyer, LHC Bar Association President Asad Manzoor Butt, and Punjab Prosecutor General Farhad Ali Shah, pleaded for adjournment until after Eidul Fitr, expressing remorse and seeking forgiveness.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Merchants of death

In an increasingly rights conscious world professing allegiance to humanity, the situation in Gaza stands as perhaps the worst contradiction, fuelled by Israel's relentless military invasion. The recent call by the UN Human Rights Council to halt arms sales to Israel — although a procedural admonition for some critics — is a desperate cry for sanity in a conflict that has spiralled into what can only be called an extermination campaign.

The facts are undeniable: over 33,000 lives snuffed out, tens of thousands more maimed, and those who are left are on the brink of famine, living off fewer than 245 calories a day. The Netanyahu government's actions highlight a flagrant disregard for international law and the principles of human decency.

The tragic incident involving the World Central Kitchen, where a targeted strike killed seven aid workers, six of whom were foreigners, encapsulates the impunity of Israel's military operations. The event prompted a rare rebuke from US President Joe Biden, who has now hinted at a potential shift in US policy.

However, this should not have been the threshold for international outrage. The fact that it took the deaths of these particular individuals to move Washington is a damning indictment of selective empathy and the disproportionate weight of Western blood over that of the Palestinian people. The US, by continuing arms sales to Israel — it reportedly approved bombs the very day the strike occurred — is complicit in the bloodshed.

A continuation of this death-dealing would further sink the country's stated commitment to justice and human rights on the global stage. Meanwhile, Israel's temporary permission for aid delivery into Gaza, following intense US pressure, is a minuscule gesture in the face of the broader atrocities committed. Such measures are akin to placing a band-aid on a haemorrhage; they fail to address the root cause of the conflict or the systemic violence perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinians.

The need for a paradigm shift in how the international community, particularly the US, approaches the Israel-Palestine conflict is long overdue. It is not enough to condemn actions post-factum or to issue slap-on-the-wrist warnings devoid of substantive action. There must be a concerted effort to halt arms sales to Israel and to hold it accountable for its violations of international law, something it has long become accustomed to.

In the words of UN Secretary General António Guterres "nothing can justify the collective punishment" in Gaza. It has been six long months. The destruction, the bloodlust, the war must end, and they must end now.

Human hierarchies

Zarrar Khuhro

We have witnessed horrors over the past six months. We have seen entire families decimated at the press of a button. We have seen entire bloodlines of Palestinians erased from the earth to slake Israel's bloodlust. We have seen hungry men and women rushing for aid only to be gunned down and then blamed for their own deaths. We have seen humans crushed flat by tanks and bulldozers.

We have seen children hunted like mice through the ruins of Gaza, joyfully sniped by Israeli soldiers playing their murderous games, the same soldiers who — joyfully — pose with the lingerie of Palestinian women they have murdered or displaced. They proudly advertise their atrocities, filming TikToks where they mock their victims, eat their food, desecrate their homes, mosques and bodies. They are celebrated for it by a society suffering from a deep sickness of the soul, a country where trophies like the passport of a dead or displaced Gazan child is sold on Facebook, where IDF soldiers post pictures of themselves brutalising Palestinians on their dating profiles and get hundreds of matches from women excited by this display of barbarism.

All this has happened with hardly a mention on Western mainstream media, and with the barest wringing of hands in Western capitals. And that's because there are hierarchies to human lives. There are some — mostly brown, mostly living in the Global South — who are born to be killed. Their lives are pointless, unworthy of comment or eulogy and in death they simply become statistics of the sort that can be easily ignored. Most of

the time, they aren't even killed; they simply die in unexplained explosions apparently caused by no one. Their children's lives are cut short by bullets that seemingly travel through time and space of their own volition. They don't really matter, and their deaths barely elicit a statement of concern from the worthies that run this world. We know this but the knowing brings us no solace, only sorrow.

Proof, if we needed any, was supplied when the Israeli army 'triple-tapped' an aid convoy of the World Central Kitchen, killing brave and selfless aid workers who hailed not from the disposable countries but from the US, UK, Canada, Australia and Poland. This was, of course, 'unacceptable' and led to relatively loud condemnation of Israel with even the usually supine 'do you condemn Hamas/Israel has a right to defend itself' sections of the US media treating Israeli government spokespeople with the same ire they usually reserve for Palestinians who have lost their entire families.

Prominently, the hosts of America's President Joe 'more Zionist than the Zionists' Biden's favourite show, Morning Joe, tore into Israel's minister of the economy for Israel's handling of the war in Gaza. Biden finally called for a ceasefire, reportedly threatened to condition future aid to Israel on how it addresses concerns and pressured Israel into opening the Erez crossing into Gaza, allowing a few trucks of aid in. This proved that American pressure could make Israel change course.

But don't think for a moment that this is any lasting change of heart where Biden is concerned; he's too old and too rigid in his hawkish views to ever change. It

is, however, an indication of the pressure he now feels, given that Western citizens have been killed and that his chances of re-election seem dimmer. It also helps, of course, that the founder of the WCH, Jose Andre, is a well-known and well-connected figure in Washington, D.C.

Just a day after Biden called for an 'immediate ceasefire', the politicians-for-hire of America step-ped up with choreographed messages of unconditional support for Israel. Politicians like Brad Sherman, the democratic Congressman, whom many Pakistanis recently became acquainted with, tweeted not just to exonerate Israel of blame but also to indirectly place the blame on WCH itself. This isn't surprising since Sherman is one of the many hired guns of Israel in the US Congress, and has received upwards of \$700,000 over his career from pro-Israel interest groups. Other known Israeli mouthpieces like Richie Torres (over a million dollars from pro-Israel groups) also chipped in as did Republican Ted Cruz and many others.

Speaking of AIPAC and its allies, Biden stands out as the highest recipient of funds from pro-Israel lobbies, clocking over \$11m from various Israeli lobbies over the course of his career. Increasingly, though there are voices calling out AIPAC in the US, something that was unthinkable fairly recently, and these voices will only grow in volume. Change is coming, but slowly and with a lot of pushback.

In the meantime, American citizens can take solace in the fact that if Israel were to kill them, the majority of the US political establishment would immediately rally to the defence of Israel. - Courtesy Dawn

The Rs400bn quandary

Basit Ghauri

The financial instability of distribution companies has led to a conundrum for decision-makers whereby the federal government, under the IMF programme, seeks to alleviate the burden of circular debt and considers shedding the Discos. On the other hand, the provinces and private sector remain cautious about assuming associated liabilities. Their fate remains unclear, as the Power Division, the Special Investment Facilitation Council, the Privatisation Commission, and the provinces fail to reach a consensus on the future of Discos.

Discos are struggling, with multifaceted challenges and structural deficiencies within the broader power sector contributing to their financial instability. A uniform tariff regime equalises the tariff of all Discos based on a national average; it is subsequently reduced through government subsidies from the federal budget. Such regulatory hurdles and lack of corporatisation hold back competition for performance improvement, exacerbating financial woes.

In FY2022, Discos reported a staggering net negative equity of Rs1,426 billion primarily driven by transmission and distribution losses of 16.3 per cent. Last year, low recovery rates and theft resulted in a staggering loss of Rs236bn. Abolishing this regime also risks social backlash and political repercussions, particularly in high-tariff areas.

The culmination of these challenges manifests in annual net losses of Rs400bn, begging the question of how to proceed. Multiple options are being explored, including complete or partial privatisation, management contracting,

provincialisation, handing over to the army, or maintaining the status quo.

Complete privatisation: The 1990s privatisation programme succeeded in privatising 167 entities worth about Rs476bn. However, recent attempts have largely failed, with only one success in the past decade. Successful privatisation demands strong political commitment, resolution of legacy contracts, settlement of liabilities, and negotiations with a sizable workforce. For instance, pressure from 3,500 employees at the Pakistan Steel Mills thwarted multiple privatisation attempts. With Discos employing over 100,000 individuals, gaining employee buy-in for any potential transaction appears highly unlikely.

Further, KE's privatisation has been problematic, with the need for a massive Rs171bn subsidy last year due to regulated consumer tariffs. The current uniform tariff regulations provide little incentive for entities like KE to adopt cost-effective, cleaner alternatives. According to a study by Renewables First, an energy and climate think tank, integrating renewables into its generation mix could have saved KE \$457 million over the past two years.

Moreover, aligning with liberalised market interventions, such as the Competitive Trading Bilateral Contracts Market, adds complexity. Since the wire business of Discos is a natural monopoly crucial to CTBCM success, determining the cost of using wires for bilateral contracts is a pertinent question. Also, corporatisation is essential, but some Discos lack formal boards, while others are intertwined with political affiliations.

Concession model:

Concession models offer an alternative, permitting government ownership retention while outsourcing Disco operations to enhance efficiency. This public-private partnership model, akin to successful infrastructure projects in provinces such as Sindh, necessitates tailored approaches for each Disco, with awareness of potential job displacements.

Provincialisation: Provincialisation as a solution to the power sector's circular debt addresses merely the symptoms, and not the disease. Provincial capacity to manage Discos is the same as, if not less than, the federal government's. Imbalances could arise, with wealthier provinces subsidising tariffs, while others face increased tariffs, exacerbating economic disparities. For instance, Tesco (Tribal Areas Electric Supply Company) receives around Rs20bn in subsidies from the federal government for its expenses, with almost negligible recoveries. This makes up some 2pc of the provincial budget set aside for Tesco only. Although incorporating this amount into the NFC award has been proposed, historical issues with timely and complete NFC disbursements remain unresolved.

Maintaining Disco's status quo may seem politically favourable but risks worsening the circular debt and relations with the IMF. Resolving Discos' issues requires assessing social and financial costs, managing assets, and building stakeholder consensus. Regardless of the chosen path, consumers will bear short-term costs, with substantive benefits materialising in the medium term. The government should adopt forward-looking strategies in consultation with stakeholders. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Pakistan faces average cost of Rs136bln per annum due to natural disasters: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at a validation session on financial flow and gap analysis of public finance for disaster preparedness and response conducted by FAO Pakistan, a news release said. Findings of the Financial Flow and Gap Analysis of Public Finance for Disaster Preparedness and Response conducted by FAO Pakistan, a news release said.

The analysis seeks to facilitate specific advocacy and capacity-building steps essential for enabling national, provincial, and district-level systems to finance and support Anticipatory Actions (AA). With a focus on both national and sub-national levels, particularly in Sindh province, the study looked into government climate and disaster risk financing mechanisms, tools, and flows.

Janek Toepper, Climate Change and DRF Specialist, FAORAP, along with Syed Aftab Raza, Public Finance Management Consultant, presented key findings from the research analysis, shedding light on the Disaster Risk Finance for anticipatory action. Following this, Mubshar Hussain, Manager of Disaster Risk Reduction at NDRMF, discussed the Disaster Risk Financing Strategy and NatCat Model.

Emphasizing the necessity for collaborative efforts among public, private, and international stakeholders.

BISP beneficiaries to receive financial assistance directly into bank accounts: SBP

Independent Report KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan, Monday, rolled out a facilitation framework to enable Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) beneficiaries receive financial assistance directly into their bank accounts. The central bank, in a statement issued here, said that the facilitation framework has been developed in consultation with the BISP and banks and under the framework banks accounts of BISP beneficiaries will be opened in all banks and Micro Finance Banks across the country.

The decision has been taken to onboard BISP beneficiaries for receiving the social welfare payment into their accounts and under the framework, about 9.3 million BISP beneficiaries will be able to open a "BISP Sahulat Account" in a single visit to the designated bank branch within their vicinity. The BISP has mapped its beneficiaries with a bank branch in the vicinity of the beneficiaries. However, given the large number of beneficiaries, the framework will be implemented in phases. Initially, a pilot phase will be run in Karachi and Lahore for onboarding about 300,000 BISP beneficiaries and after successful implementation of the pilot phase.

Rupee sheds 02 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed a devaluation of 02 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.94 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.92. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs277.3 and Rs280.4 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by 09 paise to close at Rs301.07 against the last-day closing of Rs301.16, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.83, whereas an increase of 10 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded.



LAHORE: Members of Kissan Board Pakistan are holding protest demonstration against wheat support price, in Lahore.

Farooq Shaikhani emphasizes pivotal role of private sector to revitalize institutions

HYDERABAD (APP): President Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry Farooq Shaikhani, emphasizes the pivotal role of the private sector worldwide in revitalizing declining institutions through their unwavering commitment, innovation and embrace of new technologies, however suggested that in Pakistan, government institutions should adequately support and incentivize the private sector as well.

He stated that the official rate for a 100 kg sack of wheat has been set at Rs. 10,000. However, following this decision, the

price of wheat in the open market has subsequently decreased, resulting in direct financial setbacks for farmers. He highlighted Pakistan's significant position as the fifth-largest wheat-cultivating nation globally. However wheat shortages and fluctuating flour prices, ultimately impacts both the public and traders.

President Chamber Farooq Shaikhani stressed the need to engage the private sector in wheat procurement, aligning with Islamic banking principles. Such involvement promises enhanced efficiency in the

KATI commends surge in LSM Production

KARACHI (APP): President Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), Johar Qandhari, Monday, expressed satisfaction over the recent uptick in production within the large-scale manufacturing (LSM) sector.

President KATI, in a statement issued here, acknowledged the positive impact of increased production, particularly in the textile sector, on exports and opined that the growth surge is transient due to the upcoming Eid festivities.

While underscoring the urgent need of lowering production costs and interest rates through cost reduction measures to sustain and bolster industrial activities, Qandhari emphasized that Pakistan's production costs were higher than other countries in the region. Asserting the vital role of industrialization and exports in fostering economic development, he stressed that government should engage in dialogue with industrialists to address the issue of electricity and gas prices promptly, thereby facilitating economic stability for Pakistan.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where three ships, Elephant, Swansea and FSM scheduled to load/offload Rice, Coal and LPG berthed at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday. Meanwhile another ship, Gall carrying Palm oil also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day. A total of ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Ardmore Cherokee and Al-Khor sailed out to sea on Monday morning and another ship FSM.

Eid shopping reaches its peak in city markets

RAWALPINDI (APP): The shopping in city markets for Eid-ul-fitr reached its peak on Monday and the traders in the city markets were happy with a large turnout of the customers.

A festive environment was noticed at the busy shopping centers including Tench Bhatta, Saddar, Lalkurti, Moti Bazar, Commercial Market and several other markets of the town.

The shopkeepers and their helpers were busy till late night on Saturday and Sunday, in managing the customers, showing them the goods and bargaining with them.

The families were seen to throng the markets

to pick up their choices for Eid on Saturday and Sunday.

The shopkeepers of different malls and other markets said that their business on Saturday and Sunday was better than other days of this Ramadan. Varieties of goods, including foreign brands, particularly Chinese, are found in abundance.

The shops are flooded with garments for men, women and children, with the latest designs, particularly for children.

The rush of the customers at the shopping centers nowadays starts from evening and continue till closing of the shops before sehri.



LAHORE: Vice President Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry Adnan Khalid Butt meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman.

163rd BoD meeting of PIEDMC held

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Industrial Estates Development and Management Company (PIEDMC) Chairman Javed Iqbal here Monday presided over the 163rd meeting of the PIEDMC Board of Directors. The board approved the sale plan of Bahawalpur Industrial Estate. The meeting also approved the design and cost of the main gates of the Quaid-e-Azam Business Park; the audited accounts of the company for the years 2021 and 2022; the terms of references of the working committees; and the concept paper of the Green Energy Initiatives.

The Board also approved obtaining a license from PTA to provide telecommunication services in Quaid-e-Azam Business Park; formation of the special committee to acquire land for a new grid station in Sunder Industrial Estate; and initiating the process to fill the vacant statutory seats of the company. While addressing the meeting Chairman PIEDMC Javed Iqbal said that speedy measures were being taken to promote industrial development in Punjab. Special focus is being given to the timely completion of development projects and the provision of facilities to the industrialists under one roof.



LAHORE: Finance Minister of Punjab Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman presiding over 1st meeting of Cabinet Standing Committee for Legislative Business & Privatization.

Minister inaugurates facilities for mentally challenged children

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Mal Sohail Shaukat Butt marked a significant milestone with the inauguration of special residential facilities for mentally challenged children at the Chamman institution.

During his visit to the Chamman Institution here on Monday, he also laid the foundation stone of hostel, special washrooms and mess in the building.

Sohail Shaukat Butt personally interacted with the children, distributed Eid gifts, and expressed heartfelt affection towards them. Witnessing the joy on the children's faces upon receiving toys was a heartwarming moment for

all present. Sohail Shaukat Butt emphasized the importance of the project, which is a result of a public-private partnership with the Mushal-e-Raha Foundation. He expressed gratitude to Chairperson Mushal-e-Rah Amina Aftab for their unwavering support towards this noble cause.

The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to providing the best possible care for these special children, stating that these children are the flowers in our garden, and it is our duty to nurture and protect them. "We will spare no effort in ensuring they receive the attention

and facilities they deserve." The minister also addressed the issue of violence against women, announcing the upcoming launch of the 1737 helpline dedicated to the rescue and assistance of women facing litigation and violence. The "CM Punjab Women Protection Helpline" aims to support vulnerable and oppressed women, alongside stringent legislation to combat violence against domestic workers.

The inauguration of these special facilities at the Chamman institution marks a significant step towards providing a supportive environment for mentally challenged children, he concluded.



LAHORE: Provincial Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique, Khawaja Imran Nazir, Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman, Rana Sikandar Haya and Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman presiding over 1st meeting of Cabinet Committee for deadly diseases.

FWMC deports 3500 workers, 150 vehicles for cleanliness during Eid

FAISALABAD (APP): Eidgahs in Faisalabad and their routes and congregation sites would be cleaned and washed before Eid-ul-Fitr in addition to sprinkling anti-germ sprays.

He said that more than 3500 workers and 150 vehicles would remain active during Eid holidays.

During his visit to various mosques and Eidgahs here on Monday, he said that leaves of FWMC officers and officials were cancelled and the entire staff would remain available from April 10 to April 13 for immediate disposal of waste material during Eid days. He said that there were 758 mosques and

Eidgahs in Faisalabad and their routes and congregation sites would be cleaned and washed before Eid-ul-Fitr in addition to sprinkling anti-germ sprays.

He said that more than 3500 workers and 150 vehicles would remain active during Eid holidays.

They would ensure mechanical sweeping of 100 kilometers roads in Faisalabad.

The people could contact the FWMC through its complaint cell 1139 which would remain active round-the-clock to receive and redress public complaints on urgent basis.

Police finalizes security plan for Eid-ul-Fitar

KHANEWAL (APP): Police finalized security plan to maintain law and order during celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitar.

The District Police Officer (DPO) Rana Omer Farooq said that foolproof security arrangements would be made during Eid and law violations would not be tolerated at any cost.

He said that more than 648 police officials would be deployed on security duty at 461 Masjid and 51 Imambarahs across the district.

On the other hand, Elite force would continue patrolling in the areas for quick response in any emergency like situation, he added.

1085 vehicles inspected, fines imposed

PESHAWAR (APP): The district administration and the Transport Department have inspected a total of 1085 vehicles and 59 transport terminals.

Fines were imposed on 372 vehicle owners, and FIRs were registered against six managers of bus terminals during the last three days.

The authorities have issued warnings to 78 transporters, while 16 were arrested for overcharging. Inspections were carried out at various transport terminals, including General Bus Stand.

Members of global animal welfare organisation calls on senior minister

LAHORE (APP): A four-member experts team of Austria-based global animal welfare organisation, Four Paws, called on Senior Minister Punjab Marriyum Aurangzeb at Margalla Wildlife Rescue centre and discussed different issues, including wildlife conservation, breeding, ecosystem provision, technical assistance, provision and use of modern medical equipment and capacity building of the Punjab Wildlife Department's staff.

Four Paws's Director (Operations) Dr Amir Khalil, Dr Ivanov, Dr Frank Gorritz, and Welzer Englof arrived in Pakistan for the medical treatment of eight black bears as per the special request of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board for animal treatment. The senior minister expressed gratitude for the visit of the Four Paws team to Pakistan, treatment of wildlife and cooperation in wildlife conservation efforts. The senior minister stated that public awareness campaigns would be launched regarding wildlife conservation.



PESHAWAR: Newly elected Minority MPA Gopal Singh meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

Largest Namaz-e-Eid gathering to be held at Gulshan-e-Jinnah at 8 a.m

KARACHI (APP): The largest Namaz-e-Eidul Fitr gathering under the management of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) will be held in Gulshan-e-Jinnah (Old Polo Ground), here at 8 a.m.

The flags of different Muslim countries are being raised to express solidarity. Apart from cleanliness around the Eid Gah, the entrance and exit routes are also being made better for the faithfuls. Strict security arrangements have been made for Eid prayers.

Along with arrangements for ablation for the citizens coming for Eidgah, cleaning and disinfecting spray will also be performed.

Jinnah. According to the instructions of Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, arrangements are being completed for the Eid-ul-Fitr gathering at the Old Polo Ground.

Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Municipal Commissioner S.M Afzal Zaidi, diplomats of Islamic countries, members of national and provincial assemblies, various social and political leaders and a large number of dignitaries of the city will offer Eid prayers at Gulshan-e-



PESHAWAR: A large number of vehicles stuck in traffic jam at Saddar market while people busy in shopping as they are preparing for the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitar coming ahead, in Peshawar.

Sindh Doctors Association UK, NDF distributes wheelchairs, tricycles in Nawabshah

NAWABSHAH (APP): Sindh Doctors Association UK distributed wheelchairs and tricycles to deserving disabled people through the local partner organization NDF Pakistan Nawabshah here on Monday.

On this occasion, eminent social activist Abid Lashari, acknowledged the efforts of Sindh Doctors especially Dr. Shah Bux Lashari, Dr. Fahad Memon, Dr. Shahabuddin Kalhoro and

others. He further said that 10 wheelchairs and three tricycles were distributed among the deserving persons with disabilities from the given donation. He prayed for the Pakistani community living in the United Kingdom, especially the Sindh community, who made this possible to provide assistive devices to 13 persons with disabilities to ensure their mobility to make their lives easier in the Holy month of Ramadan.

One robber killed, 3 injured and held after encounter

KARACHI (INP): One robber was killed and three injured and held with arms and looted valuables after exchange of fire here in the metropolis on Monday.

According to details, three armed robbers barged into a bungalow in Gulshan-e-Mehmar area of Karachi. The police getting the information cordoned off the bungalow and an exchange of fire took place in which one robber was killed while two others were critically injured and held. The police recovered three pistols, ammunition, looted jewelry, cash and cell phones from possession of the killed and arrested robbers. Meanwhile, another robber was injured and held during an encounter at Shah Faisal Bridge. Arms, four snatched cell phones and other valuables were recovered from his possession. The body and injured robbers were shifted to different hospitals and police after registering separate cases at respective police stations started investigations.

DCs, DPOs directed to ensure prevention of aerial firing

PESHAWAR (APP): Commissioner, Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud has directed the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and District Police Officers (DPOs) of all districts of the division, authorities of traffic police, Water Supply & Sanitation Programme (WSSP) and administrative officers of the Capital Metropolitan Government also attended the meeting. Divisional Commissioner directed Police in all districts of the division to begin patrolling from the afternoon of the day of moon-sighting night and beside police.

on Monday. Besides, the Deputy Commissioners (DCs), District Police Officer (DPOs) of all districts of the division, authorities of traffic police, Water Supply & Sanitation Programme (WSSP) and administrative officers of the Capital Metropolitan Government also attended the meeting. Divisional Commissioner directed Police in all districts of the division to begin patrolling from the afternoon of the day of moon-sighting night and beside police.

International News

At least 94 dead in Mozambique after unlicensed ferry boat capsizes

Monitoring Desk MOZAMBIQUE: At least 94 people died, including children, and 26 are missing after a ferry boat capsized off the northern coast of Mozambique, an official from the country's Maritime Transport Institute (INTRASMAR) said.

The vessel was an overloaded fishing boat and was not licensed to transport people, Lourenco Machado, an administrator of INTRASMAR, said on state television on Monday.

"On Sunday we registered a maritime incident where at least 94 people died when a barge carrying 130 people capsized. We have recovered 94 bodies and 26 are missing," he said.

The boat was ferrying people from Lunga in Nampula province to

Mozambique Island, he said, adding that initial reports indicated that it was hit by a tidal wave.

The passengers were fleeing a cholera outbreak, said state broadcaster TVM, citing another local maritime administrator.

Jaime Neto, secretary of state for Nampula province, also said that the passengers were fleeing cholera, according to the British Broadcasting Corp (BBC).

"Because the boat was overcrowded and unsuited to carry passengers, it ended up sinking," he told the BBC, adding that many children were among the dead.

Videos posted on social media X showed many bodies lying on a beach and some people carrying the bodies of children. Reuters

could not immediately verify these videos.

Mozambique and other countries in Southern Africa have been battling cholera outbreaks since last year.

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Boat that sank off the north coast of Mozambique killing 96 people on the Island of Mozambique.

Iran FM opens new Syria consulate after deadly Israeli strike

Monitoring Desk DAMASCUS: Iran's foreign minister inaugurated the country's new consulate in Damascus on Monday, a week after a deadly strike blamed on Israel destroyed the former premises, sending regional tensions skyrocketing.

Tehran, a key Damascus ally, has vowed to avenge last Monday's air strike on the Iranian embassy's consular section that killed seven Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) members, including two generals.

The strike came against the backdrop of Israel and Hamas's ongoing fighting, which began with the group's October 7 attack on Israel.

Damascus and Tehran blame Israel for last Monday's raid, but it has not commented. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian inaugurated the new consular section in a Damascus building in the presence of his Syrian counterpart Faisal Mekdad, whom he also met earlier on Monday, state news agency SANA said.

Russian FM Lavrov due in China today

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will visit China on Monday and Tuesday, his ministry said in a statement.

"On April 8 and 9, the foreign affairs minister ... will undertake an official visit in the People's Republic of China, during which discussions with... [his Chinese counterpart] Wang Yi are planned," it said on Sunday.

"An in-depth exchange of points of view is expected on a certain number of 'burning subjects'," the statement said, citing "the Ukrainian crisis and the situation in the Asia-Pacific region".

Russia says Ukraine struck nuclear plant, Kyiv denies it was behind the attack

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russia said Ukraine struck the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station controlled by Russian forces three times on Sunday and demanded the West respond, though Kyiv said it had nothing to do with the attacks.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, which has experts at the site, said it was the first time the nuclear plant, Europe's largest, was directly targeted since November 2022 and said the attack had endangered nuclear safety.

Russian forces took control of the plant in 2022 shortly after their full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Both Moscow and Kyiv have repeatedly accused each other of risking a nuclear accident by attacking the plant. Russia's state nuclear corporation, Rosatom, said

Ukraine attacked the plant three times on Sunday with drones, first injuring three near a canteen, then attacking a cargo area and then the dome above reactor No 6.

"Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station has been subjected to an unprecedented series of drone attacks, a direct threat to the safety of the plant," Rosatom said. "The radiation levels at the plant and the surrounding area have not changed," it said.

A Ukrainian intelligence official said Kyiv had nothing to do with any strikes on the station and suggested they were the work of Russians themselves. "Russian strikes, including imitation ones, on the territory of the Ukrainian nuclear power plant ... have long been a well known criminal practice of the invaders."



People watch the solar eclipse on the lawn of Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, California, U.S.

Millions across North America await total solar eclipse

Monitoring Desk MAZATLAN: A total solar eclipse will have millions of people across a heavily populated swath of North America gazing toward the heavens on Monday. However, the celestial event will not be visible in Pakistan or India.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), the eclipse will be visible from the west in "Europe, North

America [and] north in South America, Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic."

"However it will be not visible in Pakistan," it added. Meanwhile, Hindustan Times reported that the total solar eclipse would also not be visible in India. The eclipse will be viewable, weather permitting, along a path starting in Mexico and then crossing through the United States and into Canada.

Thai PM says Myanmar regime 'losing strength'

Monitoring Desk SAMUI: Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin told Reuters now is a good time to open talks with Myanmar as the military regime that seized power in a 2021 coup is weakening.

Myanmar is in the throes of an insurgency on multiple fronts, with allied anti-junta groups backed by a pro-democracy parallel government seizing control of several military posts and towns, including parts of a key town on the border with Thailand over the weekend. The insurgency is the biggest challenge the Myanmar junta has faced since it mounted a coup against an elected government in 2021.

"The current regime is starting to lose some strength," Srettha said in an interview on the resort island of Samui on Sunday, adding, "but even if they are losing, they have the power, they have the weapons."

Footage shows a lively Gaza turned to wasteland since war began

Monitoring Desk GAZA: Drone footage of Gaza over the six months of warfare between Israel and Hamas shows how the once vibrant Palestinian enclave has been transformed into a vast wasteland of rubble and twisted steel by Israeli bombardment. During normal days, Palestinians used to be able to stand on their buildings' balconies and take in a view of the Mediterranean Sea.

Those structures

have vanished, footage from Reuters and other sources shows, crushed into piles of cement and debris. Residents have been forced to wander Gaza seeking shelter from an Israeli offensive designed to destroy its arch enemy Hamas.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the campaign will not stop until Hamas is eliminated, so the bombardment and destruction are expected to continue.

China constantly coerces Japan and Philippines, US envoy to Japan Emanuel says

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: China constantly uses coercion and pressures other countries, including Japan and the Philippines, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel said on Monday. Emanuel made the remark at a Center for Strategic and International Studies event in Washington days before U.S. President Joe Biden hosts Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr for a summit.

People's Liberation Army conducts military drills in South China Sea

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: China conducted military "combat patrols" on Sunday in the disputed South China Sea, its army said, the same day as joint drills by the Philippines, the United States, Japan and Australia.

The announcement comes one day after defence chiefs from four countries including the Philippines — which has been engaged in several contentious maritime disputes with Beijing recently — said they would conduct joint drills in the area.

Beijing's People's Liberation Army (PLA) Southern Theater Command said it was organising "joint naval and air combat patrols in the South China Sea". "All military activities that mess up the situation in the South China Sea and create hotspots are under control," it said in a state-

ment, in an apparent swipe at the other drills being held in the waters. Further details about the Chinese military activities in the waterway were not announced.

The exercises take place days before US President Joe Biden is due to hold the first trilateral summit with the leaders of the Philippines and Japan. Top US officials have repeatedly declared the United States' "ironclad" commitment to defending the Philippines against an armed attack in the South China Sea — to the consternation of Beijing. China claims territorial sovereignty over nearly all of the South China Sea and has been increasingly assertive in the region in recent years. China's Coast Guard said it had "handled" a situation on Thursday at a disputed reef where several ships from the Philippines were engaged in "illegal" operations.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan meeting with Pakistan Business Council.

Govt determined to boost economy to give confidence to business community: Jam

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Monday said that the government was confident and focused to further improve all the factors linked with the economy, so as to boost confidence of the business community. He said this while talking to media after a meeting at the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) here on Monday.

He said that Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif also held several meetings regarding economy of the country and business, exports, trade and energy sectors are among our top pri-

orities. Jam Kamal Khan said that the Commerce Ministry is well aware of its responsibility to reach out business community to take the input from them and we are determined to give our utmost to resolve the challenges being confronted by this community.

Referring to a recently held pre-budget seminar at Islamabad, the Federal Commerce Minister said that representatives of the business community from all over the country were invited to take their valuable suggestions to incorporate in the policy and decision-making process so as

to further improve the situation. The commerce minister told that trade diplomacy has been a very vital factor throughout the globe which helps the countries to improve their diplomatic ties. He said that the government as well as the business community are considering the available options to move the things in the positive direction.

Jam Kamal Khan said that the government is very hopeful and taking things forward in a progressive way and in near future we will share with the media and the masses the opportunities we need to ponder

over our progress and prosperity. He told another questioner that the road map of exports is not like pushing a button to improve the exports immediately rather it is a gradual and continuous process and therefore we will have to take appropriate steps accordingly. He lauded the performance of the previous caretaker government, and said that many things were streamlined by the caretaker setup in the past six months as smuggling was also controlled to a greater extent and some of the initiatives needed to be taken ahead.

Shuhada Forum distributes cheques among families: Nawabzada Jamal Raisani calls for taking more steps for wellbeing of families of martyrs

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Patron-in-Chief of Balochistan Shuhada Forum and Member National Assembly, Nawabzada Jamal Raisani has underlined the need to take steps for wellbeing of the families of martyrs in the province.

He observed that the bereaved families of martyrs are confronting difficult circumstances, and as such we need to take steps for their wellbeing a lot.

He also stressed the need to provide more opportunities of education and livelihood for the families

of martyrs. Nawabzada Jamal Raisani was addressing the cheque distribution ceremony among the families of martyrs here at the office of Shuhada Forum on Monday.

The cheques were distributed among 14 families of martyrs at the ceremony.

Also present on the occasion were the spokesman of Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind and others.

Addressing the ceremony, Jamal Raisani paid homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the cause of country and na-

tion. He said that our organization has been working for wellbeing of the families of martyrs round the clock.

He assured to raise voice for the families of martyrs at every forum. He said that it would be our utmost endeavour that the provincial government and other organizations may do more work for the families of martyrs.

He urged the philanthropists to provide financial assistance to the Shuhada Forum so as to help the families of martyrs in big way.

Sardar Awais sets April 23 deadline to curb power pilferage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari has given April 23 as deadline to all Chairmen, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) to curb power pilferage completely.

Termining the current efforts to curb menace of power pilferage insufficient, the minister directed strict action against power thieves, said a statement issued by the Power Division here Monday. The data did not match to the actual damages of power theft, he said.

He said the incumbent government has zero tolerance about power pilferage and committed to rooting out the power theft menace.

Those targeting innocent people not to be spared, asserts Chief Minister

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has asserted that the elements targeting innocent people would not be spared at all.

In an official condemnation statement issued here the other day, the Chief Minister said that it is an inhumane and cowardly act to attack the innocent people.

He said that the terrorists don't deserve any mercy, and as such they would be eliminated by the security forces together

with the masses. Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti pledged that the security forces would be taken to task. He also vowed to ensure peace and protection of life and property of the masses.

The Chief Minister expressed deep sorrow and sympathy with the bereaved families of those martyred in Khuzdar bomb explosion.

He directed to the concerned high ups to provide best medical treatment to those injured in the explosion.



QUETTA: A large number of vehicles stuck in traffic jam at Bacha Khan Chowk while people busy in shopping as they are preparing for the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitar coming ahead, in Quetta.

Govt to establish first-ever center of excellence for climate change: Romina

ISLAMABAD (INP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday expressed the government's intention to establish the first-ever center of excellence for climate change in the country.

She said that the newly planned Centre would be for welfare of wildlife wherein veterinary training, transfer of veterinary technology, awareness for the public would be provided by senior wildlife scientists for betterment of niche, ecology, growth and experimentation of wildlife.

Romina Khurshid Alam held a meeting with

Islamabad Wildlife management Board along with experts from Four Paws at ministry of climate change, a news release said.

The Coordinator to PM on Climate Change was apprised on management, preservation of wildlife, issues and challenges about Margalla Hills National Park & Marghazar Zoo. Dr. Frank Goertz, head of Institute of zoo & wildlife research and Dr. Amir Khalil, Director reveal & rescue briefed the coordinator to PM on bio rescue & endangered species.

The Coordinator to PM on Climate Change emphasized on setting up a new park dedicated for rare species, endangered species

and vulnerable species. For this purpose 28 acre land, under the ministry would be utilized.

While discussing the challenges of natural life of Pakistan, Coordinator to PM on climate change remarked that she was pursuing for the earliest signing of Islamabad Nature & wildlife management act 2023 after which measures for bio rescue and wildlife would be upscald.

Coordinator to PM on climate change expressed her gratitude to the participants of the meeting adding that there is long way to go for welfare of Pakistani wildlife which was neglected for a very long time



MAKKAH MUKARAMAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif kisses Hajr-e-Aswad as part of Ziaaraat of Al-Masjid e Haraam.

Power theft: Government 'okays' deputation of FIA officers to DISCOs

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has 'okayed' deputation of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officers to electricity distribution companies (DISCOs) to end power theft, sources on Monday.

The move has been taken to end power theft and enhance recoveries on the demand of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the sources said.

In this regard, a letter has been penned to the Power Division regarding the deputation of FIA officers in five DISCOs including Islamabad Electric Supply Company, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Tribal Areas and Quetta Electric Supply Companies.

FIA officers are already deputed in Peshawar, Sukkur and Hyderabad Electric Supply Companies.

The Power Division has recovered over Rs1.50 billion during a country-wide power theft crackdown from March 24 to 31, taking the overall recoveries to Rs84 billion.

To minimize the losses in the power sector, the caretaker government and military leadership of Pakistan in September 2023 decided to launch a country-wide crackdown on power thieves to minimize the losses. Pakistan has so far recovered Rs84 billion fine during a country-wide crackdown on the power pilfers while over 62,000 people have been taken into custody from September 1 till date.

Giant blue whale spotted along Gaddani coast

KARACHI (APP): The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF-Pakistan) lauded the efforts of local fishermen who recorded the live blue whale and shared its video with the organization and media outlets after they recorded the giant blue whale around two kilometers off Gaddani coast, Balochistan while moving on the surface of the coastal waters on Monday morning.

According to local fishers, the same whale was seen along the Gaddani coast at around 4:40 pm, on Sunday, but could not be recorded on camera. This is the second record of a live sighting of a blue whale in Pakistani waters, a news release said.

Commenting on this sighting, Muhammad Moazzam Khan, Technical Advisor, WWF-Pakistan, said that the blue whale is the second most common whale, after the Arabian Sea

humpback whale, found in Pakistani waters.

There is a sizable population of blue whales in the Arabian Sea as local fishermen have been reporting several sightings of the animal for the last 15 years. In September 2017, a gigantic mother blue whale with her calf was sighted off the Churna Island near Karachi coast. He said that WWF-Pakistan through its Observer Programme is building the capacity of local fishers to safely release the entangled whales, dolphins, turtles and other threatened marine species from fishing nets, film the sighting of endangered species and make efforts for the protection. Khan mentioned that the area from where blue whale is recorded is a part of the Chuma-Kaio Island Complex Area of Interest and is adjacent to the North East Arabian Sea Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA) declared by the Marine Mammal.

Govt. orders inquiry into Khuzdar bomb blast: spokesman

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has ordered an inquiry into the bomb explosion took place in Khuzdar on late Sunday night. This was stated by the spokesman, Government of Balochistan in an official hand out issued here.

According to the spokesman, the explosive device was planted in a motorcycle, which claimed life of two persons and left five others injured. The spokesman said that the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to the concerned authorities to provide best medical treatment to those injured in the blast.



QUETTA: A large number of people standing in queue to deposit gas bill

Rehabilitation & expansion of Qadeem Eidgah Gwadar completed in 4 months

Independent Report
QUETTA: The project of rehabilitation and expansion of the Qadeem (ancient) Eidgah of Gwadar has been completed under the GDA Old Town Rehabilitation Project in December last year on directives of the Director General GDA, Dawood Khan Khilji.

These projects were included the reconstruction and expansion of the Qadeem Eidgah of Gwadar, which was completed working on it at fast pace.

Needless to mention here is that the old Eidgah of Gwadar city had historical significance, which was in dilapidated condition.

The GDA decided to reconstruct and expand the Eidgah. The project includes the boundary wall, doors, marble floor, sound system, drain line, water and electricity line, place of ablution in the Eidgah besides its renovation and repair.

The total area of Eidgah is 78,000 square feet where around 10,000 faithfuls can offer prayer simultaneously.

Four students die as tractor, trolley rams mini-van in TT Singh

TOBA TEK SINGH (INP): Four students died when a speeding tractor-trolley rams a mini-van carrying the children to school in Toba Tek Singh on Monday morning. Another eight students were injured in the accident occurred near Motorway bridge in Tehsil Pir Mahal of Toba Tek Singh. Rescue personnel rushed to the accident site and shifted the bodies and the injured to a hospital.

Three of the four deceased students were identified as four-year-old Husna, four-year-old Muhammad Mugheer, seven-year-old Muhammad Ahmad.

ferent projects had been started under the GDA Old Town Rehabilitation Project four months back in December last year on directives of the Director General GDA, Dawood Khan Khilji.

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NTDC to ensure uninterrupted power supply on Eid-ul-Fitr

LAHORE (APP): In compliance with the instructions of Ministry of Energy (Power Division), the National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) has completed all necessary preparations to ensure uninterrupted power supply throughout the country on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

A central control room has been set up to maintain close liaison with National Power Control Center and all distribution companies (DISCOs) which will work round the clock during Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, according to the company's spokesman here Monday.

PIA announces pre-Hajj operation from May 9 to June 10

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan International Airline (PIA) Monday announced starting its pre-Hajj operation from May 9 to June 10 this year.

During the pre-Hajj operation, more than 20,000 Hajj pilgrims will travel to Saudi Arabia. As per schedule, on the first day of the PIA pre-Hajj operation, flights will depart from different cities of the country including Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and Peshawar on May 9.

Through the PIA flights on the first day of the pre-Hajj operation, more than a thousand pilgrims will depart for Saudi Arabia. As per the schedule, PIA's special Hajj and scheduled flights will operate to two cities in Saudi Arabia—Jeddah and Madinah. During the pre-Hajj operations, PIA will use the planes of

Latif hopeful PTI founder to be released in current month

MULTAN (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sardar Latif Khosa has asserted that PTI founder Imran Khan will walk free from jail in current month.

The former prime minister's sentence in the Toshakhana case has been suspended by the court while the cipher case will not stand even a week, he said during his appearance on a private TV channel.

Downplaying former prime minister Imran Khan's conviction in the cipher case, Khosa said that the documents were not presented before the court in the case while the PTI founder's presence was not proved in any case related to the May 9 riots.

The PTI leader reiterated that the PTI founder will neither cut a deal for his release nor will he leave the country. According to Latif Khosa, Khan wanted all institutions to act as per the Constitution of Pakistan and was against the politics of revenge. On political dialogue.

24 vehicles challaned on overcharging of fare on public transport

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Regional Transport Authority (RTA) and Traffic Police continued crackdown against the transporters and drivers on overcharging of the fare on the public transport in Quetta.

According to an official hand out issued here, the team supervised by the Secretary RTA Waheed Sharif Umrani and Traffic Police raided the taxi stand and bus terminal located at Jable Noor, western bypass.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam calls on by Ethiopian Ambassador, Jemal Beker Abdula at her office.

Six shops sealed, eight shopkeepers arrested

Independent Report
QUETTA: At least six more shops were sealed while eight shopkeepers were arrested on the charges of profiteering and violation of the official rate list in different parts of the provincial metropolis the other day. According to the local administration, the crackdown is continued against profiteering and violation of the official rate list in the metropolis.

The price control committee teams comprising the assistant commissioners and magistrates are heavily engaged in the campaign against profiteering all over the city. The teams visited more than 400 shops and examined the rate list there. During the course, six shops were sealed while eight shopkeepers were arrested on the charges of violation of official rate list. Some 22 shopkeepers were also charged fine while 99 others were issued stern warning not to fleece the people. The district administration has warned the shopkeepers not to violate the official price list, otherwise stern action would be taken against them.

IHC reserves decision on maintainability of plea against chairman senate elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday reserved its verdict on maintainability of a petition challenging the election of chairman and deputy chairman Senate.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the PTI's petition along with the objections raised by the registrar office. The registrar IHC has objected that the case of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Senate seats is under hearing in the Peshawar High Court (PHC) thus the petitioner should have filed this case to PHC.