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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-MUKARRAMAH (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.

especially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute to ensure peace and stability in the region.

The Crown Prince congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on assuming the office and expressed warm wishes for his tenure.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also conveyed gratitude for the Kingdom's steadfast support and hospitality and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to bolstering bilateral ties and economic cooperation.

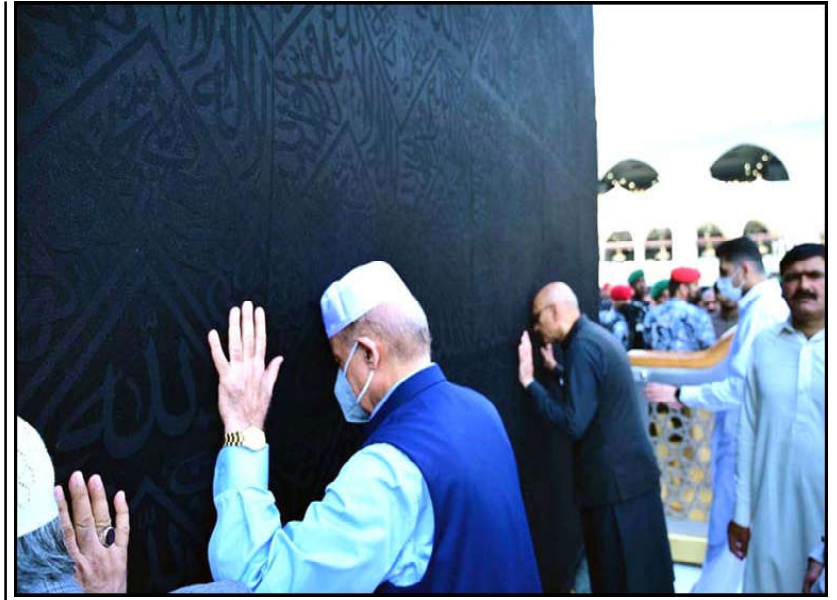
PM Shehbaz invited the Crown Prince to undertake an official visit to

Pakistan at the earliest convenience which he accepted.

Meanwhile Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have called for efforts by the international community to halt Israeli military operations in Gaza and mitigate the humanitarian impact besides emphasising the need to advance the peace process.

The regional and global developments of mutual interest, including the worrying situation in Gaza were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on Sunday as the former was on a three-day visit to the Kingdom.

Both sides underscored the imperative for the international community to pressure Israel to cease hostilities, adhere to international law, and facilitate



MAKKAH MUKARRAMAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during Ziaaraat of Al Masjid e Haraam.

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.

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.

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 governance.

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

The meeting decided to hire services of experts from the private sector for making CMDU functional.

The Chief Minister on the occasion stressed that the experts included in the Reforms Committee to prepare proposals for bringing improvement in their

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

related sectors.

related sectors.



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

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): 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.

CM announces to set up Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Programme in Balochistan

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 government 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Soon after the explosion, the police, administration and bomb disposal squad reached the spot

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

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.

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



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

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 Paki-

stan 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

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.



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

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 fatcha for the eternal peace of the wife of Asfandyar Wali Khan and mother of Aimal Wali Khan and fortitude to her other family members.



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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

All this has happened with hardly a mention on Western mainstream media, and with the barest wringing of hands in Western capitals.

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.

At 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Discos are struggling, with multifaceted challenges and structural deficiencies within the broader power sector contributing to their financial instability.

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.

The culmination of these challenges manifests in annual net losses of Rs400bn, begging the question of how to proceed.

Concession models offer an alternative, permitting government ownership retention while outsourcing Disco operations to enhance efficiency.

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.

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).

This imperative emerged from a participatory workshop organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in Islamabad.

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

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.

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.



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

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.



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.

price of wheat in the open market has subsequently decreased, resulting in direct financial setbacks for farmers.

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

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.

procurement process, as private enterprises typically boast streamlined operations driven by profit incentives.

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.

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

He emphasized that engaging the private sector would enhance farmers' welfare by enabling them to receive competitive rates from private buyers, thereby improving their livelihoods and fostering increased productivity.

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.

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.

The shopkeepers of different malls and other markets said that their business on Saturday and Sunday was better than other days of this Ramadan.

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

The families were seen to throng the markets

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.

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.

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-Rah 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 deputs 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

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.

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



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 abatement for the citizens coming for Eidgah, cleaning and disinfecting spray will also be performed.



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

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.

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.

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



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

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

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."

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.

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".

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.

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 statement, 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.

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 priorities. Jam Kamal Khan said that the Commerce Ministry is well aware of its responsibility to reach out to 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 for 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.

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.



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



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 & Margharaz Zoo. Dr. Frank Goertz, head of Institute of zoo & wildlife research and Dr. Amir Khalil, Director reveal and 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.

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 nation.

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.

He said all the concerned officers should trace all the sources of electricity pilferage and address them. SEs, XENs SDOs and concerned field staff have to give certificate of no theft in their respective areas, the minister said.

He said all CEOs would verify these certificates and submit them to the ministry. These performance would be reviewed on weekly basis and no leniency would not be tolerated, he said. Awais said legal, disciplinary action would also be taken against the officials for inconsistency or conflicting evidence. Amendments would also be brought in the laws and severely punish the officials involved in electricity theft, he said.

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

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.

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.

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

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has 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.

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.

During the course of action, 24 vehicles were challaned on overcharging of the fare. While on the other hand, the extra fare charged from the passengers on some 71 buses and coaches were returned to them.

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.

The Secretary RTA asked the transporters and drivers not to charge extra fare from the passengers taking advantage of the Eid. Otherwise, stern action would be taken against them, the Secretary RTA warned.

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

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.

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.

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.

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 fishermen 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.

According to local fishermen, 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.



QUETTA: Consul General of Japan and Chairman Kuchlak Welfare Association signing a MoU



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.

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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.

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.