

Independent

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Vol. XIV No. 78 Reg. mails-B/ID-445 Tuesday April 02, 2024, Ramzan 22, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Directs foolproof security for Chinese nationals

Bisham terror attack aimed to harm Pak-China extraordinary friendship: PM

Govt to leave no stone unturned to punish terrorists behind attack

DASU (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday assured foolproof security measures for the Chinese nationals working on Dasu Hydropower Project as well as across the country and resolved to ensure exemplary punishment for the perpetrators of March 26 incident.

Addressing a gathering of the Chinese engineers and workers, he said the government would ensure that the perpetrators and culprits of March 26 incident should get the exemplary punishment, so that it would be a lesson and that no one could commit such dastardly act in future.

The prime minister said that the sole purpose of his visit was to offer deep and sincere condolences and express feelings to the Chinese brothers and sisters in Dasu over a sad incident that took place on March 26 in which five Chinese and one local lost their lives.

He said it was a cowardly act on part of the terrorists to kill innocent Chinese and a Pakistani for no other reason except to disturb and damage the exceptional friendship between Pakistan and China.

Federal Ministers Amir Muqam, Attaullah Tarar,

Chairman WAPDA Lt Gen. (ret) Sajjad Ghani, Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, members of the Chinese company and senior officials were also present on the occasion.

Terminating it a job of the enemies of Pakistan, the prime minister said that it was a dastardly act on part of the perpetrators who found every opportunity to harm this friendship which was strengthening by each passing day and expanding and moving forward with speed. "That is the reason enemies do not spare any opportunity to damage and create a wedge between the two Iron Brothers," he added.

Prime Minister Sharif said that they shared the moment of sadness and sorrow and assured that the government would not leave any stone unturned and would not spare any opportunity to ensure the best possible security measures for the Chinese families and nationals.

He also assured the Chinese leadership, the people and the Chinese ambassador that all foolproof security arrangements would be made for the Chinese people working and supporting a prosperous and developing Pakistan.



DAASU: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the Chinese Engineers and government officials at Kass camp of China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC).

IHC suspends sentence of PTI founder, Bushra in Toshakhana case

Appeal against conviction will be fixed for hearing after Eid holidays, says IHC CJ

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has suspended the sentence of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in Toshakhana case.

The order was issued by Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb after hearing on Monday. Barrister Ali Zafar appeared on behalf of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi while prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz represented NAB.

The CJ IHC remarked "Ali Zafar Sahb if you will give arguments on your appeals then we cannot hear you. Appeals are being heard in cipher case. Both the appeal cannot be heard simultaneously."

Barrister Ali Zafar said Suleman Safdar has said he

will give arguments for half an hour on cipher appeals. Let me give arguments in this case today.

The CJ IHC remarked if you want to give arguments of conviction then we hear them. The appeal against sentence will be fixed after Eid. The CJ IHC Aamer Farooq remarked cipher case is fixed for hearing on Tuesday which will be completed within some days. We cannot fix for hearing Toshakhana case tomorrow after hearing it today. FIA has to start its arguments in Cipher case. We don't know they take how much time. We fix the Toshakhana case after Eid.

The court suspended the sentence of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi in Toshakhana case.

Chaudhry Salik says

Pakistan fully committed to bring perpetrators of attack on Chinese nationals to justice

BEIJING (APP): To express solidarity with the government and people of China, Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain arrived in Wuhan, China, Monday on the special flight that carried the mortal remains of five Chinese personnel, who died in a terrorist attack on March 26. The Federal Minister was received by high-ranking government officials and a Pakistani Embassy representative at Wuhan airport, where he also attended the special ceremony held to pay homage to the five deceased personnel.

Later, the Federal Minister held a meeting with Ms. Chen Ping, Vice Governor of Hubei Province, and offered his deepest condolences on the loss of innocent lives while reiterating Pakistan's solemn commitment to bringing to justice the perpetrators who committed this heinous crime.

The Minister also paid rich tribute to the Chinese personnel for their invaluable contribution to the development and progress of Pakistan and vowed that the government and people of Pakistan would never let the evil plans against China-Pakistan relations succeed.

IMF demands to end subsidies for 'protected' consumers

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has called for an end to subsidies for the poorest consumers called "protected", while also issuing directives to gas consumers.

According to the IMF, protected gas consumers should be protected under the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Mechanism. While the IMF has given new instructions to the authorities regarding the cross-subsidy of gas consumers.

quoting IMF sources, protected gas consumers should be protected under the BISP mechanism, cross-subsidy should be phased out till protected gas consumers are protected. Budget subsidy should be removed to transfer Re-gasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) to domestic consumers. It is pertinent to note that a subsidy of 40 billion rupees was given to the household consumers for their transfer to RLNG, and a subsidy of 29 billion rupees was given to consumers for their transfer to RLNG.

According to reports

Court cancels arrest warrants of Amin Gandapur

ISLAMABAD (APP): A local court on Monday cancelled the arrest warrants of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in a case pertaining to protest and vandalizing the public property.

Judicial Magistrate Naveed Khan issued the order and adjourned hearing of the case against Gandapur till May 20.

Earlier, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had approached the District and Sessions Court of Islamabad to cancel the non-bailable arrest warrant in the long march and vandalism case.

The petition has stated that Ali Amin Gandapur never deliberately avoided appearance in the court. It has been stated in the application that Ali Amin Gandapur could not appear in the court due to his election engagements, and he apologizes unconditionally for disobeying the court orders.



FAISALABAD: The Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, Mr Atadjan Movlammov, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President for early finalization of Transit Trade Agreement with Turkmenistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday called for an early finalization of the Transit Trade Agreement with Turkmenistan to further boost bilateral cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

The President, talking to the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan Atadjan Movlammov who called on him, said that the agreement, once signed, would help expand trade, promote regional connectivity as well as enhance economic activities in the region. The ambassador congratulated President Zardari on assuming the office of the President for the second time, according to a President House press release.

Both sides expressed the desire for the early

completion of the TAPI Gas Pipeline, which would not only support Pakistan's economy but would also help meet its energy needs.

Welcoming the ambassador, the president said that Pakistan attached special value to its bilateral relations with Turkmenistan due to the centuries-old historical, religious and cultural links and wished to increase high-level exchanges to give fresh impetus to bilateral ties.

He expressed Pakistan's desire to work with Turkmenistan to further enhance mutually beneficial cooperation.

The president highlighted that the existing volume of trade between the two countries needed to be improved for the mutual benefit of the two countries. President Zardari

fondly recalled his visit to Turkmenistan during his first term as the president in 2010 to participate in the TAPI Summit as well as the 4th International Neuroze Festival in 2013.

The ambassador of Turkmenistan conveyed the warm greetings of the Turkmen President, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, and former President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov to President Asif Ali Zardari on his election.

He said that the Transit Trade Agreement was not only important for both friendly countries but also for the region as it would generate huge transit trade activities. He expressed warm wishes for the leadership of Turkmenistan and thanked them for their felicitatory message on his election.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif presenting a souvenir to Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), H.E. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al Zaabi.

Khawaja Asif says

No Immediate relief to masses as country nears financial collapse

SIALKOT (INP): In a candid revelation, Defense Minister Khawaja Asif acknowledged that Pakistan stands on the brink of financial collapse, resembling a default scenario.

Speaking to the press in Sialkot, Asif highlighted the gravity of the situation, attributing it primarily to the country's near-bankruptcy and rampant tax evasion plaguing various sectors.

"As it stands, the government is unable to provide immediate relief to the populace," remarked Asif, addressing the dire economic predicament. He pointed out that a staggering number of citizens, particularly in key sectors such as retail and wholesales, evade their tax obligations, exacerbating the nation's

economic woes. Shockingly, only a fraction of the population, amounting to a mere few hundred thousand individuals, diligently fulfill their tax duties.

Compounding the issue, Asif revealed that tax disputes worth a colossal 2.6 trillion rupees linger unresolved in the courts, with the judiciary's sluggishness further impeding any semblance of fiscal stability. The burden of taxation disproportionately burdens the salaried class, exacerbating the socio-economic disparities within the country.

However, Asif expressed cautious optimism for a turnaround within the next 18 to 24 months, citing the government's strategic policies as the beacon of hope.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz and Quaid PML-N Muhammad Nawaz Sharif presiding over a meeting regarding Agriculture Department.

SC takes suo motu notice of IHC judges' letter

Seven-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, to hear case on Wednesday

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Monday took suo motu notice of Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges' allegations of interference by intelligence agencies, says in media reports.

Six serving judges of Islamabad High Court (IHC) penned a letter to Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), urging it to summon a judicial convention to review the matter of "interference of intelligence agencies with judicial functions".

IHC top judges including Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Baqir Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, and Justice Salman Rafat Imtiaz - penned the letter to SJC in the aftermath of Supreme Court's March 22 judgement on Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's dismissal case.

In the letter, the top judges sought guidance

Letter by 6 judges of IHC: Justice (Retd) Tassaduq refused to become Chairman of commission

ISLAMABAD (Online): Justice (Retd) Tassaduq Hussain Jilani has refused to become chairman of commission constituted in the perspective of letter written by 6 judges of Islamabad High Court (IHC)

Justice (Retd) Tassaduq Hussain Jilani has informed Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif about his decision, through a letter.

He said in his letter to PM that he is grateful to PM and cabinet for expressing confidence on him. I am grateful to chief justice and senior judge justice Mansoor Ali Shah for their trust on me.

The letter of 6 judges was written to Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) and its chairman Chief Justice of Pakistan.

Investigating by me any matter which falls under jurisdiction of constitutional institution, SJC or SC will be violation of the judicial rules. The TORs set for inquiry don't conform to letters of 6 judges.

from the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) with regard to the duty of a "judge to report and respond to actions on part of members of the executive, including operatives of intelligence agencies, that seek to interfere with discharge of his/her official functions and

qualify as intimidation". A seven-member

larger bench headed by the CJP will take up the case on Wednesday. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Jamal Mandokhail, Justice Atiq Minallah, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan will be the members of the larger bench. The hearing will take place at 11-30am on Wednesday.



WUHAN: To express solidarity with the government and people of China, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development arrived in Wuhan, China, on the special flight that carried the mortal remains of five Chinese personnel, who died in a terrorist attack on 26 March, 2024.

Punjab CM gives approval to set up research endowment fund

Independent Report LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday gave approval to establish a research endowment fund worth Rs 500 million for Ayub Research Center.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and PML Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif co-chaired a meeting to review challenges of agriculture in Punjab, said a handout issued here. She

said, "When a farmer applies for a loan, it should be ensured that the loan is issued as soon as possible. The department should devise a fool-proof system of monitoring and feedback of the loan scheme."

Maryam Nawaz also gave in-principle approval of a pilot project for the recruitment of agriculture officers and field assistants against vacant posts. She directed to ensure adherence to merit in the recruitment process. In the meeting, it was decided to ensure coordination of the sub-institutions of the Agriculture Department for research, better performance and good governance. PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said, "Lack of quality seeds even after the lapse of four decades is a matter of grave concern."

He said, "Effective steps should be taken to plug the wastage of 37

MAF water from wastage in Punjab." He emphasised the need to use modern methods of irrigation.

The Secretary Agriculture in his briefing on various projects for the development of agriculture in Punjab apprised that 1.7 MAF of water could be saved by paving 7300 water courses (Khalas) in Punjab. A proposal to return rainwater to the ground by reverse pumping to improve groundwater levels was also reviewed in the meeting.

Moreover, necessary measures to increase the rate of farm mechanization from 35 to 60 percent in Punjab were also discussed.

It was decided in the meeting that Rs150 billion loan will be given to farmers for Rabi and Kharif crops. PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif directed formulating simple eligibility criteria for the farmers to avail loans.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Government support?

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb wants to conclude a larger, medium-term deal with the IMF before the current fiscal year is out. He is also hopeful of getting to the finish line in time. Speaking to reporters at the PSX on Friday, he expressed hopes of reaching a staff-level agreement for the new programme with the Fund by end FY24.

According to him, the lender has been "very receptive" to Pakistan's request for a larger programme in recent communications. While there was no final decision yet, he said, "it is our desire that by the time we wrap up this fiscal year an [agreement] is reached". He has repeatedly argued that Pakistan requires IMF discipline for at least the next three years to "execute" the long-delayed structural changes in the economy.

Apparently, the finance minister has also earned the goodwill of the lender, and the upcoming talks on the new programme on the margins of the spring meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions will, hopefully, pave the way for early finalisation of the new loan programme.

At a time when the minister needs the government's full backing to pull off the crucial deal and implement tough economic reforms over the next several years, it seems that some circles are trying to undermine his role in the cabinet. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's decision to name Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar to the all-important Council of Common Interests and keep Mr Aurangzeb out of it looks like an attempt to contain his role in decision-making.

Sadly, this was not the only occasion, since the formation of the new government a month ago, that he has been sidelined. Some days ago, Mr Sharif, in a break from tradition, decided to chair the ECC, the top policymaking forum. It was only after widespread criticism that he yielded the position to the finance minister. Likewise, the latter's role in the privatisation process was also diminished when Mr Dar was appointed head of the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation. In the CCI's case, what exactly is the foreign minister expected to contribute to the council's deliberations? On the other hand, the presence of the finance minister in the CCI — the top constitutional forum mandated to discuss and decide on matters and disputes related to the federation and the provinces — is of utmost importance at this moment because the implementation of several IMF programme goals and policy reforms hinge on the active involvement of the federating units.

There is no better forum than the CCI to enlist the buy-in of the provinces on the IMF programme and reforms. It can only be hoped that sense will prevail and the prime minister will replace Mr Dar with his finance minister in the CCI in the larger interest of the country.

Rising waters

Zain Siddiqui

You have to feel for Pakistan's youth: it can't be easy growing up in a country where the adults are just not ready to admit their time is up. For starters, they barely get heard. Even though they form the bulk of the population, the only time we see them being discussed on national TV is when decrepit politicians and shop-soiled analysts are discrediting their political choices as 'idiotic' or 'immature'.

Beyond politics, it seems that Pakistan's older generations care little for the country's younger citizens; their dreams and aspirations, or the future they want in the country they call home. On the contrary, disdain for the young is growing so entrenched that even the word 'youth' has been corrupted into a slur. It's little wonder that so many young Pakistanis these days seem obsessed with fleeing the country and its suffocating environment.

The impatience of Pakistani youth is blamed as the root cause of social upheaval; their rough mannerisms — a symptom of their growing frustration — lamented as the reason for the country's 'moral decline'. Though such prejudices are perhaps not uncommon among the old anywhere in the world, in Pakistan, they're taking on a far more sinister colour.

'Pakistan needs saving from its wayward youth' has become a popular refrain in the corridors of power. The mantra has been used to justify denying Pakistan's younger demographic its right to participate in the political process. Consider for a moment what the official approach towards the youth is when the most powerful adult in Pakistan framed its

youth's right to self-determination thus: "If all the children in a household want to do heroin, is the father supposed to sit by and watch?"

Speaking of politics, for a fleeting moment after the recent general election, it seemed that Pakistan's youth had finally arrived. The electoral results seemed like a rather spectacular announcement of their coming of age. The oversized impact of the youth vote was confirmed in a post-poll survey conducted by Gallup Pakistan, which described the average Pakistani voter in the 2024 election as "overwhelmingly young". The political upset these young voters pulled off would not have been such a surprise had national-level planners actually been listening.

Pakistan has had a youth bulge for years. Prominent thinkers had long been highlighting that the country was in the midst of a generational shift that would dictate the trajectory of its sociopolitical, economic and cultural evolution for the next two or three decades. It was, therefore, only a matter of time before this demographic made its mark on national politics. Yet, instead of welcoming this historic shift, the forces of inertia were terrified by it. They tried desperately to ensure it remained contained. The sheer volume of young voters made it impossible. They have since been trying desperately to restore equilibrium. It will prove an uphill task.

In retrospect, it seems the boomers simply hadn't accounted for young Pakistanis doing what young people often do when you push down on them too hard. They sullenly nod along, act as if they agree with whatever they are being told, and then turn around and do precisely

that which they have been told not to. One can only imagine the satisfaction our rebellious young souls got as they watched the entire state machinery go into panic mode in desperation to undo the mischief they had caused.

But we digress. Back to our youth problem. The state, at some point, has to give in. It must realise it cannot win a war against something that has been ordained by time. Pull up any chart today showing the demographic distribution of Pakistan's population, and it will show you that the battle it is waging against the youth is all-ready lost. Millions upon millions of young Pakistanis are entering legal adulthood each year and, with it, becoming entitled to the lawful means of economic and political self-determination. Writing them off as 'addicts' or trying to control them by force seem to be dangerous ways of dealing with the colossal restructuring of the country's demographic base that is currently underway.

Pakistan already belongs to its youth — the older generations just aren't ready to accept it yet. Because of the latter's reluctance to let go, every time the former try to forcefully assert themselves, trouble will ensue. To avoid such confrontations, the state must figure out how to keep the youth engaged and involved. Political upheaval and economic deprivation are correlated. The state must realise it cannot fight young citizens driven to desperation by their economic conditions. It needs to at least provide some reassurance that their future is in good hands. A pro-youth stance will help restore social stability. The next budget would be a good place to start. — Courtesy Dawn

Targeting Chinese nationals

Muhammad Amir Rana

The Shangla terrorist attack on the Chinese engineers' vehicle is having consequences. Chinese companies have suspended work on at least three critical hydropower projects: the Dasu dam, the Diamer-Basha dam, and the Tarbela 5th Extension.

The attack has caused significant alarm. Apart from disrupting these vital infrastructure projects, it has shaken the confidence of Chinese nationals working in Pakistan. Reports indicate some are considering leaving the country due to safety concerns.

The Pakistani government has repeatedly pledged to bring the perpetrators to justice. However, the recent incident has eroded trust. Chinese social media reflects growing anxiety, with calls for stricter security measures to protect Chinese lives.

Whenever a major terrorist incident occurs in the country, the media, security experts, and even state institutions start to make sweeping generalisations about the event, the culprits, their motives, and the terrorist groups that could have been involved in such incidents.

The first and most well-known excuse cited in the attacks, especially those targeting Chinese nationals or CPEC-related projects. Three names of terrorist groups spring to mind: Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Balochistan Liberation Army, and the Islamic State-Khorasan. They guess a specific group's involvement depends on the region; these three groups have specific operational bases.

The same is the case for the recent Shangla attack. The names of all three groups popped up immediately after the attack. The TTP has been

projected as the prime suspect, as one of its commanders was declared the mastermind behind a similar attack on the Chinese in Kohistan in 2021. The names of a few TTP commanders who may have orchestrated the attack are circulating in the media. Quickly jumping to conclusions distracts investigation and impacts the state's ability to tackle the security situation comprehensively.

Pakistan's militant landscape may not be too complex but is diverse. Ideologies, sociopolitical factors, and group dynamics all work within local contexts. In any counterterrorism inquiry, local context and dynamics are more important than broader ideological and political motivations.

Shangla, upper and lower Kohistan, and Battagram districts of the Hazara region in KP and the adjoining Diamer district in Gilgit-Baltistan share religious, social, tribal, ethnic, and cultural codes. The region has been frequently in the news due to 'honour' killings, burning of girls' schools, and the killing of Shia travellers. Recently, it has gained notoriety for attacks on Chinese workers involved in development projects in the area.

The Deobandi school is dominant in the region and blends with conservative social traditions, particularly the honour code. The resultant insularity has led to frequent interactions between the locals and Deobandi madrasahs, as well as sectarian and militant outfits in the country. The locals support these religious organisations, giving them financial and human resources, and weapons. Before receiving large compensation sums for the Dasu and Basha dams, the region thrived on timber smuggling.

Extremist tendencies

in the region are stronger than those in the neighbouring areas. Anti-Shia sentiment, blood feuds in the community, and a sense of ethnic superiority are ingrained.

The region has always been difficult to govern. Security institutions, bureaucracy, and the area's political leadership have tried to run the administration — while compromising on laws and rules. Even in cases of major disputes, the administration tries to resolve them through local jirgas and by involving religious scholars. This can result in leniency towards criminals, with many extremist elements taking the law into their own hands. However, this doesn't diminish the level of religious extremism present. Some residents may sympathise with the Uighur community in Xinjiang, and others may dislike the presence of foreigners on their land. These factors could be nurturing negative perceptions about Chinese nationals in the region.

One possible example of the local dynamics is seen in the blasphemy accusation against a Chinese official at the Dasu dam site last year. The incident highlighted that tensions could erupt.

While local groups may lack the capability to carry out large-scale attacks independently, past events like the killing of Shia passengers and the attack on tourists at Nanga Parbat demonstrate their capacity for violence. Their ability is amplified by support from like-minded groups within Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The government's strategy of outsourcing the maintenance of order to local and external religious figures needs to be revised to address these sentiments. A more comprehensive approach is needed to calm tensions. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

SIFC's initiative to establish country's largest IT Park in Islamabad laudable: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has highly appreciated the Special Investment Facilitation Council's (SIFC) decision to establish country's largest IT Park in Islamabad.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he said that the landmark decision was indeed a manifestation

of a significant stride-forward for Pakistan's expanding tech landscape and promising unparalleled opportunities for innovation and progress.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the mega project covering an area of 3.3 acres to be built in G-10 Sector of the federal capital will hopefully be a hub of technological advancement and array of facilities to

foster creativity and entrepreneurship.

He praised that the gigantic project, to work under public-private partnership, will have immense attraction for country's burgeoning freelance economy, will have a research center, a well-stocked library, software houses, conference rooms, dedicated work spaces for freelancers and start ups

and an exhibition area for showcasing cutting-edge IT products. The ICCI President further said that the project will not only create business opportunities for young entrepreneurs but will turn a big source of foreign exchange earnings for the country. He said the construction of an IT Park of such a paramount importance in Islamabad was the long-standing demand of the Islamabad Chamber.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the FPCCI meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal to address economic challenges through close collaboration.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari holds a meeting with PITC.

SACM on Industries visits KP-BOIT

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: A detail sector-wise briefing on on-going activities, progress, issues, challenges and future road map of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BOIT) was given to Abdul Karim Khan, Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Industries during his visit to the headquarters of the board here on Monday.

Director Business Facilitation, KP-BOIT, Mr. Iqbal Sarwar highlighted that functions and efficiency and role of KP-BOIT needs to be improved and strengthened so that

investment and trade can be better facilitated.

He further highlighted that SMART investment attraction techniques are required to be used to improve investment attraction, both foreign & local in the province.

He stated that Ease of Doing Business (EODB) and Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiatives (PRMI) were priority of the previous government and KP province should be ahead of others in terms of promoting and implementing Ease of Doing Business and creating an enabling business environment.

Farmers advised to start sweet potato cultivation immediately

FAISALABAD (APP): Farmers have been advised to start the cultivation of sweet potato (Shakar Qandi) immediately and complete it up to June for bumper crop.

Spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension) department said here on Monday that sweet potato was rich source of proteins, carbohydrates, vitamin and other minerals. He said that farmers should cultivate approved varieties of sweet potatoes over maximum space of their lands. Its cultivation should be started from first week of April and completed it up to June.

Jam Kamal assures FPCCI delegation of full support, promised to extend all facilitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) delegation on Monday called on Federal Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal to address economic challenges through close collaboration.

The delegation, led by Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the FPCCI, held discussions with the minister to address pressing economic matters, said a press release issued here.

During the meeting, the delegation congratulated the minister on his new appointment and pledged their full support towards collaborative efforts to address issues being facing the business community. Jam Kamal assured the FPCCI delegation of his commitment to addressing their concerns, emphasizing the importance of regular coordination meetings to facilitate smoother operations.

Chicken, eggs prices reach at Rs 445 per kg, Rs 290 per dozen

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of poultry chicken during the second half of the holy months of Ramadan reached at Rs 445 per kg and the price of poultry eggs reached Rs 290 per dozen in the open market in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The meat of the poultry chicken has reached Rs 650 to 660 per kg in the open market, according to the survey conducted by APP here on Monday.

The price of poultry chickens and eggs has been going above Rs 445 to 290 per kg and dozen for the last months, which is getting away from the purchasing power of consumers day by day.

The prices of poultry items have increased by 30 percent in the twin cities during the last month after Ramadan began, which has created huge volatility in the market.

WB, IFC to continue support for Pakistan's development goals

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Bank (WB) and International Finance Corporation (IFC) here on Monday expressed resolve to continue support for Pakistan's development goals and agendas for the welfare of the people of Pakistan.

According to press statement issued by finance ministry, Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb, was called on by WB Country Director, Najib Benhassine and Country Manager of International Finance Corporation (IFC), Zeeshan Ahmed Sheikh.

They discussed the

collaborative development strategies and initiatives aimed at promoting economic growth, enhancing financial stability, and fostering sustainable development within the country.

During the meeting, the importance of strengthening partnerships with international financial institutions like IFC and WB was highlighted. Discussion was done to leverage their expertise and resources for the country's development agenda.

The minister highlighted the government's commitment to creating an enabling environment for private

sector investment and ensuring transparency and accountability in financial matters. Respective representatives from WB and IFC appreciated the efforts of the government aimed at bringing reforms in economic and financial sectors to ensure sustained economic growth in terms of expanding the tax base, state-owned enterprise (SOEs) restructuring and Privatization.

They also discussed potential areas of cooperation and investment opportunities in various sectors, including agriculture, power sector, and IT.

Gold rates increased by Rs2,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs2,800 and was sold at Rs237,600 on Monday as compared to its last day rate of Rs234,800. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs2,401 and was sold at Rs203,704 against the sale price of Rs201,303 and 10 gram 22 karat gold also increased to Rs186,728 as against Rs184,528 respectively.

Exports witness 8.93% increase to \$22.914 bln in 9 months: PBS

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has reported that the exports from the country witnessed an increase of 8.93 percent during the first 9 months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The latest PBS data on Monday stated that the exports from the

country increased up to \$22.914 billion during July-March (2023-24) as against the exports of \$21.036 billion in July-March (2022-23), showing a growth of 8.93 percent.

On the other hand, imports into the country declined by 8.65 percent to \$39.944 billion this year against the imports of \$43.724 billion last year.

CM directs reservation of separate room for treatment of transgender at DHH

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur, while agreeing with the suggestion of Governor Haji Ghulam Ali regarding the provision of better treatment facilities to transgender, has issued instructions to the reservation of a separate room for the trans community in District Headquarter Hospitals of the province.

The decision was taken during a meeting between Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur on Sunday night. Mayor Peshawar, Haji Zubair Ali was also present in the meeting.

During the meeting,

Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and KP CM discussed different problems faced by the trans community of the province, and several decisions were taken.

Chief Minister, Ali Amin issued instructions to the Health Department for the reservation of a separate room for transgender for the provision of treatment facilities to them at District Headquarter Hospitals.

Chief Minister also agreed over the provision of land for a separate graveyard for the transgender community and a notification in this regard will be issued soon.

Haji Ghulam Ali apprised Ali Amin about the challenges faced by

transgender in the burial of a community member as people did not allow them to perform the last rituals of the deceased in their respective graveyards.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur also held out assurance of inviting the transgender community to the CM house for a meeting with him.

It merits a mention here that Governor Haji Ghulam Ali in a unique gesture of humility and humbleness, spent his Sunday holiday with 300 transgender of Peshawar by extending them special invitations for visiting the Governor House to share their problems and receive Ramzan Food packages.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali meeting with an elder disabled citizen during Ramzan ration distribution ceremony.

Awais Leghari directs to ensure follow up of all received complaints

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Power Sardar Awais Leghari while terming performance of Customer Care Service Centres of power distribution companies (DISCOs) unsatisfactory on Monday directed Pakistan Information Technology Company (PITC) to ensure follow up of all received complaints.

Chairing a meeting on working of customer care service centres here, he said, "every complaint received at the customer care centers across the country should be followed up with a phone call".

He said that the consumers should also be informed about the steps being taken to address their complaints, said a statement issued here.

This initiative sought to improve communication and transparency in the complaint resolution process.

The minister pointed out wrong reporting of address of consumer's complaints in the meeting. He also directed comprehensive analysis of all complaint received since 2018.

Court awards nine year sentence to a drug peddler

ATTOCK (APP): The court has awarded nine years imprisonment to a drug peddler and imposed fine of Rs.80,000, here on Monday.

The Control of Narcotics Substance Court in Attock, announced the judgment while hearing the case.

According to details, accused Muneer Hussain Shah was arrested by Attock Saddar Police in 2023, after recovering hashish from his possession. During the court trial, the prosecution presented strong evidence against Hussain Shah, proving his involvement in the illicit drug trade.

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Rescue 1122 on Monday issued a performance report of March, featuring a total of 647 emergencies tackled with an average seven minutes response time by the district's emergency service. Spokesman of the Rescue 1122 said while sharing details said the service provided first medical aid to about 649 patients and subsequently shifted them to hospitals.

Rescue 1122 Dikhan tackles 647 emergencies in March

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Minister chairs KP cities' improvement project meeting

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Archives and Libraries, Meena Khan Afridi has said that provision of clean water to the people is our top priority while tangible steps will be taken for keeping Peshawar clean and green.

The minister said this while chairing a meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP) Peshawar. On the occasion KP health Syed Qasim Ali Shah was also present while project director Zafar Ali Shah, Mian M. Shakeel director technical and chief engineer Dr. Mahboob Alam also attended the meeting.

The ministers were informed about the project and told that KPCIP Peshawar interventions in water

supply, green urban spaces and integrated solid waste management. Besides Peshawar, the project is also going on in four cities of the KP including Mingora, Kohat, Mardan and Abbottabad.

"Water Sanitations Services Peshawar (WSSP) is working in 5 operational zones of Peshawar. In these zones, there are 34 water tanks (water reservoirs) in which 23 will be reconstructed while 10 will be rehabilitated" said in the briefing. However, for collection of garbage, small and large loaders will be used aimed at cleaning the city, no waste touching the ground and for climate friendly disposal of solid waste.

The ministers were further informed that those water reservoirs will be solarized where there is no issue of space.



MULTAN: Labourers are busy loading sand on the tractor trolleys from the dry bed of the Chenab River.

Online registration begins for PITB training program for women

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) has started receiving applications for the 6th cohort of its training program 'SheWins' to improve the skills of women and help them in career building. The 5-week training program, focusing on e-Commerce and Social

Media Marketing, aims to equip women with the skills to explore better business opportunities and understand the balance of entrepreneurial life. In this regard, PITB Chairman Faisal Yousef highlighted the program's objective to empower women to become self-reliant in their professional lives.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers busy unloading wheat sacks from delivery truck at grain Market in the Federal Capital.

BISP announces over 80% disbursement success rate to 85,000 beneficiaries

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): The Zonal Director of BISP AJK Dr Abdul Aziz Qurashi, announced that Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) AJK region has achieved a significant milestone in its BISP Kafaalat Disbursement Program, a vital component of BISP's ongoing efforts to alleviate poverty and empower disadvantaged communities, has demonstrated remarkable efficiency and impact since its inception. By providing essential financial support to those in need, the program aims to enhance the socio-economic well-being of vulnerable segments of society.

thousand BISP beneficiaries, reaching a total percentage success rate exceeding 80 per cent.

He stated that the BISP Kafaalat Disbursement Program, a vital component of BISP's ongoing efforts to alleviate poverty and empower disadvantaged communities, has demonstrated remarkable efficiency and impact since its inception. By providing essential financial support to those in need, the program aims to enhance the socio-economic well-being of vulnerable segments of society.

Two persons burnt in CPEIC cylinder blast incident

MULTAN (APP): Two persons were burnt including a perfusionist and a technician who operates machines during cardiovascular operation when a cylinder blast occurred in the operation theatre of Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi Institute of Cardiology (CPEIC) here on Monday. Sources in CPEIC told this news agency that the incident took place in Operation Theatre near the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). They informed that two persons, a hospital technician and a passer were burnt.

FBR issues all sale tax refund claims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Monday issued all sale tax refund claims of exporter.

According to the FBR statement, the board has issued all sale tax claims prior to March 21, 2024.

Business delegation visits Kyrgyzstan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pak Trade delegation Monday concluded a fruitful two-week visit to Kyrgyzstan, marking a significant stride in bilateral economic relations.

The delegation led by prominent business figure Meher Kashif Younis, an honorary Consul Kyrgyzstan in Lahore, it engaged in intensive negotiations and collaborative discussions aimed at fostering trade ties between the two countries.

After arrival, he said throughout the visit, delegates explored avenues for enhanced cooperation in various sectors, including agriculture, textiles, technology, and energy. They participated in business forums, networking events, and one-on-one meetings with Kyrgyz counterparts, laying the groundwork for future joint ventures and investments.

He said the delegation showcased Pakistan's diverse range of products and services, highlighting its competitive edge and commitment to quality. Meanwhile, they also gained valuable insights into Kyrgyzstan's market dynamics, regulatory framework, and investment opportunities.

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International News

In setback to Turkey's Erdogan, opposition makes huge gains in local election

ANKARA: Turkey's main opposition party retained its control over key cities and made huge gains elsewhere in Sunday's local elections, in a major upset to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who had set his sights on retaking control of those urban areas.

With more than 90% of ballot boxes counted, incumbent Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, of the Republican People's Party, or CHP, was leading by a wide margin in Turkey's largest city and economic hub, according to the state-run Anadolu Agency. Mansur Yavas, the mayor of the capital, Ankara, retained his seat with a stunning 25-point difference over his challenger, the results indicated.

In all, the CHP won the municipalities of 36 of Turkey's 81 provinces, according to Anadolu, making inroads into many strongholds of Erdogan's party. It gained 37% of the votes nationwide, compared to 36% for the president's party, marking the CHP's greatest electoral victory since Erdogan came to power two decades ago.

"Unfortunately, nine months after our victory in the May 28 elections, we could not get the result we wanted in the local election test," Erdogan added. "We will correct our mistakes and redress our shortcomings." He vowed to press ahead with an economic program introduced last year that aims to combat inflation.

The vote was seen as

a barometer of Erdogan's popularity as he sought to win back control of key urban areas he lost to the opposition in elections five years ago. The CHP's victory in Ankara and Istanbul in 2019 had shattered Erdogan's aura of invincibility. The main battleground for the 70-year-old Turkish president was Istanbul, a city of 16 million people where he was born and raised and where he began his political career as mayor in 1994. The result came as a boost for the opposition, which was left divided and demoralized after a defeat to Erdogan and his ruling Islamic-oriented Justice and Development Party, or AKP, in last year's presidential and parliamentary elections.

Russia extends detention of US-Russian journalist Kurmasheva

KAZAN (AFP/APP): A Russian court on Monday extended until June 5 the pre-trial detention of US-Russian journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, who faces 15 years in prison on charges of spreading "false information," according to her employer.

In court in the central city of Kazan on Monday, Kurmasheva smiled but complained about the poor conditions in which she was being held.

"This cell is five square metres for two people. There is no hot water. Instead of a toilet there is a hole in the floor," she said. A journalist at the US-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), she was arrested last year for failing to register as a "foreign agent". RFE/RL says she was subsequently charged with spreading false information under new censorship laws introduced after Russia launched its military offensive on Ukraine in 2022.



Smoke rises after what the Iranian media said was an Israeli strike on a building close to the Iranian embassy in Damascus, Syria.

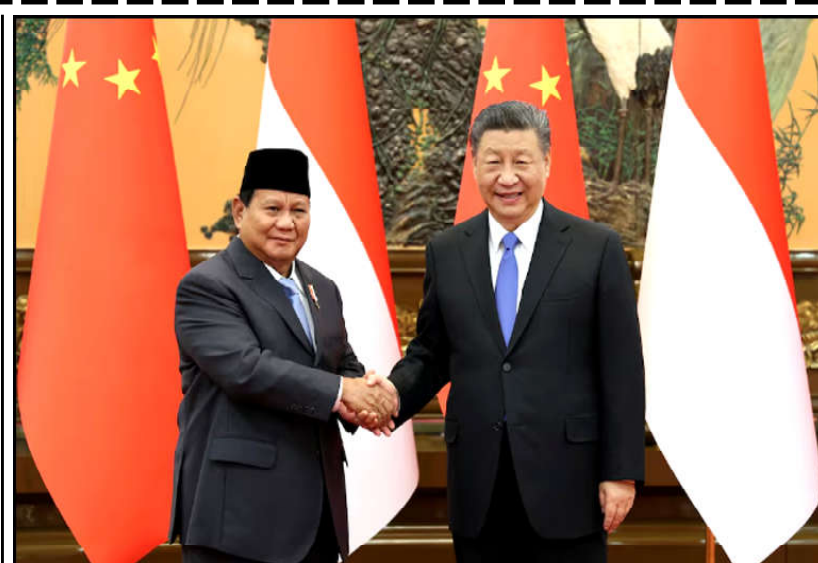
Moscow asks Kyiv to hand over those linked to terror acts

MOSCOW: The foreign ministry on Sunday called on Kyiv to hand over all persons linked to terrorist acts in Russia, including head of Ukrainian security service.

A Russian Foreign Ministry statement listed violent incidents that have occurred in Russia since the Kremlin's forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022, including bombings that killed the

daughter of a prominent nationalist and a war blogger, and an incident in which a writer was seriously hurt.

The ministry said investigation of these incidents showed that "the traces of these crimes lead to Ukraine." "Russia has turned over to Ukrainian authorities its demands ... for the immediate arrest and extradition of all those connected to the terrorist acts in question."



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indonesia's President-elect Prabowo Subianto shake hands at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China.

Syria says an Israeli airstrike has destroyed Iran's consulate building in Damascus, with deaths

DAMASCUS: An Israeli airstrike has destroyed the consular section of Iran's embassy in Damascus, killing or wounding everyone inside, Syrian state media said Monday.

The Iranian Arabic-language state television Al-Alam and pan-Arab television station Al-Mayadeen, which has reporters in Syria, said the strike killed Iranian military adviser Gen. Ali Reza Zahdi, who led the elite Quds Force in Lebanon and Syria until 2016.

Iranian Ambassador

Hossein Akbari condemned Israel and said as many as seven people were killed, but first responders were still searching for any other bodies under the rubble. He said two police officers who guard the building were wounded.

In comments to the media after meeting Akbari, Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad said "several" people were killed. Mekdad in a phone call with his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Akbari, condemned Israel over the attack.

Afghanistan confirms detention 2 Americans for 'violating law'

KABUL (INP): Afghanistan's government has arrested two United States nationals over violations of law in the country, spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said on Monday.

Mujahid did not reveal the identities of the detained individuals and said that other foreigners have also been arrested. "I think there are two Americans, and the reasons for their arrest are not clear yet; but whatever the reasons, anyone coming to Afghanistan is obliged to observe the laws of Afghanistan."

Over 4,000 beggars arrested in vicinity of Masjid Al-Haram

MAKKAH (INP): Saudi police arrested more than 4,000 beggars while conducting operations around Masjid al-Haram.

According to Arab News, the Department of Public Security has instructed citizens and foreigners living in the kingdom not to give charity to professional beggars.

The Saudi authorities say that begging is strictly forbidden in Islam. Pilgrims should not give charity to anyone.

Thousands rally against Netanyahu govt in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM: Tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Jerusalem on Sunday against Benjamin Netanyahu's government and against exemptions granted to ultra-Orthodox Jewish men from military service, in scenes reminiscent of mass street protests last year.

Protest groups, including some that led the mass demonstrations that rocked Israel in 2023, organised the rally outside parliament, the Knesset,

calling for a new election to replace the government.

The protesters also want a more equal share in the burden of army service that binds most Israelis. Around 600 soldiers have been killed so far since Oct 7 and the ensuing war in Gaza, the military's highest casualty toll in years. Israel's N12 News said it appeared to be the largest demonstration since the war began. Haaretz and Ynet news sites said it drew tens of thousands of people.

9 children killed by landmine blast in Afghanistan

KABUL: Nine children were killed in a blast in southeastern Afghanistan caused by a landmine, laid during the country's decades of conflict, a provincial official said on Monday.

The mine went off as a group of young boys and girls were playing with it in the Geru district of Ghazni province on Sunday, said the provincial head of the information and culture department, Hamidullah Nisar.

"An unexploded mine left over from the time of the Russian invasion went off when they were playing with it," Nisar told AFP. "Unfortunately, it killed nine children."

Ghazni police said the children — five girls and four boys — were aged from four to ten years old.

Swathes of Afghanistan are littered with unexploded mines, grenades and mortars from decades of conflict, spanning from the Soviet invasion in 1979, the civil war that followed, and the 20-year Taliban insurgency against foreign-backed governments.

Violence has reduced dramatically since the Taliban seized power in August 2021, ending their insurgency.

Unexploded ordnance and mines, however, still claim lives regularly, with the International Committee of the Red Cross saying children are the main victims.

Also on Sunday, another child died and five other people were wounded when unexploded ordnance went off in Herat province, local police said on social media platform X.

New Indonesia leader visits China, promises close ties

BEIJING: Indonesia's president-elect Prabowo Subianto visited Beijing on Monday on his first foreign trip since his election, and was quoted by Chinese state media as telling President Xi Jinping he aimed to continue the close ties under predecessor Joko Widodo.

Prabowo "fully supports the development of closer Indonesia-China relations and wishes to continue President Joko's policy of friendship with China," China's CCTV quoted Prabowo as saying.

The new Indonesian government will promote the alignment of development strategies between the two countries and push for more results in cooperation in fields such as the economy, trade and poverty alleviation, he said.

Prabowo, now Indonesia's defence minister, also said that he

viewed China as a key partner.

"Regarding defence cooperation, I view China as one of the key partners in ensuring regional peace and stability," he said in a statement, adding that he sought to boost defence cooperations with China.

"I also commit to fulfil the needs of Indonesia's military hardware, boost cooperation in the defence industry and establish productive dialogues," he added.

Xi described Prabowo as an "old friend of the Chinese people" and said China views its relations with Indonesia from a strategic and long-term perspective, standing ready to deepen all-round strategic cooperation.

Prabowo, 72, was elected in February but will not be sworn in until October. A long-time rival of the outgoing leader popularly known as Jokowi.



ISLAMABAD: The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) meeting, chaired by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, convened on Monday and approved one development project alongside a concept clearance proposal. Secretary Planning Awaiz Manzoor Sumra, Members Planning Commission, Additional Secretary Planning Kamran Rehman, representatives of the federal ministries and provincial governments attended the meeting.

ECP issues list of contenders

Polling on vacant seats of Senate to be held today

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has finalized the arrangements for the upcoming Senate elections, scheduled to take place today (Tuesday). According to the commission, voting will be conducted in both the National and provincial assemblies from 9 am to 4 pm.

Ballot papers have been printed in four different colours for the Senate elections to represent various categories of seats. White papers will be used for general seats, green for technocrat seats, pink for women seats, and yellow for minority seats.

The delivery of election materials, including ballot papers, to the returning officer has been completed, ensuring the smooth conduct of the electoral process.

In some assemblies, candidates have been elected unopposed. All 11 candidates from the Balochistan Assembly have been elected unopposed, along with candidates on seven general seats from the Punjab Assembly.

However, in other regions, contests are underway. In Islamabad, two candidates each are competing for general and technocrat seats.

In Punjab, there are four candidates for women's seats, and three each for technocrat and ulema seats. Moreover, two candidates are contesting

the minority seat in the province. On the other hand, there are 11 candidates for general seats and three for women's seats from Sindh. There are four candidates for technocrat seats and two for minority seats.

From Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there are 16 candidates running for general seats and four candidates for women's seats. Moreover, there is a contest among six candidates on ulema and technocrat seats.

The election commission has declared that the Senate poll in KP Assembly will be postponed if the members on reserved seats are not sworn in.

Effective measures to combat crime and ensure public safety ordered

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to details, the CPO/ DIG Operations Syed Shahzad

Aabpara and Sihala were dismissed from service due to poor performance, and in-charges of 7 po-

lice stations with weak performance were suspended.

who show improvement will remain part of our team. All staff should remain present in their re-



Nadeem Bukhari presided over an important meeting to assess the current situation of crime in the federal capital, a public relations officer said.

He said that the meeting was attended by SSP Operations, zonal DPOs, SDPOs, and all in-charge police stations.

During the meeting, the performance of all police stations was evaluated, and each officer was individually questioned. In-charge police stations of

pective police stations and will leave by the permission of the DPO, he added.

He further directed the officials to intensify the crackdown against absconders, strengthen control on checkpoints manned by officers from concerned stations. Corruption and unethical behavior will not be tolerated. Only those in-charge police stations who demonstrate merit and good performance will be allowed to continue.

All other in-charge police stations have been given four days to improve their performance. Those

IHC orders for arranging meeting of PTI founder with Bushra on Eid

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered for arranging meeting of PTI founder with his wife Bushra Bibi on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

how can the government declare private property of any one as sub-jail.

The court while summoning arguments on next hearing adjourned the hearing of the case for indefinite period. State counsel said director law visited Bani Gala sub jail under the order of court and he has issued report.

The court directed state counsel to provide copy of report to petitioner remarking "has the officer who has visited Bani gala sub jail become satisfied over facilities."

During the hearing of the case Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb while moving to state counsel remarked 141 women entered after January 31 conviction. You said that jail was overcrowded. You mean that there should be only politics. Community thinks that they are giving charity by imprisoning in Bani Gala. On one side it is being said space is less and prisoners are more. On the other hand 141 women were entered. When new women were sent into jail then any justification for not shifting Bushra Bibi remained no more.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb while expressing annoyance over Adiala jail administration and chief commissioner report for not shifting Bushra Bibi to Adiala jail and not arranging her meeting with PTI founder remarked it is all politics. You could not satisfy the court.

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CDWP okays three projects including National Forensic Science Agency for Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) has approved three projects including a National Forensic Science Agency (5th revised PC-1), which would be set up in the federal capital at a cost of Rs1,831.114 million.

The establishment of a National Forensic Science Agency is a project in the physical planning and housing sector," a news release said on Monday.

"This a revised version of the project which focuses solely on the Islamabad agency, whereas the original project approved in 2002 was aimed at establishing forensic science laboratories across provincial headquarters, with a main laboratory and training facilities in Islamabad."

The CDWP meeting, chaired by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, was attended among others by Secretary Planning Awaiz Manzoor Sumra, Members Planning Commission, Additional Secretary Planning Kamran Rehman, representatives of the federal ministries and provincial governments.

The forum also okayed a concept clearance proposal for the "Promoting Sustainable Public Private Partnership Program" with a total cost of US\$500 million. The CDWP approved the first phase of the programme valued \$250 million, which aimed at improving the environment for infrastructure financing by promoting public-private partnerships (PPPs) at the federal level.

It would help attract private investment in crucial sectors like roads, housing, healthcare, education, water & sanitation, and technology, following a programmatic approach to implement core policy, legal and institutional reforms and build capacity within relevant institutions to ensure long-term sustainability. "It aligns with Pakistan's Vision 2025 pillars, which aim to transform Pakistan's economy into one of the top 10 in the world by 2047."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan and Ambassador WADA Mitsuhiro in a meeting to discuss ways to strengthen trade relations and mutual trust between Japan and Pakistan.

Jam Kamal, Envoy reiterate to boost Pak-Japan trade ties

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan and Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, WADA Mitsuhiro have reiterated to strengthen trade relations and mutual trust between Japan and Pakistan.

The Japanese Ambassador congratulated Jam Kamal Khan on his recent portfolio, expressing a commitment to enhancing bilateral ties.

Notably, the ambassador extended an invitation to Pakistani businessmen to participate in World Expo 2025 which was scheduled to be held in Osaka Japan in 2025 to promote economic cooperation.

Despite the optimism, challenges faced by the Japanese business community in imports were brought to light by Ambassador WADA Mitsuhiro.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan responded by assuring government support to facilitate ease of doing business for local and international entrepreneurs.

Emphasizing sustainable economic development, Minister Jam Kamal Khan highlighted key sectors such as automobile, steel, machinery, textiles, minerals, and IT HR for potential collaboration with Japan.

Moreover, Minister Jam Kamal Khan disclosed the Ministry of Commerce's comprehensive five-year plan aimed at streamlining business processes and attracting both local and foreign investors.

Both dignitaries reaffirmed their commitment to fostering a balanced trade environment and strengthening the longstanding bilateral relations between Pakistan and Japan.

Youm-e-Ali commemorated with processions across major cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Youm-e-Ali, the martyrdom anniversary of fourth pious caliph of Islam, Maula Ali ibn Abi Talib, was observed with deep reverence and devotion.

night, culminating at Sehri on Monday.

Hazrat Ali met his fate tragically on the 21st of Ramadan, 40 AH (661 CE), succumbing to fatal injuries inflicted by a Kharijite dissident, Ibn Muljim, during his journey to perform the Fajr prayer in the city of Kufa, Iraq, throughout the country, majalis were held where zakireen narrate and expound upon the life and teachings of Hazrat Ali.

Processions, a hallmark of this solemn occasion, traverse the streets, symbolizing unity and remembrance.

In Islamabad and Rawalpindi, processions commenced on Sunday

Stringent security arrangements were in place nationwide, with participants passing through walk-through gates and metal detectors.

Mustafa directed CDA to ensure supply of clean water for every citizen

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Syed Ghulam Mustafa directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to ensure supply of safe and clean drinking water for every citizen in capital.

He expressed his displeasure over CDA water supply management as recent report of Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) found water samples in Parliament Lodges and Parliament House contaminated.

Mustafa Shah expressed these views during his meeting with Senior officers of CDA to take cognizant of recent report of PCRWR in Parliament House Islamabad.

Radio Pakistan continues to broadcast Holy Quran with Urdu translation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Radio Pakistan's Saut-ul-Quran Channel continues to broadcast the Holy Quran with Urdu Translation since 2015.

At present, Saut-ul-Quran channel can be accessed in 19 cities including Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Multan, Faisalabad, Narawal, Bahawalpur, Hyderabad, Khairpur, Mithi, Gilgit, Skardu, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Gwadar, Sibbi, Mirpur, Peshawar, and Karachi.

People are tuning in to the FM-93.4 Saut-ul-Quran channel to douse their souls in the blessings of the holy month.

The Saut-ul-Quran channel of Radio Pakistan

Jhelum land NAB case: IHC approves bail after arrest plea of Fawad, orders to release him

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while approving bail after arrest plea of former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry NAB case related to Jhelum land has ordered to release him.

A division bench of IHC comprising Chief Justice (CJ) Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri took up the case for hearing Monday.

Lawyer Qaisar Imam appeared in the court on behalf of Fawad Chaudhry.

The counsel for Fawad Chaudhry argued arrest warrants were issued on December 18, 2023. Five alle-

gations have been leveled against Fawad Chaudhry. Allegation is there that Fawad Chaudhry used his political influence in the project.

Prosecutor Raffeh Maqsood told the court we have witness who says that Fawad Chaudhry took bribe amounting to Rs 50 lac.

CJ IHC Aamer Farooq inquired how case of Rs 50 lac comes under the jurisdiction of NAB.

NAB prosecutor took the plea case is at inquiry stage now. We are ascertaining more details. We have issued letter to all institutions including ECNEC.

Health ministers chairs 2nd meeting of health advisory

LAHORE: The second meeting of the Health Advisory Committee convened in the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education (SH&ME), chaired by Provincial Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique highlighted the construction of a state-of-the-art Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology in Sargodha, aiming to provide modern medical facilities to residents. He emphasized the government's commitment to delivering healthcare services efficiently.

Khawaja Salman Rafique stressed the need for additional cardiology hospitals in Punjab to address the growing disease burden, aligning with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to centralize cancer treatment facilities.

Both the ministers participated via video link, while attendees included Punjab Health Secretary Ali Jan Khan, Special Secretaries, Additional Secretaries, CEO of Infrastructure Development Authority of the Punjab (IDAP) Captain Shameer, and other officials. Vice Chancellors of King Edward Medical University and University of Child Health Sciences, along with medical experts, were also present.