

Independent

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Complete independence impossible without economic stability: COAS

Says inimical forces impeding Pakistan's development to be failed with nation's support: Negative propaganda and social media trolls will not distract from working toward nation's prosperity and development; No instability to be tolerated in country's journey of prosperity: We are all a united team Pakistan.

RAWALPINDI (Online): Army chief Gen Syed Asim Munir has said the efforts of those who obstruct the development journey and divert attention from it will fail with the support of the people.

He said this while addressing participants at the Green Pakistan Initiative Conference.

He held negative propaganda and social media trolls could not divert their attention from Pakistan and working towards the development and prosperity of its people.

The COAS reaffirmed the resolve to overcome obstacles and focus on national advancement. "In today's era, complete independence without economic stability is not possible," he stressed.

Furthermore, he reiterated his commitment to zero tolerance for any form of instability that could impede the nation's journey towards prosperity. "No instability will be tolerated in Pakistan's journey of prosperity and development," he asserted.

In a call to action, the army chief urged all stakeholders to unite in rejecting negative forces and distractions, and focus on Pakistan's journey of development and stability.

"Let us all reject the negative forces, focus on Pakistan journey to development and stability and forge unity besides putting Pakistan on path to development, he added.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir addresses during the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI) Conference held in Rawalpindi.



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

Pakistan committed to deepen collaboration with SCO: Kh Asif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Defence & Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif is leading the Pakistan delegation to Kazakhstan for the annual meeting of the Defence Ministers of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The meeting reviewed the regional security issues, including the defence cooperation initiatives, a news release said. The Defence Minister also held meetings with the defence ministers of the friendly countries of the SCO to discuss issues of bilateral defence cooperation.

Various areas of mutual interest including respective regional security, counter terrorism, Afghanistan situation and review of national security priorities, extremist threats, border management and maritime security were also deliberated upon.

Minister of Defence stated that Pakistan is deeply concerned about the escalating situation in Gaza. Pakistan has consistently advocated for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian question anchored in international law and in line with relevant United Nations resolutions. He also said that Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the SCO platform.

"I would reiterate that Pakistan takes great pride in our partnership with SCO and are fully committed to further deepening and expanding this association," said the Minister for Defence while addressing the forum.

der management and maritime security were also deliberated upon. Minister of Defence stated that Pakistan is deeply concerned about the escalating situation in Gaza. Pakistan has consistently advocated for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian question anchored in international law and in line with relevant United Nations resolutions. He also said that Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the SCO platform.

Aleem Khan told NA NHA's flood damaged portion's repair to be completed by Dec

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan Friday informed the National Assembly that the restoration of the old national highway, damaged by floods, is scheduled to be finished by December 2024.

Replying to a calling attention notice in the House, he said that an amount of Rs 500 million has been approved in the financial year 2023-24, for repair of flood-damaged highways.

The minister assured the House that work on the highways would commence during this month and expressed the hope that it will be completed by end of this year.

Pakistan has given its reaction on US listing about ballistic missile program: FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch has said Pakistan has given its reaction on US listing regarding ballistic missile program and we have informed US about our reservations.

She said this during her weekly press briefing in FO here Friday.

She held President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi visited Pakistan this week. This was the first visit by an Iranian leader in seven years.

This visit provided an opportunity for the two sides to hold in-depth talks

on all aspects of bilateral relations and regional and global developments.

There was agreement to expand cooperation in economic, cultural and security domains and to transform the Pakistan-Iran border into a border of peace, friendship and prosperity. In this context, the two sides will promote bilateral trade; fast track negotiations on Free Trade Agreement; develop joint border markets and economic free zones; and promote connectivity including mutually beneficial relationships between the ports of Gwadar and Chabahar.

Nawaz Sharif set to lead PML-N again

LAHORE (INP) - Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif is set take the reins of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz once again, former interior minister Rana Sanaullah announced on Friday.

His declaration followed a crucial meeting of the PML-N Punjab chapter where party members and office-bearers unanimously passed a resolution to make Nawaz Sharif the president of the PML-N.

"Mian Nawaz Sharif ceased to be the president of the PML-N as the result of a controversial judicial order. All obstacles of suppression are over and he stands vindicated. The

PML-N will move forward under his leadership," Sanaullah asserted during a media interaction.

"Mian Nawaz Sharif has been requested to reassume the charge of the PML-N."

Sanaullah said that the former prime minister had been forcibly separated from the party in 2017.

He said that while incumbent PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif was attempting to rescue the country from economic crises day and night, Nawaz Sharif assuming the leadership role within the party would help overcome shortcomings and weaknesses.

Work started to establish forensic laboratory, prison in ICT: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (Online): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said that work has been started for the establishment of forensic laboratory and a prison in the federal capital.

Talking to the media persons in Islamabad Friday during his visit to Public Facilitation Center, he expressed the commitment to bring down crime rate in the capital territory. He said police stations of the capital will be transformed into three to four months. He said a criteria will be put in place for the registration of FIRs. He said the Safe City project will be further upgraded.

The Interior Minister said a proposal is being sent to the federal government for recruitment of two thousand police personnel in Islamabad. He said this strength is also required to

further enhance the security of Chinese nationals.

Mohsin Naqvi said the Public Facilitation Center will remain functional round the clock. He said this facilitation center is providing twenty eight services including those related to excise and traffic.

Earlier, while talking to media men at the Parliament House Islamabad, the Interior Minister said an effective strategy is being worked out for the security of Chinese nationals in Pakistan.

He said additional measures are being taken on war-footing for the security of the Chinese nationals.

The Interior Minister said a decision will soon be taken to initiate an action against illegal Afghan nationals. He said extension of three months has been given to the card holder Afghans.

Those behind causing loss to national economy will be held accountable: PM

Cabinet briefed on progress of PIA privatization; Extends validity of registered Afghan refugee cards to June 30

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the elements involved in the deep-rooted menace of corruption and criminal negligence for denting the national economy would be held accountable.

Referring to the track and trace system agreement made in 2019, the prime minister said this system was nothing but a cruel joke to the nation as no improvement was seen in the sectors of tobacco, cement, sugar and fertilizer.

He said the agreement was totally a fraud as even no penalty clause was included in it.

Chairing a meeting of the Cabinet at the PML House, he said that he had ordered to form an inquiry

committee in this regard that will present its report within 72 hours.

As regards the macro-economic indicators, the prime minister expressed satisfaction over the collective performance of both incumbent and the interim governments. He said according to a recently published report on Pakistan economy, many indicators including IT export, remittances, capital market were showing positive results due to the prudent policies of the government.

However, he maintained that lot of work needed to be done. The government will perform 'major surgical operation' to get rid of the deep-rooted flaws in the country's economy, he

added.

PM Shehbaz Sharif informed that he completed the power sector review in four phases in which important decisions were taken to minimize power theft and line losses, and to reduce prices of the electricity. Besides, he said the government had also decided in principle to divest the Distribution Companies (DISCOs).

He said the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had old and obsolete systems which needed to be replaced to increase the tax to GDP ratio. He pointed out that the FBR had the potential to earn extra revenues worth hundreds of billions of rupees by implementing reforms in its system.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Dawoodi Bohra community called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

PTI denied permission to hold Karachi power show

KARACHI (INP): The Karachi administration on Friday denied permission to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to hold a power show at Karachi's Bagh-e-Jinnah on April 28 sources said Friday. According to sources, the police report stated that the permission to hold a public gathering was denied, in light of potential security threats and the recent surge in terrorist activities in the city. In a report to District Commissioner, the Police urged against giving permission to PTI to hold a public gathering as there are threats of a possible terrorist attack in the port city.

SIC second largest party in NA, ECP tells NA secretariat

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday officially informed the National Assembly (NA) Secretariat that Sunni Alliance Council (SIC) is the second largest party in National Assembly.

As per details, ECP officially notified the National Assembly Secretariat regarding the party positions in NA. According to the ECP report, Sunni Alliance Council (SIC) has total 82 members including 49 from Punjab and 33 independent candidates after PTI-backed candidate joined the SIC, making it the second-largest party in the National Assembly.

Sunni Ittehad Council with 82 members (including 49 from Punjab and 33 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), PPP 71, MQM 21, JUL 11, PML-Q 5, IPP 4 and MWM, PKMAP, BNP.

PMAP, BAP PML-Z each have one member. The Election Commission has clarified that no specific seats have been allocated to the Sunni Ittehad Council.

The National Assembly Secretariat had requested the Election Com-

mission to provide an updated party position, which has now been notified. The development came after the NA Secretariat earlier announced that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent members of National Assembly (NA) cannot be considered lawmakers belonging to the Sunni Alliance Council (SIC) yet.

According to the details, the NA Secretariat said that it has not been conveyed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) about independent MNAs joining the SIC. "The PTI-backed lawmakers would be considered independents until the National Assembly Secretariat receives the party affiliation notification from the ECP," the secretariat said in a statement. On February 18, the PTI, whose candidates contested the February 8 general elections 'independently', decided to form an alliance with the SIC. Previously, the PTI had also announced to form a coalition in Centre and Punjab with the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) but the move faced backlash by some party members.



KAZAKHSTAN: Federal Minister for Defence & Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in a group photo with Defence Ministers of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Sanctions on missile parts suppliers not to dent ties with Pakistan: US

WASHINGTON (INP): State Department says Pakistan continues to be important partner in region; Islamabad trashes US report on human rights as 'unfair and politically motivated'

The United States has made it clear that the recent sanctions imposed on companies allegedly supplying missile components to Pakistan will not dent the bilateral relations with Pakistan. The State Department emphatically declared that there's 'absolutely no' unrecurrent of discord between the United States and Pakistan, despite recent sanctions.

Addressing the daily news briefing in Washington on Thursday, State

Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel played down concerns about political tensions arising from the sanctions saying: "Pakistan continues to be one of our most important partners in the region. There continues to be a lot of cooperation that we have with the government of Pakistan, especially in the security space and trade sector."

Patel recalled that the Pakistani finance minister was in Washington last week and held consultations with members of the State Department. "This is a robust relationship, and we look to continue strengthening it," he added.

PTI founder's interim bail extended in Jinnah House attack case

LAHORE (INP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former prime minister Imran Khan in three cases including Jinnah House attack case till May 3.

As per details, the ATC duty judge Arshad Javed heard the interim bail pleas pertaining to attack on Jinnah House and three others. The court also ordered to mark the attendance of former prime minister Imran Khan in the three cases via video link from Adiala jail.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visiting Public Facilitation Center.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Business concerns

With the country confronting one of its gravest economic crises, it is time for the government and business community to sit together and find a way out of it and build a strong, resilient economy. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took the initiative when he met prominent Karachi business leaders on Wednesday to solicit their support for the government's efforts to revive the moribund economy.

"Today we need you to take a step forward and bring this rental business to an end. Let's focus on genuine industrial and agricultural growth to double exports in the next five years. It's difficult but not impossible," he told them.

He also referred to Bangladesh's economic success and how that country had transformed its economy, even though it was once considered a 'burden' on West Pakistan before secession. He promised to incorporate the business community's recommendations in a comprehensive economic growth roadmap.

However, the community had its own apprehensions. It highlighted three major areas it considers important for economic revival: restoration of severed trade relations with India, resolution of domestic political instability in the country by engaging the incarcerated PTI leader Imran Khan, and reduction in their cost of doing business through a decrease in energy prices for manufacturing. There is no doubt that these issues are impeding a positive business climate, which is required to boost private investment and economic growth. However, both the government and business community must jointly work their way around these obstructions to steer the economy out of its present crisis.

Consider the call for the normalisation of trade relations with India, for example. The present political dispensation might face resistance from some quarters towards any effort in this direction. But this should not stop the government from taking steps, no matter how small, towards reducing tensions with India, in spite of the huge difficulties involved, especially with New Delhi's hostile stance under Narendra Modi.

The PML-N leadership has expressed its desire to improve bilateral cooperation for economic progress, which could have a positive impact on overall South Asian economic cooperation. Likewise, the issue of reconciliation with Mr Khan is a tricky one. So far, Mr Khan has not shown any inclination to talk to political rivals, though he does not appear too averse to a compromise with the powers that be. Lastly, the demand for lowering energy rates for industry is hard to meet as long as Pakistan remains in an IMF stabilisation programme. Business conditions are indeed very difficult. But should businessmen wait for better times instead of helping the government find a way out of the current mess? Finally, there are other issues such as policy inconsistency and a narrow tax base whose resolution can uplift business conditions if the business community decides to work with the government.

Vietnam moment?

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

It has been half a century since the humbling of the world's mightiest military, the US army, by Vietnamese guerilla warriors. It was, by all accounts, the most tumultuous defeat in the history of modern empire. If the Viet Cong routed US troops in the trenches, Washington lost the battle for hearts and minds at home. The anti-war movement which raged on American university and college campuses for a decade from the mid-1960s was amongst the biggest popular mobilisations in US history. The movement signified a moral defeat for US imperialism arguably as significant as its military defeat on the actual battlefield.

The eruption of student protests on American university campuses against the US-backed Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza has invited comparison with the Vietnam antiwar movement. A violent clampdown on peaceful students at Columbia University has triggered a wave of uprisings across the country, magnifying the extent to which young Americans oppose the Biden administration's unconditional support for Zionist pogroms.

Peaceful protests against the Israeli war machine and complicit Western governments have been ongoing in many Western countries, but the violent reaction of university administrators and the state's coercive apparatus in recent days makes the current moment feel increasingly like that of the iconic late 1960s. That moment was generational: young people in the 'advanced' Western world were mobilising not only against imperialist war in Vietnam and other theatres of the Cold War, but also in support of revolutionary movements and decolonisation in Latin America, Asia and Africa, whilst rebelling

against racism, sexism and capitalism at home. The violent reaction of the US and other Western states to these movements was complemented by an all-out vilification campaign by corporate media.

Similarly, beatings and arrests of student protesters — and many faculty members — in the US right now have been accompanied by a media campaign decrying them as anti-Semite. This trope has been commonplace since the latest ethnic cleansing operation began in Gaza, but has ratcheted up significantly of late.

Benjamin Netanyahu himself put out a video message spewing a series of orchestrated lies about attacks on Jewish students and the confluence between the current protests and those on campuses in Nazi Germany. The Israeli state has a matchless capacity to produce outrageous propaganda, but this feels different — the campus protests have rattled Tel Aviv and Washington. Indeed, the Columbia-inspired student movement confirms that peaceful protests are not dissipating, the panicked and violent reactions provoked suggesting weakness rather than strength.

Time will tell whether pro-Palestinian sentiment can match the longevity of the Vietnam antiwar movement, but the global movement in solidarity with Palestine is coeval with deepening politicisation on many systemic issues that make ruling classes everywhere tremble.

Take the climate crisis. A wide cross-section of young people are resisting the various forms of capital accumulation destroying ecosystems and threatening the future of human life. Youth icons like Greta Thunberg, who was until recently perceived to articulate a relatively harmless environmen-

talist position, has come out strongly in favour of Palestinians — and, it should be noted, our very own Baloch long march — thus underlining the growing pull of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist internationalism.

History never repeats itself in linear fashion, so there can be no question of seamlessly mapping our current moment onto the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially given the widespread appeal of right-wing politics in our times. But alongside the emergent student movement in the US, a not insignificant number of governments have also called out Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinians, and in some cases, like Iran, openly defied the so-called liberal world order. Much, however, remains to be done, because domestically Iran and others opposing Israel and its imperialist patron are not pro-people havens to be championed.

In Pakistan too, young people are increasingly politicised about the entrenched military-industrial-media complex and mainstream parties that meekly take on and then are deposed from power.

If nothing else, the Feb 8 poll suggests that one can protest via the ballot, and there appears every chance that this is what ordinary Americans opposed to Washington's support for Israel will do in the US presidential elections. The problem is that defeat for Genocide Joe would bring another staunch friend of Zionism, Donald Trump, back to power. To truly make the present one a Vietnam moment, the world's oppressed will need to break this and many other similar vicious cycles. -- Courtesy Dawn

A timeless classic

Syed Fahim

To be generally agreed upon as a classic, works should meet some common high standards for quality, appeal, longevity, and influence. Such a work must be of high artistic quality, at least for the time in which it was written. It should not only represent that era but also should stand the test of time. It should have universal appeal, spark intellectual debates, shape societal attitudes, and be able to inspire generations to relate to its message. While the Holy Quran is a religious scripture, let us examine how at the same time it is a timeless 'classic'.

Every time one reads the Quran intending to understand its message, one can expect to discover a new perspective from the same text that had previously alluded to a different meaning. This is, in essence, due to the maturity of thought and experience of the individual reading the Quran — the evolution of the mindset between the two instances of reading the same text on two different occasions. However, how one benefits from it is left to the reader, or maybe a more apt term should be the 'discoverer' of its message.

The Quran is a grand sum of stories of the past, rumblings of the present, prophecies of the future, rhetorical questions aimed at unbelievers, answers to the ridiculing questions of the disbelievers, description of nature and super-nature, a teaser for what is yet to be discovered, explanation of what is observed but not understood, decrees for a newly forming community, and a lot more. The variety and intricacy of subjects it covers make

the Quran an ideal catalyst to spark intellectual debates and keep it relevant 15 centuries later.

The Quran may show you multiple messages on the same page. A busy person may open it randomly to recite just one bit at a given time for blessings. They may come across an anecdote, a warning, a supplication, or a proclamation within that one page. This is one way of ensuring that the reader gets the maximum benefit from even short spurts of reading the text, instead of just learning about one topic. One can always find all verses on a particular topic, which have been assembled and published widely.

Alternatively, one can look up a word or a topic in any modern Quran app if that is the intention. This is, in fact, a higher degree of reading the Quran, a sort of consulting the book. And this is where one really starts discovering the scheme and sophistication of the book.

One may find it perplexing when interrelated messages are found to be intertwined or, in other cases, scattered among various surahs and sections of the Quran. However, herein lies the beauty of the scheme of assembly. For a curious reader, this is the start of an exhausting yet exhilarating quest to figure out the puzzle. Often, one finds nuggets of wisdom on a course, and then the trail may seem to disappear. Finding the next clue is a challenge that keeps the reader returning to the book, deepening one's learning. And once the trail is found again, it brings the euphoria and the urge to get to the next discovery. This structure also fuels the centuries-long appeal of the text, with

each new generation unveiling new and improved nuances from the scripture.

The notion may appear elusive, though, if the reader does not even know what the text means. One may learn the Arabic phonics to be able to read the Quran judiciously. But how can one expect to feel a tug at their heart without even realising if the verse they just read was a question or an answer? It is hence imperative that the Quran should ideally be read alongside its translation if the person reading it is not a speaker of the Arabic language. A modern-day person reading the Quran may find the discourse on cosmology, meteorology, or anatomy simplified; but this was the state of humans when the glorious book was revealed. In fact, the permanent beauty of its verses is evident in the fact that human beings in all periods of history have found wisdom in them.

The superior linguistic quality of the Quran for its time of revelation is well established. Its enduring appeal, influence, and impact generation after generation are equally undeniable. Maybe, it is time we open the Quran to study it rather than giving a customary reading. Maybe, we will discover the hidden element whose very narration makes us sway back and forth with its soulful, yet undecoded charm.

We have a classic in our hands, but its understanding is wrapped up in a silk ghilaf (cover), on the top shelf of the study cabinet. It is time we began to peruse its contents carefully to discover its meaning. - Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Intellectual Property Rights crucial in achieving SDG: Jam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan Friday emphasized the vital role of Intellectual Property (IP) Rights in driving innovation, creativity and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country. The minister reaffirmed the governments resolve to prioritize the development of a robust national Intellectual Property (IP) framework that fosters innovation and creativity for ensuring equitable access to the benefits of IP, especially for marginalized communities. Addressing Seminar organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in

collaboration with Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) to commemorate World Intellectual Property Day 2024, the minister said that Pakistan was blessed with huge natural resources and need to channelize these resources and streamline the direction. This day holds special significance as we reflect on the crucial role of Intellectual Property in fostering innovation, creativity and ultimately advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he added.

The theme of the event was IP and SDGs: Building our Common Future with Innovation and Creativity as the event was also attended by the senior officials from the Ministry of Commerce, IPO and businessmen and academia. Jam Kamal said that government will promote partnerships and collaborations between government, industry, academia, and civil society to drive innovation and entrepreneurship, with a strong emphasis on technologies and solutions that support the achievement of the SDGs. The minister stressed the need to focus on leveraging IP as a strategic tool to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and said that the Ministry of Commerce was committed to advancing policies that strengthen the IP ecosystem, particularly in relation to sustainable development.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan addressing on the occasion of "World IP Day Seminar 2024" organized by IPO-Pakistan in collaboration with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce (ICCI).

Bridge the gap between academia & industry is our big mission: Khalid

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Ms. Qurat ul Ain Vice President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), met Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui Federal Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. She apprised the FM about gap between academia and industry, research and cooperation, technical education, and other issues.

Education reiterated the government's dedication to revolutionizing the education sector in Pakistan. By implementing comprehensive strategies and fostering collaboration with key stakeholders, the Ministry aims to create a brighter future for the nation's youth. He further said that bridge the gap between academia and industry is our big mission. In this case will be providing cutting-edge IT skills to the youth, so that ensuring their relevance in the ever-evolving job market. Minister Siddiqui further said that the industry and universities should work together to solve the country's problems through research and cooperation. He said that people with technical education and technical experience are in demand all over the world. He said that the government is paying special attention to vocational education.

Meeting held to streamline trade between Pak-Afghan, Central Asian Republics

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting of stakeholders was held with Director Transit Directorate of Transit Trade, Arbab Ahmad Ali, Central Chairman All Pakistan Custom Agents Association, Ferooz Ahmad, former SVP SCCI, Engr Manzoor Elahi and others.

Wajid Ali, Deputy Director Transit Torkhem, Ms. Maliaka Ahmad, Vice President Frontier Custom Agents Association, Intiaz Ahmad Ali, Central Chairman All Pakistan Custom Agents Association, Ferooz Ahmad, former SVP SCCI, Engr Manzoor Elahi and others.

The businessmen delegation was headed by President Frontier Custom Agents Association (FCAA), Zia-ul-Haq Sharhadi, said a press release issued here on Friday. Others who attended the meeting included Additional Director, Dr.

During the meeting, President FCCA, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi said APTTA 2010 has several lacunas as a result of which 70 percent of transit trade has been shifted from Karachi port to Bandar Abbas in Iran.



KARACHI: Activists of (PTI) are holding protest demonstration for release of Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, at Karachi press club.

'Transforming Punjab Agri plan to help develop farm sector on modern lines: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani has said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's, 'Transforming Punjab Agriculture' plan worth over Rs. 400 billion will be an important milestone for the farm sector development and farmers' prosperity.

He said this while presiding over a high-level meeting at Agriculture House on Friday. The meeting reviewed the timeline of the plan. Kirmani said that all the arrangements for providing interest-free loans of Rs. 300 billion to the farmers were in the final stages of completion. The loan scheme



ISLAMABAD: Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Ms. Qurat ul Ain Vice President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) exchanging the views on the gap between industry and academia, skill development, manpower and other issues.

Pak, US hold 7th TIFA meeting to strengthen trade and investment ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 7th Interseasonal meeting of the Pakistan-United States (US) Trade and Investment Framework (TIFA) was held here on Friday and discussed ways to strengthen trade ties between the two nations. Federal Secretary Ministry of Commerce Muhammad Sauleh Ahmad Faruqi leading the Pakistani delegation and Assistant US Trade Representative (USTR), Brenden Lynch, heading the US delegation, said a news release. During

the meeting, both sides engaged in constructive discussions on a range of trade and investment-related matters, including agriculture, digital trade, intellectual property protection and enforcement, labor rights, good regulatory practices, and women's economic empowerment.

The US side welcomed Pakistan's progress on market access for US beef, while Pakistan appreciated US support for facilitating market access for its mangoes and fresh dates.

PSX gains 771 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday gained 771.35 points, a positive change of 1.07 percent, closing at 72,742.75 points against 71,971.40 points the previous trading day. A total of 541,144,650 shares valuing Rs 22,589 billion were traded during the day as compared to 798,527,177 shares valuing Rs 27,542 billion the last day. Some 375 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 175 of them recorded gains and 175 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 25 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Askari Bank Limited with 39,174,000 shares at Rs 25.16 per share, K-Electric Limited with 31,235,856 shares at Rs 4.58 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 30,155,361 shares at Rs 1.33 per share.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 131.74 per share price, closing at Rs 7,822.61.

SECP-IFSB workshop highlights Pak progress in Islamic Finance Dev.

ISLAMABAD (APP): A three-day capacity-building workshop on Islamic Capital Markets, jointly organized by the Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB) concluded on Friday, highlighting Pakistan's significant progress in developing the Islamic finance industry. The workshop has designed to enhance the capacity of the officials of regulatory and supervisory authorities, said a news release issued here. Chairman SECP Aqif

Saeed reiterated its deep commitment to support the continued development and expansion of the Islamic finance industry in Pakistan.

Referring to the historic judgment of the Federal Shariat Court and the government's commitment to transform the entire financial system in accordance with Shariah principles, he pointed out that SECP has already accelerated its efforts and achieved considerable progress by enabling Islamic finance in all regulated sectors.

Coca-Cola invests an additional \$22m in Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coca-Cola has invested \$22 million in the beverage sector, specifically in technology upgrades, capacity enhancement of its export potential, and employment for over half a million local professionals along its chain.

This new investment is in addition to the \$1 billion invested in the country by the Coca-Cola System since 2008, said a news release issued here on Friday. To discuss future investments in Special Economic Zones, Iain McLaughlin, President Global Commercial Product Supply.

Punjab Governor says: Character building imperative for promotion of tolerance

Independent Report
FAISALABAD: Governor Punjab Muhammad Ballegh-ur-Rehman has said that the teachers should concentrate on character building of their students as it is imperative to promote tolerance and brotherhood in society.

Addressing the 4th convocation of Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) here on Friday, he said that the Islam has made education compulsory for every individual as it boosts the hidden abilities and capabilities of the people. However, without character building, the education is not beneficial.

He said that the education without ethics has no value and we must focus on the character building of the younger

generation to stabilize the economy by promoting our Islamic values.

He urged the students to focus on their study and create leadership ability as they would have to lead the nation in their practical life.

He also advised them to always follow truthfulness as it is the only key of success in this world and hereafter.

He said that Nawaz Sharif during his tenure promoted education by establishing new universities as he believed that Pakistan could only make progress through education. The developed nations always emphasized on promotion of education but unfortunately a government came in the near past reduced education budget in Pakistan, he added. He said that the

technology has totally changed the global scenario. Hence, our scientists should accelerate their efforts to introduce new inventions so that we could compete with rest of the world.

He said that the government has set its priority to eliminate corruption from every sphere of life as it was the root cause of crises and no nation could attain progress and prosperity goals without eradicating corruption. Earlier, GCWUF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zill-e-Huma Nazli presented welcome address and highlighted achieved of her university. On this occasion, the governor Punjab also conferred degrees to the university graduates in addition to decorating the position holders with medals.



FAISALABAD: Governor of Punjab, Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman awarding degrees among the successful students during the 4th Convocation of Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF).

Governor KP says Research in health sector vital for healthy society, rooting out diseases

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said that research in the health sector is very important for a healthy society and rooting out diseases.

Addressing at the Global Conference on Health Research-2024 in Rehman Medical Institute (RMI) as special guest here Friday, he paid tribute to the management committee of RMI for organizing the World Conference on

Research in the field of medicine. The Governor said in order to deal with global medical challenges in the world, modern research in the health sector has to be promoted.

Rehman Medical Institute has undoubtedly done a great job on research to improve the field of medicine in this region, Haji Ghulam Ali said and added that the RMI was a renowned medical institution of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which was popular all over the

country.

"I also advise the young medical students to make a name for themselves in research in the medical field. I hope that this conference will prove to be very useful for the improvement of the medical field," said Haji Ghulam Ali.

The Governor welcomed the researchers from Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Qatar and other countries participating in the conference to come to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



LAHORE: Country Director World Food Program Coco Ushiyama meeting with Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzaib.

KP Health Minister launches anti-polio campaign targeting over 4.4 million children

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah inaugurated the anti-polio vaccination campaign on Friday by administering polio drops to children in Peshawar.

Over 4.423 million children will be vaccinated in the campaign, which will be carried out in two

phases. The first phase runs from April 29 to May 3, covering 14 complete districts and eight partial districts for polio eradication. The second phase runs from May 2 to May 6, targeting polio eradication in five districts. During both phases, more than 4.423 million children under the age of five will receive polio drops.

LHC CJ meets HCBA Multan delegation

LAHORE (APP): A delegation from the High Court Bar Association (HCBA) Multan, led by President Malik Sajjad Haider Maitla, met Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan on Friday.

The delegation also included Secretary-General Syed Anees Mehdi and Senior Advocate Malik Masroor Haider Usman.

The delegation extended an invitation to the chief justice to visit the High Court Bar Association Multan at the earliest. The leaders of the lawyers apprised the chief justice of the issues faced by the bar associations in the Multan division and discussed matters of mutual interest. They praised the initiatives taken by the chief justice for the convenience of lawyers and litigants and offered suggestions for the welfare of the bar associations. President of the High Court Bar Association Multan requested the chief justice to increase the number of judges at the LHC's Multan.

Opponents must compete with Punjab CM on basis of performance: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said that opponents should compete with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on the basis of performance instead of using inappropriate language.

She said this while reacting to a statement of Barrister Saif here on Friday. Azma Bukhari said that the 'Fitna' party was matchless in telling lies and using

inappropriate language. She said Barrister Saif must control his tongue, adding that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf could not digest the performance of the Punjab Chief Minister. She said, "The Punjab CM believes in taking practical steps and she is creating ease for the people of Punjab."

Azma said that the CM was taking steps for the welfare of the people without any discrimination.

11 dead, 1295 injured in road accidents

LAHORE (APP): Eleven people were killed and 1295 injured in 1236 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 564 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 731 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed that 736 drivers, 51 underage drivers, 160 pedestrians.

What injustice this laborers work on May 01 and we enjoy holiday: LHC

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has adjourned till next week hearing of petitions seeking court's order for eradication of smog.

During the hearing of the case, Justice Shahid Karim remarked it is beyond my comprehension that these deputy commissioners (DCs) do what. If Deputy Commissioner (DC) of a district wants to do something then revolution will come.

The court remarked earlier they took the shopping bags from their homes. These bags should be taken from home now too. If DC of a district wants to do something then revolution will come. I don't understand these deputy commissioners do what.

He further remarked DC is very powerful. He should only come outside and see what was going on. The court directed Judicial commission to take action and impose fine of Rs 1 lac for wasting water in the house of conservation of water.

The petitions came up for hearing before Justice Shahid Karim of LHC here Friday.

The counsel for LDA requested that directives be issued to all DCs that



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Aurora in a group photo with Canadian High Commissioner after meeting.

CM's aide directs steps to prevent domestic violence against women

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Mashal Azam Yousafzai has directed the social welfare department to take steps to prevent women from domestic violence and shift the shelter home of district Khyber to an appropriate place in Landikotal.

She issued these directives during her visit to the Directorate of Social Welfare and Women Empowerment here on Friday. She directed steps

to prevent domestic violence and provide free legal help to women victims of domestic violence. CM's advisor also sought a report about the working of non-governmental organizations and directed them to stop further cooperation with those that are non-functional.

She highlighted the priorities of the government to help drug addicts and said that a grand operation would be started very soon for their rehabilitation.

International News

Xi tells Blinken US and China should be 'partners, not rivals'

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday told top US diplomat Antony Blinken that the world's two biggest economies should be "partners, not rivals", but that there were a "number of issues" to be resolved in their relations. Blinken, in China for the second time in less than a year, met leading Chinese politicians in Beijing. US officials said he would directly raise crucial areas of difference including Russia, Taiwan and trade.

Meeting Blinken in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Xi said the two countries had "made some positive progress" since he met with US President Joe

Biden last year, according to state broadcaster CCTV. "The two countries should be partners, not rivals," Xi said. "There are still a number of issues that need to be resolved, and there is still room for further efforts," the Chinese leader added. "We hope the US can also take a positive view of China's development," he added. "When this fundamental problem is solved [...] relations can truly stabilise, get better, and move forward."

Earlier, China's foreign minister Wang Yi warned Blinken that US pressure could trigger a "downward spiral", as the visiting diplomat raised concerns on issues including support for Russia.

Wang also warned that the question of self-ruled Taiwan was the "first red line" that must not be crossed in China-US relations. Blinken described his talks with Wang at the Diaoyutai state guesthouse — which lasted more than five and a half hours — as "extensive and constructive". The top US diplomat will speak to journalists later on Friday at the US embassy in Beijing.

China has been infuriated by Biden's pressure on the economic front — which is unlikely to ease during an election year — including a sweeping ban on semiconductor exports and efforts to wrest blockbuster video app TikTok away from its Chinese owners.



China's President Xi Jinping holds a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Ukraine's Zelenskiy calls for air defense systems as allies meet

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on Friday called for additional air defense systems to be sent to Kyiv to help protect against Russian strikes, adding that a pause in US funding had helped Moscow seize the initiative. "This year, Russian jets (have) already used more than 9,000 guided aerial bombs against Ukraine and we need the ability to shoot down the air combat aircraft so that they do not approach our positions and borders," Zelenskiy said at the start of a virtual meeting led by the United States on helping arm Ukraine.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the meeting would focus on Ukraine's air defense capabilities. The meeting comes days after Congress emerged from a half-year of

deadlock to approve a \$61 billion aid package for Ukraine. President Joe Biden's administration quickly announced \$1 billion in artillery, air defenses and other hardware would soon be heading to Ukrainian front lines. "While we were waiting for a decision on the American support, the Russian army managed to seize the initiative on the battlefield," Zelenskiy said. "We can still now, not only stabilize the front, but also move forward achieving our Ukrainian goals in the war," he added. The United States hopes its new deliveries of weaponry will help Ukraine rebuild defenses and refit its forces as it recovers from a gap in US assistance, but it does not expect Kyiv to launch large-scale offensive operations against Russian forces in the near term.



AUSTIN: Law enforcement personnel detain a pro-Palestinian protester at the University of Texas in Austin.

UK slaps fresh sanctions on Iran after Israel attack

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: The UK on Thursday joined the United States and Canada in announcing a fresh set of sanctions against Iran's drone and missile industries after its recent attack on Israel.

Tehran launched its first direct military assault on Israeli territory nearly two weeks after an April 1 air strike—widely blamed on Israel—that killed seven members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard

Corps in Damascus. Iran's large-scale attack involved more than 300 drones and missiles, most of which were shot down by Israel and its allies including Washington and London, causing little damage.

The United States and Britain announced widespread sanctions on Iran last week, targeting individuals and companies involved in the Iranian drone industry.

Egyptian delegation in Israel for talks on Gaza hostages

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: An Egyptian delegation met Israeli counterparts on Friday, looking for a way to restart talks to end the war in Gaza and return the remaining Israeli hostages, an official briefed on the meetings said.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Israel had no new proposals to make, although it was willing to consider a limited truce in which 33 hostages would be released by the Islamist movement Hamas, instead of the 40 previously under discussion.

"There are no current hostage talks between Israel and Hamas, nor is there a new Israeli offer in that regard," the official said.

"What there is, is an attempt by Egypt to restart the talks with an Egyptian proposal that would entail the release of 33 hostages — women, elderly and infirm."

Israel intensifies Rafah airstrikes before ground assault

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: As Israel stepped up airstrikes on Rafah and planned to launch an all-out ground assault despite allies' warnings this could cause mass casualties, Pales-tinian authorities on Thursday asked the United Nations to conduct a probe into mass graves at Gaza hospitals.

Medics in the besieged Palestinian enclave reported five Israeli airstrikes on Rafah early on Thursday that hit at least three houses, killing at least six people including a

Fire at Brazil guesthouse leaves at least 10 dead, 11 injured

Monitoring Desk
SAO PAULO: At least 10 people died and 11 were injured in the early hours of Friday morning in a major fire at a guesthouse in Brazil's southern city of Porto Alegre, said the Rio Grande do Sul state fire department, which is still searching for the missing.

The firefighters said they were called at around 2 a.m. (0500 GMT) on Friday and extinguished the fire within two hours, according to the fire service.

Pope will attend G7 summit to discuss AI, Italy says

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Pope Francis will attend this year's Group of Seven (G7) leaders' summit to discuss the challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI), Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said on Friday. The meeting is being held in the southern Italian region of Puglia from June 13 to 15 and draws together the leaders of the United States, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Canada and Japan, as well as a few specially invited guests.

Gaza baby saved from dead mother's womb dies

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: A baby girl who was delivered from her dying mother's womb in a Gaza hospital following an Israeli airstrike has herself died after just a few days of life, the doctor who was caring for her said on Friday.

The baby had been named Rouh, meaning Soul. Her mother, Sabreen Al-Sakani, was seriously injured when the Israeli strike hit the family home in Rafah, the southernmost city in the besieged Gaza Strip, on Saturday night.

Her husband Shukri and their three-year-old daughter Malak were killed.

Sabreen, who was 30-weeks pregnant, was rushed to the Emirati hospital in Rafah. She died of her wounds but doctors were able to save the baby, delivering her by Caesarean section. However, the baby suffered respiratory problems and a weak immune system, said Doctor Mohammad Salama, head of the emergency neo-natal unit at Emirati Hospital, who had been caring for Rouh.

PM directs formation of committee for consultation with provinces on carbon credits policy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday directed formation of a committee for consultation with the provinces for policy making on guiding principles for carbon credits. He was chairing the third meeting of Pakistan Council for Climate Change. The federal and provincial governments would work together for making policies regarding climate change, he said.

"Our challenges regarding climate change are increasing with every pass-

ing day," he said, adding without the consultation of provinces, there was no question of policy making of any kind on the issue.

The participants discussed in detail policy guidelines for foreign trading in carbon credits. He instructed that a policy draft should be presented in the next meeting of the Council after consultation with the provinces. The chief ministers of the four provinces expressed their viewpoint regarding policy making and gave recommendations.

The prime minister directed that the provinces and other stakeholders should be taken into confidence regarding the important policy draft on climate change. He said Pakistan was one of the countries badly affected by the adverse effects of climate change. It was gravely affected by the rains in 2022 and the floods caused by them.

As a servant of Pakistan, he said, he worked for the relief and rehabilitation of the flood affectees and fought the case of Pakistan

all across the world regarding climate change.

He said Ahsan Iqbal and Sherry Rehman and all the relevant institutions and ministries took important steps to take Pakistan out of that difficult time and to build infrastructure in the country regarding climate change. He said he and the Pakistani nation were thankful to the friendly countries and the international community particularly Secretary General of the United Nations for coming to the aid of affected Pakistanis.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the third meeting of Pakistan Climate Change Council.



ISLAMABAD: PM coordinator on health, Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmad is being briefed regarding Sehat Sahulat programme in State Life Corporation Islamabad, Federal Secretary for Health, Mr. Nadeem Mehbub is also accompanying him.

Saudi Arabia's Umrah and Ziyarah Forum focuses on innovative ways to enhance pilgrim experience

ISLAMABAD (APP): Umrah and Ziyarah Forum concluded at the King Salman International Convention Center in Madinah. During the three-day event, participants discussed ways to foster collaborations, enhance the pilgrim experience and improve the services provided for pilgrims.

The agenda for the forum, organized by the Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in partnership with the Pilgrim Experience Program, included six discussion sessions and 24 workshops led by 29 experts and specialists.

The topics they covered included services for pilgrims and other visitors, advancements in air travel services for pilgrims, finan-

cial systems in the Umrah and ziyarah sectors, and development opportunities in housing and hospitality services, Arab News reported.

Other discussions focused on services at ports, the automation of operations, ways to improve the efficiency of workers, and the important role of services provided for visitors at holy sites and throughout their journeys in Makkah and Madinah.

One of the key topics was air travel services, with discussions about the growth in flight numbers and the need to provide a comprehensive range of services throughout pilgrims' journeys beyond those purely focusing on their rituals. For example,

participants highlighted plans for the expansion of Madinah Airport to better accommodate the increasing numbers of pilgrims and other visitors arriving there.

Another discussion examined financial services in the Umrah and ziyarah sector, and explored the options for international money transfers, ways to develop financial procedures, and innovative digital solutions for processing transactions.

Other topics included development opportunities in housing and hospitality services, during which speakers emphasized the importance of transparency and the need for full compliance by service providers with the terms of their contracts.

Ashrafi re-elected member of Muslim World League's Supreme Council

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and International Tazim-e-Haramain Sharifain Council Secretary General, has been re-elected as a member of the Supreme Council of Muslim World League.

With a longstanding commitment to the upliftment of Islamic values and the welfare of Muslim communities worldwide, Ashrafi has consistently been at the forefront of advocating for unity and cooperation within the Muslim world. Ashrafi's re-election to the prestigious Supreme Council reaffirms his influential role in shaping the discourse surrounding contemporary Islamic issues.

Throughout his tenure, Ashrafi has demonstrated remarkable leadership in promoting interfaith harmony, countering extremism, and fostering dialogue among diverse Muslim sects.

No political prisoner in country at present: Senator Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Leader of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) in the Senate Irfan-ul-Haque Siddiqui on Friday said there was no political prisoner in the country at present while the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder was behind the bars for being convicted in various cases.

Taking part in the debate on the presidential address in the Upper House, Senator Siddiqui said in past the PML-N leadership had to face imprisonment in fake cases, but its government did not want to pursue the politics of revenge.

He extended an olive branch to the opposition parties, saying that if the

PTI could hold negotiations with its traditional political rivals then why it could not sit on the table with the government for the sake of the country.

"The opposition should hold talks with the treasury benches for resolving critical issues and crises of the country. It should pinpoint problems and issues of national interest, and also suggest their solutions.

At the same, they should bear criticism with open hearts as it is part of debate and discourse and political norms," he added.

Senator Siddiqui condemned intimidation of the judiciary in the past and also in the prevailing time.

Art exhibition highlighting "Echoes of Earth" on May 4

ISLAMABAD (APP): Theatre Wallay will feature an art exhibition, titled "Echoes of Earth", a celebration of climate consciousness on May 4 at Bhattai Auditorium in Islamabad.

The exhibition supported by the US Mission in Pakistan in partnership with Pakistan-US Alumni Network orchestrated a transformative writing workshop aimed at cultivating the talents of aspiring writers to tackle pressing climate issues, said a statement issued by Theatre Wallay here Friday.

PNCA, IFWA to organize a special puppet show

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), in collaboration with the International Foreign Women Association Islamabad, will organize a Puppet Show for foreigners and the general public on April 28. The activity will be held at PNCA Auditorium. The family puppet show will be performed in English, featuring 20 minutes performance followed by the presentation. The puppet theatre PNCA will showcase the skills of its puppeteers featuring vibrant costumed puppets and will present puppet folk tales.



ISLAMABAD: Students of Mehergarh's youth leaders visiting Senate Museum at Parliament House.

PTI senator puts forward conditions for talks with govt

ISLAMABAD (INP): Opposition Leader in the Senate, Shibli Faraz on Friday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is ready for conditional talks with Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) led coalition government.

In an informal conversation with media, Shibli Faraz expressed his willingness to engage in dialogue with anyone including federal government for the betterment of Pakistan, but only if the government creates a conducive environment for talks. He emphasized that

political cases must be withdrawn, and the rule of law and onstitution must be upheld, demanding the release of PTI founder Imran Khan, women, and political prisoners, however, he stressed that legal cases should be pursued if they are genuine.

The PTI senator further added that the government must allow political freedom and stop political victimization. The opposition leader said that PTI held intra-party elections for the third time, but objections were raised on the party polls again.

Lahore-Paris rally to highlight the positive image of Pak: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme, (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Friday said that the Lahore Paris Rally would play a vital role in highlighting the positive image of Pakistan.

He said this while reviewing the arrangements of the Lahore-Paris rally 2024 during a meeting with the Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism and Development Corporation (PTDC) and the organizers of the rally. The main objective of

the meeting was to devise a strategy for the event's success. At the same time, security arrangements, logistics support and cooperation with international partners were discussed in detail in the meeting.

The Lahore-Paris rally, which will begin on August 26, will travel through 12 countries from Pakistan to France and will pass through major countries like Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

IGP Islamabad chairs command conference at CPO

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: According to details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chaired a command conference at the Central Police Office (CPO), a public relations officer said.



He said that senior police officers were briefed by the Special Operations Committee during the conference.

The conference reviewed the implementation of the IGP directives issued over the past three days, with detailed discussions held on each directive.

IGP Islamabad stated that we are working towards a national objective and sought explanations from senior police officers regarding lapses and negligence, warning of disciplinary action against officers failing to implement issued directives.

He reviewed the performance of the past three days, objectives, and reports from all divisions and instructed all officers to submit their reports with complete statistics.

Moreover, reports were requested from the night patrolling officers, and police officers were directed to seek assistance from organizations related to departmental skills.

IPRI, ILA Italy ink MoU on cooperation in Intl law development

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Italian Branch of the International Law Association (ILA Italy) and the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) Friday signed a General Agreement for Cooperation to promote cooperation, information exchange and academic programs between the two Institutions on issues pertaining to understanding and development of international law.

This strategic alliance marks a significant step towards leveraging complementary expertise and resources to address

pressing international legal challenges and advance innovative solutions, a news release said issued here.

The agreement aims to enhance the scientific and academic level of both Institutions, promote friendship and understanding between the Italian and Pakistani academics and policymakers, and facilitate collaboration in research and analysis on international law. The agreement outlines various forms of cooperation, including mutual research programs, exchange of publications and materials.

MPs highlight critical issues from their respective areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lawmakers in the National Assembly raised various critical issues from their respective areas on Friday and called upon the government to take action to address them.

During a point of order, Mian Ghous Muhammad highlighted that approximately Rs. 20 billion is payable to sugarcane growers by sugar mills. He said that in Punjab, there is a law mandating mills to pay interest to farmers if payments are delayed.

He expressed concern that mill owners are not meeting their obligations

and urged the government to ensure prompt payment to the growers.

Muhammad Iqbal Khan asked the government to address law and order challenges in his area, urging the federal government to enhance security measures and take care of the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Khalid Ahmed highlighted similar concerns about law and order in his constituency, appealing for federal intervention to improve the situation.

Agha Rafiullah Syed expressed disappointment over the absence of minis-

ters in the house and said that government representatives must be present to address public concerns raised by members.

He stressed the importance of government representatives being available in the National Assembly to respond to the issues and queries brought forth by legislators on behalf of their constituents.

Riaz Fatyana acknowledged the Speaker's directive to ensure ministerial presence and requested assistance from the Interior Ministry to facilitate Umrah visits for National Assembly members.

Kids murders: IHC orders psychiatric examination of mother

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday ordered the psychiatric examination of Zeba Gul accused of killing her three children and attempting suicide.

IHC's Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, in his written order, observed that the petitioner Zeba Gul had been charged with attempting to commit suicide after killing her two daughters and a son.

It was clearly written in the charge sheet of December 1, 2022 that Zeba Gul was mentally ill, but the trial court sentenced Zeba Gul three times to life imprisonment under 302B without inquiry, the court added.

The IHC noted that the trial court also sentenced Zeba Gul to 14 years imprisonment under Section 311 of the Pakistan Penal Code.

It ordered the Chief Commissioner Islamabad to conduct a mental medical examination of the applicant from the medical board and the report of the medical board should be submitted to the court to determine whether the accused was mentally competent to present her defence before the trial court or not.

CDA organizes E-Katchari to facilitate residents

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Estate Wing of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Friday organized an E-Katchari to facilitate the residents of the federal capital. The E-Katchari was organized on the special instructions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in which the online complaints of the citizens were received while considering the problems related to the Estate Wing in the sectoral and non-sectoral areas, said a news release.



LAHORE: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands, Ms. Henny Fokel de Vries meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Speakers for proactive approach, inclusive strategy to address Afghanistan issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at an international conference have demanded the stakeholders to adopt a proactive approach and inclusive strategy at the regional partners' level to address issues of Afghanistan. During the working session-1 on the theme of "Unravelling Afghanistan's Shifting Landscape", the experts suggested a regional dialogue and cooperation, border and refugee management, leveraging partnerships and engagement with locals, building the economic capacity of Afghanistan through connectivity, trade, and transit routes, and adopting a broader perspective on the Afghan issue, a news release said.

The session was held during the international conference on "Pakistan in the Emerging Geopolitical Landscape" by the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI).

The speakers of the session included Rangina Hamidi, Former Minister of Education of Afghanistan; Prof. Victoria C. Fontan, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, American University of Afghanistan; Qatar, Ambassador Mohammad Sadiq, Pakistan's former Special Representative for Afghanistan; Dr. Ye Hailin, Professor and Vice Dean of the National Institute of International Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (NISS, CASS); Dr. Foad Izadi, Associate Professor, Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran; and Dr. Bette Dam, Investigative Journalist, Author. The speakers of the session provided a comprehensive analysis of the evolving landscape in Afghanistan, emphasising the long-term consequences of investing in militarised education.



ISLAMABAD: Moroccan Ambassador to Pakistan Muhammad Karmoune meet Pakistan Red Crescent, Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmad Laghari.

ICT admin conducts operation against encroachments, illegal activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Assistant Commissioner (AC) Industrial Area, Farwa Batool accompanied by the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) conducted anti-encroachment operation at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and removed all illegal encroachments around the hospital.

Talking to APP, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration Spokesman, Dr Abdullah Tabassum said that on the directives of the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, the authority was conducting extensive operations targeting encroachments, illegal gas canning, and cleanliness issues in Fed-

eral Capital. In a recent operation conducted at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), he said the AC removed all illegal encroachments and structures blocking public pathways were demolished in the area. The AC also inspected the canteens and tuck shops of the hospital, focusing on cleanliness standards, pricing, and the use of plastic bags. After these inspections, she issued fines totaling Rs 23,000 for various violations and warned businesses to comply with regulations.

In another part of the operation, Dr Abdullah said the district administration teams targeted illegal gas cylinder filling activities in

the G-8 area. Four LPG shops in the area were found in the unlawful canning of gas cylinders, posing a safety risk. These shops were immediately sealed to prevent further illegal activity, he said. He said the Islamabad administration's efforts were part of a broader campaign to crack down on various violations in the city. Daily operations were being carried out to combat encroachments, rising prices, and professional begging, he added. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon urged the residents and businesses to adhere to city regulations to avoid penalties and contribute to a safer, cleaner Islamabad.