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IMF approves disbursement of \$1.1 billion loan tranche

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Monday approved disbursement of \$1.1 billion last loan tranche, marking the successful end of the second bailout package in eight years but it took heavy toll in the shape of unbearable inflation and slowing economic wheel.

The Executive Board of the IMF approved the completion of the second review of the \$3 billion Standby Arrangement, confirmed the Ministry of Finance. This also paved the way for the release of the last loan tranche of \$1.1 billion. The IMF board also backed Pakistan's intent to get another bailout package to ensure 'permanency in economic stabilisation and deepen structural reforms'.

The global lender approved the completion of the second review of the arrangement hours after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the country's debt trap had become a 'death trap', calling it the biggest challenge for his government. He made these remarks while addressing the closing session of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

"We have a serious problem of inflation before us. And then we have a debt trap, I prefer calling it a death trap, which has crumbled our economy," said Shehbaz.

The PM also met with the Managing Director of the IMF Kristalina Georgieva in Saudi Arabia on Sunday to discuss the next bailout programme.

Deviating from its transparency policy, the IMF did not list Pakistan in the April 29th calendar being issued on its website.

Prime Minister Shehbaz, Governor State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmad and the Secretary Finance Imdad Ullah Bosal played pivotal roles in first securing the deal in June 2023 and then pushing it towards the finishing line.

In July last year, Pakistan had signed the nine-month programme for the \$3 billion, which stabilised the economy and brought the current account deficit under control. However, the budget deficit remained out of the control and is going to end around 7.4% of the GDP as per IMF's own estimates.

It is the second bailout package that the country completed in past eight years. Last time, it had successfully implemented the \$6 billion Extended Fund Facility from 2013-2016. But it again had to seek another bailout package in 2019, which remained unsuccessful.

Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said on Sunday that seeking another IMF programme was akin to "admitting failure".



RIYADH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif speaks at a Closing Plenary-Rejuvenating Growth, at a Special Meeting of the World Economic Forum.

President confers NI (M) upon Commander Turkish Land Forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon Commander of the Turkish Land Forces, General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu in recognition of his illustrious services.



The ceremony was attended by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, senior military leadership and other senior officials.

Later, the visiting Commander of Turkish Land Forces, General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu, also called on the President, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The meeting was also attended by the Chief of Army Staff, General Syed

Asim Munir. The meeting discussed matters pertaining to defence cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

Both sides emphasised the need for further expanding bilateral ties for the mutual benefit of Pakistan and Turkiye.

Talking to the Commander of Turkish Land Forces, the president said that Pakistan was proud of its relations with Turkiye, which had always supported Pakistan on core issues.

He expressed satisfaction over the collaboration between Pakistan and Turkiye on a number of projects that would further strengthen bilateral ties.

The president highlighted the need for increasing people-to-people contacts, as well as promoting cooperation in the areas of agriculture, education, art and culture to bring the people of Pakistan and Turkiye further closer.

Turkish Commander lauds Pak Army's role in regional peace, stability



RAWALPINDI (APP): Commander Turkish Land Forces, General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir here at General Headquarters on Monday and appreciated the role of Pakistan Army in ensuring peace and stability in the region.

Earlier on arrival at GHQ, the Commander Turkish Land Forces, laid wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada. A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Army presented the guard of honour to the visiting dignitary.

Justice Babar dismisses pleas seeking his recusal in audio leak case

ISLAMABAD (APP): Justice Babar Sattar of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday dismissed the miscellaneous applications filed by PEMRA, FIA and PTA seeking his recusal from hearing the audio leaks cases.

The court also imposed a fine of Rs 500,000 each on Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA).

However in an identical plea, it summoned Intelligence Bureau's (IB) joint director in personal capacity on next date of hearing, which would be announced later. The court was told that approval to file the

Four terrorists gunned down in Tank operation

TANK (INP): Security forces personnel gunned down four terrorists during an operation in District Tank of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to a statement issued by the military's media wing Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Monday, the security forces launched the operation after receiving information about present of the terrorists in the area.

The security forces cordoned off the area and launched a swift action which resulted into the death of four terrorists.

According to the ISPR, the slain terrorists were involved in a number of attacks against security forces and civilians.

No peace in world without permanent peace in Gaza: PM

RIYADH (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday said permanent peace in Gaza was imperative for peace in the world. He was speaking at the plenary meeting of the special session of World Economic Forum on the theme of "Rejuvenating Growth".

He said, "The world will not be in peace unless there is a permanent peace in Gaza."

As he talked about Gaza, the audience in the hall responded with resounding applause.

He said the conflict in Ukraine brought to the world skyrocketing commodity prices, and Pakistan could not import and procure vital raw materials for industry and agriculture.

"On top of that inflation is breaking the back of developing countries," he said. Coupled with that, Pakistan faced devastation in 2022 due to huge un-

imaginable floods.

The prime minister said, "Pakistan is one of those countries which have nothing to do with the reasons leading to climate change. Our contribution to emissions is not even fraction of one percent."

Due to the catastrophic floods in Pakistan, large swaths of land were submerged, millions of houses and animals were washed away, and stagnant water brought water borne diseases all across the country, he continued.

He said his government spent Rs 100 billion from scarce resources for relief and rehabilitation of the flood affected.

"We are grateful to the friendly countries including Saudi Arabia, Gulf countries, the United Kingdom, the United States and many other countries for their support at a difficult time."

Pakistan's economy suffered losses of 30 billion

dollars because of the floods and then it approached international entities in Geneva and other places and had to borrow loans at expensive rates due to the natural disaster which was not its fault, he mentioned. "Our country was hit in a way which I had not seen in my life time," he remarked. He gave the example of his family to express his determination and resolve to put Pakistan on the road to progress and prosperity.

He said his father and his brothers were sons of a poor farmer in undivided India and they migrated to Lahore, Pakistan at the time of partition. With the sheer dint of hard work, in 1965 his father and family raised the largest steel engineering company in Pakistan but it was nationalized on January 2, 1972, he said, adding his family stood up and accepted the challenge and in next 18 months set up six new small factories to avoid further nationalization.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurating Islamabad Traffic Police Education on Wheels & Islamabad Traffic Police Education on Wheels.

Inaugurates mobile facilitation and education service Naqvi emphasizes providing every possible facility to residents of Islamabad

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to details, the Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi has successfully implemented another important initiative for the convenience of the residents of the federal capital, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the Interior Minister inaugurated the Islamabad Traffic Police public facilitation and education mobile service and inspected and reviewed the facilities provided to citizens to get the license.

In this regard a ceremony was held at F-9 park, which was attended by the Federal Interior Minister as chief guest while, the Inspector General of Police

(IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi along with senior police officers were also present. On this occasion, the Federal Interior Minister stated that Islamabad Traffic Police will now issue driving licenses to residents from any part of the country and licenses for people over 70 years of age in the federal capital will be issued at their homes.

He further emphasized providing every possible facility to the residents of Islamabad with a priority on facilitating college and university students with services for obtaining and renewing licenses and learner permits at their educational institutions.

Moreover, the aim of

this service is to save students time from visiting traffic offices and waiting in queues, he maintained.

However, the Federal Interior Minister has announced the commencement of work to rid Islamabad of drugs and offenses. Islamabad will adhere to the Supreme Court's decision regarding offenses and ensuring no tolerance for any transgressions.

The Islamabad Traffic Police has been directed to issue licenses to citizens from any part of the country residing in Islamabad, without requiring them to return if their temporary or permanent address is outside Islamabad.

Kidnapped judge Shakirullah Marwat rescued from DI Khan

DI KHAN (INP): The Dera Ismail Khan Police on Sunday said that kidnapped judge Shakirullah Marwat has been rescued from DI Khan.

The senior judge was abducted from DI Khan two days ago. Police sources claimed that the judge has reached his home safely. Armed men had ambushed and kidnapped the senior judge, a police

official said Sunday.

Around 15 men on motorbikes intercepted Judge Shakirullah Marwat's vehicle as he was traveling towards Dera Ismail Khan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said police official Faheem Khan.

The assailants set the car on fire before fleeing with him. The driver remained unharmed, Khan said.



ISLAMABAD: PM's coordinator on climate change & Environmental coordination Romina Khurshid Alam in a group photo during a launching ceremony of WEF's National plastic action partnership held at COMSATS wherein more than 12 countries ambassadors participated.

SC roster revised as CJP not to hear cases today

ISLAMABAD (INP): The roster of today's hearing in the Supreme Court (SC) was revised as Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa will not hear cases on Monday.

The SC registrar issued the revised roster moments before the commencement of the today's proceedings. The channel said the SC officials informed the litigants about the changes in the roster just before starting the hearing.

As per the channel report, Chief Justice (CJ) Qazi Faez Isa will conduct the Chamber Work today while Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Muhammad Athar Minalah will be included in Bench No 1.

CTD arrests four key TTP terrorists involved in Bisham attack

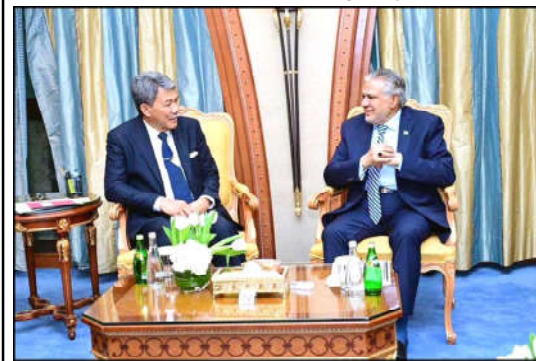
PESHAWAR (APP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday claimed to have arrested four key terrorists of Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), involved in a suicide attack on the vehicle of Chinese engineers in Bisham district, last month.

Termining the arrests a 'big headway', the CTD KP spokesperson in a statement identified the suspects as mastermind Adil Shehbaz, and Muhammad Shafiq Qureshi, Zahid Qureshi and Nazir Hussain. The head of the arrested terrorists, Adil Shehbaz, was a resident of Jalalabad district of Afghanistan.

The four terrorists including Adil Shehbaz, Muhammad Shafiq Qureshi, Zahid Qureshi and Nazir Hussain were residing in district Manshera of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Pakistan, Malaysia to hold JMC this year to study markets, explore economic opportunities

RIYADH (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday met with Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato



Seri Utama Haji Mohamad Bin Haji Hasan in which they reviewed the broad range of relations with a special focus on enhancing trade and investment ties.

In the meeting held on the sidelines of the Special Meeting of the World Eco-

nomics Commission meeting, the two sides agreed to hold the next round of Joint Ministerial Commission meeting in Islamabad during the year.

Incumbent Parliament has no 'legitimate' position: JUI-F Chief

ISLAMABAD (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman raising questions on the 'legitimacy' of the incumbent parliament has said that they have compromised on principles and "sold the democracy".

In his maiden address on floor of the National Assembly (NA) on Monday after 2024 general elections, he expressed concerns over state of representation in Pakistan and asked whether this was really a people's representative parliament.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman alleged that the governments were formed in palaces and bureaucrats decided who would be the Prime Minister.

"How long will we continue to compromise? How long will we seek help from external forces for being elected as a law-

maker," he questioned. The JUI-F chief noted that rigging took place in the 2018 elections, against which the public mobilized and achieved success. The rigging in the 2024 elections, he said, was even more shameful, as it resulted in bringing fake representatives into power.

He alleged that general elections in 2018 were rigged and the same drama was repeated in the February 8 elections. "How can our conscience be clear when sitting in this assembly, as both the losers and winners are not satisfied."

Fazl also expressed frustration over the legislative process, claiming that lawmakers seem powerless to enact laws independently, raising concerns about accountability in a country marred by insecurity.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Weathering the storm

The year 2023 is a sobering reminder of the tumultuous relationship Asia has with climate change and how this change appears to be gaining momentum each year. According to the World Meteorological Organisation, Asia bore the brunt of climate and weather disasters last year, with temperatures in the region climbing almost 2°C above the historical average. This warming has led to more frequent and severe weather phenomena, from debilitating heatwaves to devastating floods. Pakistan finds itself grappling with these realities early this year.

The National Disaster Management Authority has issued warnings of ongoing severe weather conditions likely to persist until April 29, including potential flooding and storms that threaten to disrupt lives and livelihoods. These alerts come in the wake of a series of weather-induced calamities since February that have inflicted significant damage, with the death toll rising and infrastructure strained. This escalating frequency and intensity of weather-related disasters makes evident the need for Asian countries to bolster their meteorological capabilities and disaster preparedness.

For Pakistan, the challenge is twofold. Firstly, there is a pressing need to enhance the capacity and resources of the NDMA and provincial meteorological departments. This means investing in advanced forecasting technologies and expanding early warning systems to ensure timely and accurate weather updates. Secondly, we need a strategy for climate resilience. This would involve building and updating infrastructure to withstand extreme weather, ensuring sustainable agricultural practices so our food sources remain secure, and empowering local populations through community-based disaster-risk management programmes. Every citizen must be made aware of their role in disaster preparedness and response. Moreover, the plight of farmers, highlighted by recent storms affecting the wheat harvest in Punjab, makes a strong case for agricultural reforms. Policies that support crop insurance, improve access to weather-resistant seed varieties, and promote water conservation techniques are vital. Such reforms will help stabilise agricultural output and safeguard farmers' incomes against the caprices of climate.

On a regional level, Asian countries must work closely on climate action initiatives. Sharing technology, knowledge, and strategies can amplify individual efforts and lead to regional resilience. Global cooperation, too, is key. Developed nations need to support vulnerable regions through funding, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives.

The writing is on the wall. The time for incremental steps is over. The scale of the challenge requires bold, decisive actions that reflect the urgency of the moment. For Pakistan, and Asia at large, building resilience is no longer a matter of choice but a necessity for survival in an era marked by unprecedented climatic upheaval. As we advance through 2024, let this be the year when we all proactively ensure that our communities are safeguarded and that the future is secure against the inevitable next storm.

Stirring monster

Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Last month's attack on a Moscow concert hall garnered global media attention, highlighting the rapidly expanding capabilities of the militant Islamic State. The withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan has provided opportunities for militant groups to revisit their policies and targets, resulting in a surge in terrorism. In the South Asia region, in addition to ideological affiliates of Al Qaeda, the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) now poses a significant threat.

Since its formation in 2015, ISKP has extended its influence in South Asia and is experiencing a resurgence enabled by the post-US withdrawal situation. Although the group was forced in 2019 to surrender control of territory it once held in northern and eastern Afghanistan, it has shifted its focus to urban warfare and has since executed numerous lethal attacks. It is also striving to broaden its geographic scope beyond Afghanistan by attracting talent from existing extremist networks.

A central body, the General Directorate of Provinces, is entrusted by the IS to coordinate regional affiliates. The GDP has a dedicated bureau for South Asia called the Maktab al-Saddiq. Reportedly, ISKP maintains communication with its local leadership, but local formations also exercise operational autonomy. ISKP seems flexible in its ambitions, operations, and ties with other militant groups. This is why, after the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and despite the arrests and killings of its members, ISKP remains a significant threat.

The ISKP's strategy

can be divided into two phases: from 2015 to late 2019, its strategy was to gain territory and consolidate control. However, by 2019, ISKP was facing intense pressure and consequently lost territorial control, which proved to be a significant setback. In the second phase, from 2020 onwards, it began focusing on urban warfare. This change of strategy came with the objective of eroding the legitimacy of the Afghan Taliban among the locals. The shift was followed by attacks on the Nangarhar prison, a funeral procession in Nangarhar, and attacks on local Shias and students at Kabul University. In the 2020 attack on Nangarhar Jail, carried out by 11 suicide bombers, 1,000 prisoners were released, including 280 ISKP members. Subsequently, the number of ISKP attacks in Afghanistan increased from 83 in 2020 to 334 in 2021. Two weeks after the exit of US troops from Afghanistan, the attack on Kabul airport resulted in 170 deaths.

Initially, ISKP recruitment was done primarily from areas around the Pak-Afghan border, from where it attracted former TTP fighters with Salafi linkages and sectarian influences. The ISKP's territorial losses in Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover have since changed recruitment patterns, and the group has consequently tried to attract militants on the pretext that the Taliban betrayed the jihadi cause and hence it is the only viable option to be associated with.

The ISKP also intends to expand in the periphery, including India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. However, it has struggled with ground operations. The presence of Myanmar's disenchanted

Rohingya population in Bangladesh offers the potential for the recruitment of sympathisers. In Bangladesh, the one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar (52 per cent of whom are children) have already been targeted by the ISKP; however, the group withdrew when faced with the wrath of counterterrorism (CT) operations.

Denying space to violent non-state actors in poor or disaster-affected communities is critical. States should invest more funds in eradicating illiteracy and developing vocational skills in order to deter employment by militant groups within poor communities, and strengthen relief operations and improve the well-being of disaster victims in order to discourage employment within disaster-affected communities.

Since the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, the ISKP has not faced the same pressure from CT operations, but it has still not seemed very successful in expanding its influence in South Asia. The primary reason for its inability is its confinement to Afghanistan, the availability of a smaller number of foreign fighters to join ISKP, and its lack of success in establishing an operational hierarchy outside Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, the ISKP is trying to take advantage of the withdrawal of US troops, weak governance, isolated administration, absence of an organised CT apparatus, use of technology, latest propaganda techniques, and the vacuum created due to a fractured Al Qaeda.

The question remains: are the great powers intent on stopping it in its tracks, or will the threat be allowed to return? -- Courtesy Dawn

Campus protests

Huma Yusuf

The world has been watching as police storm US university campuses to arrest pro-Palestine supporters. This is an uncomfortable escalation of mounting surveillance and censorship at campuses after months of a growing crackdown: cancellations of poetry readings and talks, social media campaigns against students and faculty, dismissals of university presidents, suspension of pro-Palestine student groups.

The mass arrests of students and clearing of encampments has ignited calls for another free speech movement on US campuses, akin to the one in the 1950s against the excesses of McCarthyism. Calls to defend the right of students to protest are mounting globally, and recalling how such activism in the past helped ensure just outcomes ranging from the Vietnam War to South African apartheid. But nothing is ever so straightforward.

Free speech and democracy advocates should worry about the way in which this is playing out. It is not a given that a wider student movement is brewing — the summer break is imminent and it is unclear whether the students can sustain the momentum.

The clampdown also shows how easily peaceful protest can be re-constructed as disruption, false speech, and the threat of violence (in a recent op-ed, an anti-protest Columbia University professor framed persistent drumming as a form of violence). Where such precedent is established, more clampdowns will follow — and not just on American campuses. Authoritarians everywhere are taking lessons from the US on how effectively to shut down critical voices. Start small, capture the narrative, dis-

tort and weaponise the opposition's words, then send out law enforcement. This is why the challenges of students at elite US university campuses are relevant beyond the context of Gaza.

The images of mass student arrests are inspiring romanticised paeanes to Gen Z, pointing out that a generation that was being written off as ill-informed and apolitical is in fact ready to fight for justice. Rather than indulge in complacency, activists everywhere should focus on what is working, and what is not.

One key success is the local relevance of the protests. Rather than broadly campaign for an Israeli ceasefire or the two-state solution, students are making specific demands of their universities: to divest from companies that are providing weapons to the Israeli army and those that profit from the war. They have also framed their demands in the context of increased transparency.

Protesters are also informed about their First Amendment rights and the legality (or not) of various protest tactics. They are well networked across the country, and supported by legal rights groups. Where protesters have been targeted with charges of antisemitism and disruption, there is an accompanying debate about their interpretation of the law.

While the protesters were right to build on the momentum of anti-fossil fuel campaigning, which has invited wider participation, there is some danger that these protests become all-inclusive: in some universities, there are also demands to cut ties with Israeli institutions or end scientific research that could support the manufacture of weapons that could be used to perpetuate genocide. At Columbia University, pro-

testers have also made demands about low-income housing in the nearby Harlem neighbourhood and called for the university to review its relationship with the New York Police Department. While this diversity of demands will sustain a culture of campus activism, it risks dilution of the present cause.

The extent to which students are informed also varies greatly. The history of certain slogans and images being used, for example, is poorly understood, and so has resulted in protesters being accused of antisemitism. In a university setting, protest should not just be about opposition, but also education. The growing toxicity of anti-protest stances means there are dwindling opportunities for learning and dialogue.

Over recent days, my social media feeds increasingly feature young voices from Pakistan wondering whether they should launch pro-Palestine protests and not just leave such activism to the 'goras'. This is the wrong approach. Activism works when it is rooted in a local context and driven by specific demands. Pakistan has a powerful history of student activism, from the protests against Ayub Khan's dictatorship to the more recent Student Solidarity Movement demanding student unions and an end to student harassment.

The recent bill supporting students' unions and Quid-i-Azam University's decision to allow such groups means Pakistan too is at the cusp of a revival of student activism. Let campus protest movements thrive, but let them do so in the spirit of justice, knowledge and positive change. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Pak-Saudi economic ties enter a new era with trade boosting steps ahead: PM

RIYADH (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the economic ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had entered a new era as both countries were set to take concrete measures to boost the volume of bilateral trade.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Saudi Minister of Commerce Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasbi on the sidelines of the Special Meeting of World Economic Forum here, said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was playing an active role in promoting and facilitating

the foreign investment in the country.

The Saudi minister told the prime minister that on the directives of Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, the Kingdom was prioritising trade and investment in Pakistan.

A delegation of Saudi businessmen, traders and investors would soon visit Pakistan, he added. The Saudi minister said that the targets were being set to take the bilateral ties to a new height within one or one-and-a-half years.

Prime Minister

Shehbaz said that the Pakistani nationals had played a significant role in the progress and prosperity of Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Minister Al-Qasbi stressed the need to further promote the sentiments about the Pak-Saudi ties among the youth and new generation.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan, Information and Broadcasting Minister Attallah Tarar, Petroleum Minister Dr Musaddik Malik and Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi also attended the meeting.

Rupee sheds 01 paise against US dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday lost 01 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.39 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.38. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.85 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 49 paise and closed at Rs 298.38 against the last-day closing of Rs 298.87, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged at Rs1.78, whereas an increase of 31 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs348.79 compared to the last closing of Rs348.48.

The Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal witnessed no change and closed at Rs75.79 and Rs74.22 respectively.



RIYADH: Saudi Minister for Commerce H.E. Majid Al Kasabi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Digital transformation Civil society, private sector & academia's collaboration with govt vital: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima on Monday said that collaborations among the government, civil society, private sector and educational institution is vital for achieving digital transformation in the country.

She expressed these views in her special remarks at the Country Digital Ecosystem Diagnostic Report: Validation Workshop Report: Validation Workshop dialogue hosted by the Sustainable Development

Policy Institute (SDPI) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to facilitate knowledge exchange among key stakeholders, driving sustainable development in Pakistan's digital landscape.

The Country Digital Ecosystem Diagnostic Report: Validation Workshop is a crucial milestone in the ongoing efforts to assess and enhance Pakistan's digital landscape. The diagnostic report provides key insights into Pakistan's digital ecosystem,

identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats across different pillars.

Shaza Fatima emphasized the importance of diagnostic reports and research surveys for the government in creating well-informed policies, strategies, and their implementation.

She stressed that short-term, medium-term, and long-term plans must be based on available data to ensure effective decision-making in the digital transformation journey.

Shehbaz's resuming PMLN's presidency to be refreshing change: Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that PM Shehbaz Sharif's resuming of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) presidency after a seven-year gap will be a refreshing change. Talking to business community on Monday, he said that this shift will be a significant development and a welcome change in

the country's politics.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the business community anticipates that political and economic conditions will improve rapidly under the guidance of Nawaz Sharif. At the same time, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar will work hard to promote economic diplomacy.

He said that the fake cases against Nawaz Sharif have met their fate and that his presidency will give the party more public recognition and a new lease of life.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where three ships namely, MSC Beira IV, Gold Trader and Milaha Qatar carrying Container, Chemicals and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Engro Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Antigua, Majestic Noor and FSM scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

Continuing tight monetary stance SBP maintains policy rate at 22%

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan, Monday, persistently kept policy rate unchanged at 22 percent while stressing on continuation of the current monetary policy stance to bring inflation down to the target range.

The central bank, in a statement issued here following the meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), noted that the macroeconomic

stabilization measures though contributing to considerable improvement in both inflation and external position amid moderate economic recovery, level of inflation was still high despite of

descending trends.

The committee reviewed Inflation outlook and found it in line with the MPC's expectations as inflation has continued to moderate noticeably in H2-FY24. Headline inflation in March declined to 20.7% from 23.1% in February while core inflation fell significantly to 15.7% from 18.1% in February.

Besides the coordinated tight monetary and fiscal policy response, other factors that have led to this favorable outcome include lower global commodity prices, improved food supplies and high base effect.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan calls on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema.

CDNS attains Rs 1375b targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 1375 billion in fresh bonds and achieved 80 percent of annual target in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to April 25.

The National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1742 billion for the year 2023-24, in which it is encouraging that 80 percent of the target has been achieved, and it is hoped that National Savings will surpass its annual target this FY 2023-24, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Monday.

The annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22.

"The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said.

Given the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan H.E. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

BankIslami achieves remarkable financial results of Rs 6.3 billion

KARACHI (APP): Maintaining its growth momentum, BankIslami delivered an impressive return for its shareholders, with a remarkable 99% surge in its profit before tax for the first quarter of 2024.

The Bank's profit before tax reached Rs. 6.3 billion, with a post-tax profit of Rs. 3.2 billion, representing a growth of 79.2%. Despite adverse market conditions, the Bank remains committed to financial excellence.

Prominently, it demonstrated magnificent cost efficiency, as evidenced by the reduced cost-to-

income ratio of 43.1% during the period, compared to 47.9% in the same period last year.

BankIslami strategically expanded its investment portfolio and grew its financing portfolio despite navigating through ongoing economic uncertainty.

Consequently, the investment portfolio reached Rs. 332.2 billion, while the financing portfolio was at Rs. 253.6 billion showing an improvement in infection ratio to 8.2% from 9.0% in December 2023.

Ahsan Iqbal highlights role of engineering in developed world

NAROWAL (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said that behind the development of the modern world is the hard work of engineers and the solution of most of the problems of all sectors of life, including health, food, and industry is related to the field of engineering. He expressed the views at the ongoing "Science Mela 2024" at University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Narowal Campus. Students of different departments of the university presented their final year projects for exhibition at the Innovation Center of the University of Engineering and Technology sub-campus

Narowal. The projects related to electrical, mechanical, civil, biomedical engineering and computer engineering. Students of various universities including Agriculture University Faisalabad, UET Sialkot Campus, ITU University of Narowal, Veterinary University Narowal Campus participated in the science fair.

Later, Ahsan Iqbal handed over new buses provided to the University of Engineering and Technology Narowal Campus to the administration and also planted a sapling in the university. He also participated in the prize distribution ceremony in the seminar hall of UET Narowal Campus.

Speaking on this occasion, he said that UET Narowal Campus was his dream for which he had worked hard to achieve. "Behind the development of the modern world is the hard work of engineers. The solution of most of the problems of all sectors of life, including health, food, and industry is related to the field of engineering. Today we are living in the era of technology, today's era is the era of artificial intelligence," he added.

He said, "If you want to establish your place in the world of education and research, you need to go through the process of continuous learning. We have established departments like National Center for Satellite Technology.



FAISALABAD: A lady health worker administering polio drops to a child during 7-days anti polio campaign in the city.

Balighur Rehman condoles with Saira Afzal

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman on Monday visited the residence of Member National Assembly (MNA) Saira Afzal Tarar at her ancestral village and extended condolences to her on the death of her father, Senior Politician Afzal Hussain Tarar.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman offered Fatiha and prayed to Allah Almighty to grant the highest ranks in Jannah to the departed soul.

He also prayed to give courage and sustenance to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with equanimity.

The Governor Punjab said the services of Afzal Tarar (late) for the country and the party will always be remembered.

Police committed to continue best services for masses: RPO

MULTAN (APP): Regional Police Officer (RPO) Capt (retd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry on Monday said that the police would continue best services for the masses and more improvement was being made in service delivery for public facilitation.

In a ceremony of awarding cash prizes and commendatory certificates to traffic police officials over

impressive performance here, the regional police officer said that the basic purpose of the police department was to serve the people and to protect lives and properties of the masses adding that all possible efforts were being made for this purpose.

He said that the department was striving hard to ensure maximum relief to masses through improving service delivery.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with MPA Imdad Pitafi during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

Three Sindh Ministers visit ancestral Bhutto family graveyard

LARKANA (APP): Three Provincial Ministers, Muhammad Ali Malkani, Dost Muhammad Rahmoon and Tariq Ali Talpur visited ancestral Bhutto family graveyard in Garhi Khudabakhsh Bhutto here on Monday. They paid tributes to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Ms. Benazir Bhutto, Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto.

Shah Nawaz Bhutto attended the shrines of Begum Nusrat Bhutto and recited Fateha and laid flowers wreath.

Speaking to the media persons, Provincial Minis-

ter Muhammad Ali Malkani said that we had come here to visit the martyrs' shrines. He said that maintaining law and order was the priority of the Sindh government. In response to a question, he said that a JIT had been formed for the recovery of Priya Kumari, which was doing its job.

He said that bumper quantity of wheat had been produced in Sindh, adding he would talk to the Chief Minister Sindh and the Provincial Minister of Food Department so that Pasco could also buy the crop.

5 killed, 2 injured in different incidents

FAISALABAD (APP): Five people including a minor girl were killed while two others sustained multiple injuries in different incidents in Faisalabad during last 12 hours. Police spokesman said here on Monday that Maqsood Anjum resident of Siddique Nagar was shot dead by his rivals Sajid alias Lalo, etc. to avenge an old enmity in Mithaiwala Chowk whereas accused Waqas alias Kashi shot dead Muhammad Rafiq resident of Chak 165-GB over a plot dispute.

CM KP felicitates newly elected local bodies representatives

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Monday congratulated the newly elected six local bodies representatives in bye-elections.

Chief Minister in a statement said that in unofficial and inconclusive results, PTI-backed candidates have won five out of six seats of Tehsil Chairman which is a manifestation of the trust of the people of the province on his party.

"I thank the people of these constituencies for showing full confidence in the supporting PTI-backed candidates", said Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. "I also congratulate

the party leadership and workers for the excellent success of the candidates supported by the party in the by-elections".

The chief minister said that in these elections, the nation has given a huge mandate to his party across the country.

He said party's founder can be put in jail but cannot be removed from the hearts of the people, said Ali Amin.

He further said that the public mandate should be recognized in the better interest of the country and nation.

Ali Amin said that they will continue all political, constitutional and legal struggle to achieve their right to provide relief to people of the province.



LAHORE: Chief Traffic Officer Amara Athar hold a banner along with students during Traffic Awareness walk (Use Helmet) at Faisal Chowk in the Provincial Capital.

Marriyum says: EPD seals 170 brick kilns, registers 169 FIRs in 15 days

LAHORE (APP): Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has sealed 170 brick kilns, besides registering 169 FIRs during a province-wide campaign against the scourge of pollution during last 15 days.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb disclosed this in a statement issued on Monday. While giving details, the senior minister reported that during this

period, the department inspected a total of 4488 brick kilns in various districts, and 170 kilns were sealed for violations of environmental laws. 705 brick kilns were issued notices and fines totaling Rs.20.1 million were imposed on the owners of brick kilns found guilty of environmental law violations. Similarly, police were also approached for the registration of FIRs against 169 kiln.

Provincial Outbreak Committee to provide immediate response during any outbreak

PESHAWAR: The first meeting of the Provincial Outbreak Committee, chaired by Minister of Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah, was held on Monday at Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir, Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Khan Mahsood, Special Secretary Polio Program

Abdul Basit, along with Additional DG Administration Dr. Siraj, Director EPI Dr. Arif, Director Public Health Dr. Irshad Roghani, Director IMU Dr Ijaz and all other relevant quarters in person. All DHOs and MSs attended the meeting online. It was reported to the minister that district outbreak committees have been formed in all districts of the province. Initial meetings have been

conducted in the relevant districts to activate these committees. The minister stated that the purpose of the Provincial Outbreak Committee is to provide an immediate response during any outbreak. He further explained that this initiative will improve the provision of routine health services, and the performance of health department officials will be presented to this committee.

International News

US, Britain urge Hamas to accept Israeli truce proposal

Blinken says Israel must still do more to boost humanitarian aid to Gaza

Monitoring Desk RYADH: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday urged Hamas to swiftly accept an Israeli proposal for a truce in the Gaza war and the release of Israeli hostages held by the Palestinian militant group.

Hamas negotiators were expected to meet Qatari and Egyptian mediators in Cairo on Monday to deliver a response to the phased truce proposal which Israel presented at the weekend. "Hamas has before it a proposal that is extraordinarily, extraordinarily generous on the part of Israel," Blinken said at a

meeting of the World Economic Forum in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

"The only thing standing between the people of Gaza and a ceasefire is Hamas. They have to decide and they have to decide quickly," he said. "I'm hopeful that they will make the right decision." A source briefed on the talks said Israel's proposal entailed a deal for the release of fewer than 40 of the roughly 130 hostages believed to be still held in Gaza in exchange for freeing Palestinians jailed in Israel.

A second phase of a truce would consist of a

"period of sustained calm" - Israel's compromise response to a Hamas demand for a permanent ceasefire.

A total of 253 hostages were seized in a Hamas attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7 in which about 1,200 Israelis were also killed, according to Israeli counts.

Israel retaliated by imposing a total siege on Gaza and mounting an air and ground assault that has killed about 34,500 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities.

Palestinians are suffering from severe shortages of food, fuel and medicine in a humanitarian cri-

sis brought on by the offensive that has demolished much of the territory. Britain's Foreign Secretary David Cameron, who was also in Riyadh for the WEF meeting, also described the Israeli proposal as "generous".

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Monday that Israel must still do more to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into the besieged Gaza Strip and that he would use his current Middle East trip — his seventh to the region since the Israel-Hamas war started in October — to press that case with Israeli leaders.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken attends the U.S.-Arab Quint Meeting with representatives from Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the Palestinian Authority, at the Four Seasons Hotel in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg arrive for a press conference, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Israel kills at least 30 Palestinians in Rafah, new Gaza ceasefire talks expected in Cairo

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: Israeli airstrikes on three houses in the southern Gaza city of Rafah killed at least 25 Palestinians and wounded many others, medics said on Monday, as leaders of Hamas arrived in Cairo for a new round of talks with Egyptian and Qatari mediators.

In Gaza City, in the north of the Gaza Strip, Israeli warplanes struck two houses, killing at least four people and wounding sev-

eral people, health officials said. The strike on the other house killed two brothers, they added.

The strikes on Rafah, where more than one million people have sought refuge from months of Israeli bombardment, took place hours before Egypt was expected to host leaders of the Islamist group Hamas to discuss prospects for a ceasefire agreement with Israel. The Israeli military said it was checking the reports.

NATO chief, on unannounced Kyiv visit, says arms flows to Ukraine will increase

Monitoring Desk KYIV: NATO boss Jens Stoltenberg told Ukrainians on Monday that his alliance's members had failed to live up to their promises of military aid in recent months, but said the flow of arms and ammunition would now increase.

In an unannounced visit to Ukraine, the secretary general of the transatlantic military alliance held talks with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and

was due to address Ukraine's parliament, the Rada.

His visit — the third since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 — comes at a difficult time on the battlefield for Ukraine. After a failed Ukrainian counter-offensive last year, Russian forces have gained the initiative — at least in part due to a dearth of arms and ammunition from Kyiv's Western partners.

"I will also be very honest with President Zelenskyy and also with the Rada that NATO allies have not delivered what we have promised over the last months," Stoltenberg said on the train taking him into Kyiv on Monday.

"The United States spent six months to agree a package and European allies have not delivered the ammunition we promised. But now I'm confident that things will change," he said.

China set to launch high-stakes mission to moon's 'hidden' side

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: China will send a robotic spacecraft in the coming days on a round trip to the moon's far side in the first of three technically demanding missions that will pave the way for an inaugural Chinese crewed landing and a base on the lunar south pole. Since the first Chang'e mission in 2007, named after the mythical Chinese moon goddess, China has made leaps forward in its

lunar exploration, narrowing the technological chasm with the United States and Russia. In 2020, China brought back samples from the moon's near side in the first sample retrieval in more than four decades, confirming for the first time that it could safely return an uncrewed spacecraft to Earth from the lunar surface. This week, China is expected to launch Chang'e-6 using the backup

spacecraft from the 2020 mission and collect soil and rocks from the side of the moon that permanently faces away from Earth.

With no direct line of sight with the Earth, Chang'e-6 must rely on a recently deployed relay satellite orbiting the moon during its 53-day mission, including a never-before-attempted ascent from the moon's "hidden" side on its return journey home.

At least 40 people die in western Kenya after a dam collapses following heavy rains

Monitoring Desk NAIROBI: A dam collapsed in western Kenya early Monday, killing at least 40 people after a wall of water swept through houses and cut off a major road, police said.

The Old Kijabe Dam, located in the Mai Mahiu area of the Great Rift Valley region that is prone to flash floods, col-

lapsed and water spilled downstream, carrying with it mud, rocks and uprooted trees, police official Stephen Kirui told The Associated Press.

Vehicles were entangled in the debris on one of Kenya's busiest highways and paramedics treated the injured as waters submerged large areas.

Gaza protesters disrupt Paris's Sorbonne university

Monitoring Desk PARIS: Protesters angry over the Gaza war took to Paris' Sorbonne University on Monday, chanting 'Free Palestine' at the university's gates while some students set up tents in the courtyard. Days after similar protests at Paris's Sciences Po elite school, the gathering at the Sorbonne was the latest sign that demonstrations on U.S. campuses.

Russian forces advance in Ukraine's east

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian forces advanced at points along the front line in Ukraine on Monday, taking a village in the Donetsk region, gaining better positions in the Kharkiv region and repelling a number of Ukrainian attacks, Russia's defence ministry said.

Russia controls about 18% of Ukraine — in the east and south — and has been gaining ground since the failure of Kyiv's 2023 counter-offensive to make any serious inroads against well dug-in Russian troops. President Vladimir Putin in February ordered Russian troops to push further into Ukraine after the fall of the town of Avdiivka where he said Ukrainian troops had been forced to flee in chaos. Ukraine said it withdrew from Avdiivka.

PM meets Bill Gates; urges sustained efforts by partners for polio-free Pakistan

RIYADH (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday met the founder and co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill Gates, wherein he called for a sustained effort by all the partners to reach the ultimate goal of a polio-free Pakistan.

In the meeting held on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Special Meeting here, the prime minister highlighted that Pakistan was working tirelessly to eradicate polio from the country, a PM Office press release said.

Earlier, both leaders had featured in a WEF's high-level panel discussion titled "Redefining the Global Health Agenda." The prime minister thanked Bill Gates for sending him a warm congratulatory letter upon

his re-election.

Bill Gates recalled the immunization and polio vaccine program in Punjab province under the leadership of Shehbaz Sharif as chief minister and emphasized replicating the same practice across the country to make the immunization program a success.

While fondly recalling their interactions during his previous tenure, the prime minister reaffirmed his commitment to continue working closely with Bill Gates to ensure a stronger partnership between Pakistan and the Gates Foundation. He thanked the BMGF for its longstanding support for polio eradication in Pakistan.

Bill Gates acknowledged Pakistan's efforts and said polio eradication was

vital to protect future generations from this crippling disease.

In addition to polio, Prime Minister Shehbaz and Bill Gates also discussed progress on ongoing activities between Pakistan and the Foundation in the areas of immunization, nutrition, and financial inclusion.

The prime minister said that the Gates Foundation was a trusted partner in Pakistan's socio-economic development and sought collaboration in other areas including IT, STEM education and disaster management.

Recalling Bill Gates' visit to Pakistan in February 2022, the prime minister extended an invitation to him to visit Pakistan again at a time of his convenience.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Anwar-ul-Haq called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President Asif Zardari says Promoting AJK tourism vital for socio-economic uplift, generating economic activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday said that strengthening the tourism sector of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was significant to ensure the socio-economic uplift and generate economic activities in the area.

He, in a meeting with the AJK Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq, who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, assured that Pakistan would provide all possible support and assistance to facilitate investment in the diverse areas of AJK's economy, especially the tourism sector, according to a President House press release.

He said that AJK was blessed with immense po-

tential for tourism and a beautiful landscape, which needed to be fully developed to attract tourists.

The two discussed the overall situation of AJK as well as the issues related to AJK's development.

President Zardari remarked that the AJK youth needed to be equipped with the latest skills and education to help them find gainful employment, besides contributing to AJK's development.

He said that Pakistan could assist the government of AJK in benefiting from the carbon credit markets.

During the meeting, the president assured of his support to the AJK prime minister and his govern-

ment.

The AJK prime minister requested the government to visit AJK and address the AJK Legislative Assembly.

President Zardari also expressed grief over the loss of precious human lives during the recent rain-related incidents in different parts of the AJK and hoped that the AJK government would help the affected families.

The president also reiterated Pakistan's commitment for continued moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) till the attainment of their right to self-determination.

Aleem Khan announces significant developments for motorway expansion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday announced the significant developments for the motorway expansion from Mansehra to Gilgit, Babu Sar top and Skardu region.

He made the announcement while addressing the 14th passing-out ceremony of 289 police officers at the NHMP Training College in Sheikhpura.

The ceremony was attended by Federal Secretary of Communication Ali Sher Mehsud, IG Salman Chaudhry, Additional IG Ali Saber Kayani, Commandant DIG Syed Hashmat Kamal, patrol officers, and their families, said a press release issued here.

The minister highlighted plans to deploy Motorway Police to Gwadar and Karakoram areas, emphasizing the institution's integrity and

its role in fostering integrity within the community.

He underlined the importance of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in driving prosperity for Pakistan and reiterated commitments to enhance institutions, ensure quality selection process, and provide comprehensive training to officers.

The minister announced an additional one-month extension for training completion and salary increments for officers.

IG Motorway Police Salman Chaudhry commended the role of Motorway Police despite resource limitations and praised Commandant College Syed Hashmat Kamal for their training initiatives.

Commandant Training College DIG Syed Hashmat Kamal expressed gratitude for the recognition and emphasized focus on personality development alongside professional training.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu, Commander of Turkish Land Forces called on Minister for Defence & Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

Amir Muqam calls for performance over politics, criticizes opposition tactics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Engr. Amir Muqam on Monday emphasized the need for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provincial government to focus on performance instead of engaging in negative politics and manipulating public sentiments.

Speaking here in the National Assembly, he urged the Opposition to adopt a constructive approach rather than disrupting proceedings with confrontational tactics.

He criticized the KP provincial government's failure and its stubborn attitude to fill 11 vacant seats in the Senate, stressing the importance of ensuring adequate representation for province in the House of Federation (Senate).

The minister lamented the underperformance of the KP province compared to Punjab and Sindh, calling for a learning curve from their development models.

About the blames of the KP Chief Minister on the federal government over resource allocation, he highlighted the equitable distribution through the National Finance Commission (NFC) award.

The minister questioned the chief minister's insistence on federal funds, emphasizing adherence to established financial mechanisms. Regarding opposition politics, Amir Muqam denounced the tendency for selective acceptance of court decisions and criticized the tendency to incite unrest while shunning accountability.



ISLAMABAD: Lady Health workers administering polio drops during Anti Polio drive in the Holy Shrine of Bari Imam Sarkar R.A in the Federal Capital.

Polio drive in full swing: ICT admin oversees campaign activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): All the Assistant Commissioners of the Federal Capital were actively engaging with polio teams to ensure the success of the seven-day anti-polio drive which started on Monday in ICT.

This proactive involvement aligned with the directives from Islamabad's Deputy Commissioner and the Additional Deputy Commissioner East, said the Spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory Administration, Dr Abdullah Tabassum here.

In this regard, the Assistant Commissioners from across the city have visited different locations to oversee the polio teams' activities.

At Jinnah Garden, Assistant Commissioner Sadder area, Ms Mehreen joined the morning assembly, where she discussed the

day's goals and addressed issues concerning polio vaccinations.

She emphasized meeting the targets, addressing "not available" (NA) cases, and handling refusals to ensure maximum coverage.

Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Nellore area, Uzir Ahmad participated in the morning briefing at I-8 area.

During this session, he reviewed the first day's planning and addressed any complaints or concerns related to the polio campaign.

Similarly, in the Industrial Area, Assistant Commissioner, Farwa Batool checked in on the polio teams at UCG-15, issuing additional guidance to enhance their operations.

This focused approach aimed at streamlining the vaccination process and solve any logistical issues.

Karakoram Highway closed between Kohistan, Gilgit

GILGIT (INP): The Kohistan-Gilgit section of the Karakoram Highway has been closed off due to severe landslides triggered by recent heavy rains.

Due to the recent rains, debris from the landslide is still present on the road at the Doga bridge near Barsin. The closure, which has been in effect since Sunday, has disrupted land connectivity between

Gilgit and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, affecting travel and trade in the region.

Efforts to reopen the highway have been hampered by the presence of mountain debris on the road. Despite machinery being dispatched to the site, clearance work has been delayed pending favourable weather conditions.



RIYADH: Founder and Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Bill Gates calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on the sidelines of a special meeting of the World Economic Forum.

Nazeer urges MNAs from Balochistan to educate masses against gas theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarrar, urged the members of the National Assembly elected from Balochistan on Monday to educate the masses against gas theft in the province.

In response to a calling attention notice regarding over billing and extra service charges in Balochistan, particularly in Quetta by the Sui Gas Company, he expressed concern over the high incidence of gas theft and meter tampering in the

province. The Minister said that the government has launched campaigns against gas theft from time to time in the province.

He cited a report indicating that the company is facing a 55 percent loss in the Quetta region due to gas theft.

Azam Nazeer Tarrar said that natural resources are assets of the country and should be utilized with care, urging concerted efforts to combat gas theft and promote responsible use of resources.

Ayaz extends felicitation to Dar on his appointment as deputy PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday extended felicitation to Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on his appointment as Deputy Prime Minister.

In his felicitation message, the Speaker said that appointment of Senator Ishaq Dar as Deputy Prime Minister indicated the trust on his political sagaciousness and his seasoned leadership, said a news release.

He said that Ishaq Dar's appointment as Deputy Prime Minister would lead Pakistan on a new path of progress and prosperity.

Govt committed to providing quality health services to people, says CM Maryam

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz said on Monday that the Punjab government was committed to providing quality health services to the people of the province.

Talking to the media at Children's Hospital here, she said the provincial government was making efforts to overcome the dearth of doctors in far-flung areas of Punjab.

"Every penny of the national exchequer belongs to the people," she said, adding, "And the government is determined to spend

the amount on improving the health sector."

She also announced the construction of a new intensive care unit (ICU) at the hospital, and ordered the release of funds for the purpose as early as possible so that the project could be completed at its earliest. Maryam said the government planned to build a state-of-the-art hospital in each district of the province.

Earlier, the chief minister inaugurated a Daycare Center at the hospital and reviewed the facilities provided there.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, meets with Mohamed Yahya of Somalia United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan.

SIC head warns of resignation from assemblies if Imran does not get justice

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) Chairman Sahibzada Hamid Raza warned the government that they will tender their resignations from the assemblies if former premier Imran Khan does not get justice.

In a tweet on Monday, "If the founder of PTI [Imran Khan] does not get justice, we will not sit in the assemblies." In the tweet, Hamid Raza suggested to the PTI leadership that they need to consider resigning from the assemblies and coming to the roads [for protests].

SIC head Sahibzada Hamid Raza MNA also said that he will be the first person to resign from the National Assembly for PTI founder Imran Khan. He said the PTI leadership should give a time frame of three weeks to eight weeks to the government

for their demands.

On the other hand, the Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan announced tabling a resolution against the fake police cases on PTI leadership.

Talking to media outside the session court in Islamabad on Monday, Omar Ayub said an FIR was filed against him and his colleagues because they demonstrated for prisoner number 804 [Imran Khan].

He said they used their constitutional and legal right of a peaceful protest rally in the presence of Islamabad police, the next day, a fake case under various provisions was registered against them.

Omar Ayub said all this illegal act was taking place at the behest of the Chief Minister of Punjab and other authorities who are the product of the so-called Form 47.

ECP summons KP CM Gandapur over asset declaration discrepancies

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Tuesday to clarify discrepancies found in his declaration of assets and liabilities submitted for the general elections of 2024. The ECP has instructed CM Gandapur to personally appear on Tuesday and provide clarification regarding his assets.

Previously, the ECP agreed to hold a hearing on a petition seeking the disqualification of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

A two-member bench issued a brief order on the petition, noting that Ali Amin Gandapur had failed to submit his assets to the election commission.

Jamiat Ulema Islam

(JUI) Kafeel Nizami filed a petition to disqualify Gandapur, alleging that he made false statements about his property in the nomination papers, consequently questioning his integrity. The petition urged the ECP to remove Gandapur from the position of chief minister.

In the petition, Kafeel Nizami, informed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) that 735 kanals of land in DI Khan were temporarily transferred to Ali Amin Gandapur, despite Asif Khan being the original owner.

His acquisition of a Land Cruiser vehicle through the sale of the same land disqualifies him from holding a Provincial Assembly seat due to providing false information.

10 people died in recent rains in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ten people were killed and 14 others sustained injuries in different incidents of roof collapses caused by recent heavy rainfall in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to private news channel reported on Monday that women and children were also included in the recent heavy rains.

According to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), 56 houses were damaged due to the collapse of walls, roofs and lightning due to torrential rains.

IHC adjourns PTI founder's bail plea

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday adjourned hearing of a bail petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder in 190 million pounds Al-Qadir Trust scam case.

IHC bench comprising Chief Justice Amer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the bail petition. Defence lawyers Barister Salman Safdar and Shehbaz Khosa appeared before the court, while National Accountability Court Prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz could not attend the proceedings.



ISLAMABAD: Mrs. Marilina Armellini, Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan, calls on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema.

Masood hails Pak-American physicians role in upgrading Pakistan's healthcare system

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan stands for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and resumption of humanitarian assistance, not through just one corridor or one per, but through multiple passages. Ambassador Masood Khan has said.

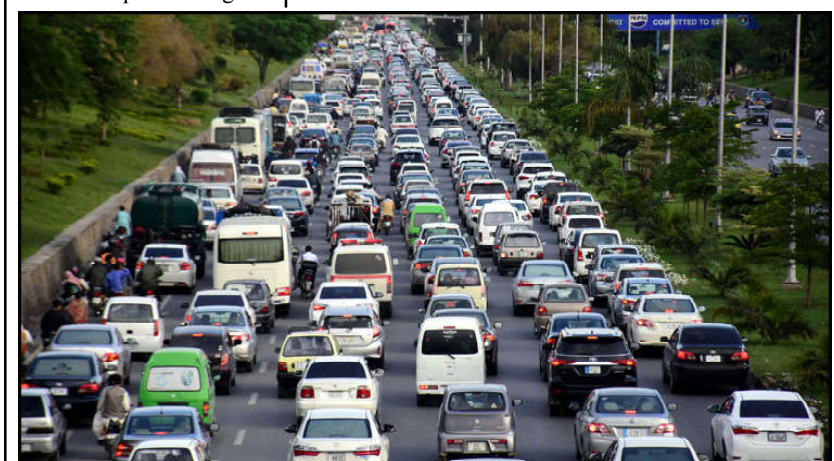
The solution for Palestine is written large on the wall," he told the Spring meeting of Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) in Chicago on Saturday.

"Palestinians right to self-determination should be recognized, the Pakistani envoy added.

APPNA is the largest association of Pakistani diaspora in the United States and Canada.

Among the largely-attended meeting were Pakistani-American physicians, healthcare professionals, community leaders and other dignitaries. US Congressman Jamaal Bowman and Congresswoman Delia Ramirez addressed the gathering held in a spacious hall.

In his remarks, Masood Khan paid tributes to the services of APPNA for their service to the humanity, and thanked the organization's president,



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam at Islamabad Expressway in the Federal Capital.