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PM launches Shuhada Package for martyred federal govt officials; resolves to eliminate smuggling

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday launched the Shuhada Package to support the families of the federal government officials martyred in the line of duty.

The prime minister announced the package during his visit to the family of late Customs Inspector Syed Hasnain Ali Tirmizi, who was martyred in a firing incident in Dera Ismail Khan a few days ago. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, PML-N leaders, and senior government officers were present.

PM Sharif handed over a cheque under the Shuhada Package to the family of martyred personnel and assured his government's all-out efforts for the security of the customs officials serving to purge the country of smug-

gling. Offering Fateha for the martyred soul and sympathizing with the bereaved family, he said that the Shuhada Package, earlier announced by the Punjab government, had now been extended to the federal government and could be revised further considering the country's financial position.

The package comprises cash assistance, housing allowance, free education and medical treatment. Under the package, the family members of a martyred sepoy will get Rs 10 million cash assistance and Rs 13.5 million housing allowance besides free education and medical treatment. The family of a martyred customs inspector will be entitled for a Rs15 million cash and Rs25 million housing allowance along with free education and medical facilities.

PM Sharif said the package would also apply to civilian officials, police and law enforcement agencies.

In his interaction with the family members, the prime minister showed compassion and affection to the orphaned children and called them the "children of a hero".

He told the children that entire nation was proud over their "hero father".

The prime minister paid tribute to the late customs inspector who sacrificed his life while fighting against smuggling in a bid to save billions of dollars for the national economy.

He also lauded the patience and perseverance of the martyred customs inspector's father and apprised him of his government's ongoing efforts to curb smuggling, citing holding several meetings on the subject.



ABBOTTABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif handing over PM's Shuhada Assistance cheque to the father of Custom's Inspector Hussain Ali Tirmizi Shaheed.

Divorced from ground reality: Pakistan rejects US human rights report as biased and politicized

Contents of report are unjust, relying on inaccurate information and disconnected from ground realities, says FO

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday categorically rejected the recently released 2023 Country Report on human rights practices issued by the US State Department terming its contents "unfair, based on inaccurate information and completely divorced from the ground reality".

Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Bloch, in a statement, said that the US State Department's annual exercises of preparing such unsolicited reports lacked ob-

jectivity and remained inherently flawed in their methodology. "These reports use a domestic social lens to judge human rights in other countries in a politically biased manner. This year's report is once again conspicuous for its lack of objectivity and politicization of the international human rights agenda," she added.

The spokesperson said the report clearly demonstrated the double standards thus undermining the international human rights discourse.

MQM-P 'agrees' on removal of Tessori

KARACHI (INP): The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) changed its strategy for the appointment of Governor Sindh as Kamran Khan Tessori is likely to be replaced by another party colleague.

The sources privy to the development said that the MQM-P, which earlier refused to replace Kamran Tessori, has now shown flexibility on the matter.

The sources within the party said that Barrister Farogh Naseem has emerged as a strong candidate to replace Kamran Tessori for the slot.

It is pertinent to mention here that the ruling

party in Sindh, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had demanded Tessori's removal from office, accusing him of "creating a political divide and further widening the gap between urban and rural areas of the province."

PPP Sindh General Secretary Senator Waqar Mehdi said that Tessori has not succeeded in closing the gap between the urban and rural areas and politics.

In the reply, the MQM-P termed Mehdi's statement as unnecessary and non-serious. "The PPP should address the growing sense of deprivation during its 15-year rule in Sindh.

PM removes Chief Commissioner Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has removed Chief Commissioner (CC) Islamabad Capt (Retd) Anwar ul Haq from his post.

According to sources Muhammad Ali Randhawa is likely to be appointed as CC Islamabad after the removal of Capt (Retd) Anwar ul Haq from his office.

Muhammad Ali Randhawa is grade-20 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service.

Awais Leghari meets Chief Minister Sindh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Power Division Awais Ahamd Khan Leghari met with Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah here Thursday at the Sindh House. During the meeting they agreed to cooperate in the prevention of electricity theft, said a statement.

The Sindh Chief Minister assured full cooperation in the ongoing campaign against electricity pilferage. The minister thanked the chief minister for his support in the national cause.

Price of POL products likely to be reduced by Rs 7 per liter

ISLAMABAD (Online): The price of petroleum products and diesel is likely to be scaled down in Pakistan due to decrease in their prices in international market.

According to sources the price of petrol has been set at 107.16 dollar per barrel with reduction in the price by 1.86 dollar per barrel in international market.

With the reduction of 4.30 dollar per barrel, the price of diesel has gone down to 104.76 dollars per barrel in the international market.

The price of petrol is likely to be reduced by Rs 5 per liter and high speed diesel by Rs 7 per liter in Pakistan.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah speaks at The Citizens Foundation (TCF) event: "Greatness of Spirit: Book Launch" at a local hotel.

No complaints of judicial interference under my watch, says CJP

KARACHI (INP): Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Thursday said he had not received a single complaint from any high court judge about interference in judicial affairs since assuming the office.

The top judge was addressing Sindh High Court Bar Association (SHCBA). He said no one has reported any meddling in the judicial process to him, adding that all the incidents were taken place before the start of his tenure as CJP.

He categorically stated that interference in judiciary was not acceptable but at the same time set the record straight that he had not received any such complaint under his watch.

On March 25, six judges of the Islamabad High Court wrote a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council regarding the "interference of intelligence agencies in judicial matters".

The letter was written by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Saman Raffat Imitiaz.

Later, the Supreme Court initiated suo motu proceedings on the IHC judges' letter and sought a proposal from the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), high courts and the federal government to address the issue.

"They should suggest what should be the institutional response and mechanism to address the issues like the ones raised in the letter [of IHC judges] and ensure that such issues do not arise in future and, if they do, to fix liability and proceed against those responsible," the top court said in its April 3 order in the suo motu case.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani presides over a Senate House Business Advisory Committee meeting, held at Parliament House in Islamabad.

Sindh Minister reviews ongoing projects of Building Department

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister of Works and Services Ali Hassan Zardari paid a surprise visit to the projects of the Building Department here on Thursday.

The Minister directed to complete the work of Sindh Judicial Academy immediately.

On this occasion, he reviewed the ongoing projects of the Ministers' Secretariat Karachi and directed to improve the quality of work.

Ali Hassan Zardari also visited the under-construction anti-corruption complex. He inspected the

new residential flats built for judges flats, officers and staff.

The minister of Works and Services directed to complete the work as soon as possible and said that the contractors who do not complete the work on time will be blacklisted.

He visited the new Chief Minister's Secretariat and reviewed the work quality. The officers of Works and Services department gave a briefing on this occasion. The minister issued instructions that the ongoing projects in Karachi should be completed on time.

Nawaz Sharif ready to talk to Imran Khan for the sake of national interest: Rana

LAHORE (Online): PML-N leader Rana Sana Ullah has said Nawaz Sharif is ready to talk to Imran Khan for national interest.

In an interview with a private channel Rana Sana Ullah said Thursday that PML-N Quaid was ready for talks with Imran Khan and he proved it through his action.

He went on to say Nawaz Sharif extended invitation to Imran Khan for talks when 126 days dharna was underway.

He held Imran Khan popularity among the people is zero but he has got vote of resistance and sympathy during general election.

PTI founder was using inappropriate words

against Nawaz Sharif at that time but even then Nawaz Sharif had extended hands of talks to Imran Khan.

Nawaz Sharif proved through his action that he gives priority to national interest above all.

Nawaz Sharif had to suffer heavily due to politics of resistance and narrative, he stated. He had to go to exile and his business was destroyed.

What Gen (Retd) Bajwa had said that he had not sent Nawaz Sharif to London is correct, he remarked.

He said Imran Khan and his cabinet had sent Nawaz Sharif to London for medical treatment, he indicated.

CM lauds TCF's journey from 5 schools to 2000 across country

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that underprivileged students from The Citizens Foundation (TCF) have successfully qualified for admission to prestigious universities and many of them have also passed the CSS exams and are currently working in both national and multinational companies.

"The motto of TCF 'Quality education for the less privileged' has had an immense impact on our society." This he said while speaking at a program The Citizens Foundation (TCF) organised in collaboration with the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) - "Greatness of Spirit in Karachi: Book Launch & Magsaysay Laureate Reunion," at a local hotel.

CM Shah appreciated TCF's journey from five schools to nearly 2,000 schools across the country in the urban slums and rural communities. "The Sindh government has given its 500 Schools to TCF for their out-

standing results," he said and added that he was so pleased to know that the TCF students were qualifying for admission in prestigious Universities and some of them have completed MBA from IBA, and LUMS and qualified for CSS exams and Fulbright scholarships and now serving in national and multinational companies. The CM expressed his admiration for the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, for initiating this prestigious award which is now considered an 'Asian Noble Prize' in the field of public service.

He also commented that it's heartening to know that the RMAF award was given regardless of nationality, religion and ethnicity. On behalf of the people of Pakistan especially the province of Sindh, Murad Shah extended heartfelt gratitude to RMAF for giving 13 prestigious awards to our legends who have given their lives to the country for a public cause.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori giving away cheque to a man during motorcycles and cheques distribution ceremony at Governor House.

PM Shehbaz Sharif announces 150 buses for Karachi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has announced 150 buses for Karachi during his inaugural visit to the city. The premier revealed the decision to allocate 150 buses following a request from Sindh Minister for Transport, Sharjeel Inam Memon, during a high-level meeting. Sindh Transport Minister Memon had requested the prime minister to provide 300 buses for Karachi.

However, the PM said that the federal government would provide 150 buses to the Sindh transport department to add them to their existing fleet. PM Shehbaz also commended the efforts of the Sindh government in

enhancing transportation services for the public during his visit to the Sindh government's transport system.

About the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project, the CM told the prime minister that on the advice of the federal government, a revised feasibility study was undertaken in 2023 and shared with the Economic Affairs Division & Ministry of Transport, People's Republic of China on May 4, 2023. He requested the prime minister to order the ministry concerned to facilitate the framework agreement for the execution of the KCR under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Govt determined to eradicate terrorism: Attaullah Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar Thursday informed the National Assembly that the government was determined to eradicate terrorism from the country.

In response to a calling attention notice regarding increase in incidents of suicidal bombing in different parts of country and increase in number of incidents of snatching, gunshots in Karachi, Hyderabad and Kashmir, he said, that following the Peshawar APS attack, the National Action Plan was devised with consensus among all stakeholders, and its implementation

was promptly initiated. The minister said that provinces extended cooperation to the federal government in executing the National Action Plan. He highlighted the commencement of two successful operations, Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad, aimed at eradicating terrorism from the country.

Tarar said that after the operations, a significant decline was witnessed in terrorist incidents in the country. He expressed regret over the lack of meetings and implementation of the National Action Plan by the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments led by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in 2018.

Industries promotion can help eliminate unemployment: Commerce Minister

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dharejo on Thursday directed the officials concerned to utilize all available resources for the promotion of small industries in the province and observed that promotion of industries can help eliminate unemployment in Sindh.

The Sindh Minister for Industries and Commerce said this while chairing a meeting of officers of Sindh Small Industries Corporation (SSIC).

Managing Director SSIC Dr. Sarwat Faheem and other officers also attended the meeting. The Minister directed the officers to improve the recovery and also ensure timely payment of salaries of employees of the SSIC.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf interacting with Naval Heads of various Navies during 19th Western Pacific Naval Symposium in Qingdao China.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Digital growth

Technology divides us. According to a new UNDP report on Pakistan, titled Doing Digital for Development — Access, Adopt, Anticipate, Accelerate, noticeable differences in human development can be seen between those districts that have embraced digital transformation compared to those that have lagged behind.

The report, which underscores the importance of equitable and safe access to technology as an important means of improving human lives, places Pakistan in the category of countries where digital development can thus far be described as 'moderate' at best. Over half the country still has no access to the internet, and its women remain grossly underserved. Of the women who do have access to digital technologies, 83.5pc say their phone ownership is policed by their spouses or parents. Meanwhile, digital development among the richest 20pc of its population is 15 times greater than in its poorest quintile. Clearly, digital access has become a marker of privilege in Pakistan. This needs to be urgently addressed. Pakistan is already among the lowest-ranked countries in the UNDP's Human Development and Gender Inequality indices. It would appear that sound digital development policies alone can greatly strengthen its present dismal standing in these areas. It is encouraging, in this context, to note that Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has described access to digital resources and modern technologies as a fundamental human necessity, just like electricity, healthcare or education.

One hopes that this belief is more commonplace at the policy level than it presently seems to be. Democratising digital development will catalyse a rapid, if not immediate, improvement in human development indicators for the underserved segments of the Pakistani citizenry. All that is needed is some creative rethinking about how they can be better integrated into the overall digital development scheme, especially in terms of ease of internet access. The government may, for example, consider an internet subsidy for underdeveloped districts. With policy debates on what Pakistan needs to re-emerge from its economic slump repeatedly hitting the resource-constraint wall, perhaps it is time our policymakers started giving more weightage to the role accelerated digital development can play in turning things around quickly and sustainably. Apart from erasing distortions in intra-district human development, increased adoption of modern technologies will also help improve national productivity. Consider that next door in India, even roadside hawkers have adopted digital payment systems simply because they ease commerce for both buyers and sellers in myriad different ways. There is no reason why the ordinary people of Pakistan will not embrace similar digital-driven improvements in their everyday lives, especially if they are also backed enthusiastically by the government under a comprehensive digital development policy. The existing infrastructure may need improvements over time, but for now, a concerted push in the right direction is a good place to start.



By Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

The term "disinformation" has gained significant traction in the modern world, but the act of disseminating false or misleading information for the purpose of deceiving or manipulating is far from a new phenomenon. Throughout history, diverse forms of misinformation, propaganda, and deceptive communication have been prevalent, shaping narratives and influencing public opinion across different cultures and periods.

In ancient Athenian Democracy, during the 5th Century BC, political orators like Alcibiades and Themistocles were known for using persuasive techniques that sometimes included exaggerations or selective presentation of facts to sway public opinion in their favor. Similarly, during the medieval period, monarchs, religious institutions, and rulers utilized manuscripts, artworks, and proclamations to control narratives and shape perceptions. Feudal societies witnessed lords and monarchs employing narratives and loyalty oaths to reinforce hierarchical structures and cultivate loyalty among vassals.

The Renaissance and Enlightenment periods saw the use of pam-

phlets, newspapers, and books to disseminate ideas challenging established norms. However, it was during World War I and II that disinformation and propaganda emerged as lethal tools, blatantly used by various nations to shape public perception, boost morale, and vilify the enemy. The ideological conflict of the Cold War further intensified these efforts, with both the United States and the Soviet Union engaging in extensive propaganda campaigns to influence global opinion.

With the emergence of television and global media, disinformation campaigns evolved into more sophisticated endeavors. Governments and non-state entities began using misinformation to pursue political objectives, contributing to the surge in dissemination of conspiracy theories. During this era, Muslims and Islam faced heightened prejudice and discrimination fueled by unfounded propaganda and disinformation.

Fast forward to the digital age, the advent of the internet and social media has introduced fresh avenues for the swift transmission of information, encompassing both accurate and erroneous content. In contemporary democracies, there is growing apprehension about disinformation campaigns, fake news, and online manipulation.

Instances have been noted where countries engage in false flag operations to tarnish the reputation of neighboring nations.

In this digital age, where information and media play pivotal roles in shaping public opinion, the emergence of deepfake technology introduces a disconcerting dimension to the landscape of election campaigns. Deepfakes refer to the sophisticated use of artificial intelligence to create realistic video or audio content, often featuring individuals saying or doing things they never actually did.

One of the primary concerns is the ease with which deepfakes can be disseminated through social media platforms, where information spreads rapidly and is often consumed without thorough scrutiny. A manipulated video of a candidate could go viral, shaping public perception and influencing voter sentiments. The impact extends beyond its immediate release, as media outlets scramble to verify authenticity, leading to heightened atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust.

Furthermore, the potential for deepfakes to target key moments in an election campaign adds complexity, overshadowing policy discussions and shifting focus to sensationalism. In the wake of these concerns, countering deepfake threats in election campaigns emerges as a critical imperative.

Policymakers, technology companies, and electoral bodies must collaborate to develop robust mechanisms for detecting and preventing the spread of deepfakes. Educating the public about their

existence and potential impact becomes a cornerstone of resilience against this new form of misinformation.

Safeguarding the integrity of democratic processes demands a proactive approach that addresses the evolving challenges posed by artificial intelligence-driven manipulation. As election campaigns unfold in an era of deepfake technology, the need for vigilance and collective action is clear. It's imperative to uphold the principles of truth and transparency to preserve the integrity of democratic institutions.

In an era where information spreads at the click of a button, the veracity of news has become increasingly precarious. The rise of disinformation and deepfakes has unleashed a torrent of challenges for journalism, threatening the very foundations of truth and credibility.

Disinformation, the deliberate spread of false or misleading information, has become a weapon of choice for various actors seeking to manipulate public opinion.

With the proliferation of social media platforms, misinformation can reach millions within seconds, blurring the lines between fact and fiction. Journalists, once revered as gatekeepers of truth, now find themselves wading through a quagmire of falsehoods, struggling to separate reality from propaganda.

Deepfakes, a more insidious offspring of disinformation, pose an even graver threat. These sophisticated AI-

generated videos manipulate audio and visual content to create hyper-realistic simulations of individuals saying or doing things they never did. From politicians to celebrities, no one is immune to the potential damage wrought by deepfakes. They can be used to fabricate speeches, incite violence, or even sway elections, sowing discord and eroding trust in institutions.

The impact of disinformation and deepfakes on journalism is multifaceted and profound. Firstly, they undermine the credibility of news sources, fostering a climate of skepticism and distrust. In an environment where misinformation thrives, audiences become increasingly cynical, questioning the legitimacy of even well-researched reporting. This erosion of trust not only undermines the integrity of journalism but also poses a threat to democracy itself, as an informed electorate is essential for a functioning society.

Moreover, the proliferation of disinformation and deepfakes complicates the already daunting task of fact-checking. Journalists are forced to navigate a labyrinth of deceit, verifying sources and cross-referencing information in a race against time. Yet, even the most diligent efforts can falter in the face of sophisticated disinformation campaigns designed to deceive and mislead.

Furthermore, the prevalence of disinformation and deepfakes has pro-

found implications for the future of journalism itself. As trust in traditional media continues to erode, journalists are forced to grapple with existential questions about their role in society. How can they uphold the principles of truth and accuracy in an age of rampant deception? How can they regain the trust of a skeptical public inundated with misinformation? These are daunting challenges that demand innovative solutions and a reimagining of the journalistic landscape.

In response to these challenges, news organizations must prioritize transparency and accountability. By openly acknowledging the prevalence of disinformation and deepfakes, journalists can begin to rebuild trust with their audiences. Moreover, collaboration between journalists, technologists, and policymakers is essential to developing strategies for combating the spread of misinformation and safeguarding the integrity of the news.

Ultimately, the impact of disinformation and deepfakes on journalism is far-reaching and profound. As society grapples with the implications of an increasingly digital and interconnected world, the need for reliable and trustworthy journalism has never been greater.

Only by confronting these challenges head-on can journalists hope to fulfill their essential role as guardians of truth in a world besieged by falsehoods.

Commerce News

Domestic wheat production grew by 5.4%, 29.69 mln tons output estimated

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA) was informed on Thursday that wheat production in the country during the current season (2023-24) grew by 5.4 percent as compared to the output of the corresponding period of the last year.

The FCA met here with Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain in chair, which was also attended by the relevant federal and provincial authorities.

While reviewing the performance of the Rabi crops (2023-24), the Committee observed that wheat production for the current season was estimated at 29.69 million

tons as the crop was sown over an area of 9.6 million hectares.

The output of other crops, including onions, for the period under review was estimated at 1.92 million tons from an area of 0.122 million hectares.

The increase in production was 3.9%, whereas the area decreased 5.4% over the last year, whereas tomato production during the season was estimated at 627.47 thousand tons from an area of 50.9 thousand hectares. The production of the above-mentioned commodity increased by 3.9%, whereas the area decreased by 0.3% over the last year.

Meanwhile, potato production for 2023-24

was estimated at 8.1 million tons from an area of 0.3 million hectares. The increase in production was 27.9% over the target assigned by the last FCA.

The FCA held detailed deliberations over the production targets for essential Kharif crops in 2024-25 and decided to fix the production target of cotton at 10.8 million bales, whereas the 8.7 million-ton production target for rice is over 3.1 million hectares of land.

The maize target was fixed at 9.3 million tons of production over 1.5 million hectares of land.

The Committee also fixed the production target of sugarcane for 2024-25 at 76.7 million tons over an area of 1.3 million hectares.

Ahad Cheem lauds UNDP's cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahsan Khan Cheema on Thursday appreciated the role of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the provision of critical assistance to Pakistan, especially during floods 2022 and support to the International Partners' Support Group (IPSG).

The minister was talking to United Nations Assistant Secretary General (ASG), Asia, and the Pacific, Ms. Kanni Wignaraja during a meeting here, according to press

statement issued by Economic Affairs Division. Assuring government's commitment, he said government was looking forward to continue cooperation with UNDP for bridging financing gap in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The minister stressed that better visibility of off budget projects and alignment between UNDP projects and national development objectives were essential in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

Meta delegation calls on Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): A two-member delegation of Meta called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja in her office on Thursday.

The delegation comprised Dania Mukhtar, Head of Public Policy for Pakistan at Meta and Taabeer Ather, Manager Public Policy for Pakistan.

The meeting discussed in details responsible use of social media platforms, said a news release.



ISLAMABAD: High-powered Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA) mandated to oversee strategic measures for ensuring food security in the country, held its meeting under the Chairmanship of Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research.

Action taken against officers not recovering 85% tax: Secretary

SARGODHA (APP): Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control (ET&NC) Punjab Secretary Masood Mukhtar has said that action has been taken against the officers who did not meet the target of 85% taxes recovery across the province.

He expressed these views during a surprise visit to the Excise and Taxation office Sargodha Division, here on Thursday. The Secretary said that Excise and Taxation Officers (ETOs) would have to go to the field themselves whereas the recovery of district

Khushab and district Bhakkar would be monitored closely.

He said that he had already issued clear instructions to the divisional directors and ETOs of all districts to meet the recovery targets given by the government up to 100% in all circumstances. "All districts are required to recover 85% of their target in May", he instructed.

He said that the districts whose recovery was not as per the target had been directed to monitor the recovery of ETOs of their respective districts on a daily basis.

Faysal Bank unveils strong financial results for the Q1'24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Faysal Bank Limited (FBL), one of the leading Islamic banks in Pakistan, continued with its growth stride during the first quarter of 2024, whereby the profit after tax doubled to PKR 6.5 billion as compared to Q1 2023. Earnings per share increased from Rs. 2.12 to Rs. 4.29, while the Bank also declared an interim cash dividend of Rs. 1/- per share, i.e. 10 percent, said a news release here on Thursday.

The total assets reached a new high of Rs.1.5 trillion, with deposits increasing to Rs.1.050 trillion and loan book in excess of Rs. 603 billion. Advance-to-Deposit Ratio (ADR) was at a healthy 55 percent, while its Capital Adequacy Ratio stood at 18.57 percent, well above the regulatory requirement.

The sound financial performance and the strong balance sheet footing is reflective of the Bank's solid business fundamentals coupled with prudent risk management practices.

WB Director urges 'bold' fiscal reforms for Pakistan's macroeconomic stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Bank's (WB) Global Director for Governance Arturo Herrera Gutierrez on Thursday stressed the need for 'bold' fiscal reforms to address Pakistan's debt distress and achieve macroeconomic stability.

Speaking at a lecture organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Gutierrez highlighted the urgency of sustainable fiscal reforms, drawing from international experiences.

"Pakistan stands at a crucial juncture where it can either pave the path for

sustained economic growth or fall into the recurring traps of debt distress," Gutierrez remarked.

He discussed historical economic challenges faced by countries like Mexico in the 1980s and how these experiences shape fiscal strategies today.

Moreover, he outlined the necessity of strong macroeconomic frameworks, robust debt management practices, and the establishment of institutional arrangements to ensure discipline in fiscal policy.

Gutierrez emphasized that ensuring

fiscal sustainability required a comprehensive long-term strategy, not just balancing budgets annually.

"These measures are critical for building credibility and securing access to financial markets," the WB director said while emphasizing the need to maintain consistency over time to avoid the economic problems of the past.

He brought to the attention the concerning resurgence of debt distress globally, particularly post-COVID-19, necessitating a re-evaluation of fiscal sustainability approaches.

PSX loses 80 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday shed 80.49 points, a negative change of 0.11 percent, closing at 71,971.40 points against 72,051.89 points the previous trading day. A total of 798,527,177 shares valuing Rs.27.542 billion were traded during the day as compared to 599,401,643 shares valuing Rs. 24.459 billion the last day. Some 389 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 173 of them recorded gains and 191 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 25 remained unchanged.

Kazakh envoy stresses quantum jump in bilateral trade

FAISALABAD (APP): The business community must avail all opportunities to give quantum jump to bilateral trade between Pakistan and Kazakhstan, said Yerzhan Kistafin, ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Addressing a selected gathering at the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said that both countries were enjoying cordial relations, but the business community must translate these ties into economic terms. He termed the business-to-business (B2B) contacts brother-to-brother relations and said that it had paved the way to fully exploit the untapped business potential. He said that three cities of Pakistan had already been declared sister cities of Kazakhstan and now Shymkent has been declared sister city of Faisalabad because of their similarities in textile. He urged textile exporters to invest in this city to directly capture the five Eurasian countries including Russia and Belarus.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with Keith Svendsen, CEO of APM Terminals, accompanied by Ambassador, Ambassador Jakob Linulf.

CM KP chairs meeting on CRBC Left Canal project

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, chaired a meeting on the CRBC Left Canal Project on Thursday and decided to issue the project tender by July of this year.

The meeting was attended by officials from relevant provincial and federal government departments.

During the briefing, the participants were informed that an agreement had been reached between the federal and provincial governments on previously finalized project implementation details. Briefings were provided by relevant authorities on various aspects of the project during the meeting.

It was informed that Rs. 20 billion would be allocated for the project in the upcoming fiscal year's development program, with the federal government also pledging Rs. 10 billion in the upcoming fiscal year's PSDP for the project.

According to the briefing, funds for the project will be shared from the federal government and 35% from the provincial government. Approximately 286,000 acres of barren land will be irrigated through the Left Canal Project. The meeting also decided to initiate another project to irrigate an additional 90,000 acres of land in southern districts. The Chief Minister instructed

relevant authorities to commence work on this project.

He further instructed them to ensure the completion of all necessary arrangements for tendering the CRBC Left Canal Project by July of the current year. The Chief Minister emphasized that the CRBC Left Canal Project is indispensable for the food security of the province and highlighted its importance for the country's food security. He stressed the need for early completion without any further delay. The Chief Minister stated that the provincial government would provide funds on a priority basis for projects, considering the economic viability of the project.



ABBOTTABAD: Workers of Water and Sanitation Services Company Abbottabad (WSSCA) are cleaning and collecting solid waste during cleaning drive campaign at the Main KKH road in Abbottabad.

Order for recounting cannot be given after issuance of forms, 47, 48 and 49: LHC

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) while upholding the success of Rana Bilal Ijaz of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) from National Assembly (NA) constituency NA-81 Gujranwala has declared illegal the Election Commission (EC) notification for recounting.

EC has issued notification for recounting on PML-N candidate Azhar Qayyum application. It has been maintained

in the written order recounting cannot be conducted after issuance of forms 47, 48 and 49. The notification for counting of votes could be issued during election process.

According to written decision EC notification in connection with recounting has no legal standing. The court declares null and void EC notification for recounting. Notification of recounting which was issued on March 18 is illegal.

Collective efforts needed to curb terrorism: Barrister

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: The recent spike of targeted attacks on security forces, customs and police in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is a national issue which must be addressed with collective efforts, said Barrister Dr Saif here on Thursday. "We can overcome and eliminate the menace of terrorism with united efforts," Barrister Dr Saif said.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's Advisor on Information and Public Relations Barrister Dr Saif further said that terrorism is our country's serious matter and police, security forces and law enforcement agencies are fighting war against terrorism with available resources. Hundreds of civilians and security forces have lost their lives during the recent terrorists attacks, he added. Police and security forces are vigilant and determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism, he said. He said such sacrifices of law enforcement and security agencies would further strengthen our resolve.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister Food, Bilal Yaseen inaugurating a squad of vehicles for checking stale meat in the office of Punjab Food Authority in the provincial capital, along with DG Food Authority, Asim Javed and others in the Provincial Capital.

Minister launches special 'Meat Safety Task Force' in Punjab Food Authority

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin launched a special 'Meat Safety Task Force' in the Punjab Food Authority (PFA), here on Thursday. The force would consist of meat specialist doctors to ensure detailed inspection of meat, being supplied across province.

While talking to the media, he said meat safety teams would conduct detailed inspections of slaughter houses, frozen meat units, meat shops, and meat processing units on daily basis. The force will also check the meat supplied at the entry points and meat markets of

all districts including Lahore. A complete record of traceability of meat coming from poultry farms, slaughterhouses will also be compiled and strict checking of entry points will be ensured in the morning hours.

The Food Minister said that Punjab Food Authority discarded 60 thousand kg of substandard meat during checking of meat shops and entry points in a few days. He said that elements hostile to health will never be allowed to do business and continuous checking is going on to ensure quality milk, meat and food.

FC man shot dead in Bannu

PESHAWAR (APP): An official of Frontier Constabulary (FC) was shot dead by unknown motorcyclists in the Janikhel area of Bannu district on Thursday. Police said FC personnel, Abid Ullah was on leave from duty and was on the way home after working in his fields when armed motorcyclists shot him dead.

On receiving information, the police force arrived at the scene and collected evidence for investigation.

The body of the deceased FC personnel was shifted to the hospital for medico-legal procedure. Police have launched a search operation in the area to arrest the perpetrators involved in the killing.

Nine dead, 1,318 injured in Punjab road accidents

Independent Report
LAHORE: Nine persons were killed and 1,318 others injured in 1,276 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 607 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 711 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

Complete digitalization of EPI in progress; efforts on to maintain cold chain: Qasim

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah Thursday said that efforts are underway to completely digitalize Expanded Programme for Immunization (EPI) besides maintaining the cold chain to ensure the supply of vaccines in every nook and corner of the province.

These views were expressed by Syed Qasim Shah while speaking as chief guest at a ceremony held here on Thursday to commemorate 50 years of the EPI programme. During the ceremony, Provincial Health Minister paid special tribute to Prof Dr Ashfaq Ahmad Khan (Late) for being the founding father of paediatrics.

PHC seeks details of registered cases against KP CM

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court comprising Justice Shakeel Ahmed and Justice Dr Khurshid Iqbal on Wednesday sought details of registered cases against Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Ali Amin Gandapur by anti-corruption watchdog.

The counsel of Ali Amin Gandapur had filed an application in the high court for details of cases.

Additional Director Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) told the court that there were two inquiries against Ali Amin, in the Dera Ismail Khan region. The police representative said that there were six First

Investigation Reports (FIRs) in Dera Ismail Khan region while the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) prosecutor informed about one case against the KP CM. Counsel for petitioner Arshad Ali told the court that Anti-corruption officials have not yet submitted their response. Justice Shakeel Ahmed wondered how the anti-corruption department could not respond to the government. The Advocate General replied that an important meeting was scheduled for April 29 in which all the stakeholders including the police chief would be invited to take important decisions related to political cases.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali is being presented Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission Annual performance Report 2023 by the Chairman KPPSC Mr. Sikandar Qayyum at Governor's House.

WWB directed to identify board's land for revenue generation

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labor, Fazal Shakoor Khan has directed Workers Welfare Board (WWB) to identify commercial land of the board sand utilize it for revenue generation.

He issued these directives while chairing meeting of WWB held here on Thursday. He also directed to form a committee comprising three members from WWB

to compile ideas and suggestions regarding land identification and sought a report within two week time. He said that construction of plazas, shops and parks on the commercial land would play a vital role in revenue generation for WWB. On the occasion, the minister was briefed about vocational, technical and general educational institutions working under WWB.

International News

155 killed in Tanzania as heavy rains lash East Africa

Monitoring Desk
TANZANIA: At least 155 people have died in Tanzania as torrential rains linked to El Nino triggered flooding and landslides, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa said on Thursday.

Tanzania and other countries in East Africa — a region highly vulnerable to climate change — have been pounded by heavier than usual rainfall during the current rainy season, with dozens of deaths also reported in Kenya.

Majaliwa said more than 51,000 households and 200,000 people have been affected by the rains, with 155 fatalities and 236 injured.

"The heavy El Nino rains, accompanied by strong winds, floods, and landslides in various parts of the country, have caused significant damage," Majaliwa told parliament in Tanzania's capital Dodoma.

"These include loss

of life, destruction of crops, homes, citizens' property, and infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and railways," he added.

El Nino is a naturally occurring climate pattern typically associated with increased heat worldwide, drought in some parts of the world and heavy rains elsewhere, and can have a devastating impact in East Africa.

In Burundi, one of the poorest countries on the planet, around 96,000 people have been displaced by months of relentless rains.

In addition, about 45 people have been killed in Kenya since the start of the rainy season in March, including 13 who lost their lives in flash floods in the capital Nairobi this week.

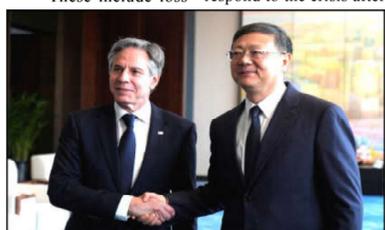
Kenyan President William Ruto convened an emergency multi-agency meeting on Thursday to respond to the crisis after

torrential rains triggered floods that caused chaos across the city, blocking roads and bridges and engulfing homes in slum districts.

Kenyans have been warned to stay on alert, with the forecast for more heavy rains across the country, while officials said people living in the most vulnerable areas would be relocated.

"The government will do whatever it takes, apply all the required resources in terms of money and personnel to make sure that lives are not lost and the people of Kenya are protected from this disaster," Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua told a press briefing.

Meanwhile, the UN humanitarian response agency OCHA said in an update this week that in Somalia, the Gu (April to June) rains are intensifying with flash floods reported since April 19.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with Shanghai Party Secretary Chen Jining at the Grand Halls in Shanghai, China.

Russia vetoes a UN resolution calling for the prevention of a dangerous nuclear arms race in space

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Russia on Wednesday vetoed a U.N. resolution sponsored by the United States and Japan calling on all nations to prevent a dangerous nuclear arms race in outer space, calling it "a dirty spectacle" that cherry picks weapons of mass destruction from all other weapons that should also be banned.

The vote in the 15-

member Security Council was 13 in favor, Russia opposed and China abstaining.

The resolution would have called on all countries not to develop or deploy nuclear arms or other weapons of mass destruction in space, as banned under a 1967 international treaty that included the U.S. and Russia, and to agree to the need to verify compliance.

Pro-Palestinian US high school students accuse school of censoring speech

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Some US students at Washington, D.C.'s Jackson-Reed High School filed a lawsuit on Wednesday alleging the public high school's administrators censored them by prohibiting pro-Palestinian events. The lawsuit said administrators treated the Arab Student Union, a student club at the high school, differently from other groups like the Black Student Union and the Asian Student Union by restricting its activities. "For the past four months, it [the Arab Student Union] and its members have been trying to engage in expressive activities at the high school — showing a documentary film, putting up posters, distributing literature, presenting a cultural programme — but have been stopped at every turn by the school administration."



French President Emmanuel Macron delivers a speech on Europe in the amphitheatre of the Sorbonne University in Paris, France.

Israel pummels Gaza after US approves military aid

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Israeli warplanes pounded the northern Gaza strip for a second day on Wednesday in a fierce assault that has shattered weeks of comparative calm, and Israel said it was moving forward with plans for an all-out assault on Rafah in the south.

The renewed attacks came after the US Congress approved \$13 billion in military aid for Tel Aviv.

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz said the Senate's approval of the aid

package already passed by the House of Representatives sent a "strong message to all our enemies" in a post on social media platform X. Even though Western countries, including the United States, have pleaded with it to hold back from attacking the city on Gaza's southern edge, spokesperson for PM Benjamin Netanyahu's government said Israel was "moving ahead" with its plans for a ground operation on Rafah, but gave no timeline.

Gaza could surpass famine thresholds in six weeks, UN official says

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The Gaza Strip could surpass famine thresholds of food insecurity, malnutrition and mortality in six weeks, an official from the World Food Programme said on Wednesday (Apr 24). "We are getting closer by the day to a famine situation," said Gian Carlo Cirri, Geneva director of the World Food Programme (WFP). "There is reasonable evidence that all three famine thresholds — food insecurity, malnutrition and mortality — will be passed in

the next six weeks." A UN-backed report published in March said that famine was imminent and likely to occur by May in northern Gaza and could spread across the enclave by July. On Tuesday, a US official said the risk of famine in Gaza, especially in the north, was very high. Cirri was speaking at the launch of a report by the Global Network Against Food Crises, an alliance of humanitarian and development actors including United Nations agencies, the World Bank.

Taliban gov't joins climate change talks for first time

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: The Taliban government has entered the first stage of discussions with the United Nations, donors and non-governmental organisations, over the impact of climate change in Afghanistan, organisers said on Wednesday.

After four decades of war, Afghanistan is ranked as one of the countries least prepared to tackle the effects of climate change that are spurring extreme weather conditions and warping natural environments.

4 injured as cavalry horses run amok in London

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: A number of military horses, including one covered in blood, ran amok on the streets of central London and injured at least four people on Wednesday.

The horses belong to the Household Cavalry, which acts as the British monarch's official bodyguard and takes part in ceremonial duties.

Blinken calls for US, China to manage differences

Monitoring Desk
SHANGHAI: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on Thursday on the United States and China to manage their differences "responsibly" as he went on a charm offensive ahead of expected tough talks.

A day before meeting Beijing's top brass to tackle thorny issues including Russia, Taiwan and trade, Blinken's visit to Shanghai has seen him sample local food, watch a basketball game and stroll along the city's famous Bund promenade. Visiting the local Communist Party leader in a room with sweeping views of the Shanghai skyline, Blinken said US President Joe Biden was committed to "direct and sustained" dialogue between the world's two largest economies after years of mounting tension.

"I think it's important to underscore the value — in fact, the necessity — of direct engagement, of speaking to each other, laying out our differences, which are real, seeking to work through them," Blinken said.

"We have an obligation for our people — indeed an obligation to the world — to manage the relationship between our two countries responsibly." The Chinese Communist Party secretary for Shanghai, Chen Jining, welcomed Blinken partly in English and spoke of the importance of US businesses to the city.

"Whether we choose cooperation or confrontation affects the well-being of both peoples, both countries and the future of humanity," Chen told him. The country's financial capital, Shanghai is often a stepping stone to power in China, with President Xi Jinping previously serving briefly in the city.

'Europe could die,' Macron warns, as he calls for stronger defences

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron appealed on Thursday for stronger, more integrated European defences and said the continent must not become a vassal of the United States, as he outlined his vision for a more assertive European Union on the global stage.

With just three years left of his second and final term in office, and having lost his parliamentary majority in 2022, Macron, 46, wants to show his critics that he retains the energy and fresh thinking that helped propel him into the presidency in 2017 and that he has not become a lame duck leader.

"There is a risk our Europe could die. We are not equipped to face the risks," Macron said in his speech at the Sorbonne University in Paris, warning that military, economic, trade and other pressures could weaken and fragment the 27-nation EU.

Macron said Russia must not be allowed to win in Ukraine, and he called for a boost in Europe's cybersecurity capacity, closer defence ties with post-Brexit Britain, and the creation of a European academy to train high-ranking military personnel.

"There is no defence without a defence industry... we've had decades of under-investment," he said, adding that Europeans should give preference to buying European military equipment.

"We must produce more, we must produce faster, and we must produce as Europeans," he said. Macron said Europe risked falling behind economically in a context where global free-trade rules were being challenged by major competitors.

People are getting nothing, will we go on paying all the money in salaries: CJP

KARACHI (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked "talk about the people. They are getting what. Roads, water and electricity, what they are getting. Will we go on paying the entire money in salaries.. CJP gave these remarks while presiding over Supreme Court (SC) bench comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan during the hearing of petition against sacking of contract employees of Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA) here in Karachi registry of SC Thursday.

The petitioner had taken plea in the court that "I was not contract employee but I was regular employee. I was employee of HAD.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail remarked was all the procedure followed

in your appointment. We don't know have you any degree or otherwise.

The court remarked you were contract employee. Read the appointment letter.

The CJP Qazi Faez Isa remarked we know what is done in committee. List comes that these have to be appointed.

The CJP observed only employees are being appointed. Where they are serving the people, we will see what the government departments are doing. Only people are being filled in government jobs. Only salaries are being paid to the employees.

He further remarked government has not four annas to do some thing. Only it is said we are serving. Government jobs are given to those who are not competent for them, why should the burden of illegal appointments be shifted to

people of Sindh.

The counsel for the petitioner took the plea government itself launched the project. Later it returned the employees.

The CJP remarked we have not to run the government. They themselves should run the government.

The counsel said the appointments were made under the package of president and governor.

The CJP remarked what powers president and governor have, had they their own money. We will not allow if constitution is violated. How the powers came to the president to distribute the money to whom he wants, when it had taken place. Who had done it.

The counsel told appointments were made during the tenure of former president Gen (Retd) Pervez Musharraf. Package was given.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori and Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah attending a ceremony "Cross of the Order of Merit of Germany" organized at German Consulate.

Islamic Summit Conference in Gambia on May 4: Palestine, Islamophobia, climate change on agenda

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) will hold the 15th session of the Islamic Summit Conference (CFM) preparatory for the Summit on May 4-5 in the Gambian capital of Banjul to discuss variety of regional and global issues, including Palestine, Islamophobia, climate change and minorities.

The session will be held under the slogan "Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development," according to a press release issued by the OIC General Secretariat.

The Islamic Summit Conference will be preceded by a preparatory meeting of senior officials on April 30 and May 1, which will

discuss the documents of the session and submit its report to the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) preparatory for the Summit.

The preparatory CFM meeting will be held on May 1-2 to consider the results of the senior officials meeting and in turn, submit its report to the Summit.

OIC Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha will travel to Banjul, accompanied by a high-level delegation from the OIC General Secretariat to participate in the proceedings of the session.

The leaders of the member states will discuss the political issues of the Islamic world, most notably the Palestinian cause,

and the economic, humanitarian, social and cultural issues, in addition to the issues of youth, women, family, science and technology, information, Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC member states, and legal matters.

The Summit will also discuss issues related to the rejection of hate speech and Islamophobia, the promotion of dialogue, and issues of climate change and food security.

During the Summit, the secretary-general will present a report reviewing the most prominent activities, programmes, and projects undertaken by the OIC since the previous session of the Islamic Summit Conference.

PM seeks cooperation between Pakistan, Denmark in agriculture, energy sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday held a meeting with a delegation led by Chief Executive Officer of APM Terminals and Board Member AP Miller Mearsk Keith Svendsen and discussed matters related to business and investment.

During the meeting, Keith Svendsen expressed interest in the first green transshipment terminal of Pakistan to be built in Karachi.

After the completion of the proposed project, large cargo ships can be anchored in the port of Karachi and the whole world will get easy access to Pakistani exports. With this project, cargo from all over the world will also reach the Central Asian states. APM Terminal will

also construct international level logistics storage facilities in Lahore, Tarnol and Peshawar and due to this project Pakistan will become the center of the region for logistics.

With this project, Pakistan will also get an opportunity to increase value of its products, which will not only provide jobs to the people but also enhance economic growth.

The prime minister had formed an inter ministerial committee headed by the finance minister for this project. It also included a representative of Special Investment Facilitation Council.

PM Shehbaz expressed interest in cooperation between Pakistan and Denmark in the fields of agriculture and environment friendly energy projects.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Dr. Shehla Raza and Haider Hussain.

ADB operations reach \$23.6 bln in 2023, achieve record climate finance

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asian Development Bank (ADB) committed \$23.6 billion from its own resources in 2023, including \$9.8 billion for climate action, to help Asia and the Pacific progress on sustainable development.

These figures are among the financial and operational results published on Thursday in ADB's Annual Report 2023.

The report summarizes how ADB supported its developing member countries (DMCs) to address the worsening climate crisis as well as the impacts of conflicts, food insecurity, and increased debt burdens, among other challenges.

ADB continued to step up as the climate bank for Asia and the Pacific, reaching our highest-ever annual financing for climate

action," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa.

"Our investments in adaptation and mitigation had a strong focus on climate-resilient agriculture, renewable energy, and low-carbon transport," he added. The \$23.6 billion comprised loans, grants, equity investments, guarantees, and technical assistance provided to governments and the private sector. Supplementing its own resources, ADB mobilized an additional \$16.4 billion in cofinancing through its strong partnerships.

ADB invested heavily in building high-quality energy, transport, and other infrastructure essential for sustainable development. It further strengthened the region's human capital through increased support for education and health.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal chairs a meeting to review progress over CPEC Joint Group Works and upcoming 13 JCC.

Non-Muslim Pakistanis enjoy freedom, state patronage: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Central Information Secretary of Pakistan People's Party and former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Faisal Karim Kundi, Thursday said that people from diverse religious backgrounds in Pakistan are experiencing the liberty to observe their faiths and engage in mutual celebrations.

Speaking at the International Interfaith/Religious Harmony Conference, he emphasized the state's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the

rights of its citizens.

Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized the importance of fostering dialogue to uphold the cherished principles of social and religious diversity, promoting national cohesion.

Organised by the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) and All Neighbors USA, the summit aimed to catalyze dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding among varied religious and cultural communities within Pakistan and beyond.

Court bars Imran, Bushra from speaking against state institutions

ISLAMABAD (INP): An accountability court in Islamabad has barred former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi from issuing statements against state institutions and their officials.

The court on Thursday also refrained both from even indirectly speaking inside the courtroom against the state institutions and their officials. Ruling on the PTI founder's application for fair trial, the court ordered the media to avoid publishing such political provocative statements which target state institutions and their officials.

Three new bills introduced in Senate

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as three government bills including the Election (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Motion Pictures (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Establishment of Special Court (Overseas Pakistanis Property) Bill, 2023 were introduced in the Senate on Thursday.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Ishaq Dar on behalf of Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development moved all the bills in the house.

Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani

referred all the bills to the concerned senate standing committees for detailed deliberation.

Meanwhile, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Ishaq Dar on behalf of Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development moved all the bills in the house as required under Article 73 of the Constitution.

The minister also moved that the Senate may make recommendations, if any to the National Assembly on the Money Bill, the Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, under Article 73 of the Constitution.

PM summons cabinet meeting today

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has summoned the federal cabinet meeting to be held on Friday (today) in Islamabad to discuss the current political, economic and security situation in the country. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will preside over the federal cabinet meeting to be held at the Prime Minister's office. Important agenda items will be approved during the meeting.

According to sources, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb will brief the meeting regarding his recent visit to the United States and agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

DIGP discusses prevailing law & order situation

SUKKUR (APP): Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIGP) Sukkur, Abdul Hameed Khoso on Thursday chaired a meeting to discuss and address the prevailing law and order situation across the region.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) of the Sukkur, Khairpur and Ghotki districts, SPs Special Branch, Counter Terrorism Department and

other senior police officials.

During the meeting, the SSPs provided a comprehensive overview of the law and order scenario in their respective districts to DIG.

In response, Khoso emphasized the need to enhance and fortify the information access system at police stations to ensure timely and complete information dissemination regarding all events within their jurisdictions.

Life-saving medicines shortage hit many cities

KARACHI (INP): A critical shortage of life-saving medicines has hit Pakistan, leaving patients in distress as 27 essential drugs, including insulin, vanish from shelves across the Pakistan.

According to media reports, the crisis is particularly acute in the federal capital, Islamabad, and other regions, with vital medications for conditions ranging from psychiatric disorders to asthma conspicuously absent.

FPCCI welcomes direct flights between Pakistan-Azerbaijan

KARACHI (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Thursday, welcomed the launch of direct flights between the Pakistan and Azerbaijan anticipating that it will usher into a new era of business, trade, industrial and economic cooperation.

President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh, in a meeting with Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov during his visit of FPCCI, noted that the Republic of Azerbaijan offers one of the most lucrative markets for Pakistan to enhance its exports on the back of geographical contiguity and availability of land-based trade routes.

As per a statement issued here, FPCCI president while discussing with the Azerbaijan envoy business-to-business and people-to-people opportunities between the two brotherly countries, also highlighted pivotal role of trade diplo-

macy in trade facilitation and better trade negotiations. To his opinion close coordination in the form of regular meetings with trade bodies and chambers of commerce of both the countries will be greatly beneficial in promotion of trade and economic activities.

The Azerbaijan envoy especially underlined that the successful official visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to his country on June 14-15, 2023 which gave strong impetus to the comprehensive and rapid development of strategic relations between the two brotherly countries.

He stated that developments were made on the basis of the tasks given by the leaders of both countries during the aforesaid visit regarding the expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation in the fields of information communication technologies, transport, defense industry, energy and trade, relevant visits were carried out.

Traffic policeman commits suicide

KARACHI (APP): A traffic police official committed suicide with his pistol in New Karachi area on Thursday.

According to police officials, Tariq son of Kamaluddin, a traffic policeman resident of New Karachi, shot himself with his licensed pistol at home and was shifted to hospital with injuries.

The policeman succumbed to his injuries and died during treatment. The deceased official was 59 years old. Further legal formalities were underway.

Karachi Police arrest four suspects in crackdown on street crime

KARACHI (APP): In a relentless effort to curb street crime, the Karachi Police have made significant strides in apprehending suspects involved in criminal activities. According to the spokesperson of the Karachi Police, over the last 24 hours, the police force engaged in three separate encounters with criminal elements, resulting in the arrest of four suspects, including two injured robbers.

The encounters occurred in various parts of the city, where law enforcement officers confronted armed criminals. During the said encounters, illegal weapons, ammunition, and two motorcycles believed to have been used in various criminal incidents were confiscated from the arrested individuals.



JAMSHORO: Vice Chancellor of Liaquat University of Medical Health and Science Professor Ikram Din Ujjan giving away shield to students participating in poster competitions at LUMHS Jamshoro.

Four Accused was Awarded Death Sentences with Fine

Independent Report SHIKARPUR: First Additional District and Session Judge Ghulam Qadir Tunio Awarded Death Sentences to Four accused persons and imposed penalties in two different hearings/cases on Thursday.

According to details, Two accused named Rafique Ahmed Brohi and Khalil Makrani found guilty in under trial case for keeping 380 Kilogram Hashish (Charas) which was found from their truck and such case was registered by New Faujdari police station some three years ago and took the truck in their custody. So Additional District and Session Judge Ghulam Qadir Tunio Awarded Death Sentences to both accused Rafique Ahmed Brohi and Khalil

Makrani including fine of one million to each.

Similarly in other hearing, Additional District and Session Judge Awarded Death Sentences to two more accused named Muhammad Sharif Brohi and Nisar Brohi with fine of 5 million to pay the victim family of deceased youngster Muhammad Younus Brohi of 19 who was killed by them some three years ago. As well as Honourable Court also verdicts for imprisonment of 08 years to accused Muhammad Sharif Brohi with fine of two lac rupees for recovering illegal weapons from his possession. While one other named Moulia Bux Brohi was found not guilty as innocent who was ordered for his release.

Elephant Madhubala to be shifted to Safari Park next month

KARACHI (INP): Madhubala, a 16-year-old elephant in Pakistan, undergoing solitary confinement at Karachi Zoo will be relocated to Safari Park next month, said the zoo administration on Thursday. According to the zoo administration, arrangements to shift the lone elephant at the Karachi Zoo have been completed and she will be shifted to the Safari Park next month, where she will unite with other elephants Sonia and Malika.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Doomrah village Qasimabad hold a protest against influential people and Qasimabad police.

DC visits 'Aaghosh' educational institution for orphans, assures support

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mitiari Muhammad Yousuf Shaikh has visited the educational institution "Aaghosh" established by Al-Khidmat Foundation for the education of orphans on the national highway near Bhit Shah and met the children.

On this occasion, he assured all possible cooperation with the institution on behalf of the district administration.

Additional Director Social Welfare Mitiari Rafique Jamali, Aaghosh's Principal Arshad Javid, Administrator Taha and other officials were also

present during the visit.

The DC appreciated the educational environment, extracurricular activities, hostel and dining facilities and cleanliness at the institute. He assured every possible assistance and cooperation from the district administration for children's technical skills, vocational training and other necessities.

Muhammad Yousuf Shaikh emphasized that nurturing and educating orphaned children was a collective responsibility of society, and "Aaghosh" is providing exemplary services in this regard.



HYDERABAD: DHO Dr. Lala Jaffar laid an awareness walk on the eve of World Immunization week in Qasimabad, organized by Dr Essa Lab and District Health officer.

VC SMIU addresses prize distribution ceremony of University's Model School

KARACHI (APP): Vice Chancellor of Sindh Madressatul Islam University Dr Mujeeb Sahrai has said Karachi is a city of great educational opportunities for students who are living and studying here in the city, hence they must avail these opportunities for their bright future.

He said this while addressing the Prize Distribution Ceremony organized by SMIU Model School on Thursday at the Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto Auditorium of the University.

The VC said that students of this metropolitan city were more fortunate than those who were living in Larkana, Sukkur, Umerkot, Bhirya,

Khuzdar, Qalat, Gilgit and other cities and remote areas of the country, as these students had good schools with quality education, modern facilities and healthy activities.

Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai said the education which he had received from the D.J. College and the culture of Karachi city had played a major role in his successful career. "The students of SMIU Model School have more reasons to feel proud and one of them is that they are getting quality education from the Alma-Mater of Quid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who had praised his alma mater on many times," he said.