

Independent

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Complete independence impossible without economic stability: COAS

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

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

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

He held negative propaganda and social media trolls could not divert their attention from Pakistan and working towards the

development and prosperity of its people.

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

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

in Pakistan's journey of prosperity and development," he asserted.

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

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



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

Sindh home minister chairs law and order meeting

KARACHI (APP): An eleven-member delegation of MQM, including Sindh opposition leader Ali Khurshidi, attended the meeting held under the chairmanship of Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hasan Lanjar here at the Central Police Office (CPO) on Friday.

Addressing the meeting, the minister said that the process of free registration of FIRs on citizens' complaints should be ensured in accordance with the orders of the higher authorities. He said that it was very important to work on the existing act regarding the protection of witnesses because it is also necessary to have solid evidence for a strong case.

Lanjar gave instructions that measures should be taken for the protection

of witnesses so that their confidence in the police can be restored and they can approach the relevant courts without fear to testify in any case.

He gave instructions that all possible measures should be taken for online testimony in order to protect the eyewitnesses.

He said that the SHOs must take concrete steps against crimes, otherwise the SHOs who cannot perform will lose their positions. On the occasion, Sindh Home Minister asked the Leader of Opposition in Sindh Assembly to join hands to control the law and order situation and protect the citizens.

IGP Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon briefed the participants of the meeting on law and order situation and police measures taken

in this regard.

He also covered the details of street crimes in the year 2023 and 2024, killings of citizens on resisting robberies. He said that according to the crime data, the data of Sindh Police and CPLC are almost the same.

The IGP Sindh also informed the meeting about the theft of mobile phones, vehicles and motorcycles from the citizens during the year 2023 and 2024.

IGP Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon comparing the first 4 months of the current year with the previous year, said the number of encounters were more than the previous year. Similarly, there was an increase of 16 in the number of dead criminals, a decrease of 16 in the number of injured arrests, while the total number of arrested criminals also decreased by 889.

Sindh govt announces public holiday on May 01

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh government has declared May 01 a public holiday across the province in observance of Labour Day. The Chief Secretary of Sindh on Friday issued a notification and announced a public holiday across the province.

As per the cabinet division circular, all schools, and private and government offices across Sindh will observe Labour Day on May 01 and remain closed.

However, the federal government and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) are expected to announce a public holiday on May 1.



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



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

SSUET convocation held, 1177 degrees awarded

SSUET playing vital role towards national dev., providing a capable workforce internationally: Governor

KARACHI (INP): Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology (SSUET) here on Friday organized 27th annual Convocation in which 1177 students of Bachelors, Masters and the

PhD were awarded their degrees. Governor Sindh Muhammad Kamran Tessori was the chief guest at the event.

The SSUET management also awarded 1,117 Bachelor's, 60 Master's, and one PhD degree. Position holders were awarded gold, silver, and bronze medals for securing the high-

est marks in the respective disciplines.

Addressing the convocation, Governor Kamran Tessori said that Sir Syed University was an ideological academic insti-

with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their professional endeavors and make a positive impact on society, Tessori added.

Governor Kamran Tessori said that he was going to give non-refundable loans of rupees one hundred thousands to 10 million to the youth who come up with new ideas or unique business plans. At Governor House, around 50,000 students are getting free information technology education in different trades and after completing a one-year diploma in IT, they will be able to earn Rs 1.5 million to 2 million rupees per month.

Speaking on the occasion, Chancellor SSUET, Jawaid Anwar said that even in the period of recession, a large number of students preferred to enroll in Sir Syed University, which was itself proof of the remarkable performance of the University.



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KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing a Press conference regarding starting Rozgar Scheme under Governor Sindh Initiative.

Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah says: Bilawal wants students to have access to all facilities

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives, Sindh, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah has said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari wanted our libraries to be modern and equipped with the latest books, where students in Sindh could have access to all facilities. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting of the Directorate of Public Libraries, Sindh here Friday.

DG Libraries Sindh Ejaz Sheikh while briefing the minister, said that there were currently 44 public li-

braries in all six divisions of Sindh and due to a large number of students and book readers, the libraries needed to be expanded.

He said that due to no recruitment since 2013, 419 out of 645 posts from grade 1 to 19 were still vacant, so the Directorate of Public Libraries was facing a severe staff shortage.

He briefed that for the convenience of the readers, more than 100 million books were available on the e-library portal, from where readers can study their favorite books at any time and from anywhere.

Mayor Karachi Murtaza says: Citywide anti-encroachment campaign launched

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that a campaign had been launched against encroachments in all the districts of Karachi simultaneously.

He said this while presiding over a high-level meeting on anti-encroachment drive at the head office of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) on Friday.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that KMC inspectors were being deployed in every town while the city administration and KMC would jointly conduct operation against encroachments. A comprehensive strategy has been chalked out under the court orders for removal of encroachments, he said and added, this operation is not aimed at making citizens jobless but a proposal to allocate space for hawkers in every district is under consideration so that the

cards and patharas can be shifted there. Commissioner Karachi Syed Hasan Naqvi, Municipal Commissioner KMC S.M Afzal Zaidi, all deputy commissioners and officers were also present in the meeting.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that during the drive against encroachments, all encroachments would be removed from M. A Jinnah Road, Saddar, Regal Market, Mobile Market, New M.A.Jinnah Road, Bohri Bazar and other areas of district South. During the meeting Deputy commissioners gave briefing about encroachments in their area.

Deputy Commissioner Central said that in his district, there is a lot of encroachments around Hyderi Food Street Block H North Nazimabad, Landi Kotal Chowranghi, Sindh Hotel, Hussainabad Food Street, Allahwala Chowranghi North Karachi, Liaquatabad 10 Number and Supermarket.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Pakistan committed to deepen collaboration with SCO: Kh Asif

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

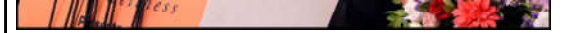
The meeting reviewed the regional security issues, including the defence cooperation initiatives, a news release said.

The Defence Minister also held meetings with the defence ministers of the friendly countries of the SCO to discuss issues of bilateral defence cooperation.

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

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

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



KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Senior Leader, Dr. Farooq Sattar talking to media persons during the Pakistan Interior Furniture Expo 2024 held at Expo Centre in Karachi.

Senate continues discussion on Presidential address

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate today commenced discussion on the Presidential address to the Joint Sitting of the Parliament.

Opening the discussion, Pakistan People's Party Senator Sherry Rehman said President Asif Ali Zardari's invitation for political reconciliation should be welcomed.

She said there is a need to do away with the politics of confrontation and turn a new page in politics in order to steer the country out of challenges.

Senator Khalil Tahir said consensus should be built on important national issues. He said the politics of anarchy and chaos must come to an end. He said

the focus should be on improving economy.

Senator Ali Zafar said the treasury and opposition benches should work together on legislation. He said there should be detailed discussion on any issue, tabled for legislation, before its passage by the House.

Jam Saifullah Khan paid tributes to the sacrifices of security forces in the war on terrorism.

Senator Irfan ul Haque Siddiqui said the opposition should sit with the government to take the country forward on the path of economic development.

He said reconciliation cannot be achieved single handedly, but it requires the participation of both sides.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Business concerns

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vietnam moment?

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A timeless classic

Syed Fahim

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Commerce News

Intellectual Property Rights crucial in achieving SDG: Jam

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

Addressing Seminar organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) in

collaboration with Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) to commemorate World Intellectual Property Day 2024, the minister said that Pakistan was blessed with huge natural resources and need to channelize these resources and streamline the direction.

This day holds special significance as we reflect on the crucial role of Intellectual Property in fostering innovation, creativity and ultimately advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he added.

The theme of the event was IP and SDGs: Building our Common Future with Innovation and Creativity as the event was also attended by the senior

officials from the Ministry of Commerce, IPO and businessmen and academia.

Jam Kamal said that government will promote partnerships and collaborations between government, industry, academia, and civil society to drive innovation and entrepreneurship, with a strong emphasis on technologies and solutions that support the achievement of the SDGs. The minister stressed the need to focus on leveraging IP as a strategic tool to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and said that the Ministry of Commerce was committed to advancing policies that strengthen the IP ecosystem, particularly in relation to sustainable development.

PSX gains 771 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday gained 771.35 points, a positive change of 1.07 percent, closing at 72,742.75 points against 71,971.40 points the previous trading day.

A total of 541,144,650 shares valuing Rs 22,589 billion were traded during the day as compared to 798,527,177 shares valuing Rs 27,542 billion the last day.

Some 375 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 175 of them recorded gains and 175 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 25 remained unchanged.

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

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



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

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

Independent Report

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

Federal Minister for

Education reiterated the government's dedication to revolutionizing the education sector in Pakistan. By implementing comprehensive strategies and fostering collaboration with key stakeholders, the Ministry aims to create a brighter future for the nation's youth. He further said that bridge the gap between academia and industry is our big mission. In this case will be providing cutting-edge IT skills to the

youth, so that ensuring their relevance in the ever-evolving job market. Minister Siddiqui further said that the industry and universities should work together to solve the country's problems through research and cooperation. He said that people with technical education and technical experience are in demand all over the world. He said that the government is paying special attention to vocational education.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): A three-day capacity-building workshop on Islamic Capital Markets, jointly organized by the Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB) concluded on Friday, highlighting Pakistan's significant progress in developing the Islamic finance industry.

The workshop has designed to enhance the capacity of the officials of regulatory and supervisory authorities, said a news release issued here. Chairman SECP Aqif

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

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

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

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

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

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

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting of stakeholders was held with Director Transit Directorate of Transit Trade, Arbab Qaiser to discuss measures for streamlining trade between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs).

The businessmen delegation was headed by President Frontier Custom

Agents Association (FCAA), Zia-ul-Haq Sharhadi, said a press release issued here on Friday.

Others who attended the meeting included Additional Director, Dr.

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

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



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

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

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

He said this while presiding over a high-level meeting at Agriculture House on Friday. The meeting reviewed the timeline of the plan.

Kimani said that all the arrangements for providing interest-free loans of Rs. 300 billion to the farmers were in the final stages of completion. The loan scheme

was ongoing with the cooperation of Agriculture department and Bank of Punjab. He further said that under this flagship program, 500,000 farmers would be provided interest-free loans. To ensure the transparency of this scheme, Punjab Kissan card was being issued soon. Agriculture Minister said that 7,000 tube wells would be transferred to solar system across the province. Besides, 5,000 super seeders and 2,000 rice shredders would be provided to the farmers at 60% subsidy. In Punjab, 7,300 water courses would be improved at a cost of Rs 80 billion. Rs 2 billion would be utilized on the reorganization of the agriculture extension.



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

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 7th Interseasonal meeting of the Pakistan-United States (US) Trade and Investment Framework (TIFA) was held here on Friday and discussed ways to strengthen trade ties between the two nations.

Federal Secretary Ministry of Commerce Muhammad Sauleh Ahmad Faruqi leading the Pakistani delegation and Assistant US Trade Representative (USTR), Brenden Lynch, heading the US delegation, said a news release. During

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

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

Punjab Governor says: Character building imperative for promotion of tolerance

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

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

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

generation to stabilize the economy by promoting our Islamic values.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

country.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

LHC CJ meets HCBA Multan delegation

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

The delegation also included Secretary-General Syed Anees Mehdi and Senior Advocate Malik Masroor Haider Usman. The delegation extended an invitation to the chief justice to visit the High Court Bar Association Multan at the earliest. The leaders of the lawyers apprised the chief justice of the issues faced by the bar associations in the Multan division and discussed matters of mutual interest. They praised the initiatives taken by the chief justice for the convenience of lawyers and litigants and offered suggestions for the welfare of the bar associations. President of the High Court Bar Association Multan requested the chief justice to increase the number of judges at the LHC's Multan.

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

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

She said while reacting to a statement of Barrister Saif here on Friday, Azma Bukhari said that the 'Fitna' party was matchless in telling lies and using inappropriate language. She said Barrister Saif must control his tongue, adding that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf could not digest the performance of the Punjab Chief Minister. She said, "The Punjab CM believes in taking practical steps and she is creating ease for the people of Punjab."

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

11 dead, 1295 injured in road accidents

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

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

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

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

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

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

procedure be evolved for destroying plastic bag.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

International News

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

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

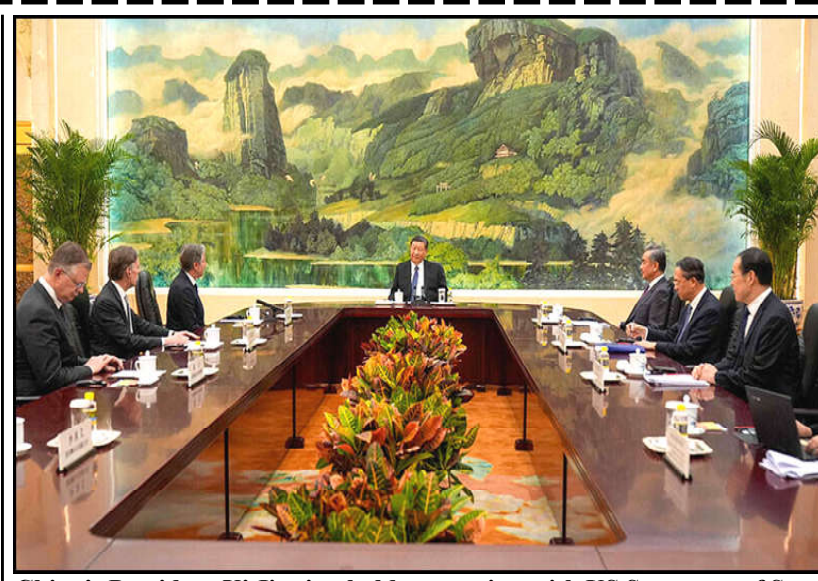
Meeting Blinken in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Xi said the two countries had "made some positive progress" since he met with US President Joe

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

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

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

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



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

Israel intensifies Rafah airstrikes before ground assault

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

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

local journalist. In the seventh month of a devastating air and ground war against Hamas, Israeli forces also resumed bombarding northern and central areas of the Gaza Strip, as well as east of Khan Yunis in the south.

Israeli warplanes had hammered the north for a second day on Wednesday, shattering weeks of comparative calm there. The war, now in its seventh month, has killed at least 34,305 Palestinians, Gaza health authorities said on Thursday.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shoigu says Russia and allies should step up military exercises in Asia

Monitoring Desk
ASTANA: Russia and its allies in Asia should expand joint military exercises as they face a direct threat from attempts by the United States to expand its security influence in the region, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Friday.

He was speaking at a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a security grouping that includes Russia, India, China, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

"I believe that every-one present shares the opinion that the deployment of military infrastructure in the region by the United States and its allies is unacceptable," Shoigu said. "Such intentions must be regarded as a direct threat to stability in the SCO space."

SCO member states should expand the scope

and geography of their military exercises, he told the meeting in the Kazakh capital Astana. His speech highlighted Russia's intention to strengthen military ties with partners in Asia and resist any erosion of its influence there despite the intense demands on its army of the war it has been fighting for more than two years in Ukraine.

At home, Shoigu's position is under greater-than-usual scrutiny after the arrest of one of his deputies this week in a bribery scandal, a development that threatens to weaken him politically.

In his speech, he accused the US-led QUAD and AUKUS blocs of trying to reshape the security structure in the Pacific to suit themselves, and said that increasing pressure was being exerted on China over Taiwan.



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

UK slaps fresh sanctions on Iran after Israel attack

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

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

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

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

Egyptian delegation in Israel for talks on Gaza hostages

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

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

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

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

Gaza baby saved from dead mother's womb dies

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

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

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

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

Pope will attend G7 summit to discuss AI, Italy says

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

Pakistan pushes for stopping Israeli war machine to end Palestinians' slaughter in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS (APP) - Pakistan has called on the United Nations and the world community to consider "further measures" against Israel to secure a ceasefire in Gaza and an end to its "plausible genocide" of the Palestinian people in the besieged enclave. Speaking in the United Nations Security Council's ministerial-level debate on the Middle East situation, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, did not specify the measures but pointed out that Israel's war in Gaza has spread the conflict to adjacent regions and further escalation must be prevented.

"Yet, unless Israel's war machine is stopped from further slaughter in Gaza, there is an ever-present danger that war and violence will spread and possibly engulf the entire Middle East and beyond," the Pakistani envoy said.

"Today," he went on to say that the 15-member Council has "three urgent responsibilities - to halt Israel's genocidal war in Gaza; to prevent the further spread and escalation of war; and to revive the peace process towards a two-State solution to establish durable peace and security in the Middle East.

Addressing the regional ramifications of the Gaza conflict, Ambassador Jadoon cautioned against the conflict's spread to neighbouring areas such as the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Iran.

He urged all parties to exercise restraint to prevent further escalation. Ambassador Jadoon also underscored the timeliness of Palestine's re-submitted application for UN membership, which, he said, is in accordance with regional initiatives advocating for a two-State solution.

Expressing disappointment over the UN Security Council veto on Algeria's draft resolution for Palestine's full UN membership, he pointed to the overwhelming support signalling Palestine's rightful place in the international community. Ambassador Jadoon reaffirmed



WUHAN: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo with officials of Pakistan Navy and China shipyard during launching ceremony of 1st HANGOR Class submarine of Pakistan Navy at Shuangliu Base at Wuhan China.

Treasury benches call Opposition in Senate to unite for fighting national challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): The members of the treasury benches on Friday called the Opposition members in the Upper House of the Parliament to unite for fighting national challenges with consensus.

The meeting of the Upper House of the Parliament commenced with the recitation of the verses of the sixth chapter of the Holy Quran "Al-An'am" in which the Almighty commanded the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to not associate himself with those who create divisions within the religion and proclaim that he is blessed with following of the true religion, the right path of truth and the Lord will reward them who do associate others with Him.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar moved the agenda second item of laying on the table of the House copy of the Address of the President made under clause (3) of Article 56 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the joint session of the Parliament. The Chairman Senate ruled the action against the agenda being late.

Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Senator Sherry Rehman while taking at the floor, extended her felicitations to the Chairman for holding the maiden proceedings after his charge in an exemplary manner.

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

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

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

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

This visit provided an opportunity for the two sides to hold in-depth talks on all aspects of bilateral relations and regional and global developments. There was agreement to expand cooperation in economic, cultural and security domains and to transform the Pakistan-Iran border into a border of peace, friendship and prosperity. In this context, the two sides will promote bilateral trade; fast track negotiations on Free Trade Agreement; develop joint border markets and economic free zones; and promote connectivity including mutually beneficial relationships between the ports of Gwadar and Chabahar.

She added as expressed in the Joint Statement, Pakistan and Iran have similar views on the situation in Gaza and on Jammu and Kashmir. The leaders highlighted the need for dialogue and peaceful means to resolve the Kashmir dispute, in accordance with international law and the will of the people. On Gaza, both sides expressed support for a just, comprehensive, and durable solution based on the aspirations of the Palestinian people, as well as the return of displaced persons.

She remarked Chairman, China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), Luo Zhaohui visited Pakistan from 21-25 April 2024.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing a ceremony held in honour of special persons organized by Disable Welfare Association.

Omar Ayub alleges raids on PTI workers homes in Punjab

ISLAMABAD (INP): Opposition leader Omar Ayub raised serious concerns in the National Assembly regarding alleged raids on opposition homes in Punjab, accusing Punjab IG Usman Anwar of corruption and criticizing the deteriorating state of the Punjab Police Force. Speaker ordered removal of remarks concerning IG calling for a judicial inquiry into the Bahawalnagar incident.

Expressing his dismay during the National Assembly session, Omar Ayub stated, "This is unacceptable." He highlighted the

DC Hyderabad inaugurates 7-Day anti-polio drive

HYDERABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Tariq Qureshi on Friday inaugurated a 7-day anti-polio drive starting from April 29th in Karan Khan Shoro basic health unit (BHU).

He emphasized that parents should ensure that their children up to the age of 5 receive polio drops to protect them from permanent disability, as administering polio drops during every campaign was the only solution to prevent polio.

3 women among six shot dead in Shikarpur, Kashmir

SHIKARPUR, KASHMIRE (INP): Six people including three women were killed in two separate incidents of firing in Shikarpur, reported on Friday. In the first incident, armed men shot three people including two women to death and injured another over old enmity in village Darya Khan of Shikarpur District.

According to police, the incident points to the ongoing rivalry between two groups of the Bhu and Marfani clans.

Keamari police bust major gutka smuggling attempt

KARACHI (APP): The District Keamari Police on Friday successfully thwarted a nefarious attempt to smuggle over 18 mounds of hazardous Gutka/Mawa and betel nuts in the Mochko area. According to SSP Keamari, the police operation unfolded, culminating in the seizure of a vehicle laden with contraband, while the perpetrators managed to evade arrest.

In a swift and decisive action, police officials confiscated the vehicle and its illicit cargo, which included 60 sacks of betel nuts, totaling a staggering 720 kilograms, along with 10 bags containing 200 packets of gutka/mawa.

World Earth Day observed in Sukkur

SUKKUR (APP): An awareness walk and seminar was organised on the occasion of World Earth Day by Aror University Sukkur with collaboration of Environment Protection Authority (EPA) here on Friday.

On this occasion, Vice Chancellor, Aror University Engr Zahid Hussain Khand highlighted on the theme Planet vs Plastic on Earth Day and said that it is the responsibility of all of us to protect the earth and ensure the protection of its environment.

Pakistan needs strong defence in view of its location in 'rough' neighbourhood: Masood Khan

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan has a "rough" neighbourhood that requires strong defence capabilities, Ambassador Masood Khan said on Wednesday at an event in Charlotte, North Carolina, while hoping that Islamabad's defence ties with the US will continue.

"We have had strategic partnerships. We have had peaks and troughs. We had agreements, disagreements. But we have remained steadfast partners throughout these seven and a half decades," the Pakistani envoy told a gathering of scholars, intellectuals and opinion-makers during 'Ambassador Circle Series' organized by World Affairs Council of Charlotte, North Carolina.

"And," he added, "we want to continue this partnership."

The Council's 'Ambassador Circle Series' provides opportunity for the current and former ambassadors and high-ranking government officials who visit Charlotte to share their insights on diplomatic relationships between the United States and nations around the world. Underlining that the terrorist threat was still potent, the Ambassador said that "it has not disappeared because the United States has come back (from Afghanistan)."

"It is a lethal threat not only to Pakistan and Afghanistan, but to United States and its allies in the region, Masood Khan added.



Masood Khan addressing a gathering of scholars, intellectuals and opinion-makers during Ambassador Circle Series organized by World Affairs Council of Charlotte in US state of North Carolina.

Setting up modern GTS need of the hour: MD SSWMB

KARACHI (APP): Managing Director Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) Syed Imtiaz Ali Shah said that the establishment of modern Garbage Transfer Station (GTS) is the need of the hour. He said this while chairing a meeting here on Friday.

He said that providing a clean and healthy environment is our priority, and timely removal and transfer of garbage is the solution to this problem.

He said that the construction of modern GTS will provide a healthy environment to the citizens while the sanitation work will be further improved and accelerated.

He further said that the four GTS of Karachi, include at GTS Sharafi, GTS Imtiaz, GTS Gutter Baghecha, and GTS Dingamore will be developed at par with modern practices.

On the occasion, the Head of the Turkish company's team, solid waste specialist Martin John Edge gave a detailed briefing regarding the commencement of the construction of Modern GTS in collaboration with Solid Waste Management and Sweep Project.

He briefed about the GTS's architect design and 3D design, GTS operational area, garbage vehicle traffic route, Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and other facilities.

The GTS will be secured by boundary wall, the operation area will be covered with charcoal filtration to control waste odors.

Site has also been allocated for plants and greenery development on the sides to maintain a green environment.



HYDERABAD: Deputy Accountant General Mansoor Ali Siyal listening to complaints about treasury during an open katchery at Hyderabad Treasury office.

SIU arrests robbery gang targeting bank customers

KARACHI (APP): In a significant operation conducted by the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) Karachi Police, a notorious gang of robbers involved in targeting individuals withdrawing cash from banks has been apprehended.

According to SSP/SIU Adeel Hussain Chandio, the SIU swiftly moved to arrest a three-member dacoit gang at Newhouse Chowrangi, New Karachi, acting on a valuable tip-off.

The apprehended members of the gang, identified as Naveed Ahmed, Adnan, and Zulfiqar Ali, were notorious for their brazen robberies, targeting bank customers leaving with substantial amounts of cash, often at gunpoint.

During the operation, law enforcement agency recovered three 30-bore pistols along with ammunition from the accused.

Hot, dry weather forecast for Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department on Friday forecast hot and dry weather in most parts of the Sindh province during the next 24 hours.

However, dust raising/gusty winds are expected during afternoon. Mainly, hot and dry weather is likely to prevail in the province.



SUJAWAL: Doctors examine patient at free medical camp established by Pakistan Navy at Jangu Jalbani, District Sujawal, Sindh.

SIC second largest party in NA, ECP tells NA secretariat

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

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

second-largest party in the National Assembly.

Sunni Ittehad Council with 82 members (including 49 from Punjab and 33 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), PPP 71, MQM 21, JUI 11, PML-Q 5, IPP 4 and MWM, PKMAP, BNP, PMAP, BAP PML-Z each have one member. The Election Commission has clarified that no specific seats have been allocated to the Sunni Ittehad Council.

The National Assembly Secretariat had requested the Election Commission to provide an updated party position, which has now been notified.

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

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

The United States has made it clear that the recent sanctions imposed on companies allegedly supplying missile components to Pakistan will not dent the bilateral relations with Pakistan.

The State Department emphatically declared that there's 'absolutely no' undercurrent of discord between the United States and Pakistan, despite recent sanctions.

Addressing the daily news briefing in Washington on Thursday, State Deputy Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel played down concerns about political tensions arising from the sanctions, saying:

"Pakistan continues to be one of our most important partners in the region. There continues to be a lot of cooperation that we have with the government of Pakistan, especially in the security space and trade sector."



HYDERABAD: Superintendent of Police (SP) Headquarter, Shahzeb Chachar listening the problems of citizens during the open court program, at SDPO Office Baldia in Hyderabad.

Aror University organizes int'l conference on interfaith religious diplomacy in Indus valley

SUKKUR (APP): The international conference on Interfaith Religious Diplomacy in Indus Valley Civilization: Interpretations from History, Art, Architecture and Heritage, was held at Aror University Sukkur here Friday.

Divisional Commissioner Sukkur Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi inaugurated the conference. Addressing the event, the DC said the message of Sufi saints and poets, like Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, was the message of love and peace.

The keynote speaker Dr Steven Bonta talked about the Indus valley scripts in comparison with other languages like English etc.

VC Shahed Allah Bux Soomro University, Jamshoro, Prof Dr Arbella Bhutto, VC Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University, Sukkur, Prof Dr Tehmina Mangani, Prof. Dr Muhammad Ramzan, VC Emerson University, Multan, Prof. Dr Rasool Bux Mahar, VC Benazir Bhutto University of Technology and Skill Development, Khairpur Mirs, and Prof. Dr Madad Ali Shah, Pro VC IBA University Bhittai, and Prof. Dr Dur Muhammad Pathan, Pro-VC MUET, Khairpur campus highlighted the religious harmony and peaceful coexistence in Indus Valley Civilization.