

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vd: XXV No. 223, Ramzan 22, 1445 AH Tuesday April 02, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

Directs foolproof security for Chinese nationals

Bisham terror attack aimed to harm Pak-China extraordinary friendship, says PM Shehbaz

Govt to leave no stone unturned to punish terrorists behind attack

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

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

The prime minister

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

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

Federal Ministers Amir Muqam, Attaullah Tarar, Chairman WAPDA Lt Gen. (retd) Sajjad Ghani, Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, members of

the Chinese company and senior officials were also present on the occasion.

Terming it a job of the enemies of Pakistan, the prime minister said that it was a dastardly act on part of the perpetrators who found every opportunity to harm this friendship which was strengthening by each passing day and expanding and moving forward with speed.

"That is the reason enemies do not spare any opportunity to damage and create a wedge between the two Iron Brothers," he added.

Prime Minister Sharif said that they shared the moment of sadness and sorrow.

Continued on page 2



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

President for early finalization of Transit Trade Agreement with Turkmenistan

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

The President, talking to the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan Atadjan Movlamov who called on him, said that the agreement, once signed, would help expand trade, promote regional connectivity as well as enhance economic activities in the region.

The ambassador congratulated President Zardari on assuming the office of the President for the second time, according to a

President House press release.

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

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

He expressed Pakistan's desire to work with Turkmenistan to further

Continued on page 2

Khawaja Asif says

No Immediate relief to masses as country nears financial collapse

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

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

"As it stands, the government is unable to provide immediate relief to the populace," remarked Asif, addressing the dire economic predicament. He pointed out that a staggering number of citizens, particularly in key sectors such as retail and wholesale, evade their tax obligations, exacerbating the nation's economic woes. Shockingly, only a fraction of the population, amounting to a mere few hundred thousand individuals, diligently fulfill their tax du-

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

However, Asif expressed cautious optimism for a turnaround within the next 18 to 24 months, citing the government's strategic policies as the beacon of hope. He assured that the fruition of these measures would gradually alleviate the financial strain on the populace.

In a bid to alleviate the tax burden and encourage compliance, the government unveiled the Tajir Dost Scheme, commencing its registration today.



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

SC takes suo motu notice of IHC judges' letter

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

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

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

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

judgement on Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's dismissal case.

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

qualify as intimidation". A seven-member larger bench headed by the CJP will take up the case on Wednesday. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Jamal Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan will be the members of the larger bench. The hearing will take place at 11-30am on Wednesday.



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

Chaudhry Salik says

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pak-China border opened

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pak-China border Khunjerab has opened on Monday for trade and tourism after remained closed for four months.

According to the details, under the border agreement every year Pak-China border remain closed from December 1 till March 31. Border officials stated that under the agreement border transportation is closed due to snow and cold weather. During this period, Pak-China border also closed for trade and tourism activities.

However, the exchange of progressive work to the country's level continues.

Eid-ul-Fitr moon sighting likely on April 9 in Pakistan

LAHORE (INP): The Meteorological Department has predicted that there are chances of sighting of Eid-ul-Fitr moon in the country on April 9.

According to the Department of Meteorology, the birth of the new moon will take place on April 8 at 11:21pm, while on April 9, the age of the moon will be 19 to 20 hours.

The Meteorological Department said that the duration of moon sighting after sunset will be more than 50 minutes, due to which there are chances of moon sighting of Eid-ul-Fitr on April 9.

IHC suspends sentence of PTI founder, Bushra in Toshakhana case

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

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

The order was issued by Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb after hearing on Monday.

Barrister Ali Zafar appeared on behalf of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi while prosecutor Amjid Pervaiz represented NAB.

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

Barrister Ali Zafar said Suleman Safdar has said he

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

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

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



QUETTA: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai addressing an event 'Promoting Social Cohesion' organized at Methodist Church.

Achakzai underscores importance of collaborative efforts towards peace, understanding

Religious scholars from varied faith communities united for promote social cohesion

Independent Report QUETTA: Esteemed religious scholars and leaders from varied faith communities united in a shared mission to promote inter-faith harmony and social cohesion in the region and safeguarding the rights of religious minorities.

The Methodist Church Quetta hosted a gathering as luminaries from diverse faiths converged for a Dialogue cum Iftar dinner, jointly organized by the Balochistan Rural Support

Program (BRSP) and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF).

Speaker Provincial Assembly Cap @ Abdul Khaliq Achakzai underscored the importance of collaborative efforts towards peace and understanding. He emphasized the pivotal role played by collaborative efforts like this in fostering unity and harmony, further underscoring the government's dedication to collective ac-

Continued on page 2



KARACHI: Participants hold Palestine flag during procession on occasion of youm-e-Ali.

QMC liable for Rs 1.05 bln on account of non-payment to contractors, parties

QUETTA (APP): Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) is now liable for Rs 1.05 billion on account of non-payment to contractors and parties due to their inefficiency, corruption and inability to simplify and bring amendment in the revenue generation method.

The amount would double the following year if it wasn't paid to the contractors and other parties with QMC.

The QMC has been losing billions of rupees a year due to improper legislation and a lack of a mechanism for collecting rent for government-leased shops and properties situated in prime locations of the Quetta.

"Quetta Metropolitan Corporation collects rent from its as many as 900 shops and 63 leased properties located in the prime locations of the provincial

capital on a monthly basis for just between Rs 25 and Rs 30," Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, Administrator Quetta said.

Talking to APP, he said that old legislation coupled with incompetence and corruption has exacerbated the financial crisis of the Quetta metropolitan Corporation.

With its 900 stores and 63 buildings, the Corporation may bring in Rs 300 million a month in revenue. Conversely, he expressed regret that only a small amount, measured in thousands, is gathered.

Expressing his regret over the apathy of the occupants of the government-leased properties, he said there are 20 shops and leased properties that did not pay a single penny during last seven years.

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Mir Sadiq Umrani, Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, Mir Ali Madad Jattak, Prince Umar Ahmedzai, Malik Naeem Khan Bazai, Molvi Noorullah, Mir Younis Aziz Zehri, Mir Ghulam Dastagir, Mir Zabid Ali Reki, Abdul Majeed Badini, Asghar Ali Taren, Syed Zafarullah Agha, Dr. Nawaz Kibzai, Molvi Hidayatur Rehman, Farah Azeem Shah, Hadia Nawaz Baloch, Meena Majeed Baloch and Shahida Rauf expressing their views on resolution presented in Balochistan Assembly session chaired by Speaker Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai

Naqvi visits Kakul, all praise for army fitness tips to cricketers

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi Monday met players of the national men's team at the Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul and said the training would make them "more disciplined" in future.

His remarks came amid the ongoing controversy surrounding the captaincy of T20 team as former skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi was reportedly unhappy with the board's abrupt decision of his removal. The PCB on Sunday reappointed Babar Azam as national team's captain for T20I and one-day internationals (ODIs).

Sources privy to the matter, however, termed Naqvi's meeting with the cricketers as a "damage-control move".

In a statement, the PCB said that Naqvi visited Kakul in Abbottabad to "personally observe the ongoing fitness camp" be-

ing conducted by trainers from the Pakistan Army for Pakistan's T20 players.

The visit aimed at gathering firsthand insights into the training camp and to extend gratitude to the Army for their invaluable support in organising the camp, read the statement.

The fitness camp has been instrumental in enhancing the physical capabilities of the cricketers, ensuring they are in optimal condition for forthcoming cricketing assignments which also includes ICC T20 World Cup in June this year.

During his visit, the PCB chief interact with the players and personally commended them for their dedication and active participation in the camp.

He expressed satisfaction over the players' enthusiasm and commitment towards enhancing their fitness levels.

"I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the

Pakistan Army for their support to our cricketers. Their collaboration will not only enhance the fitness levels of our players but will also make them more disciplined in future," Naqvi said.

"This camp will surely put the players in good stead before undertaking a challenging journey leading to a global tournament in the USA and West Indies."

The PCB remains dedicated to providing comprehensive support to its players, equipping them with the necessary tools and resources to excel at the international level, he added.

Meanwhile, the PCB chairman also held a meeting with the selection committee to talk about the team's selection ahead of the New Zealand T20I series.

He also took the members into confidence on the developments made by the board regarding the appointment of head coach.

LPG price reduced by Rs6.45 per kg

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) on Monday announced a reduction in liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices.

According to a notification issued by a regulatory body, the LPG price would go down by Rs6.45 per kilogram and it would now be sold out at Rs 250.33 per kilogram.

For those using domestic cylinders, the price has seen a reduction. The cost of a domestic cylinder has been slashed by Rs76.

The new price for the domestic cylinder has been set at Rs 2,954.

Separately, the government on Sunday decided to jack up petrol price by Rs9.66 for the next 15 days.



DAASU: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif interacts with engineers of the China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) working at the Daasu Hydropower project.

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

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

In a statement issued here on Monday, he said that the landmark decision was indeed a manifestation of a significant stride-forward for Pakistan's expanding tech landscape and promising unparalleled opportunities for innovation and progress.

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

He praised that the gigantic project, to work under public-private partnership, will have immense attraction for country's burgeoning freelance economy, will have a research center, a well-

stocked library, software houses, conference rooms, dedicated work spaces for freelancers and start ups and an exhibition area for showcasing cutting-edge IT products.

The ICCI President further said that the project will not only create business opportunities for young entrepreneurs but will turn a big source of foreign exchange earnings for the country.

He said the construction of an IT Park of such a paramount importance in Islamabad was the long-standing demand of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and that the business community whole heartedly welcomes the initiative and assured that every possible cooperation will be extended for the materialisation of the project.

Ahsan Zafar also expressed the hope that ICCI will be taken on board at all the stages for the benefit of the business community and making the project a state of the art in real sense.

IMF demands to end subsidies for 'protected' consumers

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

According to reports quoting IMF sources, protected gas consumers should be protected under the BISP mechanism, cross-subsidy should be phased out till protected gas consumers are protected.

Budget subsidy should be removed to transfer Regassified Liquefied Natural

Gas (RLNG) to domestic consumers.

It is pertinent to note that a subsidy of 40 billion rupees was given to the household consumers for their transfer to RLNG and a subsidy of 29 billion rupees was given to consumers for their transfer to RLNG.

While the government has increased gas rates from 40 to 65.29 percent from February 1.

Gas (RLNG) to domestic consumers.

It is pertinent to note that a subsidy of 40 billion rupees was given to the household consumers for their transfer to RLNG and a subsidy of 29 billion rupees was given to consumers for their transfer to RLNG.

While the government has increased gas rates from 40 to 65.29 percent from February 1.

Terrorists will not be spared, says Maryam

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz says those involved in terrorism will not be spared.

Maryam Nawaz paid tribute to security personnel for arresting culprits involved in Shangla attack.

She said terrorists and their facilitators would not be given any amnesty and it was necessary to bring them to justice.

Also read: Maryam vows to protect Christian community and their rights

The chief minister said the nation was united and determined to wipe out the plague of terrorism from the homeland.

Bisham terror attack aimed to...

Continued from page 1

row and assured that the government would not leave any stone unturned and would not spare any opportunity to ensure the best possible security measures for the Chinese families and nationals.

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

The prime minister said that after the incident, he had visited embassy immediately to offer condolences on behalf of his government and the people of Pakistan to the Chinese leadership and the Chinese people.

He informed that a joint investigation team was also constituted on the same day and its report was due any time.

He further assured that they would not waste time to act upon the recommendations of the inquiry committee in letter and spirit.

Besides, a high level security meeting held on March 27 in which they discussed better coordination with the provincial governments over the additional security measures, he added.

The prime minister said that Pak-China friendship would march forward in unison and the enemies of CPEC and this exceptional relationship would be defeated completely.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Jiang Zaidong said that the prime minister visited the embassy and reassured security for the Chinese nationals.

He also expressed gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan for expressing solidarity, adding that they were ready to work together to further build their strategic partnership with Pakistan.

The gathering also observed 30-second silence for those who lost lives in the tragic incident.

Mahar for forming rapid response force to assist farmers in calamities

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Agriculture Minister, Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Mahar on Monday directed to constitute a Rapid Response Force for assisting farmers in case of natural calamities like heavy rains and flooding in the province.

The minister was chairing an introductory meeting with officers of the Agriculture Department that was attended by Secretary of Agriculture Rafiq Ahmed Burro, Director General (DG) Research Noor Muhammad Baloch, DG of Water Management, DG of Engineering and other officers of the department.

Teams of the Rapid Response Force will be on alert to assist the affected farmers and all the officers would pay surprise visits to their corresponding areas and fulfill their targets, he outlined.

Highlighting the importance of the agriculture sector Muhammad Bakhsh Mahar said that the use of technology and access of farmers to findings of agricultural research were necessary to enhance production in Sindh.

He urged all the officers to improve their performance and utilize all their abilities for the growth of the agriculture sector and directed that water management, research, engineering, training, and extension wings of the department should be made more active with a focus on digitization.

Referring to declining trends of cotton cultivation in the province, he directed that better varieties of cotton should be introduced in Sindh to encourage farmers to cultivate cotton crops.

The minister was briefed about the performance of different wings and progress on ongoing projects of the agriculture department.

The meeting was informed that a Rs 60,000 subsidy is being given to the owners of land up to 12.5 acres during the third phase of the assistance program and a helpline center was functional to provide information to farmers while training on rooftop farming was also being imparted to citizens.



GILGIT: A youngster searching for alluvial gold through a traditional way on the bank of river.

PVF loses Brazilian coach services for volleyball team

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) will lose the services of Brazilian Coach Issanaye Ramires Ferraz, as he signed the agreement with Korea after getting an attractive offer to train the Korean national volleyball team.

The Pakistan Volleyball Federation is currently paying him around \$4,000 per month but Korea not only promised to double the monthly amount, but it also offered him a full package that included boarding and lodging for his entire family and education for children in the best available institutions.

Under the coaching of Issanaye Ramires, Pakistan who beat one of the world's best volleyball team Korea in straight sets at Asian Games last year, Pakistan defeated powerful Korea, Green shirts romped over India with utmost ease in the high-profile event.

Korea has offered Issanaye one of the most lucrative packages which was difficult to turn down.

The Brazilian coach, who has trained the Pakistan team for almost a year now, has finally decided to part ways, grabbing the offer with both hands.

Ch Muhammad Yaqoob, Chairman of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation is also upset on losing the services of such a brilliant coach, said that no doubt the Brazilian coach is one of the best around and he has proved that by helping Pakistan beat some of the best outfits in Asia, adding that he helped Pakistan reach as high as No 5 in Asia in less than a year.

PVF has very limited resources and as such cannot offer him the package that Korea has doled out for him" said PVF Chairman, adding that Issanaye Ramires is departure has left us in a tough corner but now we are working on best available options for the new coach as april will be last month of Brazilian coaching with the Pakistan team.

Wreath laying ceremony held at Nur Khan Airbase for five Chinese who died in terror incident



ISLAMABAD (Online): A wreath laying ceremony was held at Nur Khan Airbase for the five Chinese nationals who died in a recent terror incident.

On behalf of the President, the Prime Minister, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Air Staff, floral wreaths were placed at the base.

Silence for thirty seconds was observed in honor of the deceased. In a statement, the government once again strongly condemned the Bisham terrorist incident and expressed the firm resolve to bring the terrorists and their facilitators to justice.

Babar Azam's father asks son to treat team's mates like brothers

LAHORE (INP): Babar Azam's father, Azam Siddique urged the white-ball captain to respect senior players Mohammad Amir and Imad Wasim.

Taking to Instagram, Siddique said: "People are saying that there will be no unity in the team under the leadership of Babar Azam. I have explained to Babar Azam to forget what somebody had done in the

past."

"I have also told Babar to treat everybody in the team like brothers. As all the eleven brothers will conquer the world with unity," he added. Father Babar Azam is also thankful for getting the captaincy of the Pakistan team again. The most important thing is that authority gave honor and respect to Babar Azam, Siddique added.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor University of Mekran Panjgur Dr. Abdul Malik Tareen meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

President for...

Continued from page 1

ther enhance mutually beneficial cooperation. The president highlighted that the existing volume of trade between the two countries needed to be improved for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

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

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

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

Achakzai underscores importance...

Continued from page 1

in building a more inclusive and peaceful society. He lauded the role of BRSP, PPAF, and the Methodist Church in orchestrating the Dialogue Quead-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for a Pakistan that respects religious freedom and unity among all faiths. Nadir highlighted the pivotal role of Paigham-e-Pakistan in fostering interfaith harmony and social cohesion. By promoting a unified national narrative that embraces diversity, it bridged communal gaps and nurtured a sense of unity among Pakistanis. Gul also highlighted the cultural and heritage importance of fostering interfaith harmony and social cohesion.

Zahoor Buledi, member of Provincial Assembly of Balochistan emphasized the crucial role of dialogue and cooperation among various faith communities. Buledi stressed the significance of mutual respect and understanding in nurturing a society that cherishes its diversity. He highlighted the positive impact of such gatherings in promoting interfaith harmony and fostering an environment of tolerance and inclusivity.

Bishop Khalid Rehmat highlighted the importance of celebrating diversity and social pluralism. He emphasized the need for unity in embracing Pakistan's rich cultural tapestry, stating, "It is imperative that we appreciate and celebrate the diverse cultures and traditions that contribute to the fabric of our nation."

Khalid emphasized the collaborative efforts of government institutions in promoting social cohesion, stating, "I commend the collaborative efforts of government institutions in fostering social cohesion and understanding among our diverse communities."

Nadir Gul, the CEO of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), highlighted the significant role of religious scholars in promoting education, countering extremist ideologies,



QUETTA: Resident of Bostan hold protest outside QPC.



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

CDWP okays three projects including National Forensic Science Agency for Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) has approved three projects including a National Forensic Science Agency (5th revised PC-1), which would be set up in the federal capital at a cost of Rs1,831.114 million. The establishment of a National Forensic Science Agency is a project in the physical planning and housing sector," a news release said on Monday. "This a revised version of the project which focuses solely on the Islamabad agency, whereas the original project approved in 2002 was aimed at establishing forensic science laboratories across provincial headquarters, with a main laboratory and training facilities in Islamabad." The CDWP meeting, chaired by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, was attended among others by Secretary Planning Awaiz Manzur Sumra, Members Planning Commission, Additional Secretary Planning Kamran Rehman, representatives of the federal ministries and provincial governments. The forum also okayed a concept clearance proposal for the "Promoting Sustainable Public Private Partnership Program" with a total cost of US\$500 million. The CDWP approved the first phase of the programme valued \$250 million, which aimed at improving the environment for infrastructure financing by promoting public-private partnerships (PPPs) at the federal level. It would help attract private investment in crucial sectors like roads, housing, healthcare, education, water & sanitation, and technology, following a programmatic approach to implement core policy, legal and institutional reforms and build capacity within relevant institutions to ensure long-term sustainability. "It aligns with Pakistan's Vision 2025 pillars, which aim to transform Pakistan's economy into one of the top 10 in the world by 2047." The CDWP also undertook and discussed a working paper from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training regarding the establishment of a Danish School at Kuri Road, Islamabad. The project was given a go ahead asking sponsors to conduct feasibility study.

Youm-e-Ali commemorated with processions across major cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Youm-e-Ali, the martyrdom anniversary of fourth pious caliph of Islam, Maula Ali ibn Abi Talib, was observed with deep reverence and devotion. Hazrat Ali met his fate tragically on the 21st of Ramadan, 40 AH (661 CE), succumbing to fatal injuries inflicted by a Kharijite dissident, Ibn Muljim, during his journey to perform the Fajr prayer in the city of Kufa, Iraq. Throughout the country, majalis were held where zakireen narrate and expound upon the life and teachings of Hazrat Ali. Processions, a hallmark of this solemn occasion, traverse the streets, symbolizing unity and remembrance. In Islamabad and Rawalpindi, processions commenced on Sunday night, culminating at Sehr on Monday. The main procession in Islamabad, originating from Imambargah Zainabiya, followed its traditional route to Imambargah Asna Ashri. In Rawalpindi and Peshawar, processions have concluded their routes. However, in Lahore, Karachi, and other regions, processions are underway. Notably, Lahore's main procession commenced from the historic Mubarak Haveli in Mochi Gate, destined for Karbala Gamey Shah outside Bhati Gate, amidst elaborate security measures. Stringent security arrangements were in place nationwide, with participants passing through walk-through gates and metal detectors.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah has said that it is incumbent upon the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to ensure supply of safe and clean drinking water for every citizen in capital. He expressed his displeasure over CDA water supply management as recent report of Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) found water samples in Parliament Lodges and Parliament House contaminated. Mustafa Shah expressed these views during his meeting with Senior officers of CDA to take cognizance of recent report of PCRWR in Parliament House Islamabad. While expressing grave concern over the report, Mustafa Shah directed CDA to evolve proper Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for cleaning of water tanks in Parliament Lodges and Parliament House. He also directed CDA to ensure proper cleanliness of water tanks and then sending water samples to PCRWR at least after every three months.

Effective measures to combat crime and ensure public safety ordered

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to details, the CPO/ DIG Operations Syed Shahzad Aabpara and Sihala were dismissed from service due to poor performance, and in-charges of 7 police stations with weak performance were suspended. The suspended in-charge police stations include Margalla, Ramna, Sangjani, Nilore, Korla, Lohi Bher, and Humak. While in-charge police station Industrial Area and Karachi Company were appreciated for their good performance. All other in-charge police stations have been given four days to improve their performance. Those who show improvement will remain part of our team. All staff should remain present in their re-



Nadeem Bukhari presided over an important meeting to assess the current situation of crime in the federal capital, a public relations officer said. He said that the meeting was attended by SSP Operations, zonal DPOs, SDPOs, and all in-charge police stations. During the meeting, the performance of all police stations was evaluated, and each officer was individually questioned. In-charge police stations of

UNI International delegation meets NAVTTC chairperson to boost collaborations

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from UNI International, led by Chief Executive Officer Max Ma, on Monday, convened with NAVTTC Chairperson Gulmina Bilal Ahmad and presented the ITMC portfolio. NAVTTC Director General Skills Standard and Curriculum Hafeez Abbasi, and UNI International Director Abbas were also in attendance during the meeting. Chairperson Gulmina extended a warm welcome to the UNI International team, expressing appreciation for their ongoing collaboration with the curriculum development team under Director General Hafeez. She specifically commended UNI International's dedication to joint curriculum development and anticipated further endeavors in the future. Emphasizing the importance of collaborations, she particularly highlighted the initiative to send Pakistani skilled youth abroad. Furthermore, Chairperson Gulmina underscored the necessity of job placement services for Pakistani youth, particularly within Chinese companies both in Pakistan and overseas.



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

AIOU to close admissions on April 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced that the last date for admissions for Semester Spring 2024 is April 15. According to AIOU, the programs offered in this phase include Associate Degree (BA/BCom), BBA, BS (ODL) programs, teachers training programs (1.5, 2.5 and 4 Years B.Ed.), postgraduate diploma programs, and certificate courses.

AJK PM expresses grief over passing of prominent figures

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a series of condolence messages, the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of several prominent figures and paid tribute to their services to nation. In his condolence message issued late Sunday, the Prime Minister extended his deepest sympathies to the bereaved family of Engineer Sardar Muazzam Sarfaraz, the nephew of former AJK Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan and cousin of former minister Sardar Farooq Sikandar Khan. Recalling the late engineer's contributions, Haq prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul. In a separate message, the Prime Minister conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker, Chaudhry Latif Akbar, over the passing of his sister. Acknowledging the profound loss, Haq extended his prayers for the solace of the grieving family.

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

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered for arranging meeting of PTI founder with his wife Bushra Bibi on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. The petitions regarding shifting of Bushra Bibi from Bani Gala to Adiala jail and her meeting with PTI founder came up for hearing before single bench of IHC led by justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb here Monday. The court while ordering for arranging meeting between PTI founder and his wife Bushra Bibi on the occasion of Eid and one day in a week sought arguments on declaring private property as sub jail. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb while expressing annoyance over Adiala jail administration and chief commissioner report for not shifting Bushra Bibi to Adiala jail and not arranging her meeting with PTI founder remarked it is all politics. You could not satisfy the court. He further remarked you people are hell bent upon reducing index of rule of law to zero. The court remarked how can the government declare private property of any one as sub-jail. The court while summing up arguments on next hearing adjourned the hearing of the case for indefinite period. State counsel said director law visited Bani Gala sub jail under the order of court and he has issued report. The court directed state counsel to provide copy of report to petitioner remarking "has the officer who has visited Bani gala sub jail become satisfied over facilities. During the hearing of the case Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb while moving to state counsel remarked 141 women entered after January 31 conviction. You said that jail was overcrowded. You mean that there should be only politics. Community thinks that they are giving charity by imprisoning in Bani Gala. On one side it is being said space is less and prisoners are more. On the other hand 141 women were sent into jail then any justification for not shifting Bushra Bibi remained no more.



ISLAMABAD: People gather for Iftar during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan at the Faisal Mosque in the Federal Capital.

Radio Pakistan continues to broadcast Holy Quran with Urdu translation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Radio Pakistan's Saut-ul-Quran channel continues to broadcast the Holy Quran with Urdu Translation for enriching the Ramadan experience of its listeners. People are tuning in to the FM-93.4 Saut-ul-Quran channel to douse their souls in the blessings of the holy month. The Saut-ul-Quran channel of Radio Pakistan has been airing the recitation of the Holy Quran with Urdu Translation since 2015. At present, Saut-ul-Quran channel can be accessed in 19 cities including Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Multan, Faisalabad, Narwal, Bahawalpur, Hyderabad, Khairpur, Mithi, Gilgit, Skardu, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Gwadar, Sibbi, Mirpur, Peshawar, and Karachi. In the next phase, transmission of the Saut-ul-Quran channel will be extended to 19 more cities, which include Sialkot, Sargodha, Mianwali, Kallar Kahar, Faqirabad, Larkana, Bhit Shah, Landhi, Khuzdar, Loralai, Turbat, Zhob, Chitral, Abbottabad, Kohat, Noshetra, and Muzaffarabad.

Death anniversary of famous poet Masroor Anwar observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The death anniversary of famous poet, song, and story writer, Masroor Anwar was observed on Monday. Masroor Anwar wrote hundreds of film and national songs as well as film stories and dialogues during his career. Born in Shimla on January 6, 1944, Masroor Anwar migrated to Pakistan after the participation of the subcontinent.

Court approves interim bail of former federal minister Zartaj Gul in 13 cases

RAWALPINDI (Online): Judge Malik Ijaz Asif of Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) No 1 Rawalpindi approved interim bail of former federal minister Zartaj Gul in 13 cases including violent demonstrations after PTI founder arrest, attack on state installations and police, vandalizing, siege and arson. The court has ordered the accused to file surety bonds in the sum of Rs 50000 each in all cases. The court has ordered police not to arrest the accused till April 17. Later Zartaj Gul said while talking to media men outside the court that 13 cases were registered against her in Rawalpindi division. I will not part ways with PTI founder even if 1300 cases are registered against me. The court has issued non bailable arrest warrants of former deputy speaker Punjab Assembly Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi and Zohaib Khan Afridi.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors feeding Zebras on roadside Zoo at the green belt area of Sector F-8 in Federal Capital.

Teachers call for end to centralized exams as FDE defaults on payments

ISLAMABAD (APP): Teachers engaged in conducting centralized primary and middle standard exams under the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) have come forward with grievances regarding unpaid remuneration and burdensome expenses incurred during exam duties for the last three years. Frustrated by unmet promises and financial strain, these teachers advocated for a shift towards local exams to alleviate their plight. Despite assurances from FDE authorities, teachers allege that for the past three years, they have not received their rightful remuneration for conducting exams and assessing papers. Speaking on condition of anonymity, several female teachers while talking to APP lamented the dire situation, highlighting the financial hardships they endure to fulfill their duties. One of the teachers revealed, "FDE conducts centralized exams and teachers have to bear the exams expenses from their own pocket which is ridiculous. The expenses include transportation costs to exam centers, purchasing materials for sealing answer scripts, and covering transport expenses to deliver materials to FDE." Another teacher recounted, "I hired a taxi, collected the exam material from FDE and deposited answer scripts on daily basis during the exams but FDE never provided transport facility or paid transportation cost. I paid from my personal pocket. The absence of reimbursement for expenses incurred during exam duties has left me feeling undervalued and disrespected. Promises made by FDE officials regarding payment for exam duties remain unfulfilled." "For three consecutive years, the FDE has failed to reimburse teachers for their diligent efforts in administering exams and assessing papers. While appointing teachers for examination duty, teachers are assured for payment but unfortunately, the promise of FDE officers never fulfilled, shared another teacher. The situation is compounded by the lack of support from FDE in providing necessary materials and facilities for conducting exams. Teachers report purchasing materials such as cloths, sealing wax, and packing material with their own money.



ISLAMABAD: People standing a queue to draw their salary outside bank at Aabpara.

Over 850 Kashmiris martyred by Indian troops since August 5

ISLAMABAD (APP): More than eight hundred fifty Kashmiris have been martyred by Indian troops since August 05, 2019 in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Additionally, the report highlighted the arrest of at least 23,210 individuals, including Hurriyat leadership, political activists, women, journalists, human rights defenders, students, and young boys. Furthermore, Indian forces damaged 1116 houses and structures, while 133 women were molested or disgraced during this period.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Tuesday April 02, 2024

Government support?

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

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

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

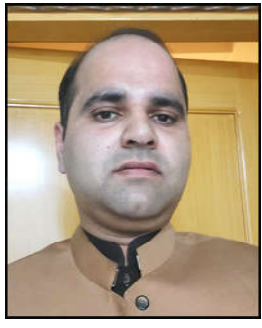
At a time when the minister needs the government's full backing to pull off the crucial deal and implement tough economic reforms over the next several years, it seems that some circles are trying to undermine his role in the cabinet. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's decision to name Foreign Minister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

Sadly, this was not the only occasion, since the formation of the new government a month ago, that he has been sidelined. Some days ago, Mr Sharif, in a break from tradition, decided to chair the ECC, the top policymaking forum. It was only after widespread criticism that he yielded the position to the finance minister. Likewise, the latter's role in the privatisation process was also diminished when Mr Dar was appointed head of the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation.

In the CCI's case, what exactly is the foreign minister expected to contribute to the council's deliberations? On the other hand, the presence of the finance minister in the CCI — the top constitutional forum mandated to discuss and decide on matters and disputes related to the federation and the provinces — is of utmost importance at this moment because the implementation of several IMF programme goals and policy reforms hinge on the active involvement of the federating units.

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

Century of educational excellence and success



Muhammad Umer

The importance of formal education is multifaceted, extending beyond individual development to influence societal progress, economic prosperity, and the overall well-being of communities and nations.

Recognizing and investing in education is fundamental for building a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable future. Understanding the importance of the foremost society building the community elders of Jungle Pir Alizai, Killa Abdullah marked a remarkable contribution in strengthening the educational institutes. Killa Piralizai-Piralizai is a village located in District Killa Abdullah of Balochistan. It is located 60 km to the north-west of provincial capital

Quetta and is about 2.26 km from the main Quetta-Chaman Highway.

Government. Boys High School Piralizai District Kill Abdullah, established in 1919, holds a significant place in promotion of education in the area. This institution has not just educated generations but has sculpted the future of our district. Starting as a humble primary school, it blossomed into a thriving middle school for 33 years and later evolved into a distinguished high school, a status it has proudly held for the past 35 years.

A monumental event unfolded the last Sunday — the grand celebration of Government High School Piralizai's centennial anniversary. A momentous occasion that not only marked a hundred years of educational legacy but also showcased the relentless dedication of the school's staff and the spirited participation of former students. As an alumina of this esteemed institution, I had the privilege of being part of this historic event, a memory I shall forever cherish. As we gather to honor rich legacy of education and community, let us embark on a nostalgic journey through the annals of

history, cherishing the milestones, memories, and unwavering spirit that have defined our institution over the past century.

This centennial celebration is not merely a reflection of the years gone by, but a testament to the enduring commitment to excellence that has shaped generations and left an indelible mark on the fabric of our school's story. Join us in commemorating a century of knowledge, growth, and the enduring bonds that unite us as one cherished school community. Esteemed guests from all walks of life, alumni, faculty, and

students in all large number attended the momentous occasion that transcends time — the grand celebrations of century-old school.

It wasn't just a gathering of distinguished alumni; it was a union of political leaders, tribal elders, and former and current students, together, they joined hands to pay homage to the institution that had profoundly influenced numerous lives throughout the past century.

The impact of Government Boys High School Piralizai extends far beyond its classrooms. Its alumni, comprising the majority of

teachers in District Kill Abdullah, have not only excelled in their careers but have also become the backbone of our community. Hundreds of its students-later graduated have ventured into fields like Engineering, Medical, Media, and Banking, are truly shaping the landscape of our society.

What truly sets this school apart is its remarkable journey towards co-education, a trailblazing concept in our province. For over 15 years, this school has championed the idea of boys and girls learning side by side, defying societal norms and fostering an environment of equality and progress. This forward-thinking approach has empowered approximately 70% of our women, enabling them to receive education and actively engage in various sectors of life such as politics, education, and healthcare alongside their male counterparts.

From the very beginning, the zeal and passion of the school's teachers, headmaster particularly the loving teacher Mr. Main Zahid, and the relentless dedication of Mr. Asif, a revered teacher, were evident of the grand celebration of Government High School Piralizai centennial anniversary. Mr. Asif, in particular, undertook a monumental task — he meticulously recorded the school's history in the form of a book. This book covered many interviews with former students of GBHS-Piralizai. It told the stories of a large number of teachers and students, many of whom now hold important positions in the government and public sectors.

Reading the book, I was profoundly touched by the lives and experiences of three of our beloved teachers, which I feel compelled to highlight here — Late Master Abdul Aziz, Master Shah Wali, and Chaudhary Abdul Karim. The book also highlighted the early struggles of Malak Ayub Khan, grandfather of Malak Farid Khan, the chief of Piralizai, whose efforts laid the foundation for our school during the British era.

Chaudhary Abdul Karim, in his role as the headmaster, led this institution to remarkable achievements throughout Baluchistan. Master Shah Wali, a revered science teacher, was not only an educator but also admired for his wisdom and kindness. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, he led the

Janbaz force, a group of 900 trained tribal personnel, to safeguard the tribal regions near the Afghanistan border from Soviet forces. During the recent gathering, communities from all corners of the district are united to honor the enduring success of our school. Distinguished speakers, including Malak Farid Khan, Engr. Zamarak Khan (former Minister), Haji Wali Mohammad, Author & tribal leader Divisional Director (Education), DEOs, DDEOs, and other respected figures, praised the institution's rich history and its revered teachers.

Lastly among the spirited participation in the grand celebration of Government High School Piralizai's centennial anniversary. Everyone has acknowledged the efforts of the Head Master Mr. Attaulah, Senior teacher Mr. Main Zahid — whose hard work, coupled with the love and sincerity he poured into his tasks and the relentless efforts of Mr. Asif whose book amazingly showed our history. He worked really hard and made it exciting. It felt like the old times and all the intelligent things people knew back then came alive for us.

Dr Naazir Mahmood

Peace activists come in a hundred and one varieties. Some are diehard peacekeepers from their student days, others are new converts who spend their early lives fighting and then realize the futility of belligerence.

From columnists and development professionals to educators and finance experts, the Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPPFD) has had a wide range of members since its creation in 1994.

Peace activist Laxminarayana Ramdas — who died on March 15, 2024 at the age of 91 — was a former head of the Indian Navy who took it upon himself to speak his mind. I first met him in April 2000 when a large delegation of Pakistani peace activists visited India. My wife Sanobar and I, with our two daughters — six-year-old Zoya and four-year-old Sawera — were among the delegates to the Fifth Joint Convention of the Pakistan-India Peoples Forum in Bangalore (now Bengaluru).

At that time, I was working for 'Dawn' in Karachi. Our editor, Saleem Asmi — an active member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and a peace activist — gladly agreed to grant me two weeks off to visit India. Though it was not my first visit to India, it was our first to South India. Ramdas — or Ramu da, as most of us started calling him — was so fond of children. He and his equally benevolent wife, Lalita Ramdas, showered their love on our two daughters, who had suddenly become mini-celebrities for Indian media as the youngest delegates from Pakistan.

For the past 40 years, Ramu da and Lalita campaigned for all the right causes in South Asia and beyond. They stood firm against all adversities and were an ideal couple for many of us. Despite being well-travelled and having the opportunity to settle anywhere in the world, they had their feet rooted to the ground they belonged to — the Subcontinent. When India and Pakistan tested their nuclear devices in 1998, Ramdas was one of the most vocal opponents of the nuclear arms race in South Asia. He strongly advocated for nuclear disarmament and

restraint and repeatedly asked India and Pakistan to initiate peace talks. Coming from a former naval chief, it was a significant suggestion that both governments should have followed. His efforts drew worldwide admiration, earning him the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2004 which he shared with his Pakistani counterpart, our very own IA Rehman. This was in recognition of his efforts to advocate peace between the two nuclear-armed neighbours when he was the chairperson of the PIPFPD's India chapter.

He later entered politics with an anti-corruption movement and then with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), but that was a brief stint, resulting in his removal as internal Lokpal (ombudsman) by AAP in 2015.

He joined Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in 2022 and was also involved in a range of campaigns on several issues. He wrote an open letter to former president Ram Nath Kovind, seeking his intervention in directing all political parties to desist from using military symbols and uniforms

Ramdas for peace

or depicting actions by military formations or personnel for political purposes.

His leadership was invaluable for several movements for communal harmony and justice in India, and he kept himself involved till his end. Activist circles across borders loved him for his charming and inspiring personality that strove to build a strong constituency of peace.

Even more admirable was his stance that Jammu and Kashmir was not a land dispute between India and Pakistan but a historical battle for justice for the people of the divided region. In an increasingly polarized India where Muslims — and especially Kashmiri Muslims — are a constant target of BJP goons — Ramu da was a beacon of light and a tower of strength against bigotry and fundamentalism.

Multi-religious prayers at his funeral conveyed a clear message that he was a secularist to the core, and despite being born into a Hindu family, he had respect for all religions.

On multiple occasions, Ramu da's indomitable spirit came in handy for peace activists in South Asia, as he stood tall to challenge all sorts of authoritarian attitudes displayed at various levels in India and Pakistan. Human dignity was close to his heart, and his struggle for human rights was exemplary. He considered justice and peace vital for any human society that claimed to be civilized. His association with the India-Pakistan Soldiers Initiative for Peace (IPS) and the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP) was a source of strength for both organizations.

It is worth mentioning that the CNDP, which came into being in 2000, is India's national network of over 200 advocacy organizations, groups, individuals, and mass movements that demand the rolling back of nuclear programmes in India and Pakistan. Unfortunately, there is no such coalition in Pakistan apart from some individuals such as Dr AH Nayyar and Pervez Hoodbhoy, who openly call for nuclear disarmament. Ramdas also supported the struggle against special economic zones in Maharashtra under the 22 Gaon Bachao Andolan (movement to save 22 villages).

Ramdas was always ready to challenge the highest authorities in India by fearlessly voicing his concerns against injustices against marginalized communities, be it with religious and ethnic minorities or with children and women anywhere in India. He stood against the communalization of Indian politics by the BJP and the Saffron Brigade or the Sangh Parivar — as it is commonly known in India. Like an enlightened and progressive intellectual, he urged both India and Pakistan to uphold the democratic fabric of society, promote secular values and shun religious bigotry and extremism. Like his counterparts in Pakistan, such as Asma Jahangir, Hina Jilani, Dr Mehdi Hasan, Mubashir Hasan, IA Rehman, and many others in India, Ramdas touched many lives. When we met him in India in 2000, he loved our two daughters and shared with us the names of his three daughters: Kavitha, Mallika, and Sagari. Little did we know that within a couple of years, we would have another daughter — Ujala — to join the three-daughter club. He was indeed an inspiration for at least two generations of peace activists. -- Courtesy News

Rising waters

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

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

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

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

Targeting Chinese nationals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The same is the case for the recent Shingla attack. The names of all three groups popped up immediately after the at-

Targeting Chinese nationals

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

Pakistan's militant landscape may not be too complex but is diverse. Ideologies, sociopolitical factors, and group dynamics all work within local contexts.

In any counterterrorism inquiry, local context and dynamics are more important than broader ideological and political motivations. Shingla, upper and lower Kohistan, and Battagram districts of the Hazara region in KP and the adjoining Diamer district in Gilgit-Baltistan share religious, social, tribal, ethnic, and cultural codes. The region has been frequently in the news due to 'honour' killings, burning of girls' schools, and the killing of Shia travellers. Recently, it has gained notoriety for attacks on Chinese workers involved in development projects in the area.

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

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

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

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

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

Punjab CM gives approval to set up research endowment fund

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

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and PML Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif co-chaired a meeting to review challenges of agriculture in Punjab, said a handout issued here. She said, "When a farmer applies for a loan, it should be ensured that the loan is issued as soon as possible. The department should devise a fool-proof system

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

of grave concern."
He said, "Effective steps should be taken to plug the wastage of 37 MAF water from wastage in Punjab." He emphasised the need to use modern methods of irrigation.
The Secretary Agriculture in his briefing on various projects for the development of agriculture in Punjab apprised that 1.7 MAF of water could be saved by paving 7300 water courses (Khalaas) in Punjab. A proposal to return rainwater to the ground by reverse pumping to improve groundwater levels was also reviewed in the meeting.



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

Measures for providing electricity to remote areas initiated: Nasir Shah

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Energy, Planning and Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Monday, said that energy department has initiated practical measures for provision of electricity to residents of far flung grid areas through solar power generation.
The provincial minister, while talking to media at Sindh Assembly building, said that thousands of households in remote villages of Tharparkar, Kohistan and riverine areas of the province were deprived of the basic utility.
Besides solar electrification of remote and off grid areas as per election manifesto of chairman Bilawal Bhutto

Zardari, the incumbent PPP government has plans to develop solar parks in different areas of Sindh, Nasir Shah said.
A solar park of 50 mega watt production capacity will be developed near Karachi and electricity generated there will be provided to K-Electric while Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) and Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO) will also get electricity from solar parks, he informed.
Nasir Shah said all the power distribution companies will utilize the additional power supply through solar to facilitate their consumers especially the life line consumers.

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

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and KP CM discussed different problems faced by the trans community of the province, and several decisions were taken.
Chief Minister, Ali Amin issued instructions to the Health Department for the reservation of a separate room for transgender for the trans community in District Headquarter Hospitals of the province.
The decision was taken during a meeting between Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapure on Sunday night. Mayor Peshawar, Haji Zubair Ali was also present in the meeting.
During the meeting,

Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and KP CM discussed different problems faced by the trans community of the province, and several decisions were taken.
Chief Minister, Ali Amin issued instructions to the Health Department for the reservation of a separate room for transgender for the trans community in District Headquarter Hospitals of the province.
The decision was taken during a meeting between Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapure on Sunday night. Mayor Peshawar, Haji Zubair Ali was also present in the meeting.
During the meeting,

transgender in the burial of a community member as people did not allow them to perform the last rituals of the deceased in their respective graveyards.
Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapure also held out assurance of inviting the transgender community to the CM house for a meeting with him.
It merits a mention here that Governor Haji Ghulam Ali in a unique gesture of humility and humbleness, spent his Sunday holiday with 300 transgender of Peshawar by extending them special invitations for visiting the Governor House to share their problems and receive Ramzan Food packages.



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

Health ministers chairs 2nd meeting of health advisory

Independent Report
LAHORE: The second meeting of the Health Advisory Committee convened in the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education (SH&ME), chaired by Provincial Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir here on Monday.
Both the ministers participated via video link, while attendees included Punjab Health Secretary Ali Jan Khan, Special Secretaries, Additional Secretaries, CEO of Infrastructure Development Authority of the Punjab (IDAP) Captain @ Shameer, and other officials. Vice Chancellors of King Edward Medical University and University of Child Health Sciences, along with medical experts, were also present.
The meeting reviewed the master plan of Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Sargodha and

Nawaz Sharif Cancer Care Hospital Lahore in detail, with briefings from IDAP officers. SH&ME Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique highlighted the construction of a state-of-the-art Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology in Sargodha, aiming to provide modern medical facilities to residents. He emphasized the government's commitment to delivering healthcare services efficiently.
Khawaja Salman Rafique stressed the need for additional cardiology hospitals in Punjab to address the growing disease burden, aligning with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to centralize cancer treatment facilities.
Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir assured timely completion of the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Sargodha, with continuous monitoring of progress.

21 Ramadan a tragic day in Islamic history: CM Murad

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that the 21 Ramadan martyrdom day of Hazrat Imam Ali R.A. is a tragic day in the history of Islam.
In his message on the Martyrdom Day of Hazrat Imam Ali r.a. here on Monday, he said that Imam Ali's martyrdom day teaches us to uphold justice and fairness. He said that Hazrat Ali r.a. always fought a struggle for the exaltation of Islam.
The CM Murad said that may Allah Almighty grant us an opportunity to follow the footsteps of Hazrat Ali R.A.

CM pays tribute to security forces for arresting Shangla attack perpetrators
LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid glowing tribute to the security forces for arresting all those involved in Shangla attack on Chinese nationals.
In a press statement issued here on Monday, the CM said that people involved in terrorism do not deserve any exemption, adding that it was inevitable to bring terrorists and their facilitators to justice.

ECP notifies Hafiz Naem as returned candidate on PS 129
KARACHI (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan has notified the result of general election on Sindh Assembly's PS 129 Karachi Central and declared Hafiz Naem ur Rehman of Jamat-e-Islami Pakistan as returned candidate.
According to notification issued by ECP on Monday, Naem ur Rehman was declared as returned candidates with securing highest number of votes i-e 26296 votes.



LAHORE: CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique laying floral wreath on dead body of Shaheed Head Constable Ghazanfar Ali

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

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): The Zonal Director of BISP AJK Dr Abdul Aziz Qureshi, announced that Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) AJK region has achieved a significant milestone in its BISP Kafaalat Disbursement Program and said that "We are thrilled to witness the substantial progress and impact of the Benazir Kafaalat Disbursement Program," has successfully disbursed Rs 879,928,500 as financial aid to over eighty-five thousand BISP beneficiaries, reaching a total percentage success rate exceeding 80 per cent.
He stated that the BISP Kafaalat Disbursement Program, a vital component of BISP's ongoing efforts to alleviate poverty and empower

disadvantaged communities, has demonstrated remarkable efficiency and impact since its inception. By providing essential financial support to those in need, the program aims to enhance the socio-economic well-being of vulnerable segments of society, said a press release here on Monday.
Dr Abdul Aziz Qureshi said "Surpassing 80,517 beneficiaries is a testament to the program's effectiveness in addressing the financial needs of BISP Beneficiaries.
Moreover, achieving a success rate of over 80 percent underscores our commitment to delivering tangible results and making a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families across the state."

Two persons burnt in CPEC cylinder blast incident

MULTAN (APP): Two persons were burnt including a perfusionist and a technician who operates machines during cardiovascular operation when a cylinder blast occurred in the operation theatre of Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi Institute of Cardiology (CPEC) here on Monday. Sources in CPEC told this news agency that the incident took place in Operation Theatre near the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). They informed that two persons, a hospital technician and a passer were burnt and shifted to Nishtar Hospital Accident and Emergency (A&E) ward by Rescuers. They maintained that the false ceiling of the ICU fell and window panes were also smashed.

PPP to achieve significant success in Senate polls, claims Sharjeel Memon

KARACHI (APP): Senior Minister of Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon on Monday said that the People's Party will achieve significant success in the Senate elections.
Speaking to the media at the Sindh Assembly Media Corner, Senior Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the Sindh Government and the Department of Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control are conducting a crackdown across the province, resulting in significant success in seven or eight cases.
There has been a positive response to this crackdown, and the aim is to halt all types of drug supply under all

circumstances, Memon added.
He stated that immediately after Eid, the Sindh government will provide relief to people not only in Karachi but all over Sindh. The construction work on Jam Sadiq Bridge and Yellow Line BRT will commence swiftly.
He emphasized that the People's Party has consistently advocated for the freedom of the judiciary. The party remains committed to ensuring the judiciary's autonomy, a cause for which only the People's Party workers have made sacrifices, even shedding blood. It is disheartening that such efforts are often overlooked or misunderstood.

Minister chairs KP cities' improvement project meeting

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Archives and Libraries, Meena Khan Afridi has said that provision of clean water to the people is our top priority while tangible steps will be taken for keeping Peshawar clean and green.
The minister said this while chairing a meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP) Peshawar. On the occasion KP health Syed Qasim Ali Shah was also present while project director Zafar Ali Shah, Mian M. Shakeel director technical and chief engineer Dr. Mahboob Alam also attended the meeting.
The ministers were informed about the project and told that KPCIP

Peshawar interventions in water supply, green urban spaces and integrated solid waste management. Besides Peshawar, the project is also going on in four cities of the KP including Mingora, Kohat, Mardan and Abbottabad.
"Water Sanitations Services Peshawar (WSSP) is working in 5 operational zones of Peshawar. In these zones, there are 34 water tanks (water reservoirs) in which 23 will be reconstructed while 10 will be rehabilitated" said in the briefing. However, for collection of garbage, small and large loaders will be used aimed at cleaning the city, no waste touching the ground and for climate friendly disposal of solid waste. The ministers were further informed that those water reservoirs will be solarized where there is no issue of space.

ECP notifies Hafiz Naem as returned candidate on PS 129

KARACHI (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan has notified the result of general election on Sindh Assembly's PS 129 Karachi Central and declared Hafiz Naem ur Rehman of Jamat-e-Islami Pakistan as returned candidate.
According to notification issued by ECP on Monday, Naem ur Rehman was declared as returned candidates with securing highest number of votes i-e 26296 votes.



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

SFA teams conduct raids, food outlets fined for selling substandard items

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Food Authority teams have conducted operation in districts South, East and West, under the supervision of Director General Sindh Food Authority Agha Fakhur Hussain.
Director Operations Rafiq Memon and other officers were also present on this occasion.
The teams of Sindh Food Authority inspected the food items prepared for Ifari and Sehri in these districts. A fine of Rs 50,000 each on Jeddah Pakwan Centre and Jeddah Biryani and Rs. 200000 on Tipu Bergen. Sindh Food Authority

team collected the fine on the spot.
Meanwhile, a fine of Rs 300,000 was also imposed on Faisal Malik Shop. The workers at these food centers were not aware of the rules of hygiene. Expired food items, found at these food centres, were also wasted on the spot.
Talking on the occasion, Director General Sindh Food Authority Agha Fakhur Hussain said that people associated with food items business should follow the SOPs of Sindh Food Authority. "We are ensuring the supply of quality food items to the public".

Court awards nine year sentence to a drug peddler

ATTOCK (APP): The court has awarded nine years imprisonment to a drug peddler and imposed fine of Rs.80,000, here on Monday.
The Control of Narcotics Substance Court in Attock, announced the judgment while hearing the case.
According to details, accused Muneer Hussain Shah was arrested by Attock Saddar Police in 2023, after recovering hashish from his possession. During the court trial, the prosecution presented strong evidence against Hussain Shah, proving his involvement in the illicit drug trade.

Minister inspects women degree college construction in Tehsil Bhera

Independent Report
LAHORE: Minister for Communication and Works Punjab, Sohaib Ahmed Bherth emphasized the need for timely completion and adherence to quality standards during his surprise visit to the construction site of the Government Degree College for Women in Tehsil Bhera. Accompanied by officials from both the College Administration and the Communication and Works department, Bherth diligently assessed the progress of the construction work, a hand-out said.
During the inspection, Bherth received comprehensive briefings on various aspects of the ongoing construction, ranging from the ground

floor flooring to the structural integrity of the first floor and the development of essential facilities such as the canteen and living quarters. Despite acknowledging significant advancements, Mr. Bherth stressed the importance of expediting the remaining finishing work to ensure timely completion.
Providing financial insights, Mr. Bherth disclosed that a substantial allocation of Rs 66 million had been earmarked for the project, with Rs 52 million already utilized. He reiterated the significance of this investment, particularly in enhancing educational infrastructure for female students in Tehsil Bhera and adjacent areas.

Rescue 1122 Dikhan tackles 647 emergencies in March

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

Online registration begins for PITB training program for women

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

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



KARACHI: A large number of people throng in Hydri Market shopping in preparations for Eid-ul-Fitr.

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

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

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

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

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

foster creativity and entrepreneurship.

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

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



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



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

SACM on Industries visits KP-BOIT

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: A detail sector-wise briefing on ongoing activities, progress, issues, challenges and future road map of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BOIT) was given to Abdul Karim Khan, Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Industries during his visit to the headquarters of the board here on Monday. Director Business Facilitation, KP-BOIT, Mr. Iqbal Sarwar highlighted that functions and efficiency and role of KP-BOIT needs to be improved and strengthened so that investment and trade can be better facilitated. He further highlighted that SMART investment attraction techniques are required to be used to improve investment attraction, both foreign & local in the province. He stated that Ease of Doing Business (EODB) and Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiatives (PRMI) were priority of the previous government and KP province should be ahead of others in terms of

promoting and implementing Ease of Doing Business and creating an enabling business environment.

He further desired that KP-BOIT must reach out to local investors including leading industrialists on top priority under his leadership and highlight issues hindering opportunities available in KP. The Special Assistant to CM, Abdul Karim directed KP-BOIT to ensure progress updates of each industry with timeline, working within the umbrella of SEZA.

He also directed that a sector-wise presentation be made by each sector specialist in next week. He further directed that strengthening of KP-BOIT through its vision and mission as per law is mandatory, so that the importance of KP-BOIT can be highlighted in other institutions/departments of the province. He also stressed on issues and challenges in investment projects of each sector to be presented to him and a way forward be drawn.

Sinotec Solar to establish 3 GW solar panel plant in Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a strategic move to bolster Pakistan's renewable energy sector, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has announced its facilitation of a groundbreaking initiative by Sinotec Solar Private Limited.

The endeavor entails the installation of a colossal 3 gigawatt (GW) solar panel manufacturing plant in the heart of Karachi, said PTV on Monday.

The project, set to revolutionize Pakistan's energy landscape, heralds a new era of localized production of solar panels, significantly reducing the nation's dependence on imports.

Sinotec Solar Private Limited, a renowned player in the global renewable energy market, is poised to not only establish the manufacturing plant but also extend support for the production of dry batteries and electric vehicle trucks, aligning with Pakistan's

green energy ambitions.

This landmark initiative is projected to inject a substantial influx of foreign direct investment (FDI) into Pakistan, marking a pivotal moment in the nation's economic trajectory.

Furthermore, the project is poised to generate a multitude of employment opportunities, fostering socio-economic growth and empowerment within the local community.

Speaking on the significance of the project, Chairman of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) emphasized the establishment of this state-of-the-art manufacturing facility.

He underscored Pakistan's commitment to renewable energy development and self-sufficiency. "It not only strengthens our energy security but also propels us towards a sustainable future," he remarked.



LAHORE: Employees of Pakistan Railways Workshop shouting slogans during protest in favor of their demands outside press club.

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

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

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

During the meeting, the delegation congratulated the minister on his new appointment and

pledged their full support towards collaborative efforts to address issues being facing the business community.

Jam Kamal assured the FPCCI delegation of his commitment to addressing their concerns, emphasizing the importance of regular coordination meetings to facilitate smoother operations.

He acknowledged the challenges faced by the business community, particularly in the areas of electricity and gas, and assured the delegation of his commitment to addressing these issues along with the rest.



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

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

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

The latest PBS data on Monday stated that the exports from the country increased up to \$22.914 billion during July-March (2023-24) as against the exports of \$21.036 billion in July-March (2022-23), showing a growth of 8.93 percent.

On the other hand, imports into the country declined by 8.65 percent to \$39.944 billion this year

against the imports of \$43.724 billion last year.

Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the first 9 months of the current fiscal year was recorded at \$17.030 billion against the deficit of \$22.688 billion last year, showing a sharp decline of 24.94 percent.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country increased by 7.99 percent in March 2024 compared to the exports of the same month of last year. The exports during the month were recorded at \$2.555 billion as against the exports of \$2.366 billion in March 2023. On the other hand, the imports during March 2024 were recorded at \$4.726 billion.



KARACHI: In preparations for Eid-ul-Fitr, women selecting fabrics to buy from the stalls set up in Hydri Market.

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

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

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

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

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

According to the market survey, during the last two months in the twin cities, a 28% increase was witnessed in the price of poultry chicken, while as same a 30 percent increase in the price of poultry eggs in the same period.

Meanwhile, talking to APP, the former Chairman of the Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA), Dr Sajjad Arshad said that the increase in the current prices of poultry was due to demand and supply factors during Ramadan.

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

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

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

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

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

The minister highlighted the government's commitment to creating an enabling environment for private sector investment and ensuring transparency and accountability in financial matters. Respective representatives from WB and IFC appreciated the efforts of the government aimed at bringing reforms in economic and financial sectors to ensure sustained economic growth in terms of expanding the tax base, state-owned enterprise (SOEs) restructuring and Privatization.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gold rates increased by Rs2,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs2,800 and was sold at Rs237,600 on Monday as compared to its last day rate of Rs234,800.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs2,401 and was sold at Rs203,704 against the sale price of Rs201,303 and 10 gram 22 karat gold also increased to Rs186,728 as against Rs184,528 respectively, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Awais Leghari directs to ensure follow up of all received complaints

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

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

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

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

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



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Trade and Industry Chaudhry Shafay Hussain presiding over a Caretaker Ministerial Committee regarding implementation of Ramzan package.

Farmers advised to start sweet potato cultivation immediately

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

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

Business delegation visits Kyrgyzstan

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

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

After arrival, he said throughout the visit, delegates explored avenues for enhanced cooperation in various sectors, including agriculture, textiles, technology, and energy.

They participated in

business forums, networking events, and one-on-one meetings with Kyrgyz counterparts, laying the groundwork for future joint ventures and investments.

He said the delegation showcased Pakistan's diverse range of products and services, highlighting its competitive edge and commitment to quality.

Meanwhile, they also gained valuable insights into Kyrgyzstan's market dynamics, regulatory framework, and investment opportunities. Deputy leader of delegation Dr Shahid Hassan expressed optimism about the prospects of deepening economic cooperation between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

PTEA demands initiatives for economy revival

FAISALABAD (APP): The Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA) has demanded structural policy initiatives to revive the economy and stimulate economic growth.

In a statement issued on Monday, Khurram Mukhtar, the Patron-in-Chief of PTEA expressed deep concern over the current economic uncertainty, citing high interest rates and limited availability of funds as major impediments to the

growth of industrialization and exports in the country.

He highlighted the negative impacts of the economic slowdown on the textile industry, which is Pakistan's largest manufacturing sector. He mentioned that textile exports have declined from a peak of \$1.74 billion in April 2022 to a low of \$1.18 billion in February 2023, and are now stagnant at around \$1.4 billion per month, \$600 million below the installed production capacity.

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

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

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

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

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

The vote was seen as

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



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

Moscow asks Kyiv to hand over those linked to terror acts

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

A Russian Foreign Ministry statement listed violent incidents that have occurred in Russia since the Kremlin's forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022, including bombings that killed the daughter of a prominent nationalist and a war blogger, and an incident in which a writer was seriously hurt.

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

nected to the terrorist acts in question," the statement said. Among those listed in the statement to be handed over are SBU head Vasyl Maliuk, who has acknowledged his service was behind attacks on the bridge linking Crimea to the Russian mainland since the Kremlin's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

"The Russian side demands that the Kyiv regime immediately cease all support for terrorist activity, extradite guilty parties and compensate the victims for damages," the ministry statement said.

Separately, Russian authorities also arrested three people in the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan on charges of planning terrorist attacks, following a deadly attack on a concert hall near Moscow.

Russia extends detention of US-Russian journalist Kurmasheva

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

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

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

Strikes hit Gaza as truce talks set to resume in Cairo, Doha

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Deadly airstrikes pounded the Gaza Strip as talks towards a truce between Israel and Hamas resumed in Cairo on Sunday, according to Egyptian state television.

As heavy fighting raged on in the besieged Palestinian territory, including in or around several hospitals, the humanitarian crisis deepened despite a UN Security Council resolution last Monday that demanded an "immediate ceasefire".

To help alleviate the suffering of Gaza's 2.4 million people, another aid ship was sailing from the Mediterranean island-nation of Cyprus to bring 400 tonnes of food relief, as part of a small flotilla. Foreign powers have ramped up aid air-drops, although UN agen-

cies and charities warn this falls far short of the dire need.

At least 77 people were killed overnight in new Israeli bombardment and ground combat, most of them women and children, pushing the death toll of Palestinians to 32,782, according to the health ministry.

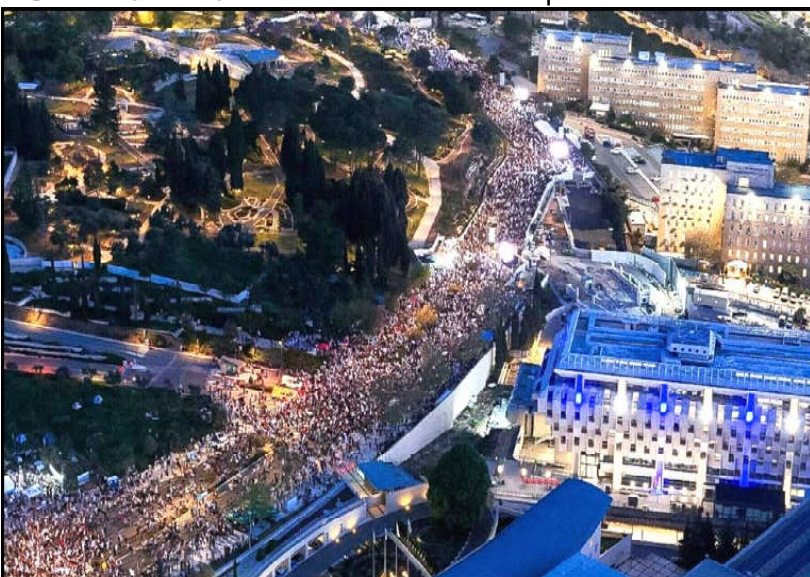
Tensions have risen over the spiralling civilian death toll between Israel and its chief backer the US, especially over Israeli threats to send ground forces into Gaza's far-southern city of Rafah.

Washington has nonetheless approved billions of dollars worth of bombs and fighter jets for Israel in recent days, The Wall Street Journal reported, citing unnamed officials.

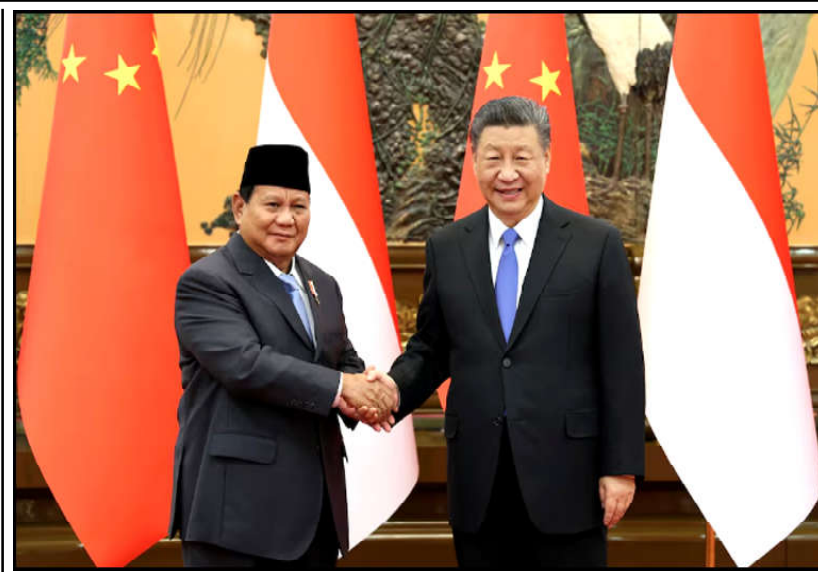
Penchant for Rolex watches lands Peruvian president in hot water

Monitoring Desk
LIMA: Peru's prosecutor's office on Sunday ordered President Dina Boluarte to present any Rolex watches in her possession, after a raid on her home and office as part of a corruption probe. Boluarte, 61, is being investigated for illegal enrichment and failing to declare several luxury watches which she has been spotted wearing since coming to power in 2022, following her predecessor's arrest.

"The president of the republic has been formally summoned to exhibit the Rolex watches," when she gives her sworn statement on April 5, the prosecutor's office said.



A drone view of anti-government protesters launch a prolonged demonstration calling for Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's government to resign and a general election, in front of the Knesset, Israeli parliament in Jerusalem.



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

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

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

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

Iranian Ambassador

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

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

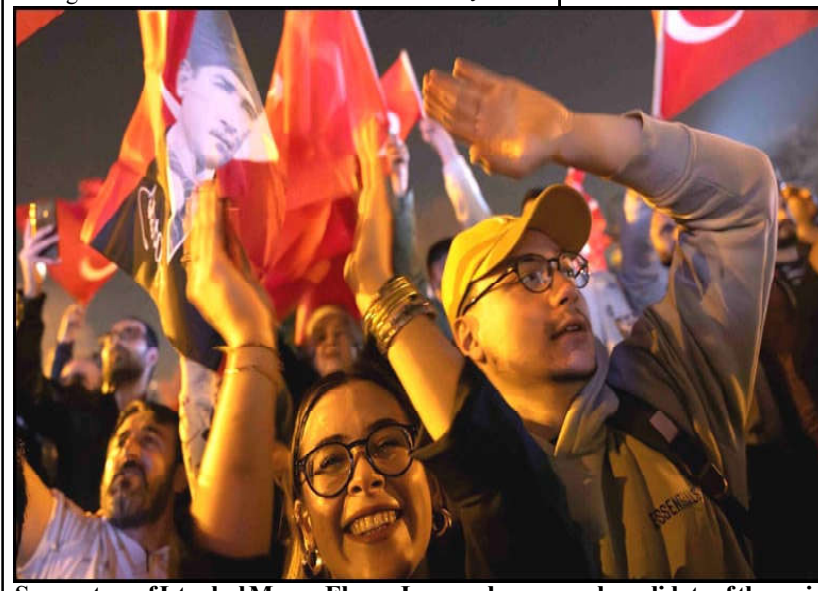
Thousands rally against Netanyahu govt in Jerusalem

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

Protest groups, including some that led the mass demonstrations that rocked Israel in 2023, organised the rally outside parliament, the Knesset, calling for a new election to

replace the government.

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



Supporters of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, mayoral candidate of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), celebrate following the early results in front of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMB) in Istanbul.

Crews work to lift first piece of collapsed US bridge

Monitoring Desk
BALTIMORE: Salvage crews worked to lift the first piece of Baltimore's collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge from the water on Saturday to allow barges and tugboats to access the disaster site. Maryland and US officials said, the first step in a complex effort to reopen the city's blocked port.

The steel truss bridge collapsed early on Tuesday morning, killing six road workers, when a massive container ship lost power and crashed into a support pylon. Much of the span crashed into the Patapsco River, blocking the Port of Baltimore's shipping channel.

Maryland Governor Wes Moore told a news

conference that a section of the bridge's steel superstructure north of the crash site would be cut into a piece that could be lifted by crane onto a barge and brought to the nearby Tradeport Atlantic site at Sparrows Point.

"This will eventually allow us to open up a temporary restricted channel that will help us to get more vessels in the water around the site of the collapse," Moore said. He declined to provide a timeline for this portion of the clearance work. "It's not going to take hours," he said. "It's not going to take days, but once we complete this phase of the work, we can move more tugs and more barges."

High winds cause five deaths in south Poland

Monitoring Desk
WARSAW: Five people were killed by falling trees as strong winds battered southern Poland on Monday, reaching a speed of 155 km (96 miles) an hour in the highest parts of the Tatras mountains. In the town of Rabka-Zdroj, two adults and a child died after a tree crushed them, firefighters said. In Zakopane, a popular Tatras resort, a 23-year-old woman and nine-year-old boy died in similar circumstances.

Saharan dust smothers Switzerland, France

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: An exceptionally rare haze of Saharan dust cloaked Switzerland and southeastern France on Saturday, sparking health warnings as a yellow hue tinged the sky.

The phenomenon, which began in Switzerland on Friday, brings with it "a very clear worsening of sunlight and visibility. Added to that is an increase in concentrations of fine particles", the MeteoSuisse weather service posted on X. With the dust concentrated at lower than 3,000 metres (around 9,800 feet), air quality was especially affected, with Switzerland's airCheck monitoring application flagging high levels of pollution in a corridor stretching from the southwest to the northeast.

9 children killed by landmine blast in Afghanistan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New Indonesia leader visits China, promises close ties

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

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

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

Prabowo, now Indonesia's defence minis-

ter, also said that he viewed China as a key partner.

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

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

Xi described Prabowo as an "old friend of the Chinese people" and said China views its relations with Indonesia from a strategic and long-term perspective, standing ready to deepen all-round strategic cooperation. Prabowo, 72, was elected in February but will not be sworn in until October. A long-time rival of the outgoing leader popularly known as Jokowi.

US military says it destroyed Houthi drones over the Red Sea and in Yemen

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: The U.S. military said Sunday its forces destroyed one unmanned aerial vehicle in a Houthi rebel-held area of war-ravaged Yemen and another over a crucial shipping route in the Red Sea. It was the latest development in months of tension between the Iran-backed rebels and the U.S.

The drones, which were destroyed Saturday morning, posed a threat to U.S. and coalition forces and merchant vessels in the region, said the U.S. Central Command.

It said that one drone was destroyed over the Red Sea, while the second was destroyed on the ground as it was prepared to launch.

"These actions are necessary to protect our forces, ensure freedom of navigation, and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels," CENTCOM said.

The rebels launched a campaign of drone and missile attacks on shipping in the Red Sea in November. They have also fired missiles toward Israel, although those have largely fallen short or been intercepted.

The rebels have described their campaign as an effort to pressure Israel to end its war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The ships targeted by the Houthis, however, largely have had little or no connection to Israel, the U.S. or other nations involved in the war.

The Houthis have kept up their campaign of attacks despite more than two months of U.S.-led airstrikes. Earlier this month, CENTCOM said its forces also destroyed four unmanned aerial vehicles in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen. It also said Houthis fired four anti-ship ballistic missiles toward the Red Sea, but no injuries or damages were reported by U.S. coalition or commercial ships. The escalation in the Red Sea and the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza impacted the U.N.-led efforts to relaunch political talks to end Yemen's yearslong conflict.

South Korea's Yoon urges doctors to end impasse over trainees

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said on Monday his government is open to talks with doctors who oppose his plan to increase medical school admissions while accusing critics of offering no reasonable alternative to ease a doctor shortage.

In a 50-minute address to the country, Yoon signalled his willingness for the first time to seek a compromise on his medical reform proposals after the government called for dialogue with striking doctors.

Yoon apologised for the inconvenience caused by the ongoing strike by trainee doctors but accused the medical sector of putting their own interests ahead of public health.

"If you come up with a more proper and reasonable solution, we can discuss it as much as you want," he said. "If you present better opinions and rational grounds, government policy can change for the better."

More than 90% of the country's 13,000 trainee doctors have been staging walkouts since Feb. 20 in protest against the government's plan to boost medical school admissions by 2,000 starting in 2025 from 3,000 now.

South Korea's population of 52 million had 2.6 doctors per 1,000 people in 2022, far below the average of 3.7 for countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Previous governments have devised measures to tackle deepening shortages of doctors in essential services including paediatrics and emergency units, as well as clinics outside the greater Seoul area, but their efforts fell apart amid strong opposition from the medical sector. Some medical professionals have said the Yoon administration had failed to consult in advance, and its plan would do little to fix the current situation including low pay for trainee doctors.

ECP issues list of contenders Polling on vacant seats of Senate to be held today

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

In preparation for the elections, a motion to utilize the National Assembly hall for the Senate election will be presented and approved during today's Lower House session.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The candidates vying for a spot in the Senate from Balochistan in the upcoming elections to the Upper House of parliament were elected unopposed on all the seats on March 29.

The election commission announced that the candidates from Balochistan were elected unopposed on all seats of the Senate. The seats up for grabs from Balochistan were seven general seats, two women's seats, and two technocrat seats.

Also, 20 of the 33 candidates of the Senate had withdrawn their nomination papers, while two contenders stepped down in favour of their opposing candidates, the ECP confirmed.

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

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

They also agreed to work towards enhancing the trade volume, which stood at \$1.26 billion USD in 2022-23, according to sources from FBR and TDAS.



QUETTA: Teachers of Balochistan University are holding protest demonstration against non-payment of their salaries, outside Balochistan Assembly in Quetta.

Chairman FCC Mediterranean cold winds cause Gwadar flooding

GWADAR (INP): Mediterranean cold winds cause Gwadar flooding, said Ahmed Kamal, Chief Engineering Advisor & Chairman Federal Flood Commission.

Responding to the misinformation from some media on Gwadar's flood situation and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he pointed out that main reason for recent torrential rains in Gwadar is the stream of cold winds coming from the Mediterranean.

He told Gwadar Pro here on Monday that between mid-February to mid-April the temperature has been a bit higher, and this time this condition and the temperature were higher.

Due to the higher temperature and the penetration of the system, there had an impact of the sea side also in Gwadar. That's why there was increased rainfall due to higher temperatures at that time and sea surface vapor being sucked into it," Ahmed Kamal explained.

"Such incidents have happened in the past in Gwadar and nearby areas such as Kage or Lasbela, but not with the intensity that has happened this time. This is very much indicating the impact of climate change, and this is an indication of western wave or cold winds coming to Pakistan and increasing its impact in Pakistan," he further said.

According to Ahmed

Kamal, China and Pakistan have been closely working together on disaster management. "We have also signed an MoU with the relevant Ministry of the Chinese Government, and Hohai University of China, under which there will be a Joint Water Management Center.

Besides this, a large number of personnel every year i.e. junior, middle and senior students who will be water resources and management professionals from colleges and universities will be trained in Pakistan as well as in China," he said.

If we want to develop a place and we want to improve our country, then no one should have any kind of objection.



QUETTA: Voice for Baloch Missing Persons Leaders, Mamun Qadeer and Nasrullah Baloch addressing a press conference.

AC Usta Muhammad trying to provide facilities to people in Ramadan

QUETTA (APP): Assistant Commissioner (AC) Usta Muhammad on Monday said that measures were being taken to provide facilities to public in month of the Ramadan by establishment of Sasta bazaar on special directive of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Hussain. He said that the district administration has set up a Ramadan Sasta Bazaar in the city of Usta Muhammad and established stalls selling quality food items at discounted rates compared to the normal market and various items including food items, fruits and vegetables, pulses and rice, meat and poultry at affordable prices.

He said that people

from the surrounding areas including the citizens also bought essential items at prices cheaper than the market by about 35 percent and made purchases according to their needs and utility stores also set up stalls in Sunday Bazaar, rate lists were also displayed, people benefited from lower prices than utility stores, special attention was paid to cleanliness in Sasta Bazar.

The citizens appreciated this initiative of the district administration and also expressed the hope that the district administration would continue the series of similar Sasta Bazar so that we could benefit from this facility.

NA offers Fateha for security personal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Monday offered Fateha for the brave personnel of the security and law enforcement agencies who made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of the country.

The members of the house paid their respects to the departed souls, particularly those who lost their lives in the line of duty in North Waziristan and Gwadar.

Video went viral of Sher Afzal Marwat of slapping someone

ISLAMABAD (INP): The video went viral of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) leader Sher Afzal Marwat in which he slapped to one of his personal guard.

According to the details, in that video Sher Afzal was stuck in the crowd of PTI's supporter where he slapped his personal guard who was standing right next to him amid his anger.

PTI's leader stated that the person in the video was his personal guard.



QUETTA: Members of Sunni Ulema Council (SUC) are holding protest demonstration for demanding public holiday on the occasion of Youm-e-Ali (A.S), the day of martyrdom 21st Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, at Quetta Press Club.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They also agreed to work towards enhancing the trade volume, which stood at \$1.26 billion USD in 2022-23, according to sources from FBR and TDAS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 illegal mini petrol pumps sealed in Qta

QUETTA (APP): On the special directives of Deputy Commissioner Quetta Saad Bin Asad, a special operation was conducted by

Magistrate Abdul Hameed, on public complaints against illegal mini petrol pumps at A One City and Spiny Road area of Quetta.

During operation, 20 mini petrol pumps were sealed and a warning was issued to illegally run petrol pumps to avoid selling the petrol to consumers.

He also issued a stern warning to several petrol pump owners asking them to close their shops as soon as it possible and move the goods, otherwise, action would be taken against them by confiscating their shop's goods.

Sheikh says he predicted Shehbaz will prevail

RAWALPINDI (INP) - Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Monday he had already predicted Shehbaz Sharif would prevail over Nawaz in politics.

Speaking to media outside the anti-terrorism court in Rawalpindi, Rashid said copies of three cases relating to May 9 incident had been provided to him.

He said 17 cases about May 9 were pending against him in courts. Out of these cases, 11 cases were under adjudication in the anti-terrorism courts. He said he would appear before the court on the next hearing date.

He said he had predicted long ago that Shehbaz's politics would prevail.

The former federal minister said those who had to run the government should run it but the innocent people should be released. "The jails are full. Our silence will bear fruit. We will defend ourselves in court. We are not begging for our release orders," said the senior politician.

The former minister said, "We want stove of the poor to keep burning."

Governor Punjab visits residence of Ch Shujaat Hussain

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman on Monday visited the residence of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

During the meeting, the overall situation of the country and the promotion of technical education were discussed. Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain was also present on the occasion.

The Governor Punjab congratulated Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain on assigning ministries to Chaudhry



QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Pishin Captain (retd) Juma Dad Khan Mandokhail meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Salik Hussain and Chaudhry Shafay Hussain.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the youth are the valuable asset of the country. He said that the technical educational institutions like TEVTA, Skill Development Fund, NAVTTC and Punjab Vocational Training Council are playing a key role in equipping the youth with skills to find employment opportunities in the country and abroad.

Sasta Bazar set up in Dera Murad Jamali

QUETTA (APP): On special directive of Deputy Commissioner Nasrabad Batool Asadi, special relief was provided on sugar by minority business community in the Ramadan Sunday Sasta Bazar set up in Dera Murad Jamali (DMJ) for provision of relief to the people in terms of food in Ramadan.

Senior Vice President of Dera Murad Jamali Anjuman Tajran and President of Electronic Union, Senior Leader of Political and Social Socialist Hindu Panchayat, Seth Tara Chand, Vishal Kumar Traders sold sugar at 110 per kg as a relief to the public at

Sasta Bazar. A large number of people took part in purchasing of sugar Assistant Commissioner Dera Murad Jamali Ajmal Khan Mandukhel and Assistant Commissioner Chhithar Mohammad Ismail Mengal, Senior Leader of Hindu Panchayat Mukhi Manik Lal, President of Wholesale Trade Union Mirjan Mengal, Harpal Das Pahojia were also present on this occasion. The poor people took advantage of a good purchase in the Sasta Bazaar and this initiative of Seth Tara Chand, Vishal Kumar was well appreciated who sold sugar on low price to people to provide them relief.

The ambassador laid flowers at the impromptu memorial during the ceremony on 30th March 2024.

"We share the grief of the people of Russia. We can imagine the horror and pain it brings, as Pakistan has sacrificed more than 100,000 lives for fighting terrorism," he said in a statement issued on Monday.

PTI objects to formation of larger bench in IHC judges' letter case

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has raised objections over the constitution of the bench in the Supreme Court's suo motu notice on the letter penned by six judges from the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

PTI spokesperson Rauf Hasan emphasised the party's stance, advocating for the establishment of a full court to address this crucial matter and suggesting that proceedings be televised.

Rauf lauded the decision of former Chief Justice Tasadeq Hussain Jilani to resign from heading the inquiry commission, citing his commendable reputation.

Additionally, he proposed convening a lawyers' convention to deliberate on the concerns highlighted in the High Court judges' letter.

The letter, authored by six judges of the Islamabad High Court, expressed apprehensions regarding undue interference by secret agencies in judicial affairs. Initially, a commission chaired by Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani was tasked with investigating the matter.

However, following Jilani's resignation, the Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa has formed a 7-member larger bench to oversee the case, a move contested by PTI.



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

UAE ambassador calls on defence minister

RAWALPINDI (Online): Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Islamabad Monday.

Federal Minister lauded the vision and efforts of H.H. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the President and Supreme Commander of UAE armed forces for development and transformation of UAE.

While speaking to the Ambassador, Defence Minister highlighted the importance of brotherly relations between the two countries, and appreciated the similarities in views of both countries regarding major regional and international issues.

While expressing satisfaction on the existing collaboration, it was mutually agreed upon that there exists a scope for further increase in defence cooperation.

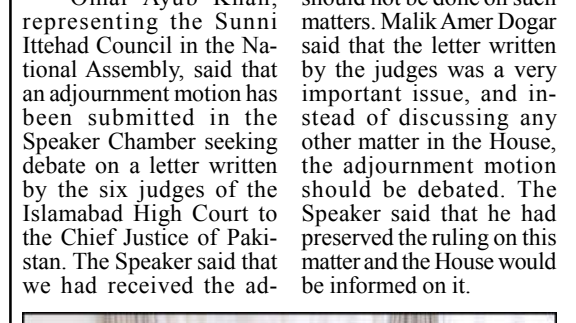
NA Speaker preserves ruling on adjournment motion submission

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday preserved the ruling on adjournment motion seeking debate on a letter of six judges of the Islamabad High Court.

Omar Ayub Khan, representing the Sunni Ittehad Council in the National Assembly, said that an adjournment motion has been submitted in the Speaker Chamber seeking debate on a letter written by the six judges of the Islamabad High Court to the Chief Justice of Pakistan. The Speaker said that he had received the ad-

jourment motion, and ruling will be issued later.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Atallah Tarar, said that this matter was sub-judice and the Supreme Court had also constituted a bench on this matter. He said politics should not be done on such matters. Malik Amer Dogar said that the letter written by the judges was a very important issue, and instead of discussing any other matter in the House, the adjournment motion should be debated. The Speaker said that he had preserved the ruling on this matter and the House would be informed on it.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman meeting with Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his resident. Provincial Minister Chaudhry Shafay Hussain is also present

Balochistan Board offers free online verification of student records for IBCC

QUETTA (APP): In a move aimed at enhancing the accessibility and authenticity of educational documents, the Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) has launched a groundbreaking initiative to provide free online verification of student records for attestation of certificates by the Inter Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC). Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the public facilitation center and verification portal at BBISE Quetta, Executive Director IBCC, Prof Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah, highlighted the importance of ensuring the credibility of educational documents.

He stated, "Recognizing the growing importance of ensuring the authenticity of educational documents, the Inter Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC) has taken a significant step towards streamlining the verification process for students seeking attestation of their academic certificates. Through this initiative, the Board(s) of Intermediate and Second-

ary Education (BISEs) are being connected with the attestation portal of IBCC for direct verification of records."

Chairman BBISE, Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Baloch, expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative, emphasizing its benefits for students and educational institutions alike. He stated, "The students of BBISE are no longer required to apply for verification to BBISE and now can directly approach IBCC for attestation of their documents. This initiative expedites the overall process, benefiting students and educational institutions alike. The students of BBISE, whether within Baluchistan or residing in other parts of the country, can avail this facility from anywhere with an internet connection. This inclusivity is a crucial aspect of IBCC and BBISE's commitment to providing equitable services." BBISE encourages all students in Baluchistan to take advantage of this facility and looks forward to contributing to a more streamlined and accessible education system.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding price control in the province