

Independent

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif casting his vote at the Senate elections at Parliament House.

PM terms promotion of foreign direct investment as top priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday highlighted that promoting foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country to transform challenges into opportunities was top priority of the government.

He was chairing a high level meeting to review progress on foreign investment. The meeting reviewed in detail the progress on the memorandum of understandings (MoUs) and agreements with the Gulf countries under Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

Talking to participants of the meeting, the prime minister said all possible facilities will be given to the investors adding that special cells in the federal ministries will be established to promote innovation and research in the investment

sector. The prime minister said the establishment of SIFC had helped restoring confidence of the investors.

He directed that a feasibility study should be conducted for such projects which had the potential to attract investors and the services of internationally recognized experts should be obtained in this regard.

He emphasized that there should be no compromise on the quality of the projects presented for investment. The prime minister also directed all the ministries to further improve their relations with the Gulf countries regarding the progress on their respective MoUs.

He said all the necessary requirements should be fulfilled with respect to the foreign investment in the solar energy projects in Muzaffar Garh, Layyah

IHC judges receive letters containing 'anthrax'

ISLAMABAD (INP): A concerning development came to light that eight judges, including the Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court, have reportedly received letters containing 'anthrax'.

According to court sources, one of the letters was opened by a judge's staff and was found to contain an unidentified powder.

Upon discovery of the suspicious substance, a team of experts from the Islamabad Police reached the premises of the Islamabad High Court to analyze the situation.

The primary focus of

the investigation revolves around determining the nature of the powder and its potential threat.

Court sources disclosed that along with the powder, the letters also contain threatening signs.

As per sources within the court, the letter was written by a woman named Resham, with no specific address indicated.

In response to the situation, the Islamabad High Court has taken proactive measures by summoning top officials of the police to provide updates and coordinate efforts aimed at ensuring the safety of the judiciary.

Pak, Kazakhstan express keen interest to deepen collaboration on regional, int'l issues



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Kazakhstan have underscored the shared commitment to strengthen bilateral ties and deepen collaboration on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The commitment was made during a meeting between Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin and Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Islamabad on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Ambassador shed light on Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the forthcoming events scheduled to take place in Kazakhstan.

In response, Khawaja Asif emphasized the significant potential for further enhancing cooperation between Kazakhstan and Pakistan across various sectors, including military, military-technical, and other strategic domains.

PTI among five parties to form 'grand opposition alliance'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Five major opposition parties including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) held a meeting and discussed forming the 'grand opposition alliance' to give a 'tough' time to the government.

Chairman PTI Gohar Ali Khan, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Liaquat Baloch, and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami

Party (PkMAP) chief Mehmood Achackzai attended the meeting. Majlis-e-Wadhat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) head Allama Nasir Abbas and Balochistan National Party (BNP) Chairman Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub and Asad Qaiser were also present on the occasion.

Umar Ayub appointed as opposition leader in NA

ISLAMABAD (Online): Speaker National Assembly (NA) has appointed Umar Ayub Khan as opposition leader Speaker Ayyaz Sadiq has issued notification of appointment of Umar Ayub Khan.

Umar Ayub Khan will assume charge of his office after issuance of notification.

The process of scrutiny in respect of opposition leader was completed in speaker office.

The speaker declared Umar AYub opposition leader after his satisfaction.

Imran Khan tells court 'Bushra Bibi poisoned in Bani Gala sub-jail'

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan Tuesday apprised the court that his wife and ex-first lady Bushra Bibi was poisoned at the Bani Gala sub-jail.

The PTI founder made the claim during a hearing of the £190 million settlement case in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail. Khan informed the accountability court judge that the former first lady had marks on her skin and tongue after "being poisoned". He sought the court's order for an inquiry into the incident and a complete medical checkup of Bushra Bibi. Khan said: "I know who is behind it."

He insisted that the medical examination of the former first lady should be done by Dr Asim Yunus, a doctor at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre.



MUZAFFARABAD: Kashmiris protesting against Indian brutalities and demanding UN to take notice on completion of 1700 days of Indian military siege on occupied Kashmir in the city.

PM felicitates newly elected senators

Ruling alliance sweeps Senate polls with PPP grabbing 11, PML-N six seats

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb win from Islamabad and Punjab, respectively; polls postponed in KP amid oath-taking dispute

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Tuesday took the lead in the Senate polls with 11 seats, while Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) clinched six seats.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) and an independent candidate Faisal Vawda secured one seat

each. The polling for the 19 vacant seats was held in the National, Punjab, and Sindh assemblies while elections on 11 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's seats were postponed by the Election Commission over the "denial" of oath-taking to the lawmakers elected on reserved seats.

Overall 356 lawmakers

cast their votes in the upper house of parliament's elections, whereas, votes of seven NA lawmakers were rejected.

Islamabad Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar won on a technocrat seat from Islamabad, garnering 222 votes with Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) Raja Ansar Mehmood coming in second with 81.

Meanwhile, PPP's Rana Mehmoodul Hassan secured 224 votes to win the general seat in Islamabad while PTI's Farzand Hussain Shah garnered 79 votes.

Punjab In Punjab, all seven candidates vying for the general seats in Punjab were elected unopposed at the end of March. Today, polls

were held on two women and technocrats seats each and one minority seat.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Petroleum Minister Musadiq Malik were successful on the two technocrat seats, garnering 128 and 121 votes, respectively.

In Punjab, PML-N's

Continued on page 2

Wang Wenbin says China firmly supports Pak counterterrorism efforts

Will provide necessary assistance in the investigation of Dasu terrorist attack

BEIJING (APP): China firmly supports Pakistan's counterterrorism measures and will provide necessary assistance in the investigation of Dasu terrorist attack, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday.

China firmly support Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts, Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing in response to a question asked by APP about Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's assurance of foolproof security measures for the Chinese national working on Dasu Hydropower Project as well as across the country and exemplary punishment for the perpetrators of March 26 attack.

The spokesperson

said, since the attack, China has been in close communication with Pakistan and added, we hope that Pakistan will get to bottom of what happened with utmost resolve and efforts, bring the perpetrators and whoever behind the attack to justice and do everything possible to protect the safety and security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in the country.

Wang Wenbin remarked that China firmly safeguards the safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions overseas.

"China will provide necessary assistance to Pakistan in the investigation of the case," he said.

Speaker NA calls on President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

During the meeting, the speaker congratulated the president on assuming his office. President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Matters related to parliamentary affairs and legislation were also discussed during the meeting.

EC suspends notification of success of speaker BA in PB-51

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has suspended the notification of success in respect of speaker Balochistan Assembly (BA) speaker BA Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

The petitions filed by candidates Abaseen Achakzai and Asghar Achakzai against result of PB-51 Chamman came up for hearing before Election commission.

The election commission while accepting the plea suspended the notification of success of speaker Balochistan Assembly besides ordering re-polling in 12 polling stations of PB-51 Chamman.

PTI attempts to politicize matter of judges' letter: Law Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar Tuesday said that statements of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), and its founder were an attempt to politicize the suo-motu action of Supreme Court in matter of IHC judges' letter.

Giving reaction on a statement of PTI leader Barrister Gohar, the minister said that only the Constitution would be followed in this country, adding that what the PTI founder said was not a law.

He said that those who had been making references against judges in their regime shouldn't give advice to the government.

The law minister said that Barrister Gohar who himself was a lawyer should know that the bench has been formed under Article 184(3) of the Constitution.

BNP delegation offers condolences to ANP President

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation from the Balochistan National Party, headed by MNA Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal, visited Wali Bagh Charsada on Tuesday to express condolences to Asfandyar Wali Khan, the President of the Awami National Party, on the passing of his wife.

The delegation extended their condolences to provincial president Aimal Wali Khan on the loss of his mother.

They offered prayers and recited Fataha for the departed soul, praying for strength and patience for the grieving family.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Our's responsibility to restore trust of masses on State & it's system, says Chief Minister

Mir Sarfraz Bugti assures to resolve financial crisis ascertaining reasons behind; announces to make accountability of financial irregularities done in UoB; terms issue of ghost employees as of serious nature

Independent Report

make mistake but don't do dishonesty.

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has urged all the members of provincial assembly from treasury benches to give patient hearing to the general public issues.

In a statement issued here on the matter of heated conversation between a government member of assembly and a professor of Balochistan university on occasion of the protest outside provincial assembly the other day, the Chief Minister said we are elected representatives of the public and as such it is our responsibility to hear the public problems and resolve them.

He said that we have got the mandate of resolving the issues of masses and it's our responsibility to restore public confidence on the state and it's system.

The Chief Minister said that where government would commit a mistake it would tender apology.

He said that public service is our motto, we can



President Balochistan National Party Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal enquiring about health of Central President Awami National Party Asfandyar Wali Khan

IGP chairs crucial meeting on performance of Quetta Safe City Project

Independent Report

Quetta: A high level meeting was held to review the performance and utilization of Quetta Safe City Project here on Tuesday.

The Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh presided over the meeting.

While the Deputy Inspector Generals of police, AIGP Quetta ITCP, AIGP Operations, SSP Traffic, Project Director Safe City Project, Deputy Director ITCP were present in the meeting, the Commandant PTC Quetta participated in the meeting through video link.

The meeting reviewed the performance of Quetta

Safe City Project besides considering certain proposals for its utilization.

The meeting also reviewed to establish Safe City Authority in different other cities of the province.

Addressing the meeting, IGP said that the monitoring of movement of criminals would be made possible through the safe city project cameras.

In addition to this, the identification of encroachments and traffic jams would also be made possible through the CCTV cameras, he added.

He termed the encroachments as biggest reason behind the traffic jam.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review progress on foreign investment.

IHC adjourns appeals in cipher case till today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday adjourned the hearing till tomorrow in appeals against the conviction of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) founder and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in a cipher case.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the appeals.

During the proceeding, the defence counsel said that he brought the details regarding the changing in the statement of Azam Khan. The chief justice said that how it could be claimed that Azam Khan changed his statement.

Barrister Salman

Safdar said that Azam Khan didn't say that PTI founder used it for political benefit. He said that the former principal secretary had stated that the PTI founder said in front of military security that the copy of the cipher is missing.

The court asked the lawyer to read the statement of Azam Khan under section 164. The lawyer said that the then prime minister told the public about cipher during a procession, adding that he was not sure that whether the PTI founder waved original document or blank paper in the gathering. Salman Safdar said that the defence counsels have crossed examined Azam Khan during the trial.

Ruling alliance sweeps Senate polls...

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Anusha Rehman and Bushra Anjum were successful on two seats reserved for women, garnering 125 and 123 votes, respectively. PML-N's Khalil Tahir Sindhu was successful on a minority seat.

Sindh, the ruling PPP secured 10 of the 12 seats up for grabs. The remaining two were won by the MQM-P and an independent candidate.

On general seats, PPP's Ashraf Ali Jatoi (22 votes), Dost Ali Jassar (21 votes), Kazim Ali Shah (21 votes), Masroor Ahsan (21 votes), Nadeem Bhutto (21 votes) were successful.

MQM-P's Amir Chishty (21 votes) and independent Faisal Vawda (21 votes) also won from a general seat. A day earlier, the PPP had decided to withdraw one of its candidates to support Vawda.

On the technocrat seats, PPP's Zamir Ghumro (58 votes) and Sarmad Ali (57 votes) were successful. PPP's Rubina Saadat Qaimkhan (57 votes) and Quratulain Marri (58 votes) won on two seats reserved for women.

PPP's Poonjo Bheel (117 votes) was also successful on a minority seat. Prior to the polls, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shahhad expressed the hope for all PPP candidates to be elected to the Senate. Speaking to the media outside the Sindh Assembly, he said that Sarfaraz Rajar withdrew his nomination papers on the party's directives as the party was Vawda.

In an indirect reference to the PTI, CM Shah said that those who made tall claims about giving surprises in the Senate election finally retreated from the arena and boycotted the election from Sindh.

In its notification, the ECP stated that polls for the Senate seats of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will not be held until the administration of oath to the elected members against the reserved

Army, Wapda triumphs All Pakistan Ramadan Cup Basketball Titles

ISLAMABAD (INP): Unbeatable Pakistan Army and Wapda emerged victorious in Women's and Men's departmental categories of All Pakistan 3x3 Ramadan Cup Basketball Tournament, which concluded here at Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad. In a fiercely contested match witnessed between Army and Lycans A Club, Army team displayed exceptional skills and tenacity, battling until the end of the match by securing women's title by 12-5 points. Aamina Mohsin of Army emerged as the player of the night, contributing a stellar performance with 8 points along with Hadiya added 3 points while Mahrukh Ali scored 3 points for Lycans A.

In Men's departmental final Wapda A was too strong against Wapda B continued their good show in the tournament and thrashed their opponent by 21-10

points. Wapda ace players Kaleemullah and Zain ul Hasan again led the winning side by scoring 9 and 7 points respectively while Amir Farooq scored 6 points for the losing side. Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) President Brig (R) Muhammad Ifthikhar Mansoor was the chief guest of concluding ceremony who presenting the winning trophies and cash rewards to the winning teams while Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Muhammad Saeed Akhtar, Pakistan Basketball Federation Associate Secretary and organizing committee secretary Ouj E Zahoor, President Federal basketball Association Ejaz Rafi Butt, PBBF Chairman selection Committee Col. @ Shujaat Ali Rana, National Coach Malik Muhammad Riaz, Muhammad Azam Dar and other dignitaries were also present in the concluding ceremony.

Pakistan strongly condemns Israeli attack on Iranian Embassy in Syria

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has strongly condemned an Israeli air attack on the consular section of the Iranian Embassy in Syrian capital Damascus.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch in a statement on Tuesday termed the attack an unacceptable violation of the sovereignty of Syria and undermining its stability and security.

The spokesperson said the attack is a violation of international law and the UN Charter. She said attacks against diplomats or diplomatic facilities are also

illegal under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the irresponsible act of the Israeli forces is a major escalation in an already volatile region.

She called on the UN Security Council to prevent Israel from its adventurism in the region and its illegal acts attacking its neighbors and targeting foreign diplomatic facilities. The spokesperson offered deepest condolences to the families of the victims and the people and the Government of Iran on behalf of Pakistan.

Deputy Commissioner Swat says Provision of quality medical facilities in hospital top priority of district administration

By Haroon Siraj
SWAT: Deputy Commissioner Swat Dr. Qasim Ali Khan on Tuesday visited the Saidu Group of Teaching Hospitals.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Qasim Ali Khan made a detailed visit to various wards and departments of the hospital to review the performance of the Hospital. During his visit the Hospital Management Committee meeting was also held in the conference room of the Medical Superintendent's office under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Swat Dr. Qasim Ali Khan.

During the meeting the past performance of Saidu Group of Teaching Hospital was reviewed in detail and a plan of action was prepared for the next month. The Chief Executive Dr. Israr ul Haq and Medical Superintendent Dr. Sharafat Ali gave a detailed briefing regarding the overall performance of Saidu Group of Teaching Hospital, Swat

district, resources, machinery and other issues in the hospital and other important issues were also discussed.

Deputy Commissioner Swat Dr. Qasim Ali Khan while appreciating the services and performance of the members of the Hospital Management Committee said that they should ensure the best health facilities to the people even with limited resources. He said that provision of quality medical facilities in the hospital and improvement of all the hospitals of Swat district are among the top priorities of the district administration because only a healthy society can lead the country on the path of development. Deputy Commissioner urged the hospital administration to ensure the provision of all medical facilities to the pa-tients in wards and said that there should be no in-terruption in medical facilities for surgical emergency patients.

Science Minister inaugurates a 5,000 fellowships programme for Palestinian students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui Tuesday inaugurated a 5,000 fellowships programme for Palestinian students in a ceremony held here.

The second phase of the programme is announced in collaboration with the Association of Private Universities of Pakistan (APSUP) and COMSTECH consortium.

Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, addressing the event as a special guest, expressed his immense pleasure at initiating this timely and significant step.

He said it is a gift from Pakistan to the Palestinian brothers. He highlighted the importance of this large-scale scholarship programme in collaboration with partner universities from Pakistan and other

Muslim countries in promoting science and technology.

The minister emphasized that this initiative reflects the essential and intrinsic relations between Palestine and Pakistan at all levels, in line with the vision of the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Coordinator General of COMSTECH, Professor Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Chaudhry revealed that in the first phase of the COMSTECH Palestine programme, 500 fellowships were announced in various fields of science, technology, health, and agriculture.

He further disclosed that APSUP and COMSTECH consortium have pledged to offer 5,000 fellowships in the second phase.

The official announcement of this mega programme will soon be

made by the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), he added.

Secretary-General of the OIC, Hussein Ibrahim Taha emphasized that the collaboration between COMSTECH and private sector universities' association in Pakistan and the esteemed Embassy of Palestine in Islamabad is a significant step in their determination.

He highlighted the programme's representation of hope amidst challenges for the Palestinian people and commended the unwavering commitment to solidarity and support for Palestinians through COMSTECH.

Ambassador of Palestine, Ahmad Jawad Rabie expressed his happiness and pride at being part of the inaugural ceremony of the COMSTECH programme for Palestinian students.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of Palestinian students with Federal Minister for Science and Technology and Minister of Federal Education & Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Ambassador of State of Palestine, Ahmed Jawad Rabie and others on the occasion of Launching Ceremony of COMSTECH Scholarships and Fellowships Program for the Palestinian Nationals at COMSTECH Auditorium at Federal Capital.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

CONSOLIDATED ADVERTISEMENT NO.04/2024
Applications are invited for initial recruitment to the following posts in the Various Departments of Government of Balochistan:
Don't wait for the last date, apply online today. IMPORTANT NOTES

Age: Age will be calculated on the closing date of receipt of applications. **Local/Domicile Certificate:** The candidate should submit local/domicile certificate of his/her district. A married female candidate, not already in Government Service and desires to apply on the basis of local/domicile of her husband, is required to submit the local/domicile certificate of her husband containing her name. In case of in-service candidates, the local/domicile certificate endorsed in service record of department will be accepted. **III. The Government reserves the right not to fill any vacancy or to fill more or less than the number of vacancies announced by the Commission. **IV Zonal Allocation:** The zonal allocation of vacancies has been made in accordance with the Government of Balochistan's Recruitment Policy of 1991. **V Experience:** Unless otherwise prescribed in the recruitment rules, the requisite experience (with necessary valid documentary proof) means the post qualification experience gained in a regular, full-time paid job and that of the on job training subject to its relevancy acquired after obtaining the required qualification till closing date. Experience as part time, honorary, apprentice and interim will not be considered/ counted as experience. **VI Eligibility:** Eligibility of the candidates in terms of Recruitment Rules and the advertised conditions shall be determined after the conduct of screening/professional test/examination. On detailed scrutiny of the applications if they are found ineligible, their candidatures will be cancelled irrespective of the fact whether they have appeared in the examination/test or even qualified therein. On rejection of application of candidates on the basis of their ineligibility, the Commission would inform the applicants. The candidates should therefore, make sure before applying that they are eligible in all respects for the post, they have applied for. **VII Viva Voce Test:** The written/MCQs test qualified candidates will be called for Viva Voce Test and the same would be as follows:- **Current Affairs:** (Last one or two month's important happenings/issues which are highlighted in Print/Electronic Media. **General Knowledge:** (Related to Balochistan, Pakistan and International) **Islamic/Religious Studies:** (Islamic questions regarding day to day issues as Muslim, Holy Prophet's life (PBUH) and period of Khulafa-e-Rashideen). However, a candidate belonging to other religion would be asked questions according to his/her religion. **Pakistan Studies:** (1857 to 1947 and 1947 to till date) **VIII The candidates who qualify for viva-voce test will be intimated by post, sms and telephonically to furnish/submit one (01) set of requisite documents duly verified by the concerned Board/University and attested by Gueezted Officer i.e. four (04) photographs, Matric, Intermediate DMCs/certificates, Bachelor, Master, M.Phil, D.Phil. Transcript/Degrees, CNIC, Experience Certificate (where required) showing nature of job/ detailed job description issued by an authorized officer of the Department concerned, Local/Domicile Certificate (duly verified by the competent authority), Departmental Permission Certificate (in case of government servant) etc. within Ten (10) days of the Notice from BPS. The candidates who fail to furnish the requisite documents within stipulated time or furnish incorrect/incomplete information their candidature shall be rejected straight away. Therefore, they are advised to keep their documents ready for submission to BPS by the due date.****

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

01. Four (04) Posts of Principal Midwifery School (Female) (B-18).

Merit	Zonal Allocation			Nasirabad Zone
	Kalat Zone	Zhob Zone	Merkan Zone	
01	01	01	01	01

Qualification/Experience: a) (i) Three (3) years' Diploma in General Nursing from a recognized Institute; and (ii) Having valid registration under Section 19 of the Pakistan Nursing Council Act, 1973, with Pakistan Nursing Council; and b) (i) One (1) year's Diploma in Midwifery from a recognized Institute; and (ii) Having valid registration with Pakistan Nursing Council; and c) (i) Two (2) years' Bachelor's Degree in Nursing or Midwifery from a recognized Institute; or (ii) One (1) year's Diploma in Ward Administration from a recognized Institute; and (iii) One (1) year's Diploma in Teaching Administration from a recognized Institute; and (iv) Having valid registration with Pakistan Nursing Council; and d) Having at least three (3) years' experience as Tutor Nurse. **Gender:** Only female candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 18 to 28 years and general upper age relaxation up to 43 years granted by the Government of Balochistan for fresh candidates as well as government servants. **Syllabus:** MCQs test in the relevant subject.

AGRICULTURE & COOPERATIVES DEPARTMENT

02. Two (02) Posts of Entomologist (B-18) in Research Wing.

Merit	Zonal Allocation			Nasirabad Zone
	Kalat Zone	Zhob Zone	Merkan Zone	
01	01	01	01	01

Qualification/Experience: i. M.Sc. (Hons) in Agriculture at least in Second Division in relevant discipline/subject from a recognized University; ii. Having at least three (03) years' experience of Research in the relevant subject; iii. Having (4) scientific publications published in the relevant discipline/subject in the standard scientific journals having ISSN No. recognized by the HEC. **Gender:** Both male and female candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 25 to 35 years and general upper age relaxation up to 43 years granted by the Government of Balochistan for fresh candidates as well as government servants. **Syllabus:** MCQs test in the relevant subject.

03. One (01) Post of Agriculture Officer (B-17) (Extension Wing)

Merit	Zonal Allocation			Nasirabad Zone
	Kalat Zone	Zhob Zone	Merkan Zone	
01	01	01	01	01

Qualification: Master's Degree (Second Division) in Agriculture from a recognized University. OR Bachelor's (Hon's) Degree 2nd Division in Agriculture from a recognized University. **Gender:** Both male and female candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 21 to 30 years and general upper age relaxation up to 43 years granted by the Government of Balochistan for fresh candidates as well as government servants. **Syllabus:** MCQs Test in the relevant specialty.

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (Q-WASA)

04. Three (03) Posts of Assistant Engineer (B-17).

Merit	Zonal Allocation			Nasirabad Zone
	Kalat Zone	Zhob Zone	Merkan Zone	
01	01	01	01	01

Qualification: B.E. (2nd Division) in Civil or Mechanical or Electrical Engineering or equivalent qualification in the relevant subject from a recognized University. **Gender:** Both male and female candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 18 to 30 years and general upper age relaxation up to 43 years granted by the Government of Balochistan for fresh candidates as well as government servants. **Syllabus:** MCQs test in the relevant subject.

URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

05. One (01) Post of Urban Planning Officer (B-17).

Merit	Zonal Allocation			Nasirabad Zone
	Kalat Zone	Zhob Zone	Merkan Zone	
01	01	01	01	01

Qualification: i. Bachelor's Degree in Urban Planning/Architecture from a recognized University. **Gender:** Both male and female candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 21 to 30 years and general upper age relaxation up to 43 years granted by the Government of Balochistan for fresh candidates as well as government servants. **Syllabus:** MCQs test in the relevant subject.

LABOUR & MANPOWER DEPARTMENT

06. Nine (09) Posts of Chief Instructor (B-17) (Male) in Directorate of Manpower Training Balochistan.

S#	Subject	Zonal Allocation				Nasirabad Zone
		Total	Merit	Kalat Zone	Zhob Zone	
i	Computer	04	01	01	01	01
ii	Electrical	01	01	--	--	--
iii	Mechanical	03	01	01	01	--
iv	Refrigeration & Air Conditioning	01	01	--	--	--
Total		09	04	02	02	01

Qualification/Experience: Diploma in relevant field from a Government Polytechnic Institute/ College of Technology with 5 years' work experience in Vocational Training. **Gender:** Only male candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 21 to 30 years and general upper age relaxation up to 43 years granted by the Government of Balochistan for fresh candidates as well as government servants. **Syllabus:** MCQs test in the relevant subject.

07. Twenty Seven (27) Posts of Senior Instructor (B-16) (Male) in Directorate of Manpower Training Balochistan.

S#	Subject	Zonal Allocation							
		Total	Merit	Kalat Zone	Zhob Zone	Merkan Zone	Quetta Zone		
i.	Electrical	04	--	--	01	01	01	--	
ii.	Electronics	03	01	01	01	--	--	--	
iii.	Computer	12	02	01	01	02	02	01	01
iv.	Civil Draftsman	02	01	01	--	--	--	--	--
v.	Mechanical	03	01	01	01	--	--	--	--
vi.	Refrigeration & Air Conditioning	01	--	--	--	01	--	--	--
vii.	Ship Making/Breaking	01	01	--	--	--	--	--	--
viii.	Wood Work/Carpenter	01	01	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total		27	07	04	04	03	04	03	01

Qualification/Experience: Diploma in relevant field from a Government Polytechnic Institute/ College of Technology with 5 years' work experience in Vocational Training. OR Matric with trade proficiency certificate in the relevant trade from a Government Technical Training Centre or a recognized institute with 8 years' experience in the relevant trade. **Gender:** Only male candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 21 to 30 years and general upper age relaxation up to 43 years granted by the Government of Balochistan for fresh candidates as well as government servants. **Syllabus:** MCQs test in the relevant subject.

08. One (01) Post of Trade Testing Officer (B-16) in Directorate of Manpower Training Balochistan.

S.No	Subject	Zonal Allocation	
		Total	Merit (All Balochistan)
i.	Computer	01	01

Qualification/Experience: Diploma of Associate Engineer in relevant technology with 3 years' service experience in Vocational Training. OR Matric with one year certificate in relevant trade from any recognized institute with 7 Years' experience in Vocational Training. **Gender:** Only male candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 21 to 30 years and general upper age relaxation up to 43 years granted by the Government of Balochistan for fresh candidates as well as government servants. **Syllabus:** MCQs test in the relevant subject.

09. Two (02) Posts of Senior Instructor (B-16) (Female) in Directorate of Manpower Training Balochistan.

S.No	Subject	Zonal Allocation	
		Total	Merit (All Balochistan)
i.	Computer	02	01

Qualification/Experience: Diploma in relevant field from a Government Polytechnic Institute/ College of Technology with 3 years' work experience in Vocational Training. OR Matric with trade proficiency certificate in the relevant trade from a Government Training Centre or recognized institute with 8 years' experience in the relevant trade. **Gender:** Only female candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 21 to 30 years and general upper age relaxation up to 43 years granted by the Government of Balochistan for fresh candidates as well as government servants. **Syllabus:** MCQs test in the relevant subject.

HOME & TRIBAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT (CTD BALOCHISTAN POLICE)

10. Ten (10) Posts of Sergeant (B-16).

Merit	Zonal Allocation			Nasirabad Zone	Merkan Zone	Quetta Zone
	Kalat Zone	Zhob Zone	Merkan Zone			
02	02	01	01	01	01	01

Qualification/Experience: Master degree or Minimum 16 years education in 1st division or 2.5 CGPA from any institution/ University recognized by the HEC. **Physical Fitness:**

a) Male: Height 5' Chest 31" x32.5"
b) Female: Height 4'6"

Endurance Test:

a) Male:
i. One mile run in 08 minutes
ii. 3 chin ups in one minute
iii. 20 pushups in 90 seconds
iv. 20 sit ups in 90 seconds
v. Otherwise medically fit

b) Female:
i. One mile run in 11 minutes.
ii. 15 sit ups in 90 seconds.
iii. Medically fit.

Gender: Both male/female candidates are eligible. **Age Limit:** 18 to 28 years (No relaxation is allowed).

ADVERTISEMENT CLOSING DATE 30th April, 2024 (Tuesday) GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

a) All applications for Initial Recruitment in BPS-16 and above must be submitted online through BPS's website www.bpsc.gov.pk. No hardcopy of online application is required from the applicants. However, those applicants who do not have access to internet facility, are allowed to submit their applications on the prescribed form must reach the Balochistan Public Service Commission, Quetta by hand or by mail on or before the closing date i.e. 30th April, 2024. Application form available at BPS website giving detailed particulars in the light of prescribed conditions for the post applied for. It will be mandatory for the candidates to bring original CNIC, Treasury Receipt (Green Challan) and downloaded copy of Admission Certificate/Roll no slip at the time of Screening/ Written Test. The candidates should realize that original CNIC and original Treasury Receipt (Green Challan) would be admissible as a valid document. It is reiterated that the candidates must preserve the original T.R and do not send the same to BPS office in advance, so as to avoid any inconvenience at the time of entry in the Examination Halls. c) Those candidates who have submitted their application by hand or sent by mail/post, their roll no slips will be dispatched to their postal address as well as they will be intimated through sms. d) Admission Certificates/Roll no slips for Screening (MCQ's Test/Written test) for posts applied will be placed on the website of BPS i.e. www.bpsc.gov.pk. Candidates are advised to frequently visit this website. They will be intimated through SMS as well. e) No extra time is allowed for postal transit etc.

APPLICATION FEE: The Candidates are required to deposit the original treasury receipt of

POST (Basic Pay Scale)	AMOUNT (Fee)
BPS-16 Posts	Rs. 1200/-
BPS-17 & BPS-16 Posts	Rs. 800/-

The amount should be deposited in the State Bank/National Bank of Pakistan only in the province of Balochistan or Government Treasury authorized to transact business on behalf of Government of Balochistan under the Head 02101 ORGAN OF STATE EXAM FEE RECEIPT BPS with incorporating the relevant RCO/District-wise Code in Challan. The RCO/District-wise code is available on the official website of this Commission i.e. www.bpsc.gov.pk. CAUTION Please refuse to engage with any person who may offer to help you get selected. Have faith in your own ability and trust in ALLAH ALMIGHTY. In case dubious person contacts you for providing undue favor in written examination or interview, please immediately contact the following Hon'ble Members of the Commission at once:-
1. Madam Mudassar Asrar, Member (BPS) Tel: 081-9203142 2. Mr. Khalid Baloch, Member (BPS) Tel: 081-9201572 3. Mr. Sher Khan Bazai, Member (BPS) Tel: 081-9201582
Your name will be kept secret and no prejudice will be caused to you.

PRQ No.1793/02-04-2024
www.dpr.gov.pk @dpr_gob @dpr_gob @dgpb.balochistan

SECRETARY
BALOCHISTAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

SC summons petitioner journalists seeking Intro of media regulations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday summoned the petitioner journalists who filed a case seeking introduction of media regulations in the country.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, heard the case pertaining to the FIA's notices to journalists. The court sought written comments from respondents and adjourned the hearing for indefinite time.

The court in its order said that a request to withdraw the petition related to media regulation has been filed.

It said neither the petitioner came to the court nor the lawyer, nor the advocate on record.

It further said, it was claimed in the application that now the federal government is looking into the matter of media regulation itself. However, the Attorney General denied this attribution to the government, the court noted.

The court said that the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has been made as a respondent in this case and no one has

raised an objection on it. It said that the lawyer has told that a report of Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ) is available regarding the abduction of Matiuallah Jan. The court asked the respondents to submit this report.

Press Association of Supreme Court (PAS) lawyer Barrister Salahuddin took a position during the hearing that a petition of public interest cannot be withdrawn.

During the hearing, the chief justice remarked that false news was aired related to his wife which could have given a wrong impression. He asked whether the responsible should be served contempt of court notice and be sent to jail after indicting them.

The CJ asked whether the membership of a journalist would be abolished for running false news.

Barrister Salahuddin said that the membership could be abolished after giving a show cause notice to the concern person. The lawyer said that such events happened because the defamation law in the country was not strong.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Managing Director PTDC.

Dr Mukhtar reviews PSDP health projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed on Monday received a briefing on the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) projects of the Ministry.

Federal Secretary Health Ifitikhar Ali Shallwani, along with senior officials of the Ministry of Health briefed the Coordinator to PM on the scope of ongoing initiatives and utilization of resources towards the improvement of healthcare infrastructure

and services.

The discussion in the briefing centered on evaluating the progress of ongoing PSDP projects, identifying potential challenges, and formulating strategies for their timely completion. Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed emphasized the need for innovation, transparency, and accountability in the execution of PSDP projects to maximize their impact and ensure optimal utilization of resources.

He stressed the need of institutional reforms in healthcare facilities and regulatory organizations.

SC admits Qasmi's appeal against removal as MD PTV

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday issued written order pertaining to the acceptance of the review petitions and withdrawal of its judgment regarding the termination of Ata ul Haq Qasmi as Managing Director Pakistan Television (PTV).

The top court in its five page judgment said, "The factual determination of the purported loss was arbitrary and also incorrect". Mr. Qasmi was paid just a little more than his

predecessor, which, if inflation is factored in, would be justified. And, it was a material C.R.Ps.835 of 2018 etc 5 error to assume that Mr. Qasmi's programme's air time was lost revenue; it could also be contended that his programme contributed towards PTV's earnings. It would not be fair to penalize someone on the basis of mere conjecture. There is no evidence to suggest that an amount of Rs.197,867,491 was paid to Mr. Qasmi or that he had caused such a loss to PTV.

Police khidmat markaz facilitates 12,237 citizens during the last month

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police, Khidmat Markaz have facilitated 12,237 citizens with different services relating to issuance of character certificate, foreign registration, tenants registration and house servants, general police verification and report of missing items.

A police public relations officer said that, following the special directions of senior police officers, the Islamabad Capital Police were taking all possible

measures and initiatives in order to provide maximum facilities to the citizens of Islamabad.

In this regard, the Islamabad Capital Police Khidmat Markaz has provided several services to the citizens including issuance of 2,761 character certificates after the complete verification by police stations concerned, 2,244 exit certificates to foreigners, 653 reports of missing documents and valuables.



ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust distributing Ramadan Food Packages to deserving and needy families in F-9 Park in the Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Gulbar Khan calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Thousands Quran copies distributed at two Holy Mosques

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Saudi Arabia's Presidency for Religious Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques continues to distribute thousands of copies of the Holy Quran to worshippers and visitors to the two holy mosques during the blessed month of Ramadan.

To enrich the religious experience of non-Arabic speakers, the presidency distributes copies of translated meanings of the Quran, to take them home as a cherished memory of their time in Makkah and Madinah, SPA reported.

The Saudi Arabia's Quran Affairs Department is responsible for providing the Quran to visitors and worshippers of the Prophet's Mosque. It provides translations for non-Arabic speakers and handles organizing the Quran copies inside the mosque, its expansions, and courtyards.

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IHC seeks report regarding shifting Pervaiz Elahi to jail

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday sought report regarding shifting of former chief minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi from PIMS hospital to Adiala Jail.

The court instructed the Executive Director PIMS hospital to clarify that why the accused was shifted to jail during his medical treatment.

Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the case filed by the wife of Pervaiz Elahi, Qaisra Elahi. The petitioner's lawyer adopted the stance that Pervaiz Elahi received injuries as he fell down in Adiala Jail.

The doctors have advised to shift the accused to PIMS hospital for his medical supervision.

The doctors suggested two weeks complete bed rest to the accused and instructed to keep him in intensive care, the lawyer said, adding that medical treatment was a fundamental right of every citizen as per the constitution.

Naat competition held at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) organized a Naat competition between students of colleges and universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, in which 18 students from different institutions participated and recited Naats.

Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood was the chief guest while Director General Regional Services (DGRS), Dr. Malik Tauqir Ahmed Khan hosted the event.

In his address, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that it is a great blessing to present the Naat of our Holy Prophet (S.A.W) and there is no competition or position in it, but it is an expression of devotion and love.

PM directs to build Daanish Schools in three GB divisions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to build Daanish Schools across all three divisions of Gilgit Baltistan to impart world-class education and accommodation facilities to students from low-income groups.

The prime minister, in a meeting with GB Chief Minister Gulbar Khan who called on him, also constituted a committee to look into the issues faced by GB that would present its recommendations after consultation with the stakeholders.

The prime minister assured the GB chief minister that uplifting the GB people by providing them with education and health facilities was among the federal government's priorities.

He also sought recommendations on the ways to exploit the immense tourism potential of GB, besides instructing to expedite work on Attabad and Harpo hydropower projects.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also sought a strategy for execution of solar power projects in Gilgit Baltistan.

ICCI delegation lauds NEOC's proactive approach towards public safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) visited the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Headquarters here Tuesday to gain insights into its operational capacity and appreciated the proactive approach of the Centre towards public safety during disasters.

The visit aimed to familiarize the delegation with the cutting-edge facilities and protocols in place to handle emergencies effectively, a news release said.

The delegation was given a detailed briefing on the operational capabilities

of the NEOC by Chairman NDMA, Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik. They were given a comprehensive overview of the Centre's state-of-the-art infrastructure, advanced technology and the skilled personnel tasked with managing emergencies of various scales.

President of ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri expressed his admiration for the NEOC's impressive capabilities and its commitment to safeguarding the people of Pakistan. He lauded the Centre's proactive approach towards ensuring the safety and well-being of the citizens, emphasizing the critical role it plays in emergency response and disaster management.

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik briefed about the capabilities of NEOC to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce delegation at NDMA HQS

CDA adopting comprehensive strategy to ensure best facilities in hospitals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) is taking concrete steps to make the Capital Hospital, a state-of-the-art, hospital besides providing best treatment facilities to the patients there.

A comprehensive strategy is being adopted so that the patients visiting the hospitals for medical treatment could not face any kind of difficulty.

In this regard, the administration of Capital Hospital has decided to purchase "Cochlear Implant devices" for the country's first public sector Cochlear Implant Center established in CDA Hospital with all required modern facilities for the patients. A budget of around 40 million rupees has also been allocated to implement the project.

According to the details, a modern Hearing Assessment System and other devices would also be purchased from this allocated budget. In this connection, advertisements have also been given in the newspapers. It should be noted that many deaf and speech-impaired children have been treated under the supervision of expert surgeons and doctors at the Cochlear Implant Center of the Capital Hospital. The CDA Board granted the status of Cochlear Implant Center to make this facility more functional and a Center of Excellence to make it a specialized center for deaf and hearing patients.

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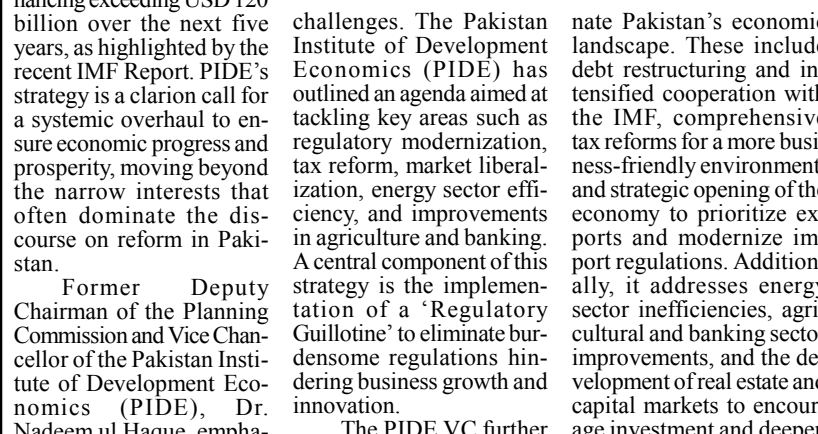
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PIDE unveils comprehensive reform agenda for economic revival

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has launched an ambitious reform strategy, "ISLAAH: Immediate Reform Agenda - IMF and Beyond," to propel Pakistan towards economic stability and growth amid its looming financial crises. This initiative, embodying the ideals of rethink, reform, and revive, responds to Pakistan's urgent need for external financing exceeding USD 120 billion over the next five years, as highlighted by the recent IMF Report. PIDE's strategy is a clarion call for a systemic overhaul to ensure economic progress and prosperity, moving beyond the narrow interests that often dominate the discourse on reform in Pakistan.

Former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to address Pakistan's economic challenges. The agenda outlines a series of innovative reforms designed to rejuvenate Pakistan's economic landscape. These include debt restructuring and intensified cooperation with the IMF, comprehensive tax reforms for a more business-friendly environment, and strategic opening of the economy to prioritize exports and modernize import regulations. Additionally, it addresses energy sector inefficiencies, agricultural and banking sector improvements, and the development of real estate and capital markets to encourage investment and deepen



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Nadeem ul Haque presenting the ISLAAH reform agenda.

PUC chairman condemns Israel's aggression against Iran's consulate in Damascus

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmod Ashrafi on Tuesday vehemently condemned the Israeli brazen act of aggression against Iran's consulate in Damascus, Syria.

He, in a statement, expressed his profound dismay over the unwarranted assault on the diplomatic mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The PUC chairman described the attack as a flagrant violation of international law and a blatant disregard for diplomatic norms, emphasizing that such belligerent actions only serve to escalate tensions and destabilize the region further.

"The assault on Iran's consulate in Damascus is a reprehensible act of aggression that must be unequivocally condemned by the international community," Ashrafi said adding, "It is imperative for nations to uphold the principles of

sovereignty and respect for diplomatic premises, regardless of political differences."

Ashrafi urged the United Nations Security Council to take immediate and decisive action to hold Israel accountable for its actions, stressing the need for a robust international response to deter further acts of aggression in the region. Moreover, he said this egregious crime had garnered significant condemnation from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and other Muslim nations worldwide.

"This condemnation signifies unity among the Muslim Ummah and delivers a resolute message to Israel, rejecting its brutalities in all forms and manifestations," he maintained.

"The attack on Iran's consulate in Damascus is not just an attack on Iran, but an attack on the sanctity of diplomatic missions and the principles of international law," Ashrafi asserted adding,

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov calls on Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Saik Hussain.

Capital markets witness huge rush

ISLAMABAD (APP): With the start of the third Ashra of Ramadan, Eid shopping had gained momentum and the citizens were thronging bazaars and malls.

A great rush is being witnessed in almost all shopping malls and bazaars including Jinnah Super Market, Aabpara, Karachi company, F-10 Markaz and other markets of the city.

Several local brands have begun displaying their latest Eid editions of dresses, shoes, and other essential accessories to attract buyers and gain maximum profits.

The shopkeepers have decorated their shops with colourful lights to attract customers.

A large number of women and children are thronging to markets to purchase clothes, footwear, cosmetics, henna, bangles

and other items.

As the festival of Eid comes closer, the stalls of beautifully designed colorful bangles, jewellery and melmdri in the markets of the city have been set up which are attracting the customers.

Number of famous shops also offering upto fifty percent discount to attract customers. However, the buyers also complaining of the price hike on the occasion of Eid.

A customer said that parents and children are unwilling to compromise on purchasing Eid clothes and gifts no matter how much prices rise.

The sale of ready-made garments also increased in the last days of Ramadan when garment outlets displayed various ready-made clothes on sale which were attracting customers, said a shopkeeper.

IFA taking action against selling substandard, expired food items

ISLAMABAD (APP): Strict and legal action against the substandard, unhygienic and expired food items is underway as the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) continued its campaign across the federal capital. According to Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of IFA Dr Tahira Siddique, the authority in its ongoing operation launched against the unhygienic food outlets in the Federal Capital, inspected 30 points and a fine of Rs 110,000 was imposed on violations.

Talking to APP on Tuesday, she said the IFA accompanied by Food Safety Teams

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Talking to APP on Tuesday, she said the IFA accompanied by Food Safety Teams

(FSTs) launched cracked down on a well-known bakery in Margalla Town for selling bakery items that failed to meet safety standards.

Additionally, large quantities of substandard bakery items, beverages, sweets, and vegetables were also seized and discarded by the Food Authority teams.

She said that the confiscated items include 4.65 expire ketch up, and 60.2 kg bakery items, 25.25 beverages, 2.48 kg sweets, and 1 kg vegetables.

Meanwhile, warnings and improvement notices were also served to different shop keepers.

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Addressing the historical event, Dr. Ahmad Waqar Qasim, Dr. Afia Malik, and Dr. Mahmood Khalid Senior Research Economists of PIDE, also took part in presenting PIDE's pioneering study. They stated that PIDE's groundbreaking economic reform initiative aims to streamline governance by addressing the burden of 122 regulatory bodies operating directly under the Federal Government, which currently account for over 50% of the GDP, as revealed by PIDE's Sludge Audits.

In our pursuit of economic efficiency, it's imperative to shift from a system of permissions to clear rules, as permissions not only consume valuable time and resources but also incur significant documenta-

tion costs, both directly and in terms of missed opportunities. To achieve this, we must prioritize clear rules, digitization, and market liberalization, putting an end to the bureaucratic penchant for permissions and paperwork, thereby overcoming the "Permissionistan" syndrome. Drawing inspiration from India's successful reforms in 1991, it's evident that piecemeal approaches won't suffice. Instead, we advocate for the implementation of a regulatory guideline, a proven strategy adopted by countries like Hungary, Mexico, South Korea, and the UAE, among others. Nadeem ul Haque further stated that amidst the urgent need for tax simplification and policy certainty, this budget season demands immediate attention towards streamlining taxes in a revenue-neutral manner and ensuring stability for a decade, with a commitment to refrain from introducing new taxes in each budget cycle.

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Letter inquiry

There has been a twist in the tale. After the Supreme Court last week deferred to the federal cabinet, asking it to deal with a disturbing letter six Islamabad High Court justices had addressed to the chief justice, observers had worried that a government-sponsored inquiry into intelligence operatives' alleged interference in judicial affairs would prove to be a non-starter.

Even as voices from within the legal community were still criticising the Supreme Court for neglecting its responsibility and ceding full control over the inquiry to the government, a respected former judge, retired chief justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani, was duly appointed to head the inquiry commission tasked with looking into the judges' letter.

By Monday, however — following an open statement from more than 300 lawyers, amidst whispers that the six IHC justices may be considering directly petitioning the Supreme Court, and a polite 'no, thank you' from Mr Jilani — the scheme seemed to have fallen apart.

Accepting demands that the letter be taken up by the Supreme Court under its jurisdiction defined in Article 184(3), Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa announced on Monday that his court had taken suo motu notice of the matter. A seven-member bench will take the case up for hearing tomorrow. Although some concerns regarding the size and composition of the bench have been raised by certain quarters, the development is a breakthrough for the legal community and is being seen as a positive step.

It is hoped that the court will now arrange for the proceedings to be broadcast live, as in past important cases. The issues raised by the six justices of the Islamabad High Court have caused quite a sensation, and it would, therefore, be in the public interest if they are also addressed transparently.

The legal community deserves much credit for refusing to accept a compromise in the form of an inquiry commission and pushing for the letter to be taken up by the Supreme Court.

Mr Jilani's well-reasoned refusal to sit in inquiry over six serving justices also deserves commendation. The former chief justice of Pakistan, while thanking the government for its consideration, courteously pointed out that since the letter had been addressed to the Supreme Judicial Council and its chairman, it would be improper of him to interfere in an institutional matter. He also objected to the inquiry's terms of reference, as set by the government, noting that they did not seem relevant to the issue raised in the judges' letter, namely, a consultation on what judges must do when they are placed under duress. In doing so, Mr Jilani greatly strengthened the argument that others had been making: the judiciary must address this issue internally. One now hopes it will do so enthusiastically.

“Should Dr. Arif Alvi Fill the Leadership Vacuum in PTI?”

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President(Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Dr. Arif Alvi, the former President, possesses a wealth of attributes that make him a distinguished figure in the political arena. In essence, Dr. Alvi embodies the qualities of an astute politician with a positive, creative, and non-violent approach to governance. Dr. Arif Alvi's political journey began in 1979 with Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), where he opposed martial law under General Zia-ul-Haq. He later became a founding member of PTI in 1996, serving as its Sindh president. Despite navigating through General Pervez Musharraf's martial law, he secured a National Assembly seat from Karachi in 2013 and won against MQM-P heavy-weight Dr. Farooq Sattar in 2018. Known for his loyalty to Imran Khan, Alvi assumed the presidency in 2018, navigating Pakistan's volatile political landscape effectively with a few hiccups here and there.

Having successfully completed his tenure as the supreme commander of the armed forces of Pakistan and head of all three pillars of the state, Dr. Alvi now faces a pivotal moment in his political career. With the leadership vacuum in PTI growing wider each passing day, exacerbated by the incarceration of its founding chairman, Mr. Imran Khan, the need for Alvi to assume an active role in the party has never been more apparent. Imran Khan's likely prolonged detention underscores the urgency for Alvi to step up, espe-

cially as other key leaders of PTI find themselves either in jail or in hiding due to alleged state oppression. As PTI grapples with these unprecedented challenges, Alvi's leadership and guidance could prove instrumental in navigating the party through turbulent times and charting a course towards stability and resilience.

PTI's leadership is currently dominated by lawyers, often labeled as “paratroopers” by analysts. These individuals lack a political background and grassroots support, making them ill-equipped to handle the intricacies of political maneuvering effectively. Their tendency to resort to legal battles instead of leveraging popular support has been detrimental to the party's interests. This lack of political acumen has significantly undermined PTI's standing and effectiveness, leading to its near-complete disarray.

Their failures have been glaring: firstly, their inability to defend their own chairman entangled in numerous frivolous cases and subsequent incarceration. Secondly, their failure to secure the release of key political figures and thousands of workers unjustly imprisoned. Thirdly, the loss of the party's election symbol resulted in a significant blow to PTI's electoral prospects and brand value. Fourthly, their actions inadvertently led to the absorption of newly elected members into a sectarian political party, further tarnishing PTI's identity. Lastly, they were unable to defend the allocation of reserve seats for women and minorities, strengthening rival parties at PTI's expense. These missteps have not only weakened PTI but have also alienated cer-

tain segments of its support base.

Their professional mindset predisposes them to view fellow lawyers as adversaries, contributing to a lack of unity within PTI. This absence of cohesion, a hallmark of effective political parties, has left PTI fractured. Divergent opinions among self-assumed leaders mirror the courtroom dynamics of lawyers competing for favorable outcomes, resulting in internal discord and confusion. As a consequence, PTI finds itself in a state of disarray, unable to present a unified front or pursue a cohesive agenda.

During the PTI government, I had the privilege of serving as Director General to two PTI ministers, Fawad Hussain and Shibli Faraz, and developed a close relationship with Mr. Shah Mehmood Qureshi. From my experiences accompanying Mr. Qureshi on official and unofficial engagements as Press Attache in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and later in Geneva, Switzerland, I observed their exceptional abilities. In my opinion, their presence at the forefront of PTI leadership, the lawyers and Mr. Raof Hassan had a marginal role in PTI decision making. But in the absence of the political leadership, despite their sincere intentions, these lawyers-turned-PTI leaders have inadvertently damaged the party's standing and undermined the political capital built by PTI's founder, Mr. Imran Khan.

While PTI owes gratitude to lawyers and Mr. Raof Hassan, who is renowned for his exceptional writing and keen political insight, it is undeniable that they cannot match the experience and expertise of genuine politicians due

to many pressing reasons.

Genuine politicians bring years of political activism, governance, and public service to their roles, allowing them to navigate complex challenges with finesse. Their understanding of political dynamics, constituency needs, and policymaking processes equips them to handle intricate political maneuvering, coalition-building, and effective constituency engagement. In contrast, lawyers-turned-politicians may initially lack direct political experience, presenting challenges in grasping the nuances of political dynamics and effectively engaging with constituents.

Secondly, genuine politicians often have strong roots in their constituencies and a profound connection with the concerns and aspirations of the people they represent. Their longstanding presence and engagement within communities allow them to establish meaningful connections with constituents and address their needs effectively. Conversely, lawyers-turned politicians may encounter difficulties in building such connections, especially if they lack prior experience in community engagement or grassroots organizing.

Thirdly, genuine politicians typically demonstrate strong leadership qualities, including the ability to make tough decisions, build consensus, and inspire confidence among party members and supporters. Their leadership is characterized by a keen understanding of political dynamics and a commitment to advancing the interests of their constituents. While lawyers-turned politicians may bring analytical skills and legal expertise to the

table, they may face challenges in adapting their approach to the broader demands of political leadership, including building alliances and navigating internal party dynamics.

Given the context outlined above, it becomes apparent why it is crucial for former President Alvi, a close associate of Imran Khan and someone with deep ties to PTI, to step forward and provide political leadership to the party.

As a genuine politician with years of experience in governance and public service, Alvi possesses the necessary acumen to navigate the complex challenges faced by PTI. His understanding of constituency needs and ability to establish meaningful connections with constituents can help revitalize the party's grassroots support.

Moreover, Alvi's demonstrated leadership qualities, including his track record of making tough decisions and building consensus, make him well-suited to unite the party and provide a clear direction amidst internal turmoil. His commitment to advancing the interests of PTI supporters and addressing their concerns underscores the importance of his leadership at this critical juncture.

By stepping forward, Alvi can work towards reclaiming PTI's iconic symbol and disassociating it from sectarian affiliations, thereby restoring the party's brand value and integrity. Additionally, his efforts to secure the release of Imran Khan and other imprisoned party members would signal a commitment to upholding democratic principles and ensuring justice for all PTI members.

With over ten months of experience

working closely with Dr. Arif Alvi as his press secretary and media advisor, I can attest to his wisdom, articulate nature, and exceptional team-building skills. As a statesman, Dr. Alvi envisions a vibrant, forward-looking, modern, and prosperous Pakistan. During his over five-year tenure, he persistently masterminded Pakistan-specific COVID-19 protocols, saving many lives and positioning the country favorably compared to others worldwide. Dr. Alvi emphasized the importance of fast-tracked education and skill development through smart and effective short-duration courses to uplift illiterate and unskilled segments, transforming them into wealth-generating assets. He advocated for leveraging the latest technological advancements such as quantum computing, internet of things, big data management, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality. Additionally, he highlighted the significance of research and development as essential for achieving fast-track progress and development. On the social front, Dr. Alvi's advocacy for early detection of breast cancer, addressing mental health issues, and promoting inclusivity for differently-abled individuals underscores his commitment to social causes.

Overall, Alvi's leadership is essential in reasserting PTI's position as a formidable political force, reuniting the party under a unified vision, and overcoming the challenges that lie ahead. His experience, integrity, and dedication to serving the people make him a fitting candidate to lead PTI effectively and take the country towards a brighter future.

Upholding Global Peace:

Ayaz Sadiq's Stand at the 148th IPU Assembly

By Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The recent 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) held in Geneva witnessed impassioned speeches and deliberations on crucial global issues. Among the voices resonating through the halls of diplomacy was that of Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, representing Pakistan. His address not only underscored Pakistan's commitment to peace and international cooperation but also shed light on pressing humanitarian concerns and the imperative for collective action. His poignant remarks served as a clarion call for collective action to address pressing global challenges and uphold the principles of justice, dignity, and solidarity on the world stage.

In his address, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq conveyed Pakistan's deep appreciation for the IPU's longstanding efforts in promoting peace and understanding worldwide. Emphasizing Pakistan's pride in its membership since 1948, he reaffirmed the nation's unwavering support for the IPU's noble objectives.

Central to Sadiq's discourse was Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with the people of Gaza amidst the harrowing humanitarian crisis unfolding in the region. He condemned the indiscriminate violence perpetrated against civilians, particularly women and children, and called for urgent international intervention to address the dire situation.

Moreover, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq reiterated Pakistan's steadfast support for the rights of the Kashmiri people, highlighting the longstanding oppression and denial of self-determination in the occupied territory. He urged the international community to uphold human

rights principles and advocate for the resolution of the Kashmir conflict in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. Beyond regional concerns, Sadiq underscored the global imperative of addressing climate change, particularly its disproportionate impact on developing countries like Pakistan. He emphasized the urgent need for concerted international action to mitigate the effects of climate change and protect vulnerable communities from its adverse consequences. Furthermore, Speaker Sadiq touched upon the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the importance of understanding its implications for governance, democracy and human rights. He emphasized the need for parliamentarians to engage in informed discussions, the IPU Assembly offers valuable opportunities for parliamentarians to engage

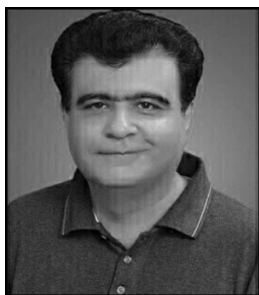
in bilateral meetings and networking sessions. Speaker Sadiq's participation likely facilitated dialogues with counterparts from various countries, enabling the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices. He participated in sideline meetings with distinguished figures such as former IPU President Mr. Duarte Pacheco, as well as Speakers and delegates from countries including Mr. Saqr Ghobash, Speaker of the Federal National Council of UAE, Mr. Johari Abdul, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia, Mr. Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of Russian Federation and Dr. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran and Mr. Hassan Abdullah Al-Ghanim, Speaker of the Shura Council of the State of Qatar. These meetings underscored Pakistan's commitment to fostering constructive dialogue and cooperation at both

regional and global levels.

Additionally, the participation of other Pakistani parliamentarians in various forums and committees at the IPU Assembly highlights the breadth of Pakistan's engagement with international parliamentary diplomacy. Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar MNA along with Ms. Wajeeha Qamar MNA and Senator Saadia Abbasi participated in the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, highlighting the increasing involvement of women in legislative affairs. Moreover, Senator Ali Zafar and Mr. Umair Khan Niazi MNA, took part in the Co-ordination Meeting of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), emphasizing regional cooperation and diplomacy. In another instance, Syed Naveed Qamar MNA, Barrister Aqeel Malik MNA and Senator Farooq H. Naek contributed to the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, indicating a focus on environmental and social issues. Furthermore,

Barrister Aqeel Malik MNA, Mr. Ahmed Atteeq Anwer, MNA and Mr. Umair Khan Niazi MNA participated in the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU, showcasing the involvement of the younger generation in shaping legislative agendas. Meanwhile, Senator Saadia Abbasi, Senator Ali Zafar, Barrister Aqeel Malik MNA and Syed Amin-ul-Haq, MNA contributed to the Standing Committee on UN Affairs, reflecting Pakistan's commitment to international affairs and diplomacy. Mr. Tahir Hussain, Secretary General and Syed Shamoony Hashmi Special Secretary also took part in the ASGP meeting, likely focusing on administrative and procedural matters within the parliamentary structure. Overall, these engagements demonstrate Pakistan's active participation in both regional and global parliamentary platforms, addressing diverse issues ranging from gender equality to sustainable development and international diplomacy.

Pro-poor reform



The new set-up must quickly undertake substantial reforms to save our moribund economy and ensure durable economic stability, productive growth, equity and sustainability. The IMF, think tanks, business groups, etc. mainly propose technical reforms, such as deregulation and privatisation, to loosen the hold of an elite-run state on markets, assuming — against global evidence — that unbridled markets can ensure progress. However, the elites that run our

state run markets too. Thus, many state ills actually stem from market ills — twin deficits exist partially as businesses seek endless subsidies and engage in tax evasion and can't compete globally. The outcome is that one can't reform the state without reforming markets as market elites will soon recapture it.

Reforms in which the bulk of the populace barely figures will produce an elite-run market that fails on all four aims mentioned above. With the Soviet state-monopolist model proved infeasible, the way forward is a welfare-cum developmental state that mainly serves the interests of the poor and also ensures that markets provide fair avenues to them. Such reforms must target the state and market, make masses their focus and use their political mobilisation as the key force to unleash reform.

The starting point must be a review of the factors that cause poverty

among the masses, ie, small producers and labourers in rural and urban areas in Pakistan. Such bottom-up analysis will reveal not only the lack of economic and social investment by the state as key factors but also the people's exploitation and marginalisation by markets and local elites. It will lead to a comprehensive structural reform agenda that covers legislation, policies, strategies, projects, services and institutional reform at the federal, provincial and local levels, unlike the usual band-aid welfare.

The agenda will expand the poor's ownership of assets (including land reforms) and access to credit, skills and technology; and ensure the rule of law to protect them from elite abuses. It will expand locally devolved quality education, health, family planning and other social services; and support community-based groups which mobilise and advocate for the

poor to increase their bargaining power in markets and politics. Minorities, women, and far-flung areas must be the top priority.

This major investment in the poor will not only serve ethical concerns but also become the main driver of national progress as reduced poverty ignites growth that benefits all. Despite our large population, our internal market is small, given low incomes. Increasing people's incomes will expand the size of the national market and profits for producers. This, in turn, will again create jobs, and expand incomes and the national market size, thus igniting a virtuous cycle of progress. The poor spend more on local goods than the rich, benefiting local producers and the external account.

This sharp focus on the poor would serve as the foundation for reforms in policy areas that hog mainstream reform agendas, such as fis-

cal, external, investment, state enterprise and energy issues. But the policy steps in even these areas will now centralise and protect the interests of the poor. To achieve fiscal balances, the state would only give targeted subsidies to the poor, eliminate elite and universal subsidies, focus more on direct taxes on untaxed sectors to generate enough resources for the increased investment in the poor, and avoid indirect taxes that burden the poor.

To end oligopolies in industrial realms that rig both markets and the state, the state would ensure investment flows to small and medium firms, not just large market elites, in new sectors that yield jobs, productivity and ex-ports to ensure trade balances. Smart regulation will replace deregulation and broader state units restructuring will replace only privatisation. The result would be a pro-poor indus-

trial policy but also agrarian and informal sector policies that mainstream ecological concerns.

This agenda goes beyond reforms and actually restructures society in favour of the masses. But such change can only come from long-term political mobilisation around this agenda to help grassroots progressive parties win power. In the interim, though, such an agenda can help pinpoint the perils of pro-elite reforms championed by mainstream sources and put pressure on them to adopt at least some of its elements. The PTI clearly does not have such a progressive agenda. But it has shown how social media-run youth mobilisation can help defeat well-resourced, establishment-backed parties. The use of such mobilisation by progressive parties around a pro-poor agenda represents a clear and exciting path to real change.

**Momination papers of Murad, Swati others
PHC dismisses petitions
against acceptance
for senate election**

PESHAWAR (Online): Peshawar High Court (PHC) while upholding appellant tribunal decision has dismissed the petitions against approval of nomination papers of PTI leaders Murad Saeed, Azam Swati and others for Senate election.

They are candidates for Senate election. The petition against acceptance of nomination papers of Murad Saeed for Senate election came up for hearing before Justice Arshid Ali and justice Waqar Ahmad of PHC Tuesday.

The counsel for Murad Saeed told the court Taj Muhammad Afridi has withdrawn his nomination papers and he is no more candidate for Senate election. He cannot raise objection now being not candidate for Senate election. Amir Javed advocate took the plea in the court Taj Muhammad Afridi is complainant from the very beginning. He was candidate at the time of filing papers. Murad Saeed has not provided details of the cases. Murad Saeed has not shown his assets. Murad Saeed has not deposited amount of

fine imposed on him for violating code of conduct. Amir Javed advocate told the court the nomination papers of Murad Saeed for the election of National Assembly were rejected for not depositing fine. Appeal has to be filed by oneself but Murad Saeed is absconding.

Justice Arshid Ali remarked Supreme Court has made clear regarding abscondment. Petition has been filed in PHC in connection with details of cases while assets have been shown. FBR documents are attached therein.

Justice Arshid Ali further said in the remarks when proposer and seconder of Murad Saeed themselves appeared before RO then the signatures can be fake how. Murad Saeed signed too. Video has been shown to RO. Later PHC while upholding the decision of appellate tribunal dismissed the petitions filed against acceptance of nomination papers of Murad Saeed, Azam Swati, Faisal Javed, Khurram Zeeshan and Azhar Mashwani.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chairing a special meeting focusing on electricity theft, established a task force to tackle electricity pilferage at the district level.

**CM launches Naya Dour,
Saaf Suthra Lahore initiative**

Maryam also sets up task force to check electricity theft

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a meeting here on Tuesday, announced the launch of a 'Naya Dour, Saaf Suthra Lahore' initiative, under which all major and minor roads of Lahore will be repaid and constructed, streets paved, tuff tiles installed, and 222,000 streetlights restored.

The CM gave a 3-month deadline to complete the comprehensive development plan of Lahore, saying that she

wanted to see every street and neighborhood clean. She said that she herself will review its implementation after every ten days. People should also support the government in this cleanliness drive, he appealed. She also directed to make all water filtration plants of Lahore functional at the earliest.

Earlier, Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) gave a detailed presentation on drainage and sewerage rehabilitation, construction and repair project in 9

zones of Lahore. A sewer master plan and the construction of water collecting tanks were also discussed in the meeting.

The CM directed WASA to present a detailed plan of phase-wise increase in its jurisdiction, construction of water collecting tanks, and the requirement of human resource and machinery accordingly.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, former senator Pervaiz Rashid, Provincial Minister for Information

and Culture Azma Zahid Bukhari, Provincial Minister for Local Government and Community Development Zeeshan Rafique, MPA Santa Ashiq, Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik, Chief Secretary, Chairman P&D, Secretary Housing, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and other officers concerned attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a special meeting focusing on electricity theft.

**Governor chairs meeting
on launch of IT program
in Hyderabad**

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori chaired a meeting regarding the launch of the IT program in Hyderabad.

Governor Sindh said that after the test, 50,000 students of Hyderabad will be given admission to the information technology course.

It is gratifying that more than 6,000 students have registered themselves in two days after the launch of the program's website, he noted.

Tessori said that under this program the youth will be self-

sufficient and able to earn their livelihood. He said that this program will be started in other districts of Sindh very soon. The series of tests will start within two months under the IT program, he added.

The Governor Sindh said that this program will be a ray of hope for the disappointed youth and will prove to be very important for the economy of the country.

Head of Saylani Welfare Trust Maulana Bashir Farooqui also participated in the meeting.



LAHORE: Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Bachar is talking to the media with other MPs, on the occasion of the senate election.

**Minister Health
approves promotion
of 305 nurses**

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Minister Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah on Tuesday approved promotion and placement of 305 nursing staff promoted through departmental promotion committee in the Health Department.

Health emphasized that promotion in service is a fundamental right of employees, and placements will address the shortage of nurses in various hospitals of the province.

On the other hand, Minister of Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, chaired a meeting with a delegation representing Young Doctors Association, Provincial Doctors Association, and other forums led by Doctor Nabi Jan Afridi focal person to health minister for health community.

During the meeting, discussions were held regarding the installation of prepaid electric meters at Lady Reading Hospital doctor's hostel and concerns of medical officers regarding this matter.

Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah stated that The Director General of Health Services will issue announcements regarding the placement of these nurses in various hospitals of the province. Following the approval of the Minister of Health, the services of these nurses will be assigned to different hospitals across the province. Out of these nurses, 156 have been promoted based on education, and 136 on seniority. The Minister of

Health emphasized that promotion in service is a fundamental right of employees, and placements will address the shortage of nurses in various hospitals of the province.

**Committee formed
to ensure child birth
registration**

LAHORE (APP): A meeting on Tuesday decided to form a committee to prepare recommendations to ensure the registration of children at the time of birth. The committee will comprise the secretary of Local Government Department, special secretary of Health Department, chairman of Punjab Information Technology Board, director-general of National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), and the Punjab member of National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC).

Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman and Chairperson of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq attended the meeting held at the Civil Secretariat. The meeting also decided to depute the Secretary of Implementation and Coordination as the focal person for enhancing coordination with the NCRC. Speaking on the occasion, the chief secretary said that birth registration was very important for the protection of children's rights and provision of better health and education.



ABBOTTABAD: Police Rapid Response Force officials are taking part in mock exercise as a practice to defend in perception of any terrorist attack, held in Abbottabad.

**1186 FIRs registered
against electricity
theft in Rwp Division**

RAWALPINDI (APP): 1186 FIRs had been registered against electricity theft in Rawalpindi division, said Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Amir Khattak here on Tuesday.

Chairing a meeting held here at Commissioner's Office Rawalpindi to prevent electricity theft, the commissioner informed that 1186 cases had been registered in Rawalpindi Division since 7 September 2023, while 994 accused were arrested and over Rs 88 million were recovered.

He directed the

authorities to ensure 100 percent electricity theft recoveries in all districts of the division. He ordered to complete all the arrangements for power supply especially in Murree during Eid days. Additional manpower should be deployed in Murree for Eid holidays and a backup plan should also be prepared for uninterrupted power supply during Eid holidays.

The performance of Rawalpindi Division is best in the province in terms of anti-electricity theft, Engr. Amir Khattak informed.



KARACHI: Members of Covid Staff Alliance Health Department Sindh are holding protest demonstration against non-payment of their dues salaries and for acceptance of their demands, held at Karachi press club.

**Minister for regularization
of tourism activities to increase
revenue, service delivery**

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Tourism, Zahid Chanzab has stressed to regulate tourism activities of development authorities in upper areas and said that it would help enhance service delivery system and increasing revenue generation.

He was talking to Director General (DG) Kagan Development Authority (KDA), Muhammad Shabbir here on Tuesday. The minister highlighted the need of legislation to regulate tourism activities of developmental authorities and said that it would

positively impact service delivery and increasing revenue generation. He said that proper regulation would also help discovering new avenues of tourism and attract visitors to KP. He also directed foolproof security measures for tourists in Eid season and expressed hope that the authority would provide all the needed facilities to visitors.

The minister also directed to expedite pace of developmental work on Kagan Valley Township Scheme. On the occasion, DG KDA also briefed minister about their problems and ongoing activities of the authority.



LAHORE: Students watching the calligraphy exhibition at Alhamra Art Council.

**Rs 30.5b distributed among
2.9m families under BISP
so far: DG Punjab**

MULTAN (APP): Director General, Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Punjab Nadeem Alam Butt said on Tuesday that disbursement of quarterly grants, recently enhanced by the government to Rs 10,500 per registered family, was in progress and so far a sum of Rs 30.5 billion has been distributed among over 2.9 million families under strict monitoring by BISP field teams across the province.

BISP was country's biggest social protection program and disbursement of Feb-Mar, third quarter of the ongoing fiscal year, was in progress to cover over 4.394 million registered families living below the poverty line. DG BISP Punjab told mediapersons, according to a release issued by BISP

spokesman. He said, BISP field teams were alert and monitoring the distribution process so that the financial assistance should reach only to the deserving families in a transparent manner.

In addition to Kifalat program, BISP also increased educational scholarships for school children of beneficiary families. Nadeem Alam Butt said adding that BISP was paying Rs 2000 per son and Rs 2500 per daughter of the registered women at primary level, Rs 3000 for boys and Rs 3500 for girls at secondary level and Rs 4000 for boys and Rs 4500 for girls at higher secondary level. However, scholarships are granted only when attendance of the student is 70 per cent.

**Governor visits
Holy Trinity
Church
on Easter**

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori visited the Holy Trinity Church, Fatima Jinnah Road and cut the cake along with the leaders of the Christian community on the occasion of Easter.

He said that the doors of Governor's House are open for the minority communities, said a statement on Tuesday.

He further said that we all are Pakistanis and we will solve the country's problems as a nation.

He said that he values the followers of every religion and belief.

The Governor Sindh also distributed Eidi among the Christian community members.

**CM Punjab
takes action on
Bahawalnagar
student rape**

BAHAWALNAGAR (APP): Following the disturbing incident of a student's kidnapping and rape at Islamia University's Bahawalnagar Campus, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz has swiftly intervened on Tuesday.

Expressing grave concern, CM Maryam Nawaz has ordered the immediate arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators. Instructing IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar to furnish a comprehensive report on the incident, CM Maryam emphasized that those responsible for such heinous crimes must face severe punishment without delay.

**Sub inspector
suspended for
getting bribe**

ATTOCK (APP): The District Police Officer Attock on Tuesday suspended a Sub Inspector and charge sheet was issued to station house officer.

Police sources said that District Police Officer Attock Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan immediately suspended Sub-Inspector Aizaz Ali posted at Jand police station for keeping a poor person including a loader rickshaw in the police station.

**CM Sindh vows to improve
law, order situation, to
win 12 Senate seats**

KARACHI (APP): The Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, has stated that his government is implementing strict measures to improve law and order in the province. These measures include addressing street crime in Karachi and kidnapping for ransom in the riverine area.

He also acknowledged that the law & order situation during their last tenure was not satisfactory, and it further deteriorated during the caretaker government.

However, his government is committed

to improving the situation and is taking steps to achieve this goal. This he said while talking to media at Sindh Assembly where he reached to cast his vote for Senate election on Tuesday.

To a question, Shah stated that during his last term, he implemented effective measures to control law and order in the province. He stated that street crime in the city was brought under control and police pickets were established along the Indus River embankment to

restrict the bandits inside the Kutcha area. Although he admitted that the law & order situation was not perfect, it was not as bad as it was witnessed in January and February. Murad Ali Shah further added that his government was taking strict measures to crush street criminals and dacoits and he promised that the situation would improve shortly.

In response to a question about the Senate election, the CM informed that his party had decided to get 12 candidates elected from the Sindh Assembly.



KARACHI: A view of traffic jam on MA Jinnah Road before Iftar in the Provincial Capital.

**CS Sindh for ensuring
required facilities at
schools, hospitals**

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Secretary, Syed Asif Hyder Shah, terming education and health as fundamental right of citizens, on Tuesday, instructed secretaries concerned to ensure attendance of teachers and doctors and availability of required facilities at schools and hospitals.

The chief secretary was presiding over a joint meeting of School Education and Health Departments that was attended by Secretary School Education Zahid Hussain Abbasi, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch and other officers.

Secretary School Education Zahid Hussain Abbasi, briefed the meeting that there were 40978 public and 11736 private schools in the province while 52,36,202 students were studying in government schools and

39,41,938 students were studying in private schools. The Education Department has recruited 51,354 new teachers through IBA Sukkur, he further informed.

The CS Sindh said that acquiring education is the basic right of every child. He directed to ensure availability of clean water and furniture in schools and paying attention to non-formal education of out-of-school children.

Asif Hyder Shah said that necessary funds will be provided to the Sindh Textbook Board for ensuring provision of textbooks to the students on time.

Secretary Health Rehan Baloch informed the meeting that 14,089 doctors and 63000 paramedical staff were working in the health department.

**Court decision
allowing
Pervaiz to
contest election
challenged**

LAHORE (Online): The single bench decision on allowing former Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Pervaiz Elahi to contest by election has been challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC).

One chaudhry Muhammad Arshid has filed petition in LHC against allowing Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi from contesting by polls in PP-32. The petitioner has made Pervaiz Elahi, Election Commission and others respondent. The petitioner has taken the plea single bench allowed Pervaiz Elahi to contest election against the law. The court has been requested to nullify single bench decision to allow Pervaiz Elahi to contest by polls.

**Two brothers
shot dead in
Bahawalnagar**

BAHAWALNAGAR (INP): Unidentified armed men gunned down two real brothers in Kora Khoh area of Bahawalnagar on Tuesday.

According to details, two brothers riding a motorcycle on their way to appear in court in a case were ambushed to unknown gunmen.

Both brothers identified as Sabir and Nanha Khan were killed in the firing and attackers fled the scene of crime.



ASTORE: Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority workers removing snow from the road and clearing road for vehicles in the valley.

Pakistan implementing an economic reform plan critical for a robust recovery

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Bank on Tuesday said that Pakistan was implementing an ambitious, credible and clearly communicated economic reform plan critical for robust recovery and poverty reduction.

Pakistan's economy is expected to grow by only 1.8 percent in the current fiscal year ending June 2024. According to the

World Bank's latest Pakistan Development Update titled Fiscal Impact of Federal State-Owned Enterprises, this subdued recovery reflects tight monetary and fiscal policy, continued import management measures aimed at preserving scarce foreign reserves, and muted economic activity amid weak confidence.

The Update also

highlights the high fiscal costs of federal state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the critical reforms needed to improve their performance, efficiency and governance through privatization. After a contraction in FY23, the economic activity has strengthened over the first half of FY24 on the back of strong agricultural output, the report said.

According to the report, together with improved confidence, also supported some recovery in other sectors. But growth remains insufficient to reduce poverty, with 40 percent of Pakistanis now living below the poverty line. Macroeconomic risks remain very high amid a large debt burden and limited foreign exchange reserves.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding export sector.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Mr Jam Kamal Khan, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Delegation of All-Pakistan Car Dealers Association calls on Excise Minister KP

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: A delegation, led by Ghulam Bilal Javed, Chairman of All Pakistan Car Dealers Association, and President of Peshawar Traders Chamber, met with the Provincial Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics, Khaleeq Ur Rehman here on Tuesday.

The focus of the discussion was on a critical issue affecting the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A few months ago, the association successfully advocated for the approval of an Islamabad Excise facilitation desk to assist Peshawar residents with the verification of Islamabad registered vehicles.

However, the KP caretaker government abruptly halted this process. In response, the delegation, under Ghulam Bilal Javed's leadership,

urged the Provincial Minister to reinstate the desk. Ghulam Bilal Javed highlighted the significant inconvenience and financial burden faced by Peshawar residents in traveling to Islamabad for vehicle verification, costing them approximately twenty-five thousand rupees and consuming their entire day.

The Islamabad Excise facilitation desk had greatly benefited residents of Charsadda, Mardan, Swabi, and other districts. Ghulam Bilal Javed urged the Provincial Minister to promptly reinstate the desk for the public's convenience.

Provincial Minister Khaleeq Ur Rehman attentively listened to all the concerns and assured the delegation that he would discuss the matter with the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and make a decision after Eid.

Property tax increase condemnable, should be withdrawn instantly: Atif

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: President of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCIO) Atif Ikram Sheikh has said regarding the increase in businessmen friendly tax scheme and property tax

in this way. Atif Ikram Sheikh said, "No one can become a member in the chambers of Pakistan without a tax file. We pay taxes and are in favor of paying taxes, but taxes should be rational. In the difficult situation of the



up to 400% that taxes should be rational, the priority of the government is to increase the tax net instead of imposing new taxes. If so, the economic situation will improve, he added. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, he said that the business community wants to pay taxes, but the tax system has to be modernized and simplified because the rotten and difficult tax system was a big obstacle

business community, imposing new taxes will make businesses more difficult." He said that the increase in property tax up to 400% in the federal capital was cruel and should be withdrawn immediately.

The business leader said that we suggest that a meeting be convened in which all the stakeholders were consulted and a unanimous decision was taken to levy the tax.

SNGPL cuts off another 2,436 connections for gas theft

LAHORE (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) during its on going gas theft crackdown, disconnected another 2,436 connections in Punjab, KP and Islamabad with Rs 28.73 million fine imposed.

According to a spokesman for the SNGPL, in Lahore, the regional team disconnected 21 connections on illegal use of gas and 3 FIRs were lodged against gas thieves.

In Multan, 844 connections were disconnected for the illegal

use of gas while another 943 on the use of a compressor and 31 FIRs were lodged against gas thieves. The team also imposed a fine of Rs 6.08 million against gas theft cases. In Rawalpindi, the team disconnected 6 connections on illegal use of gas and an amount of Rs 36 Thousand have been booked against gas theft cases.

In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 69 connections on account of direct use of gas.

UAE envoy calls on Commerce Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, on Tuesday engaged in a fruitful discussion with Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce.

The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest and strategies to enhance bilateral trade.

During the meeting, Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal, emphasized the strong brotherhood relations between the two nations, which have continued to strengthen over time, said a press release issued here.

He emphasized the need to further bolster these ties on the commercial front.

Ambassador Al Zaabi echoed Minister Kamal's sentiments, expressing the UAE's desire to see Pakistan thrive across all sectors.

Despite existing challenges, he highlighted the untapped potential for increasing trade volume between the two countries.

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 89 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Tuesday turned around to bullish trend, gaining 89.94 points, a slight positive change of 0.13 percent, closing at 66,886.26 points against 66,796.32 points the previous trading day.

A total of 239,650,377 shares valuing Rs.8.940 billion were traded during the day as compared to 238,829,562 shares valuing Rs.8.365 billion the last day. Some 342 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 160 of them recorded gains and 153 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 29 remained unchanged. In future market, as many as 309 companies traded shares in the market.

Services exports decrease by 1.37 pc in 8 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Exports of services during the first 08 months of the current financial year decreased by 1.37 percent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period from July to February, 2023-24 exports of services were recorded at \$5.079 billion as against the exports of \$5.149 of the same period of last year, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics released here Tuesday.

During the period under review, the services imports into the country grew by 28.18 percent and it was registered at \$6.971 billion as compared to the import of \$5.438 billion in the same period last year. However, the services exports from the country on a year-on-year basis grew by 6.11 percent in February 2024.

Industry needs competitive energy rates to play role in national development: PBF

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) on Tuesday said that attempts to stem the growth of the energy circular debt through tariff increases was not a sustainable way.

Chairman PBF Punjab Muhammad Naseer Malik said fifty six percent of direct taxes are paid by industry, which is more than twice its share in the GDP. Denying industry competitive energy tariffs undermines its positive contribution to the economy. "Tariff increases may provide short-term relief to the fiscal deficit but undermine the health of the economy," he added.

Muhammad Naseer Malik further stated that since 2013, we have been

adding capacity by persuading companies that they will get payments against capacity addition regardless of whether the electricity is sold or not. This condition may have been the ground reality of that time when the country needed more capacity and this was the only way of gaining investors' confidence but now the policy should be revisited. Capacity payment is fixed while the energy price varies. Imported fuel is another reason for the circular debt. Besides, all payments including the capacity payments are linked to the US dollar. As a result, when the rupee loses value, the burden of circular debt rises.

IT exports increases by 31.79% in February 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's ICT services export remittances saw a remarkable surge to US\$ 257 million in February 2024, marking an impressive increase of 31.79 percent compared to \$195 million in February 2023.

According to the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, ICT export remittances witnessed a substantial rise by \$ 257 million (14.94%) to reach \$ 1.977 billion during July 2023 to February 2024 of FY2023-

24, compared to \$ 1.720 billion reported for the same period last year.

This surge can be attributed to the concerted efforts of the Ministry of IT & Telecommunication and the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) in collaboration with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to enhance the ease of doing business environment.

Their initiatives have bolstered confidence within the IT industry, resulting in an uptick in IT & ITes export remittance receipts.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Agriculture Ashiq Hussain Kirmani presides over the meeting about cotton campaign 2024. MPA Rana Saleem and Usma Leghari are also present.

JazzCash launches Islamic savings with highest daily halal profits

ISLAMABAD (APP): JazzCash, Pakistan's largest fintech organisation, has launched its Islamic savings product with the highest daily halal profit rates.

The product offers customers free accidental insurance upon subscribing to the service, giving them an added layer of protection from life's uncertainties said a news release. Murtaza Ali, Head of JazzCash, said, "JazzCash's philosophy has been to build products that suit our people's needs. With Shariah-compliant Savings, we are bridging a crucial gap that, in the past, has prevented people from adopting fintech solutions."

He further added, "We are grateful to Salaam

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where five ships, MSC Prelude V, Supra Duke, Goofy, Al-Areesh, UOG Sparta scheduled to load/offload Containers, Rice, Coal, LNG and Mogas, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Gasport Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile three more ships, Hanze Goteborg, Ardmore Cherokee and Chemroad Journey scheduled to load/offload Rice, Palm oil and Chemicals also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day.

A total of twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, MSC Prelude V, SC Taipei and Yun Ding.



LAHORE: Families shopping bangles and jewelries at Banu Bazar Anarkali ahead of Eidul Fitr.

PM for mechanism to double country's exports in five years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for formulation of a strategy aimed at two-fold increase in the country's exports within next five years. He also asked the Ministry of Trade for compiling of such a strategy in consultation with the successful entrepreneurs and stakeholders.

The prime minister chaired a high level meeting on the export sector.

The meeting was attended by ministers including Jam Kamal, Rana

Tanveer Hussain, prominent e-Commerce entrepreneurs like CEO Utopia Jabran Niaz, Zeeshan Shah, Salman Ahmed and other relevant authorities, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister directed for extending facilitation to exporters in the e-Commerce sector who had been exporting country's product to the world, besides resolution of the issues of "Made in Pakistan" brand exporters.

He said that they were taking steps for maximum

utilization of the export sector, adding for the promotion of IT, domestic use item, textile and other exceptional sectors, the relevant stakeholders should be taken on board.

The meeting was apprised of proposals and recommendations for the development of export sector and the strategy in this regard.

The prime minister underlined for submission of recommendations over promotion of such industries that were exporting such items which had been part of the global value chains.



KARACHI: LPG Distributors Association Chairman, Irfan Khokhar along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Karachi press club.

Agricultural development takes priority: Sajjad

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Minister of Agriculture for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sajjad, has stated that the government is placing significant emphasis on advancing the agricultural sector.

He has directed relevant officials to expedite ongoing agricultural projects while maintaining transparency and accountability.

During a recent briefing at the district office in Karak, the Minister highlighted the government's unwavering commitment to enhancing the agricultural sector.

Acknowledging the pivotal role of agriculture in the region's economy, he underscored the need for the timely completion of

development schemes across the district. He emphasized that agricultural progress is essential for economic growth and urged officials to devise strategies that not only boost production but also address farmers' challenges through modern techniques.

During his visit to various areas, including Sar Kali, Loagar Faqirabad, Abazai, and Kadokhel Dam, Minister Sajjad conducted a comprehensive assessment of water resources allocated for agriculture.

He instructed officials to ensure the efficient utilization of rainwater to optimize agricultural productivity, thereby preventing wastage and fostering increased output.



HYDERABAD: Tailors busy stitching clothes for upcoming Eid ul Fitr festival.

Unfortunate to keep masses away of advantages of reduced dollar cost: Mian

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that the decrease in the dollar's value has reduced the cost of imported goods.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, he said that it was unfortunate that certain importers were preventing the public from enjoying the advantages of reduced costs because of the compromised price control mechanism in the country.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the importers were filling their coffers instead of diverting the benefit of a strengthened

exchange rate to the masses, which authorities should notice.

He said that the import cost of petroleum products has also reduced, but the price of petrol has increased, which was surprising.

The business leader said that the importers were busy filling their pockets instead of benefiting the people despite the fall of many commodities in the international market.

He said that the price control mechanism in the country is compromised, which is keeping the masses from benefiting despite unprecedented inflation.

Mian Zahid Hussain informed the dollar was available for 307 rupees in September last year.

Biden and Xi discuss Taiwan, AI and fentanyl in a push to return to regular leader talks

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping discussed Taiwan, artificial intelligence and security issues Tuesday in a call meant to demonstrate a return to regular leader-to-leader dialogue between the two powers.

The call, described by the White House as "candid and constructive," was the leaders' first conversation since their November summit in California produced renewed ties between the two nations' militaries and a promise of enhanced cooperation on stemming the flow of deadly fentanyl and its precursors from China.

Xi told Biden that the two countries should adhere to the bottom line of "no clash, no confrontation" as one of the principles for this year.

"We should prioritize

stability, not provoke troubles, not cross lines but maintain the overall stability of China-U.S. relations," Xi said, according to China Central Television, the state broadcaster.

The call kicks off several weeks of high-level engagements between the two countries, with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen set to travel to China on Thursday and Secretary of State Antony Blinken to follow in the weeks ahead.

Biden has pressed for sustained interactions at all levels of government, believing it is key to keeping competition between the two massive economies and nuclear-armed powers from escalating to direct conflict.

While in-person summits take place perhaps once a year, officials said, both Washington and Beijing recognize the value of more frequent engage-

ments between the leaders.

Taiwan remains the "first red line not to be crossed," Xi told Biden, and emphasized that Beijing will not tolerate separatist activities by Taiwan's independence forces as well as "exterior indulgence and support," which alluded to Washington's support for the island.

Biden also raised concerns about China's operations in the South China Sea, including efforts last month to impede the Philippines, which the U.S. is treaty-obligated to defend, from resupplying its forces on the disputed Second Thomas Shoal.

Next week, Biden will host Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the White House for a joint summit where China's influence in the region was set to be top of the agenda.



Taiwan's former president Ma Ying-jeou speaks to journalists ahead of his visit to China at the Taoyuan International Airport in Taoyuan.

12-year-old opens fire in Finnish school, injuring three: police

Monitoring Desk
VANTAA: A 12-year-old opened fire on Tuesday at a school outside the Finnish capital Helsinki injuring three other children, police said, adding that the attacker was in custody.

The school in Vantaa has around 800 pupils and 90 staff. Children in grades one to nine, or aged seven to 15, attend the school.

"There are people injured in the shooting incident," police said shortly after 10am (7am GMT).

Police were alerted to the scene at 9:08am and later specified that the suspect and the injured were all 12 years old.

The city of Vantaa's crisis group was activated following the shooting, local media reported. Images from the scene

showed a large number of police at the school.

In an update around 11:30am, police said the suspect, who was carrying a gun at the time, had been arrested in an area of Helsinki in a "calm manner". Parents of pupils attending the school told the media that the shooting had occurred in a classroom.

Police urged the public to stay away from the area and remain indoors. "Do not open the door to strangers," they said in a statement.

Finnish Interior Minister Mari Rantanen said in a post on X that the day had started in a "shocking way".

"I can only imagine the pain and worry that many families are experiencing at the moment," she said.

NATO at 75 is stronger - but also under threat

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: The NATO military alliance marks its 75th anniversary on Thursday, reinvigorated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine - but menaced by the growing threat from Moscow and the spectre of Donald Trump.

In 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron slammed the US-led alliance - set up after World War II to face off against the Soviet Union - as suffering from a "brain death".

Now, four-and-a-half years later, the alliance has grown to 32 members with the addition of Sweden and Finland after what Macron described as the "electroshock" of Russia's all-out assault in 2022.

In response, NATO has ramped up troop numbers on its eastern flank and put in place new plans to deal with any Russian attack. "NATO has been re-energised after the invasion of Ukraine," said James Black, assistant defence and security director at RAND Corporation.

US anti-Muslim incidents hit record high in 2023 over Israel-Gaza crisis

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Reported discrimination and attacks against Muslims and Palestinians reached a record high in the US in 2023, driven by rising Islamophobia and bias as the Israeli bombardment of Gaza raged late in the year, data from an advocacy group showed on Tuesday.

Complaints totalled 8,061 in 2023, a 56 per cent rise from the year before and the highest since the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) began records nearly 30 years ago.

About 3,600 of those incidents occurred from October to December, CAIR said.

Human rights advocates have similarly reported a global rise in Islamophobia, anti-Pales-

tinian bias and antisemitism since the latest eruption of conflict in the Middle East.

US incidents have included the fatal October stabbing of six-year-old Palestinian American Wadea Al-Fayoume in Illinois, the November shooting of three students of Palestinian descent in Vermont and the February stabbing of a Palestinian American man in Texas. CAIR's report said 2023 saw a "resurgence of anti-Muslim hate" after the first ever recorded annual drop in complaints in 2022.

In the first nine months of 2023, such incidents averaged around 500 a month before jumping to nearly 1,200 a month in the last quarter.

"The primary force behind this wave of heightened Islamophobia was the escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine in October 2023,"

India rejects China's renaming of 30 places in Himalayan border state

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India rejected China's renaming of about 30 places in its north-eastern Himalayan state of Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday, calling the move "senseless" and reaffirming that the border province is an "integral" part of India.

Beijing says Arunachal Pradesh, which it calls Zangnan, is a part of South Tibet - a claim New Delhi has repeatedly dismissed. China similarly ratcheted up tensions a year ago by giving Chinese names to 11 locations in the state. Troops of the nuclear-armed neighbours engaged in minor scuffles along their disputed frontier in the state in December 2022.



A vehicle damaged in an Israeli airstrike in Deir Al-Balah, Gaza.

Daytime fire kills 29 people at Istanbul nightclub

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: A fire killed at least 29 people in a 16-storey residential building in Istanbul on Tuesday, the governor of Turkey's economic capital said, updating an earlier toll of 15 dead and eight hurt.

"The number of people who lost their lives in the fire [...] in Gayrettepe of Besiktas district has increased to 29," Governor Davut Gul's office said in a statement, referring to the Istanbul neighbourhood.

"One person hurt in the fire was still being treated in hospital," it added. The fire began at 0947 GMT, the office said and was only brought under control by firefighters hours later.

Television images showed flames and a column of thick smoke rushing from upper-storey windows.

The number of people reported killed and hurt rose throughout the afternoon in a string of statements from the governor's office, as more victims succumbed to their injuries.

Russia appoints Admiral Moiseev as chief of the navy

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia has appointed Admiral Alexander Moiseev as head of the navy, the defence ministry said on Tuesday.

During a conference call with the senior staff of the Russian Armed Forces, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu also said that Vice Admiral Konstantin Kabantsov was appointed as commander of the Northern Fleet, and Vice Admiral Sergei Pinchuk was named as commander of the Black Sea fleet.

Blinken says US urged Israel to investigate airstrike that killed NGO workers

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday said Washington urged Israel to carry out a swift, thorough and impartial investigation into an Israeli airstrike that killed seven people working for the World Central Kitchen charity in Gaza.

Blinken arrived in Paris for talks with senior officials including President Emmanuel Macron just hours after the Washington-based NGO was struck by an Israeli airstrike in central Gaza, adding pressure on Washington to toughen its stance in the war between Israel and Hamas.

"We've spoken directly to the Israeli government about this particular incident. We've urged a swift, thorough and impartial investigation," Blinken told reporters at a press conference in Paris, adding that humanitarian workers have to be protected. "These people are heroes, they run into the fire, not away from it," he said of the NGO workers killed in the strike.

Taiwan leader embarks on 'peace journey' to China

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Taiwan's former president Ma Ying-jeou headed to China on Monday for what he called a "journey of peace" aimed at cooling cross-strait tensions. Speaking to reporters at the airport before his departure, Ma described his trip to China as 'a journey of peace and a journey of friendship'. China claims democratic Taiwan as part of its territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring the self-ruled island under its control.



Police officers stand next to a building after a fire broke out during daytime renovation work at a nightclub, in Istanbul, Turkey.

Egypt's president is sworn in for a third 6-year term after running virtually unopposed

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi of Egypt was sworn in for a third six-year term on Tuesday after being re-elected in a December vote in which he faced no serious challengers.

El-Sissi took the oath of office before parliament, which convened in the new administrative capital in the desert outside Cairo.

El-Sissi won 89.6% of the vote in the December election, with turnout of 66.8% more than 67 million registered voters. He ran against three virtually unknown opponents.

The vote was overshadowed by the Israel-

Cyprus concerned over spike in Syrian irregular migration from Lebanon

Monitoring Desk
LARNACA: Cyprus expressed deep concern on Tuesday over a spike in the number of largely Syrian irregular immigrants it said were coming from neighbouring Lebanon after more than 350 such arrivals were recorded in two days.

Cyprus, the EU's easternmost state, lies just 100 miles (160 km) from Syria and Lebanon, and arrivals of asylum seekers from the former particularly have surged in recent months.

Lebanon, which is in economic crisis, also hosts hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees.

In uncharacteristically blunt comments, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides said it was "deeply concerning" that the arrival of Syrian migrants was consistently on the rise in recent weeks.

"I fully understand the challenges Lebanon is facing but exporting migrants to Cyprus should not be the answer and cannot be accepted," he said after a meeting with European Parliament President Roberta Metsola.

Nicosia wants the European Union to consider declaring parts of war-ravaged Syria safe, which would allow for the repatriation of asylum seekers arriving at neighbouring countries.

Iran president says Israel's Syria attack 'will not go unanswered'

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi on Tuesday condemned a deadly air strike blamed on Israel against his country's consular annex in Damascus, saying the "cowardly crime will not go unanswered."

"After repeated defeats and failures against the faith and will of the Resistance Front fighters, the Zionist regime has put blind assassinations on its agenda in the struggle to save itself," Raisi said on his office's website.

"Day by day, we have witnessed the strengthening of the Resistance Front and the disgust and hatred of free nations towards the illegitimate nature of (Israel). This cowardly crime will not go unanswered."

The air strike on the Iranian embassy's five-storey annex killed seven members of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, which runs Iran's overseas military operations.

Among the dead, were Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi and Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi, both senior commanders in the Quds Force, Guards' foreign operations arm. Zahedi, 63, had held a succession of commands in the force in a Guards career spanning more than four decades. Israel declined to comment on the strike. The UN Security Council was to discuss the deadly strike later on Tuesday at a meeting requested by Syrian ally Russia. "Iran reserves its legitimate and inherent right under international law and the United Nations Charter to take a decisive response to such reprehensible acts," Iran's mission to the world body said.

Russia needs new approach to migration after concert attack, Putin says

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday called for a new approach to migration after Tajiks living in Russia were detained for a deadly attack on a concert hall outside Moscow that killed at least 144 people and wounded 551 more.

Islamic State, the militant group that once sought control over swathes of Iraq and Syria, claimed responsibility for the mass shooting. Russia has said it suspects Ukraine was linked to the attack, a claim denied by Kyiv and dismissed by Washington. At least 12 people - including four accused gunmen - have been detained in Russia in connection with the attack. Most are Tajiks who had lived and worked in Russia. Putin told police chiefs that the attack was aimed at sowing discord, xenophobia and Islamophobia inside Russia. But he said that migration systems needed improvement, as it was clear that work permits were sometimes being issued to people with serious criminal records.

"We need to deeply and radically update our approaches to migration policy," Putin said, adding that some people with almost no knowledge of Russian or Russian culture were being allowed to work without proper checks.

"The decisive principle should be that only those who respect our traditions, language, culture, and history can come to live and work in Russia." Russia's room for manoeuvre on migration, though, is limited. Millions of people from former Soviet republics in Central Asia have flocked to Russia's biggest cities over the past few decades, supporting a blossoming 24-hour consumer society by working as taxi drivers.

Germany could spend up to 9 bln euros more on defence from 2028, minister says

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: German Finance Minister Christian Lindner expects up to 9 billion euros (\$9.7 billion) in additional defence spending from 2028 if the country can reduce its debt levels, he said in comments to the DPA news agency published on Tuesday.

The additional funds could be freed up if Germany gets its debt below an EU-set target of 60% of gross domestic product from 63%, Lindner, of the fiscally conservative Free Democrats (FDP), told DPA.

"If we fall below this limit, then the repayment of coronavirus debt planned from 2028 could be discussed again," he said.

The German government took out emergency loans totalling around 300 billion euros in 2020, 2021 and 2022 in response to the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine, while suspending the debt brake that limits government borrowing.

"Without having to change the debt brake, I can then see new financial room for manoeuvre," Lindner said on Tuesday on social platform X.

Germany is budgeting for a debt repayment of 9 billion euros per year from 2028 and of 10.8 billion euros per year from 2031.

"However, if the burden of the pandemic on the debt level has already been overcome by then, the repayment could be significantly reduced," the minister said.

"This would make billions available that will help us achieve the leap to the NATO target in the federal budget after the end of the special programme for the Bundeswehr," he said.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Germany set up the 100-billion-euro special fund to purchase modern weapons. It also pledged to reach NATO's target of spending at least 2% of GDP on defence.

The German government is currently preparing the budget for 2025 and the financial plan up to 2028.

Faye sworn in as Senegal president, cites 'profound desire for change'

Monitoring Desk
DAKAR: Senegal's once jailed opposition candidate Bassirou Diomaye Faye was sworn in on Tuesday as the West African nation's fifth and youngest president ever, promising to restore stability and bring economic progress.

The 44-year-old former tax inspector defeated Amadou Ba, the candidate of outgoing President Macky Sall's ruling coalition, by a landslide in the first round of voting, reflecting high hopes for change in the country of around 18 million.

"The results of the election showed a profound desire for change," Faye said after taking the oath of office at a ceremony he attended with his two wives.

Over a dozen heads of state and regional representatives attended the inauguration, including Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo and African Union Commission Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat.

The military juntas of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger also sent representatives.

The smooth transition was a welcome boost after three years of unprecedented political turmoil in Senegal that had raised concern about democratic backsliding in the coup-prone region of West Africa, where juntas have seized power and cut ties with traditional Western allies in favour of Russia.

"Senegal will be a country of hope, at peace, with an independent justice system and a stronger democracy," Faye said, promising to manage affairs ethically and to build the economy. Millions queued for hours to cast their ballot in an election that eventually took place on March 24 by un-successful attempts by Sall's government to postpone it from February to December, then June. The move stoked frustration against Sall, whose popularity dropped over the course of his second mandate due to economic hardship.



Police officers talk to family members of pupils at the Viertola comprehensive school in Vantaa, Finland.

Ukrainian defence attorneys face moral dilemma in war crime trials

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Sometimes Ukrainian lawyer Khrystyna Vrashchuk shudders when she thinks about the work she does.

She is one of more than 200 attorneys who are defending suspected Russian war criminals and their local collaborators in cases across the country, presenting a moral dilemma that the lawyers do not always find easy to live with.

On the one hand, suspects are accused of committing sometimes heinous crimes against Ukrainians in more than two years of war. On the other, the rule of law dictates that they have legal representation, and Kyiv says it is determined to uphold it, whatever the cost.

Vrashchuk, 42, recalled how she argued in court against a Ukrainian woman whose husband and brother were allegedly tortured to death by three Russian soldiers near Kyiv in 2022. The woman, she argued, had not produced enough evidence to prove she was related to the dead men, and the attorney asked that the woman be excluded from the case on that basis.

India's massive arms acquisitions, hostile military policies threaten regional security: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has told the UN Disarmament Commission that India's large-scale arms acquisitions plus its set of aggressive military policies has turned the security environment in South Asia "volatile and explosive", and urged the world community to address this situation.

"Needless to say, these developments impinge on Pakistan's security," Ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said as the Commission, a subsidiary of the UN General Assembly, began its three-week session on Monday that is scheduled to deliberate on disarmament issues.

At the outset, he congratulated Ambassador Usman Jadoon, his deputy,

on his election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission's 2024 session. "Pakistan is honoured and proud at your election as Chair of this important Commission."

"The security environment in South Asia has deteriorated sharply in recent years, as the region's largest State has embarked on a programme of massive armament," the Pakistani envoy said, without naming India.

"It (India) is now the world's largest arms importer, and is being supplied by its 'strategic partners' with nuclear, missiles, conventional and other destabilizing weapons," he said, noting it has adopted war-fighting doctrines—such as 'Cold Start', envisaging a surprise attack on Pakistan, and a 'limited war

under the nuclear overhang."

"With a long-standing dispute—where the right of the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir are being brutally suppressed; with two major armies deployed in close proximity; with the induction of major destabilizing weapons and war fighting doctrines; with the sponsorship of terrorism against Pakistan; and with the absence of dialogue or international action—the security environment in South Asia is volatile and explosive," Ambassador Akram said.

"Unless determined steps are taken by the international community to address this situation, it could emerge as the proximate cause of a regional and global catastrophe," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran Reza Amiri Moghadam calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Protest rally in Muzaffarabad against unrelenting Indian repression in IIOJK

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A protest rally was organized in Muzaffarabad, the capital city of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, today, against ongoing Indian repression in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The rally held under the aegis of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir, an organization of post-1989 migrants from IIOJK, started at Central Press Club and culminated at Gharipan Chowk in the capital city. Pasban-e-Hurriyat chairman Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, District president Jamaat-e-Islami Raja Mohammad Aftab Khan, central leader of PPP Shaikat Javed Mir, large number of post-1989 refugees and citizens of Muzaffarabad took part in the rally. The protesters carrying black flags raised

high-pitched slogans against Indian illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and in favour of freedom of the territory from Indian bondage. Banners denouncing India's August 5, 2019 illegal actions were also displayed by the protesters. Addressing the rally, the speakers said that the Modi-led Indian government's illegal action of scrapping the IIOJK's special status on August 5, 2019 was in brazen violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, adding that New Delhi had no right to resort to any political and legal changes in the internationally recognized disputed territory. They pointed out that India was an occupier, usurper and aggressor country in Kashmir and its unilateral and illegal actions

could not change the territory's disputed status. They maintained that despite all the coercive measures taken from August 5, 2019 till date, the BJP-led Indian government had completely failed to break the morale and freedom spirit of the Kashmiri people. They said that India was acting as a cruel and imperialist power which was plotting to snatch Kashmiris' identity, culture and homeland through its military might and colonial policies. They added that the Modi regime has snatched the political, civil, social and religious rights of the Kashmiri people.

They lamented that the so-called world's largest democracy had put severe restrictions on freedom of expression in Kashmir and that religious parties.

PM Shehbaz says Pak, Iran should work to enhance trade, energy, road & rail connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday and discussed matters of mutual concern.

The prime minister thanked the President of Iran, Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, for his congratulatory message and telephone call to him following his re-election.

He underscored that Pakistan attached great importance to Iran and the two countries enjoyed historic and brotherly relations.

The prime minister fondly recalled his meeting with the Iranian President when they jointly inaugurated a border market and

an electricity transmission line in May 2023. The two leaders had also met on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Samarkand in 2022.

He stressed the need for both sides to work together to enhance trade, energy cooperation, road and rail connectivity, cultural exchanges, counter terrorism efforts and security cooperation.

The prime minister appreciated Iran's support on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir. The situation in Palestine was also discussed in the meeting.

The Iranian Ambassador thanked the prime minister for receiving him and shared an overview of the current state of bilateral relations.



QUETTA: Chief Executive Officer BRSP Tahir Rasheed meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Waseem Ahmed, Syed Haroon appointed Chairmen APNS Balochistan, KP Committees Provincial Committee

KARACHI (PR): The President, Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani and the Secretary General, Sarmad Ali of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society have appointed Syed Haroon Shah to be Chairman of the Khyber Pakhtoon-Khwa (KP) Provincial Committee for the year 2024-25 and Mr. Waseem Ahmed, Chairman Balochistan Provincial Committee of the APNS for the year 2024-25. The members of the committees are here-under:

Muhammad Haider Amin, Member Daily Balochistan Times, Naqem Sadiq, Member Daily Shaal, Syed Mumtaz Ahmad Shah, Member Daily Mashriq, Quetta

Khyber Pakhtoon-Khwa (KP) Provincial Committee: ?Syed Haroon Shah, ?Chairman Daily Wahdat, Syed Ayaz Badshah, Vice Chairman Daily Mashriq, Pesh, Saba Yousufi, ?Member Daily Aaj Pesh, Bari Malik, Member Daily Watan, Imran Haider, Member D/ Frontier Times, Mr. Ashfaq Ahmed Mufti, Member Daily Ilhaq, Syed Qaiser Rizvi, ?Member Daily Jiddat, Liaquat Ali Yousafzai, ?Member Daily Atamad, Anwar Sajidi, Member Daily Intekhab, Riaz-ul-Hassan Qazi, Member Daily Jang, M. Anwar Nasir, Member Daily Balochistan News, Frontier Post.



QUETTA: People are busy in Eid shopping ahead of Eid-ul-Fitar during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, at Liaquat Bazar in Quetta.

Senator Qadir for taking steps to improve country's economy

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Standing Committee for Petroleum and Resources Senator Muhammad Qadir said that poor state's economy has become a big problem for us.

He said that Pakistan was serious about increasing the volume of trade with Afghanistan, Iran, China and India. India is a huge market for us, he said Pakistan's export volume with India alone could be higher than the current level. Pakistan exported goods in the current financial year while exports from Pakistan to India remained negligible, he noted.

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NHMP, Pakistan Customs sign MoU to increase cooperation in prevention of smuggling

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) and Pakistan Customs on Tuesday jointly signed a memorandum of understanding to develop procedures for prevention of smuggling on national highways and motorways on modern lines and to increase cooperation in other areas.

Deputy Inspector General Police (Operations) Saad Akhtar Bharwana and Chief (Facilitation and Coordination) Pakistan Customs Ayesha Bashir signed the MoU at Central Police Office Islamabad, said a press release.

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A MoU is being signed between Motorway Police and Pakistan Customs.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq met with Leaders of Opposition Parties in National Assembly at Parliament House.

Secretary emphasizes to make data system of child care, nutrition targets effective

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan emphasized that to make the data system of monitoring of maternal and child care, nutrition targets and health facilities effective in the districts of the province.

DG Health Dr. Farooq Hot, Additional Secretary Health Arif Achakzai, Director Public Health Dr. Faheem Khan and other officials participated in the meeting held on the other day. The meeting presided over by secretary health department discussed district-wise classification of health facilities related to maternal and newborn child and other health indicators.

Balochistan Abdullah Khan while talking to the participants of the meeting said that according to data, these districts will be evaluated on the basis of desk monitoring to assess the number of health facilities, human resources, physical resources and quality of service delivery in the districts.

In the meeting, it was decided that to devise a comprehensive strategy for availability of health care services at the Tehsil level due to the scattered population and remote areas of the province.

"Tehsil level" data collection mechanism for evaluation/monitoring of PHC facilities will be devised.



QUETTA: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Provincial President, Dawood Shah along with others addresses to media persons during press conference.

Vaccination stalls set up for polio eradication in shopping centers of Quetta, Pishin

Independent Report QUETTA: The stalls have been established for vaccination of children below five years of ages against polio disease in different shopping centers of Quetta city. According to the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for polio eradication, the vaccination stalls have been established at seven shopping centers located in different parts of the metropolis on eve of Eid shopping.

The EOC high ups informed that 14 teams have

been deputed for immunization of children against polio virus at these shopping centers.

In addition to Quetta, vaccination stalls have also been set up at five places in Pishin with 14 teams deputed for vaccination of the children there.

It may be mentioned here that the extra arrangements are being made to ensure eradication of polio virus in the province in backdrop of two cases reported in Balochistan recently.

All parents urged to ensure birth registration of their children

Independent Report QUETTA: The government of Balochistan has urged all parents to ensure registration of birth of their children soon after birth.

In an official handout issued here on Tuesday, the children are blessing of Allah Almighty and their birth registration is our responsibility.

The registration of birth makes it possible to have access not only to education, health facilities, inheritance and legal identity for the children, rather it also protects their rights.

In addition to this, the birth registration also provides safe and positive beginning along with mending their future.

Therefore, all parents

should ensure registration of birth soon after birth of their children.

The parents may contact the office of birth registration in their respective local Union councils for the registration. They may also follow the directives as mentioned on the website of NADRA in this regard, it was stated.

It may be remembered that fee of getting birth certificate within 60 days of birth has been fixed as Rs. 100. It was stressed not to forget importance of birth registration of the children on the moment of pleasure.

Therefore, parents should complete registration of birth of their all children fulfilling their responsibility.



QUETTA: CEO Children Hospital Dr. Habibullah Babar, CEO Fatima Jinnah Hospital Dr. Shireen and CEO BINUQ Dr. Syed Liaquat Agha meeting with Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Balochistan Imran Zarkoon.

ECP unveils by-polls schedule for national, provincial assemblies

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday announced schedule for by-polls on six National Assembly and 17 provincial assembly seats which would be held on April 21.

The top electoral body issued a notification regarding the election programme for vacant NA and PA seats where re-election will be organised next week.

According to the notification, the by-polls will be held on six NA, 12 Punjab Assembly, 2 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly, 2 Balochistan Assembly, and one Sindh Assembly seats.

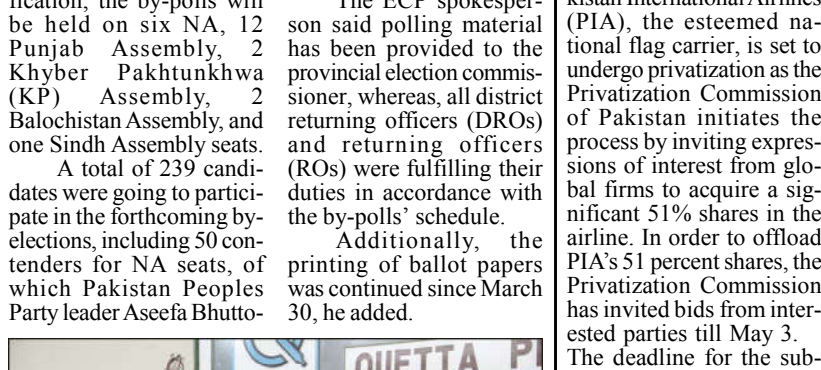
A total of 239 candidates were going to participate in the forthcoming by-elections, including 50 contenders for NA seats, of which Pakistan Peoples Party leader Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari was elected unopposed in NA-207 constituency.

Another PPP leader Zubair Ahmed Junejo was also elected without facing any contest on PS-80 Dadu seat.

Subsequently, 23 candidates were contesting by-polls for KP Assembly seats, 154 candidates for Punjab Assembly seats, and 12 candidates for Balochistan Assembly seats.

The ECP spokesperson said polling material has been provided to the provincial election commissioner, whereas, all district returning officers (DROs) and returning officers (ROs) were fulfilling their duties in accordance with the by-polls' schedule.

Additionally, the printing of ballot papers was continued since March 30, he added.



QUETTA: President of Quetta Bar Association, Qari Rehmat Advocate along with others addresses to media persons during press conference.

CM realized argument of MPA with UoB female teacher was mistake, says GoB spokesman

Independent Report QUETTA: The spokesman to Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has stated that no conscientious person would term the incident of argument between a government member of provincial assembly and female Professor of University of Balochistan as rift.

While speaking in a PTV Programme "Current Affairs Time", the GoB spokesman said that the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti had personally contacted the lady lecturer participating in the protest of Joint Action Committee of UoB and apologized to her soon after the video of the incident went viral on social media.

The female teacher not only accepted the apology of Chief Minister but she also tweeted in Balochi and Brahvi languages addressing the Chief Minister that he (CM) is just like her elder brother.

He said that in his opinion where there would be mistake, the Government of Balochistan would not be ashamed seeking apology.

It is also not wrong to seek apology on any highhandedness, Shahid Rind maintained.

The spokesman fir said that it is the elected government and it has to deliver. He said that the agenda of many people is just to make political point scoring. He said that the argument of MPA with the female teacher was a wrong act and after this, the Chief Minister's making apology on it speaks clearly that he realizes that it was a mistake.

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