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

New IMF programme crucial for economic stability: PM

Steps afoot to reduce inflation, alleviate unemployment & poverty; Reassures probe over threat letters to judges, rules out politics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the government was planning to enter a new programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which he said, was very important to consolidate the country's economy.

"With the new IMF programme, the international institutions will have more trust on us and we will be able to move forward on the agenda of development and prosperity with more confidence," he said while speaking with the participants of the cabinet meeting held here under his chairmanship.

He said the finance minister was going to Washington this month with a delegation to participate in the IMF spring meetings where he will also discuss details of the new programme with the IMF.

He said although the terms of the new deal would not

be so easy, but the government will shift the burden of the tough conditions from the less privileged to the wealthier.

The prime minister hoped that after the IMF board meeting, the last tranche of existing standby agreement worth \$1.1 billion will be disbursed to Pakistan this month.

With regard to PIA's divestment, he said the privatization process of Pakistan Airlines was on track and the schedule set for the process would be fully implemented.

He said that for the outsourcing of the airports, a Turkish company was arriving Islamabad on April 6 which would negotiate the outsourcing process with the Pakistani authorities.

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Pakistan would not hold talks with TTP: Foreign Office

Israel's adventurism in region unacceptable; must be held accountable

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has ruled out talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Responding to the queries of media persons at her weekly news briefing in Islamabad Thursday regarding the suggestion made by an Afghan Minister for talks between Pakistan and TTP, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan expects the Afghan authorities to take urgent action against the terrorist outfits and their leadership for the crimes they are committing and terrorist incidents they are responsible for in Pakistan.

She said Pakistan re-

mains committed to fighting against all the terrorist outfits which have targeted Pakistan and the symbols of Pakistan-China friendship.

She said that following the security audit and enhancement of security measures, the Chinese projects in Pakistan are functional.

The spokesperson vehemently condemned the terrorist attack in Iran. Expressing solidarity with the Iranian people, she said Pakistan would like to work with Iran to find joint solutions to terrorism.

When asked about the Palestinians' fresh bid for the UN membership, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said

Pakistan recognizes the state of Palestine and will support any such move at the UN.

Condemning the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Gaza, she called for international accountability of Israel for its crimes against humanity.

Expressing concerns over the Indian occupation authorities' decision to deny permission to hold Eid ul Fitr prayers at Eidgah in Srinagar, she urged the Indian authorities to respect the rights of the people of IIOJK to peacefully assemble and to freely practice their religion.

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President assures envoy Pakistan will take steps to ensure security of Chinese nationals

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari assured Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong on Thursday that Pakistan would take necessary measures to ensure the security of Chinese nationals working on projects in the country.

The meeting between the two comes a week after five Chinese engineers — and their Pakistani driver — were killed in a suicide bombing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bisham while travelling between Islamabad and a hydroelectric dam construction site in Dasu. The bus was attacked in the Bisham city of KP's Shangla district. The attack prompted

US vows to expand security partnership with Pakistan

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has vowed to expand the security partnership between Washington and Pakistan.

Addressing the press briefing, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said that security partnership with Pakistan has been their top priority and will continue to do so.

Miller stated that the US wants to see everyone in Pakistan treated according to the law, we support the rule of the constitution everywhere in the world, and we will continue to monitor all aid programs.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan, Mr Jiang Zaidong, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Tarar urges political parties not to politicize national economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday urged opposition and other political parties not to politicize national economy stabilized due to consistent efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Addressing a news conference, the minister recalled the initiatives taken by PM Shehbaz Sharif led government during its previous tenure of 16 months.

He was flanked by Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshed Alam. The minister gave credit to PM Shehbaz Sharif for successful negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that resulted into a standby agreement with the fund in the recent past.

He said such initiatives had ultimately stabilized rupee against dollar and brought an improvement in the exchange rate subsequently.

The minister recalled the hardships faced by the

exporters in the recent past due to the fast fluctuation in the exchange rate especially stemmed from the wrong economic policies of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led government.

"There should be no politics on the economy and everyone should play their due role for economic stability," Tarar said while highlighting the positive indicators recorded with the arrival of PM Shehbaz Sharif's government in the country.

He said Bloomberg had forecast a significant reduction in inflation in the country next year and simultaneously predicted an economic growth for Pakistan in the coming days.

The country moving in right direction as the economy had started to boom which was reflected from the positive economic indicators, the minister noted.

He lauded the role played by the media in creating awareness among the

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No differences among coalition parties on formation of cabinet, says spokesman to GoB

Independent Report

QUETTA: The spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has stated that there is no difference among the coalition parties over the matter of formation of provincial cabinet.

He said that the matter of formation of provincial cabinet has been settled and the process would be completed after return of the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti from

abroad. The spokesman of provincial government was speaking to the media persons during his visit to the Quetta Press Club on Thursday afternoon.

It may be mentioned here that it was the maiden visit of Shahid Rind to the Press Club after his appointment as the spokesman to Government of Balochistan.

He mentioned that all affairs of the government are being run accordingly.

He said that the Chief Minister had to leave for abroad due to illness of his brother.

He said that formula has been decided about formation of the provincial cabinet.

He said that for time being, the PPP, PML-N and BAP would be included in the cabinet.

He said that a committee would be formed for resolving the financial matters of public sector universities in the province.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar photographed with participants of an Iftar dinner hosted by Helping Hand for Relief and Development

Whole nation pays tributes to founder of PPP on DA: Shaheed ZAB ruling over hearts of people even today, says Ghazala

Acting Speaker Balochistan Assembly says judicial killing of ZAB was an irreparable loss to Pakistan and nation

Independent Report

QUETTA: Paying rich tributes to the founder of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and former Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB), the acting Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms. Ghazala Gola has stated that Shaheed ZAB is ruling over the hearts of people even today.

In a message issued here on eve of the 45th death anniversary of ZAB observed on Thursday, the acting Speaker provincial assembly said that the judicial murder of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was made on this day, 45 years ago.

She said that the whole nation pays tributes to Shaheed Bhutto on his death anniversary. Ms. Ghazala Gola said that ZAB was a farsighted leader having pain of people in his heart.

She said that it was an irreparable loss to the country and nation when ZAB was judicially murdered. She said that ZAB rendered sacrifice of his life for the sake of survival of democracy in the country. But he did not make compromise on his principles, Ms. Ghazala Gola maintained.

She said that Shaheed ZAB is a big name and unforgettable character in the history of Pakistan, and his name would remain in the annals forever.

Govt notifies Eid holidays

ISLAMABAD (INP): Following the announcement made by the Prime Minister, the federal cabinet division issued a notification regarding the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays on Thursday.

According to the notification, offices operating on a five-day workweek will observe three holidays from April 10 to 12 (Wednesday to Friday). For offices with a six-day workweek, four holidays have been notified from April 10 to 13 (Wednesday to Saturday). Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved holidays on account of Eid-ul-Fitr yesterday.

Saudi Arabia invites PM Shehbaz for Umrah

RIYADH (INP): Saudi Arabia has extended an invitation to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for Umrah, following a decision on a scheduled meeting with the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

According to sources, Prime Minister Sharif is expected to depart for Umrah after a meeting with Prince Mohammed bin Salman is scheduled.

During the meeting, sources said, discussions will focus on various projects aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Sources revealed that both leaders will deliberate on key initiatives to bolster economic and strategic ties between the two nations.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is set to extend an official invitation to the Saudi crown prince to visit Pakistan, highlighting the importance of strengthening diplomatic relations and fostering mutual collaboration.

Sources also indicate that several projects are in the pipeline for Pakistan in Saudi Arabia, underscoring the commitment of both countries to deepen their partnership across various sectors.



LARKANA: Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari along with Central President PPP Women Wing MPA Ms. Faryal Talpur and other offering Fataha at the grave of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

Pakistan, Japan sign two projects in weather surveillance, health sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Japan on Thursday signed two Japanese grant-in-aid projects in the sectors of weather forecasting and surveillance, mother and child healthcare.

The Notes of the projects were signed and exchanged by Secretary of Economic Affairs Division (EAD) Dr Kazim Niaz and Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan WADA Mitsuhiro on behalf of their respective governments at a ceremony held here.

Whereas, the Grant Agreements were signed by EAD Joint Secretary Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi and Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Pakistan Naoaki MIYATA, a news release said.

Japan has provided additional grant amounting to of ¥ 832 million (US\$ 5.4 million) for 'Installation of Weather Surveillance Radar in Sukkur City' and ¥671

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Hafiz Naem elected new JI Emir

LAHORE (INP): Hafiz Naemur Rehman was elected as new emir of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) by getting majority votes on Thursday.

Three names were presented by the Central Shura members to lead the Jamaat, Sirajul Haq, Liaquat Baloch and Hafiz Naemur Rehman were among the contestants. The decision was taken by the majority of Jamaat-e-Islami members. Hafiz Naemur Rehman will lead the Jamaat till 2029.

CM congratulates Hafiz Naem

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has congratulated Hafiz Naemur Rehman on being elected as the Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami.

In a felicitation statement issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister said that JI elected new leadership through democratic course.

He said that we congratulate the newly elected Ameer of JI and hope that he would play his role for resolving the issues being faced by the country.



QUETTA: Spokesman of Government of Balochistan Shahid Rind meeting with President Press Club Abdul Khaliq Rind and other journalists during his visit to Quetta Press Club

Abbasi lauds China's help to Pakistan through BRI, CPEC

BEIJING (APP): Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi stressed the importance of building a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future, as he condemned a terror attack that killed some Chinese workers in his country last week.

Describing the March 26 attack that claimed the lives of five Chinese workers in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province as a very sad incident, Abbasi denounced the attack and said his country is committed to protecting Chinese nationals working in the country.

BRI projects are "basically left to the host country to decide what to do", said Abbasi, who recently took on a new role as a member of the board of directors of the Boao Forum for Asia. He said the Chinese side's framework for the CPEC had only two requirements: projects should be economically viable, and they should be environmentally sustainable.

According to him, CPEC projects have been developed at an amazing speed in the past decade. Now, the focus is shifting to high-quality BRI.

"As part of the community of shared future, I think it is a very, very beneficial relationship in that sense because if you really look back at the Silk Road, it was basically a trading route and it was about inclusion and integration. The same thing is happening now with the BRI," Abbasi said, referring to the Digital Silk Road project.

In an interview with China Daily in Boao, Hainan province, Abbasi lauded China's help to Pakistan through the Belt and Road Initiative and the flagship China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, project, saying he finds China's engagement and the way the Chinese system works fascinating.

Tarar urges political...

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masses regarding privatization process of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) that recorded Rs 80 billion annual loss.

It was the common man who had been bearing the brunt of such economic losses, he said, expressing the hope that the privatization would not only generate revenue for the country but also remove extra burden from the common man.

He said entire focus was laid on economy and efforts were underway to digitalize the Federal Board of Revenue.

Tarar said PM Shehbaz Sharif attached great importance to Pakistan-China friendship and he himself visited Dasu and met the Chinese engineers to express solidarity with them over the attack.

He said that the entire nation was united for the betterment of the economy and national interest.

The minister asked the people to have hope and faith in the system and the

leadership that could solve every other problem. "Shehbaz Sharif is a name of hope who has delivered in the past in accordance with the aspiration of people."

The action plan would be announced very soon to empower the youth, he said in response to another query.

In response to another question, he said that the problems of sports bodies would be resolved as a committee was being formed regarding the Pakistan Hockey Federation.

With reference to Pakistan gas pipeline project, the Minister said that there was no discussion about it in the cabinet meeting today.

In response to a question regarding APP, the Federal Minister said that a committee has been formed to investigate the recent incident in the APP. Senior officials of the Ministry of Information were investigating the incident. The federal said that the recommendations of the inquiry committee would be followed.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif presenting a souvenir to British High Commissioner, Ms. Jane Marriott.

PM pays tribute to Shaheed ZAB on his 45th death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paying tribute to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on his 45th death anniversary, said he played a very important role in promoting democracy and democratic traditions in Pakistan.

"Due to the efforts of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan got the 1973 constitution which was agreed upon by all political parties," the prime minister said in a statement.

PIA announces massive airfare reduction

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Thursday announced a significant reduction in airfares for Umrah pilgrims.

During the period from April 7 to 11, the national flag carrier announced a 30 percent reduction in airfares for passengers traveling to Jeddah, Madinah, Riyadh, and Dammam.

Passengers undertaking the sacred pilgrimage of Umrah will also benefit from a notable reduction of up to 20 percent in fares.

Meanwhile, the economy class has been reduced to Rs 50,000.

Pakistan, UK agree to expand defence ties

ISLAMABAD (APP) - British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif here on Thursday.

The defence minister expressed that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Britain and appreciates Britain's efforts in Afghan reconciliation process, a news release said. He expressed the

desire of maintaining Pakistan Defence Cooperation Forum (DCF) at the level of Defence Ministries.

The minister and the high commissioner expressed satisfaction over ongoing collaboration between the two countries for regional stability.

Both sides stressed the need for expansion of defence and security ties between two countries.

UoT announces ADA/ADS supplementary exam

Independent Report

QUETTA: The University of Turbat (UoT) on Thursday announced the schedule of supplementary examinations for ADA/ADS (Associate Degree, sessions 2020-22 & 2021-23) of the affiliated colleges with the University of Turbat.

This is learned from a notification issued from the office of the Controller of Examinations, University of Turbat here.

According to the notification, the last date for the submission of the examination forms along with the fees is April 25, 2024. However, the examination forms can be submitted with a

simple late fee of Rs. 300/- until April 30.

The examination forms can be accepted with double fees up to 10th May and with triple fees up to 17th May 2024.

According to the notification, the date of commencement of examinations will be announced later. No examination forms will be accepted after the due date.

The examination forms are available in the relevant offices of the colleges affiliated with the University of Turbat and on the university website at <https://uot.edu.pk/downloads/basc-examination-form>.

New IMF programme crucial...

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About digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the prime minister informed that the consultants for the digitization process would be appointed by end of the current month. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, he recently chaired a meeting of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in which details of various sectors including finance, investment, exports, Information Technology, agriculture, power and petroleum were discussed.

"After a detailed meeting, it was decided that I will personally review the sector wise performance to solve out the problems faced by the sectors and to streamline the country's economy," he added.

The prime minister pointed out that the government had fulfilled its due responsibility with respect to the inquiry of the matter of letter by the Islamabad High Court judges by forming an inquiry commission led by former Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani.

Afterward, he said Tassaduq Hussain Jilani refused from the commission, subsequently the Supreme Court took a suo motu notice of the letter.

As regards of receiving letters by the judges with suspicious powder, the prime minister said the government was investigating the matter. "The government, with the sense of responsibility will also probe this matter to uncover the reality."

With respect to the security of the Chinese workers and engineers, the prime minister said the government was evolving a fool proof system for the security of the Chinese workers.

The prime minister said the cabinet presented the finance division's Fiscal Policy Statement for the financial year 2022-23, the Debt Policy Statement for the financial year 2022-23 and the Year End Government Performance Monitoring Report in the meeting. The federal cabinet approved the submission of the above statements/report to the National Assembly under prevailing laws, he said.

The meeting was told that the cabinet, on the recommendation of Foreign Affairs Division, allowed former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi to receive the "King Abdul Aziz

ZAB still alive in hearts of people: Babar

By Tanveer Ahmed Soomro
MIRPUR MATHELO:

Those who erased Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were themselves erased, Bhutto is still alive today but there is no one to take the names of those who erased them, expressed these views on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, President of Pakistan People's Party Ghotki district, Mir Babar Ali Khan Lound, Vice Chairman of District Council Ghotki, addressed a function. He said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a great leader who sacrificed his life for the survival of Pakistan. 45 years have passed but Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is still alive in the hearts of the people.

On April 14, Garhi Khuda Bakhsh caravans will depart from all over the country. A large number of workers will reach the meeting place from Ghotki. A working committee meeting was called by Mir Babar Ali Khan Lound on April 4 at Lound House, Pakistan People's Party District Ghotki officials participated in the meeting and in the organized ceremony, the leader of the people, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was honored.

Pakistan facing 30% water shortage for sowing season

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan is facing a 30 percent water shortage at the start of the sowing season for cash crops such as rice and cotton, the country's water regulator said.

The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) said the gap is based on lower-than-normal winter snowfall in Pakistan's northern glacier region, affecting catchment areas of the Indus and Jhelum Rivers that are used for irrigation.

Kharif crops, or monsoon crops, including rice, maize, sugarcane and cotton are sown in April and require a wet and warm climate with high levels of rainfall.

"There was less snow than normal as a result of climate change affecting the country's glaciers," Muhammad Azam Khan, assistant researcher with IRSA, which regulates the distribution of water resources along the Indus river, told a foreign news agency on Wednesday.

"This will have a direct impact on the availability of water for kharif crops in the summer."

The water shortage gap is expected to narrow as the

monsoon rains arrive later in the season.

However, the country's meteorological department has also forecast higher than normal temperatures during monsoon season, increasing uncertainty.

Agriculture is the largest sector of Pakistan's economy, contributing about 24 percent of its GDP.

But it has been criticized for being water inefficient.

"What this current water shortfall means for the crops is that authorities will have to better plan on how to utilize the water that is allotted to them," said IRSA's Khan.

Pakistan, the world's fifth-largest country with a population of more than 250 million, has recently been grappling with the profound impacts of climate change which includes shifting and unpredictable weather patterns.

Devastating floods in 2022 — which scientists linked to climate change — that affected more than 30 million people also severely impacted Pakistan's cotton crop that year.



QUETTA: Former caretaker Provincial Minister Yahya Nassar meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Pakistan, Japan...

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million (US\$ 4.4 million) for "the Extension of Maternal and Child Health Care Facilities in Sindh" to Pakistan through JICA.

These grant-in-aid projects are aimed to improve the Pakistan Meteorological Department's capabilities in meteorological observation, weather forecasting and dissemination of forecast/warnings besides strengthening medical services in the children hospital and MCH (Mother & Child Healthcare) center in Liaquat University Hospital, Hyderabad/Jamshoro, Sindh. EAD Secretary Dr Kazim Niaz appreciated the government and people of Japan for their valuable support with the assurance of extending all necessary facilitation for more meaningful cooperation between the two sides. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Pakistan WADA Mitsuhiko assured his commitment to work closely with Pakistan to further strengthen the friendly ties and bilateral cooperation.

Swearing-in of newly-elected Senators likely on Apr 9

ISLAMABAD (INP): The newly-elected Senators will take oath in a Senate session likely to be convened on April 9.

The election for the Senate chairman and deputy chairman will also be held in the same meeting. A summary to convene the Senate session on April 9 has been prepared, sources privy to the matter said.

While the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) postponed the Senate election in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the ruling coalition secured the majority of seats in the April 2 election.

Out of the 19 Senate seats up for grabs today, the PML-N won six seats, the PPP won 11 while the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) bagged one seat, unofficial results showed.

The PML-N's numbers in the 96-member House have now risen to 19 while the PPP's have risen to 24.



GWADAR: Deputy Commissioner Aurangzeb Badini presiding over a meeting to review relief activities and progress after recent flood

Pakistan would not hold talks...

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She said Pakistan will continue to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people for the just and peaceful settlement of Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

APP: Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Thursday strongly condemning the recent attack on the Iranian consulate in Syria said the Israeli "adventurism" in the region was unacceptable.

The Foreign Office spokesperson, in her weekly press briefing, said Israel must be held accountable for its irresponsible attack for its unabated atrocities in Gaza as well as the attack in an already volatile region.

"Israel's adventurism in the region reached a new height with its irresponsible attack this week on the consular section of the Iranian Embassy in Damascus, Syria. The attack is a violation of the UN Charter, international law, and Conventions," she remarked.

She said over the past six months, Israeli authorities had been involved in cross and systematic violations of international humanitarian law by repeatedly targeting UNRWA, humanitarian relief organisations, and unarmed civilians.

"The deliberate targeting of a humanitarian convoy bringing food to people facing famine is a serious violation of international humanitarian law."

Condemning the Israeli attacks on humanitarian convoys in Gaza, she called for international accountability of Israel for its crimes besides seeking "immediate, full, and effective" implementation of the provisional orders of the International Court of Justice.

"We also reiterate our call for the full and expeditious implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2728, adopted on 25th of March, leading to a permanent ceasefire, lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance, and ensuring protection of civilians throughout the Gaza Strip," the spokesperson commented.

She also condemned Thursday's terrorist attack in the cities of Rask and Chabahar in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, and conveyed Pakistan's solidarity with the government and people of Iran.

Mentioning the ongoing visit of a high-level Iranian delegation to Pakistan, she said both countries had "re-engaged and re-established" all communication channels as existed before January this year.

She said the government and the people of Pakistan looked forward to the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to their country.

Discussing the terrorist attack in Bisham that had killed Chinese nationals, the spokesperson said the law enforcement agencies were probing the incident and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fighting terrorism.

She said the projects

being executed by Chinese firms faced a temporary freeze following the terrorist attack but the work was resumed following the security audit.

To a question, she reiterated that Pakistan would not hold any talks with TTP and expected the Afghan interim government to take action against the militant groups or forces involved in carrying out terror activities inside Pakistan.

About the repatriation of illegal foreign nationals, the spokesperson said the policy was not Afghan-specific rather it featured the repatriation of all foreign nationals illegally staying in Pakistan. She said a limited number of foreigners were deported as the majority had returned voluntarily.

She said there was no change in Pakistan's one-visa policy as all foreigners coming to Pakistan should carry valid passports and visas.

She told the media that Secretary of National Security Division Waqar Ahmed visited Astana, Kazakhstan to attend the 19th meeting of the Secretaries of the Security Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which discussed the strategic security issues affecting the SCO member states with a focus on terrorism, extremism, human and transnational crimes.

In his statement, the Secretary warned about the far-reaching impacts of the terrorist acts in the region and called for a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of terrorism.

پاکستان میں نئے منتخب ہونے والے سینیٹرز کی شہادت

پاکستان کی شہادت کے تحت وزیر اور ایگزیکٹو ایسوسی ایٹ کے لیے تازہ کاروں کی ضرورت ہے۔

اس کیلئے اس کے ساتھ ساتھ شہادت کے لیے 11 بجے تک درخواستیں جمع کروانی چاہئیں۔

پاکستان کے تازہ کاروں کے سامنے کول ہاؤس میں، خواجہ شہزاد امجد خان اور دیگر کارکنان کے ساتھ شہادت

پہلے کے تازہ کاری کے عمل میں ہونے کی ضرورت ہے۔

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Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Project Director Balochistan Medical Support Program Poverty Eradication Initiative Invites Bids from eligible bidders for execution of following work for the year 2024 based on composite schedule rates 2018 on percentage rates.

Tender Fee Rs.1000/- and bid Security 2% for each work

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1.	Construction of Birthing Stations at Quetta and Loralai (TSE-232404390793)	5,868,075
2.	Construction of Birthing Stations at Naseerabad (TSE-232404390783)	5,868,075
3.	Construction of Birthing Stations at District Kech (TSE-232404390773)	3,912,050
4.	Construction of Birthing Stations at District Khuzdar Chagal and Khanan (TSE-232404390763)	7,824,100

Procurement Shall be made under BPPR Rules, 2014 Eligibility of bidders: Eligibility criteria for bidders may be seen in the bidding documents Bidding procedure: Single stage One envelope bidding procedure (TSE-232404390793, TSE-232404390783, TSE-232404390773, TSE-232404390763) Tender Documents: The Bidding document can be downloaded from www.bppra.gov.pk (free of cost) and the same can also be obtained from the office of the under signed upon payment of Prescribed tender fee.

Address: Railway Colony Quetta Phone No. 03009389070
Email: khurrammngal.bmspei@gmail.com

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TENDER NOTICE

TSE NO.232404390723 The Deputy Director, Agriculture (On Farm Water Management) Zhab, invites a sealed Tender/Bid based on BCSR 2018 from eligible contractors/bidders for execution of below mentioned development works under the project "INST OF HIGH EFF: SYSTEM WITH LOCAL BORES & CONST OF WATER STOR.TANKS/LAND DEV: FOR AGRI: PUR: TH: WATER MANG:IN ZHOB, KILLA SAIFULLAH & SHERANI PSDP NO. 131[Z2022.2844] 2023-24. Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In all Procurements of GOB whether through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, it is Mandatory for All Bidders to Get Registered at Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.

S#	Name of Work(s)	Tender Amount
1	Drilling & Development of Bores, Installation of Tunnels Linked HEIS & Solar System, Construction of Water Storage Tanks and Land Development for Agriculture Purpose In District Zhab	50,000,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. Basic Eligibility: 3 similar experience from the date of registration with the regulator (JV). Bank Turnover of at least 47,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-5 and above (Up to 65 million) in Relevant Category and Specialized Code is CE04 (v) (Irrigation Only), CE09 (ii) (Water Supply), CE10(i) (General Civil Engineering Works). Income Tax Registration certificate is required to be submitted. The bidding firm must submit Income Tax Return of Taxation Year 2023. The Bidding Firm must submit Audit Report / Audit Balance Sheet of FY 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. The bidding Firm must submit Company's latest Bank Account Statement or Bank Credit Line Certificate. The issuance date of Bank Account Statement or Bank Credit Line Certificate shall not be older than January 2024. Tender Fee Rs.2,000/- to the name of procuring agency to be deposited in any National Bank of Pakistan Branch situated in Balochistan Province through Green Challan in a head of account Agriculture Receipt (C03136) (verified by the District Accounts Officer). Method of Procurement: Single Stage-Two Envelope Procedure. Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security (3%) of tender amount in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee of tender amount in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Bid Validity Period: 90 days Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk against above mentioned TSE No.232404390723 Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 19 April, 2024 till 10:00 AM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 11 AM on EPPS System Address: Office of the Deputy Director Agriculture On Farm Water Management, Zhab Phone no: 03025212121 Email: imlirzahaq@gmail.com

Deputy Director Agriculture On Farm Water Management Zhab
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Govt launching several projects to fast track process youth's empowerment: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Thursday said that the government was striving for the empowerment of youth and it had planned to launch several projects to fast track this process.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that Pakistan was facing multiple economic and political challenges and that all political forces and institutions should work together to overcome these challenges. He said after the signing of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, the economy was being put back on the right track and investors' confidence was restored.

He said out of the 240 million population of Pakistan, about 70 percent comprised below 30 years. Rana Mashhood said it meant that 170 million of Pakistan's population consisted of youth.

He said that the government was working on several programmes to engage the youth and to provide them with suitable platforms to show their talent and skills. "It is vital to

provide the youth of the country platform and engage them positively to bring prosperity", he added.

He said that the new generation will have to be given confidence that if they work hard, they will get the reward.

Mashhood said that in the field of education, sports and IT skills, the youth will have to come forward to contribute to nation building process.

Thanking the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leadership for appointing him as Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, he said Shehbaz Sharif had launched many youth related projects in the Punjab as chief minister and now they would be replicated at the federal level.

He said that this year the scope of the youth programme would be expanded and information technology would be included in it. He said it was the vision of the PM that the IT industry should be transformed into a \$ 15 to 25 billion industry and for this purpose the programmes launched by

Punjab Information Technology Board would also be launched at the federal level.

Rana Mashhood said that three sectors including IT, skill development and agriculture were identified for getting short and mid-term progress results.

He said that the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission was joining hands with provincial technical education and vocational authorities to impart skill development to the youth. He said besides technical and vocational courses, the youth would also attend language classes for the countries they intended to go to.

He said in this era of IT, artificial intelligence and digitalization e-gaming or e-sports had become an industry worth billions of dollars. He said unfortunately in Pakistan, there was no organisation of Electronic sports. The government was planning to formulate an e-sports organisation and train players for e-sports World Cup to be held in Saudi Arabia in July or August, he said adding that as per an estimate over 6 to seven million Pakistani youth were involved in e-sports.



ISLAMABAD: Russian Ambassador Albert Khorev meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari

Pakistan desires to enhance energy, barter trade cooperation with Russia: President Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday said that Pakistan desired to enhance bilateral cooperation with Russia, particularly in the fields of energy and barter trade.

The president, in a meeting with Russian Ambassador Albert P. Khorev, who called on him here, emphasized that Russian banks should be persuaded to launch their operations in Pakistan to promote bilateral trade.

He also called for strengthening cultural linkages between Pakistan and

Russia, particularly in the fields of TV and film industries.

President Zardari conveyed his message of felicitation to Russian President Vladimir Putin on his reelection and expressed good wishes for him.

He expressed the hope that under President Putin's leadership, Russia would achieve swift development besides promoting regional peace.

He also expressed condolence over the death of 130 people in a terrorist attack that took place on March 22 in Moscow.

Ambassador Albert

Khorev told the president that Russia desired to play its part in the economic development and prosperity of Pakistan and that both countries were cooperating on mutual issues like anti-terrorism and drug trafficking. The ambassador said that Russia desired to double the existing volume of bilateral trade with Pakistan.

He thanked President Zardari for expressing condolence over the deaths in the March 22 terrorist attack in the Russian capital.

The envoy also felicitated President Zardari on assuming the office.

Over Rs. 77 billion disbursed among Benazir Kafaalat beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs. 77 billion among more than 73,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country under the Benazir Kafaalat scheme. The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (Jan-March) of Rs. 10,500 of the Benazir Kafaalat scheme is continued across the country smoothly.

"Till April 03 at 4:00 pm, over Rs. 77 billion has been disbursed among more than 73,00,000 beneficiaries of Benazir Kafaalat programme which makes 79 percent of the total beneficiaries", an official source revealed. The payment process is continued across the country, including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, simultaneously to disburse the increased payment of Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine

million registered beneficiary families.

The beneficiaries have been advised to receive their full payment through the agent/representative of their nearest designated bank and contact the toll-free number 080026477 or the nearest Tehsil offices in case of any deduction.

Besides Benazir Kafaalat stipend payments, the disbursement of education stipends is also being carried out across the country. In some areas, the special Ramadan grant is also being issued to the beneficiaries, the official source added. The special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly.

However, the beneficiaries can also contact them on WhatsApp numbers including 03018472836/03028240958 (Sindh), 0318472831 (South Punjab-I), 03175370095.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Khazar Farhadov of Azerbaijan presents souvenir to Federal Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan.

CDA to set up 'biggest IT park'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to create the country's biggest Information Technology Park (IT Park) through a public-private partnership.

With the approval of CDA Board, a plot measuring 3.3 acres has been allocated in Sector G-10 for the IT Park, which would be a unique project of its kind.

The plot would have a total covered area of 100,000 square feet, where 5,000 to 6,000 freelancers would be able to work simultaneously. The IT Park would have a working space for freelancers and startups, software houses, a library, and a research centre.

Private IT companies would bear the expenses of the construction of the IT Park, which would also have their offices on rent. However, the IT Park would be handed over to the CDA.

DC Memom for effective tackling begging, inflation, urban chaos in ICT

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the performance of Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates regarding their operational endeavors. On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner outlined crucial directives, emphasizing the imperative need for a streamlined food supply chain, budget-friendly Ramadan markets, and vibrant Eid bazaars. Furthermore, in a bid to address societal concerns, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the urgency of combating professional beggars, inflationary pressures.

The meeting, graced



ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry posing for a group photograph during iftar dinner hosted by former deputy Mayor Islamabad Syed Zeeshan Ali Naqvi at Shah Allah Ditta in the Federal Capital.

Experts convene to define Climate Resilient Water Governance Models in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A diverse group of experts convened on Thursday for a groundbreaking consultation on community-led Climate Resilient Water Governance Models in Pakistan.

Hosted by the International Rescue Committee and National Disaster Risk Management Fund, the consultation aimed to gather expert insights on enhancing resilient water governance systems and policy reforms to tackle the challenges posed by extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, exacerbated by the impacts of climate change.

Among the esteemed attendees were representatives from Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam, Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources, Member Planning Commission,

voice of local communities into project designs and policy formulations.

They stressed the need for active engagement, ensuring water rights awareness, and harnessing local wisdom and indigenous knowledge for project designs.

Additionally, clear guidelines for engaging semi-urban/urban segments in water governance systems were discussed, along with the challenges of scalability and gaps in the planning of community-driven initiatives.

Foster Financially Viable Solutions and addressing hill torrent and urban flooding was one of the key discourse drivers, participants stressed the need for watershed management, focusing on water safety, research and development.



ISLAMABAD: The launching ceremony of Pakistan Non Formal Education Annual Statistical Report 2021-22 jointly organized by Pakistan Institute for Education-PIE, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training & JICA-AQAL Project at Allama Iqbal Open University.

Wani launches Non-Formal Education Statistics Report 2021-22 of PIE

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary for Education and Professional Training Mohyuddin Wani formally launched the Non-Formal Education Statistics Report 2021-22 of the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) on Thursday.

The report shows that there has been an increase in the number of non-formal education (NFE) centers and teachers, as well as a marked improvement in the registration of girls.

Wani said that in order to equip the new generation with education and professional training, we will have to come out of traditional teaching and take full advantage of technology.

He appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) and said that the PIE has published a number of reports on the weaknesses, problems and challenges in the education sector during the year. The Ministry of Education will benefit greatly from the data-based reports of the PIE. He said that non-formal education will not

only increase the literacy rate but also provide access to education for out-of-school children. He said that only through social and technical skills can we make the new generation useful and respectable citizens. Director General Pakistan Institute of Education Dr. Muhammad Shahid Soroya said that the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) has established the Non-Formal Education Management Information System (NFEMIS) in collaboration with JICA. With the help of this system, authenticated data of non-formal education has been collected. He said this data includes information on learners, teachers, educational centers, educational performance, attendance records, tracking of learners, status of out-of-school children (OOSC), and center monitoring. He said that the purpose of the report is to present a clear picture to all stakeholders, including lawmakers, policymakers, educationists, and researchers.

PUC to observe 'Peace for Palestine Day' on Friday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) has decided to observe Friday as 'Peace for Palestine Day' to raise awareness about the core issue and advocating for a peaceful resolution of the lingering dispute.

Under the leadership of PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, religious scholars and leaders across Pakistan are set to address the Palestine crisis during their Friday sermons.

Speaking to the media, Ashrafi emphasized the urgent need for world powers to intervene and halt the ongoing atrocities perpetrated by Israeli forces against innocent Palestinian people.

He underscored the importance of resolving the conflict through peaceful means, urging diplomatic efforts to ensure justice and stability in the region.

He said the observance would signify a united stance within the religious community across the nation in solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

SDPI's head Dr Abid Suleri appointed as member of PM's Climate Committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri has been appointed as a member of the Prime Minister's Committee tasked with the critical review of climate change governance and the mechanisms for accessing climate funds.

The establishment of this committee is a testament to Pakistan's commitment to addressing the pressing issue of climate change. Chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, the committee is a diverse blend of govern-

ment officials, parliamentarians, civil society representatives, environmental NGOs, private sector entities, research institutes, and experts with specialized knowledge. Members of the committee include Coordinator to PM on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, MNA Bilal Kiyani, Executive Director, SDPI, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Kashmala Kakakhel Climate Finance Expert, Rizwan Mehmood, Climate Expert, Ali Tauqir Sheikh Climate Expert, Ahsan Kamran Climate Finance Expert, Nadia Rehman, Member Climate Change, Secretary MoCC&EC (Secretary of the Committee).



ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICC) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari along with Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon inaugurating Eid Shopping Festival at F-7 markaz.

Railways instructed to tighten security in trains, at stations during Eid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways Police has issued instructions to all Superintendent of Police (SP) Railways to tighten security in trains as well as at stations to avoid any untoward incident during Eid-ul-Fitr days.

The department had directed all SPs Railways to depute sufficient force at exit and entry points of all railway stations and strict watch to be carried out of suspicious persons, an official in the Ministry told APP. Pakistan Railways Police Commando Force would be deputed at vulnerable installations and in trains, while bomb disposal staff would also be kept on alert for search of luggage and passengers at railway stations.

"The SPs Railways directed to conduct complete check and search of empty rakes before trains reach the platforms for departure for their destinations," the official added.

All the SPs Railways would also be directed to remain present on Eid holidays and randomly check

trains, stations and escorting staff, the official added.

The official said the number of passengers was increasing day by day at railway stations and trains ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr and the Railway administration had arranged special trains across the country to facilitate the extra passengers.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Railways has decided to run four Eid special trains from Karachi to Peshawar, Quetta to Rawalpindi, Karachi to Lahore and Lahore to Karachi for the convenience of the passengers on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. One special train would depart from Karachi to Peshawar and the other from Karachi Cantonment to Lahore. The train would leave Karachi for Peshawar on April 7 at 6:00 am.

The second special train would run from Quetta to Rawalpindi on April 7 at 10:00 am while the third train will leave from Karachi Cantonment to Lahore on April 8 at 9:00 pm.

AIOU begins exam of BA, B.Ed from April 23

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is conducting examinations of Associate degree (B.A., B.Com), BBA, B.Ed, and BS programs offered in the autumn 2023 semester from April 23, 2023, throughout the country.

The date sheet is available on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) and roll number slips are uploaded to students' CMS portals.

Islamabad Capital Police says: Overcharging on Eid will not be tolerated

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police have decided to accelerate action against those public service and passenger vehicles involved in overloading and overcharging. All Zonal DSPs have also been directed to keep observing the situation and ensure action against drivers and conductors of such vehicles.

According to Kashmir Media Service, this was stated by Kashmiri civil society members including Dr Zubair Ahmed, Muhammad Furhan, Muhammad Iqbal Shaheen and Syed Haider Hussain, in their media interviews in Srinagar. While referring to the traitors, they said BJP is using them as pawns to advance its anti-Muslim agenda in Kashmir. However, they noted that those collaborating with BJP-RSS in IIOJK are traitors of Kashmir and that hell is waiting for them. They pointed out that local proxies of BJP are coming together and offering their souls to Hindutva Indian PM Modi in a bid to gain power and prominence but they should remember that traitors of the Kashmiris' just cause are destined to fade into oblivion.

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charging from passengers on Eid-ul-Fitr.

Following the directions of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, special squads of Islamabad Traffic Police have been constituted who would be deputed at bus and wagon stands.

These squads will take action against those involved in overloading and overcharging fare or misbehaving with passengers.

Special points have also been erected at various roads of the city to check and take action against passenger vehicles involved in

'Traitors of Kashmiris destined to disappear into oblivion'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Kashmiris will not tolerate those advancing Hindutva BJP/RSS agenda in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and they are determined to continue their resistance against India's illegal occupation and shutting doors for traitors.

According to Kashmir Media Service, this was stated by Kashmiri civil society members including Dr Zubair Ahmed, Muhammad Furhan, Muhammad Iqbal Shaheen and Syed Haider Hussain, in their media interviews in Srinagar. While referring to the traitors, they said BJP is using them as pawns to advance its anti-Muslim agenda in Kashmir. However, they noted that those collaborating with BJP-RSS in IIOJK are traitors of Kashmir and that hell is waiting for them. They pointed out that local proxies of BJP are coming together and offering their souls to Hindutva Indian PM Modi in a bid to gain power and prominence but they should remember that traitors of the Kashmiris' just cause are destined to fade into oblivion.



ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) staff planting the trees on green belt along with expressway in the federal capital.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Friday April 05, 2024

Pessimistic view

Unsurprisingly, the World Bank has given a pessimistic prognosis of Pakistan's moribund economy. On Tuesday, it said the country's economic growth is expected to pick up — slightly — from the current fiscal year (after contracting 0.2pc last year) but would remain below 3pc for the next two years as "policy constraints to sustainable economic growth remain unaddressed". Unless a major structural reform programme is durably implemented, growth will remain muted amid continued low investment, persistent external imbalances, distortionary fiscal policies, and a large state presence in the economy, the bank warned in the biannual Pakistan Development Update.

Even the latest growth estimates for Pakistan hinge on "continuous fiscal consolidation and a new bailout programme from the IMF". Neither the prognosis nor the warning is new. The lender had explicitly stated a few months back that debt-ridden Pakistan's current economic model was not working since it had fallen behind its peers, with progress in poverty reduction now starting to reverse, and the benefits of growth being accrued to a narrow elite.

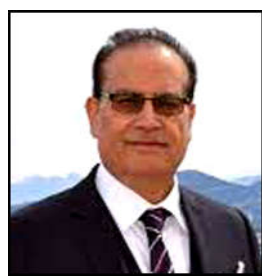
Pakistan's options are few at this point: it can either head towards the abyss or get its act together to dodge economic devastation. Najy Benhassine, World Bank country director for Pakistan, is hopeful that the nation's ongoing macroeconomic crisis could be the "Pakistan moment", provided the authorities undertake bold structural reforms to put the faltering economy on the correct track like so many other countries have done on finding themselves on the brink of an economic disaster. Nonetheless, his message is clear: the only way forward for Pakistan is to implement broad-based reforms on a sustainable basis. "The structural reforms needed to durably improve the economic outlook are known," he said. Will policymakers heed the advice? Over the last several months, global lenders, IFIs and credit rating agencies have been forthcoming in their views on the existential threat facing Pakistan's economy as its external and fiscal imbalances continue to constrain its ability to import essential goods and make foreign debt payments. Their message of urgent reforms is often punctuated with their worry over the ruling and business elites' proclivity to digress from the path and return to their profligate policies as soon as international reserves improve and the external sector stabilises. Although the current government has repeatedly pledged to implement reforms for sustainable economic revival, a definitive policy direction is missing. Some progress has been made to privatise loss-making PIA, for instance, but the government is yet to spell out a holistic policy for scores of other SOEs.

Economic policy confusion is a major concern for creditors and investors. The prime minister must understand that his plans to boost productivity and exports will not work without the articulation of an unambiguous policy direction for the economy and deep structural reforms.

Upscaled Iran-Israel Conflict: Ramification for Pakistan...

By Qamar Bashir

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



The recent wave of high-intensity attacks on Iranian interests in the Middle East, coupled with strikes on symbols of power and authority within Iran itself, has left the entire Iranian nation and its leadership in a state of shock and mourning. Just as Iran was beginning to grapple with the devastating loss of lives following the missile strike on its embassy in Damascus, which claimed the lives of seven high-ranking officials, including the esteemed Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi and his deputy General Mohammad Hadi Hajriahimi, another brutal blow struck. This time, it was a merciless terror attack on the Rask Police Headquarters in Iran's Southeastern region, resulting in the deaths of 11 Iranian officials and leaving several others wounded.

The gravity of these assaults cannot be overstated. They have rocked the foundation of Iranian sovereignty and authority, leaving the nation reeling in disbelief and anguish. The Iranian

people are struggling to come to terms with the enormity of these losses, while their leaders, both spiritual and formal, are grappling with the profound implications for national security and stability.

These events have injected a sense of urgency and determination into Iran's response. The nation finds itself at a critical juncture, faced with the imperative to defend its interests and protect its people against further aggression. Yet, amidst the chaos and uncertainty, there remains a steadfast resolve to stand strong in the face of adversity and to seek justice for those who have fallen victim to these cowardly acts of violence.

These attacks are allegedly perpetrated and masterminded by Israel, when logically, Israel should contain the spread of war in the Middle East, where it is fully engaged in war against Hamas and its affiliates in Gaza and the West Banks, Hothies in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Daesh in Syria, and therefore it should have avoided bringing Iran into the war theater.

However, it appears that Israel has larger plans and is a

part of a larger conspiracy to draw Iran into the conflict by employing provocative tactics to force it into the war zone whether it wants to or does not. This could later give Israel a real and legitimate excuse to launch a full-scale attack on Iran.

Israel, confident of its military might, bolstered by the US's unquestionable diplomatic, political, financial and military support has perhaps fully determined to deal with Iran's looming threats once for all.

Like, it has killed around 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza and continuing unabated with total impunity, it seem hell bound to neutralize Iran's nuclear threat once and for all, eliminate its missiles, rockets and drone capabilities, and bringing it down to a point where it can no longer seriously jeopardize Israeli safety and security besides, lessen Iran's ability to disrupt the global food and oil supply chain and eradicate its influence and reach in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen.

Iran on the other hand enraged by the unprovoked attack on its Embassy in Syria, and later terrorist attack in Rask, while it was

still in mourning mode after the twin bomb attack in January 4, in Karman province this year, which had killed over 100 people and wounded many more including many high ranking Iranian officials, vowed a harsh revenge after every such deplorable attacks.

Soon after the attack in Karman on Jan 4, Iranian reaction was swift. On January 16, using a combination of ballistic missiles and drones, Iran struck targets in Syria, Iraq, and Pakistan allegedly associated with Israeli intelligence and anti-regime terrorist groups. Unlike the other two countries, Pakistan did not wait, and after 24 hours launched a proportional, highly precise and finally calibrated intelligence based strikes, against hideouts of armed groups in the Sistan-Baluchestan province of Iran and restored geopolitical and security balance.

But Israel was waiting patiently to respond to the Iranian barrage of ballistic missiles and drones attacks on Israeli assets in Syria and Iraq, until it responded today with lethal attacks on the Iranian Embassy in Damascus and masterminding

the terrorist attack in Rask, prompting, Iranian leadership to pledge once again a harsh and befitting response, but this raising the stakes by adding a severe warning, that the time has now come to teach Israel a bitter lesson.

Previously, the sworn foes of Iran and Israel had shown prudence and avoided attacking each other directly, instead focused on attacking each other's proxies in the third countries. However, the level of tension has now increased to the point where in the near future, the world may experience elevated tension due to impending direct actions by Iran against Israel or retaliation by Israel against Iran.

This could lead to a dangerous expansion of the Middle East War theater to other parts of the world, causing supply chain disruptions, a spike in the price of petroleum, an increase in the price of commodities, and a general lack of certainty and predictability that would particularly harm the countries with the weakest economies like Pakistan.

Pakistan,

which has committed numerous military and civilian resources to secure its borders with Afghanistan (2670 km) and India (3320 km) and is dealing with a serious threat of cross-border terrorism, will be particularly impacted if the Middle East War Front expands along its border with Iran (959 km).

This implies that the US, an Israeli ally, will once again try to seek military bases in Pakistan, and threaten to put the country in the stone age or economically and financially choke it if it refuses. Pakistan will once more be inundated with secret service operatives, private contractors, non-state players, Jehadi groups, foreign criminals, and suppliers of weaponry.

Given the likelihood of increased hostilities between Iran and Israel and the potential impact on the nation's security, sovereignty, and safety, the Pakistani government should take these growing threats very seriously. If these assumptions come to pass, it should use all available diplomatic, political, and international communication resources to protect the country's vital interests.

We were warned

F.S. Aijazuddin

Pakistan is a judicial jungle, thick with laws, and inhabited by lawyers and judges. Justice lies hidden somewhere in the undergrowth.

Even though all three leaders in the sub-continent — M.A. Jinnah, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — studied law, the countries they sired are suffering from shared defects: legal inertia, judicial paralysis and civic frustration. Mercifully, they do not have to witness the unedifying sight of pending cases, piled like lost luggage at an inefficient airport.

The Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan released statistics regarding all the cases pending before the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the Federal Shariat Court, all high courts and District Judiciary. They amount to "a staggering 2.26 million cases".

Over 1.86 million (82 per cent) are at the district level, with the remaining 18pc clogged at the upper tier. New cases filed exceed those resolved, adding every year to the backlog. It is a Sisyphean struggle, with the boulder increasing in size each year.

In India, the scale goes beyond the margins. It has the largest number of pending court cases in the world. In 2023, the total number of pending cases exceeded 50m. Over 169,000 court cases have been pending for more than 30 years in district and high courts. According to one Indian strategy paper, "it would take more than 324 years to clear the backlog". Almost as long as the number of years the Mughals ruled the subcontinent.

In Bangladesh, the backlog is 4.2m cases, some pending with the district courts for more

than five years.

When can Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi litigants expect justice? As one wit observed: "You get justice in the next world; in this world, you have the law."

In Pakistan, there are 160,000 or so registered lawyers whose duty it is to advise their clients. They show them both sides of the coin, and then pocket the coin. The savant Edmund Burke suggested a higher denomination: "It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do." That moral loquacity has since subsided into obscurity.

Over the years, the judiciary in Pakistan has undergone changes — some cosmetic, many overdue. Gone is the use of cumbersome wigs that were outdated and inappropriate for colonial climates. Statutes enforced in the name of an absentee sovereign have been replaced by onerous ordinances and leaking laws.

The judiciary has often been described as being the third pillar of the state. It is certainly the leanest. It has always been underfunded. In a textbook published by the Federal Judicial Academy, Islamabad (2005), its director general griped that the judiciary was not getting even 1pc of the total budgetary allocation of the federal/provincial governments. This third pillar of state is tilting dangerously, its foundations eroded by the other two — the legislature and the executive.

The press — some regard it as a fourth pillar — in fact stands outside the constitutional tripod. Today, it is raucously independent. It no longer relies on government handouts. Its solvency is underwritten

by lucrative commercial advertising.

Of late, members of the judiciary have been diagnosed with a more dangerous malaise — a crisis of confidence in themselves, and in each other. Many (even judges) turn on one another in a feeding frenzy that in a less civilised society would be akin to cannibalism. They forget the words of the Argentinian novelist Augustina Bazterrica: "Today I'm the butcher; tomorrow I might be the cattle."

Many years ago, I was dropping my son off for his kindergarten class. From the car ahead of me, his schoolmate emerged, accompanied by a guard sporting a Kalashnikov rifle. He escorted him into their class of six-year-olds. I noticed that the car ahead bore the emblem of a judge of the Pun-jab High Court.

I tackled its occupant. I asked him whether he had gauged the impact his guard's Kalashnikov would have on the other young pupils in the classroom. Then I asked him that if the law could not safeguard him as a judge, then what protection could I, an unarmed member of the public, expect? He drove off quickly, hurling a less than judicious epithet.

It seems that nowadays an assassin's bullet is the least of a judge's worries. He needs to secure himself against microphones and inquisitive cameras installed in his home, some even in the privacy of his bedroom. The bottom has fallen out of our barrel of standards. In the 1990s, Singapore's leader Lee Kwan Yew visited Pakistan. On his way out, he was asked his opinion of us. He replied: "I have never seen a country so determined to commit suicide."

Prisoner welfare

Rida Tahir

The recent establishment of a committee by the Sindh government for the welfare of prisoners is a significant step towards prison reforms. Notified under Section 55 of the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act, 2019, the committee is tasked with addressing the needs of prisoners and improving their conditions.

Sindh is the only province to have revised age-old colonial laws that govern Pakistan's prison system by enacting the aforementioned law. The Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Rules framed under Section 80 of the Act span 162 pages. They are very comprehensive, indicating a detailed approach to reforming Sindh's prison system.

Conversely, the law for prisoners in the other three provinces still reflect the influence of the Raj, with many laws and practices originating from that era. The Prisons Act, 1894, the Prisoners Act, 1900, and the Prisons Rules, 1978, are the main laws currently in use in the country (except Sindh). These punitive laws contain the elements of colonial governance.

The law regarding prisons in Sindh is comparatively reformative; it aligns with the principles of dignity and advocates for transforming the prison system into a rehabilitative and educational service. The committee provides free legal aid to prisoners. Additionally, an early learning centre and children's playrooms have been established in women's prisons in Karachi and Hyderabad. The committee also provides football training camps to juveniles in Karachi and mental health services and sewing classes to women

prisoners.

Although significant improvements are needed, with particular reference to overcrowding and the need for expansion of recreational and rehabilitative facilities in all prisons in Sindh, the progress made so far is appreciable.

Sindh is also the only province to constitute a provincial human rights commission. The Sindh Human Rights Commission has been mandated by the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011, to visit any jail or institution where persons are detained to make recommendations for improving their conditions. This works as a check-and-balance mechanism supplemented by laws at the federal level, such as the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022, which provides "protection to a person during custody from all acts of torture perpetrated by public officials".

Other federal laws, such as the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018, protect juvenile offenders through the establishment of rehabilitation centres, focusing on the eventual reintegration of juveniles into society.

Unfortunately, there is a notable absence of empathy within the populace when it comes to addressing the human rights of prisoners. There is a common belief that prisoners are responsible for their own misfortune. This belief results in the lack of societal support for the well-being of prisoners. Consequently, the absence of public concern translates into a lack of government attention to the issue. If one is inclined to believe that prisoners deserve to live in poor conditions because of their own actions, the thought merits reconsideration.

Pakistan was ranked 130th out of 142 countries on the application of the rule of law and 99th on the effectiveness of its criminal justice system by the World Justice Project in 2023. These rankings underscore the significant prevalence of both wrongful convictions and wrongful prosecutions across the country.

According to a 2023 report released by Justice Project Pakistan, overcrowding in prisons is a widespread issue with some jails operating at over 200 per cent of their mandated capacity. This underscores the bleak conditions in which prisoners are incarcerated.

Whether guilty or innocent, every prisoner has the fundamental right to dignity under Article 14 of the Constitution. The Supreme Court stated in the Raja Azmat case that "treatment of prisoners in overcrowded and inadequately equipped prisons profoundly affects constitutionally guaranteed rights".

Pakistan ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 2010. It provides in Article 10 that "all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person".

The 18th Constitutional Amendment, 2010, allows for efficient governance structures through the delegation of powers from the central government to the provincial level. Other provinces across Pakistan should draw inspiration from the pioneering prison reforms initiated by Sindh and enact reformative prison laws. The true measure of a nation can only be determined by how it treats its most marginalised members, among them those languishing in prison.

CM Maryam Nawaz meets World Bank country director

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif had a meeting with World Bank Country Director Najy Benhassine to discuss World Bank-funded development projects in Punjab.

Emphasising the need for early completion of the ongoing public welfare projects in the province, the Chief Minister said, "I will personally monitor the ongoing World Bank-funded projects."

Mr Najy Benhassine congratulated Maryam Nawaz on being elected first female Chief Minister of Punjab. CM Maryam thanked him for the good words, and agreed to

continue cooperation with the World Bank to achieve sustainable development in Punjab.

The Chief Minister briefed the WB Country Director about the projects like province-wide solid waste management, Knowledge Park, and nutrition for the malnourished children in Punjab. She added, "The project of providing packaged milk to students in government primary schools is being started soon." She said, "The World Bank and other institutions will be welcomed to join this project."

The CM highlighted the need for mutual cooperation for smog

elimination and air quality improvement.

The progress of WB-funded Punjab Green Development Program, and Punjab Cities Program was also reviewed in the meeting. Both leaders also agreed to cooperate in the field of information technology. World Bank Country Director Najy Benhassine appreciated the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, and expressed best wishes for her success.

Senior Provincial Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb, Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Chief Secretary and other senior officers concerned attended the meeting.



LAHORE: World Bank Country Director Najy Benhassine meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to discuss World Bank-funded development projects in Punjab.

CM KP hold meeting on irrigation, introducing modern irrigation system

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur Thursday held an important meeting of the Irrigation Department and assigned them new tasks to introduce a modern irrigation system in the province.

He directed the construction of artificial dams to make maximum barren land cultivable in the province besides introducing a system of cluster tube wells for artificial dams. The research process in the agriculture sector should be made productive, the CM said.

Making the province self-sufficient in agricultural commodities is

the top priority of the provincial government, the Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur told the meeting. For this purpose, he said important projects should be worked on to irrigate millions of acres of barren land in the southern districts.

He said that the CRBC Lift Canal Project is a very important project in this regard and realistic data regarding small dams and command areas should be compiled in the province. He told the meeting that development projects capable of generating maximum revenue in the irrigation sector should be given first priority.

He said that steps

should be taken to provide maximum facilities to the farmers and the GIS system should be used for the collection of water and other related taxes. The Chief Minister said that punishments and fines should be increased to prevent water theft and other illegal activities.

The irrigation department should pay special attention to digitize all its affairs, Ali Amin Gandapur told the meeting. Set timelines in contracts for all works department development projects and penalties should be imposed on the contractor in case of non-progress on the contracts within the stipulated timelines, the CM warned.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman cutting the cake during Iftar dinner organized by Pakistan Youth Parliament in honour of children belonging to different Sweet Homes at Governor House Lahore.

CM Sindh pays tribute to Shaheed Z.A.Bhutto on his death anniversary

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a great leader of the world and his judicial murder was black day of our history.

According to statement issued from the CM House, Syed Murad Ali Shah said the 45th death anniversary of PPP founder is being observed across the country today to pay tribute to our great leader. He said Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had played unprecedented role for the service of the people as well as the Muslim Ummah. Qaid-e-Awam had awakened political consciousness among the masses, Murad Ali Shah said and added

that he also struggled for well being of the people and the country's development and prosperity.

The CM said on a reference filed by president Asif Ali Zardari, the honorable Supreme Court also recognized the fact that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was innocent and his sentence was illegal.

He said PPP will carry forward the mission of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his brave daughter Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto who laid down their lives for the cause of the democracy.

Murad Ali Shah said under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Pakistan People's Party always follow Bhuttoism and continue to serve people of the country.

CM takes notice of child's rape in Kot Addu

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif while taking notice of the incident of rape of a 'Mu'ataki' child in a mosque in Kot Addu, said that accused involved in the heinous crime should be given exemplary punishment under the law.

The Chief Minister directed to identify the culprit at the earliest after conducting thorough investigation into the case, and sought a report from IG Police in the matter.

Azma says: PTI founder, Bushra bibi habitual of telling lies

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said on Thursday that today four senior doctors of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) hospital carried out detailed medical check-up of Bushra bibi.

In a statement issued here, she said that during the check-up no evidence regarding giving poison or adding harpic chemical drops in food were found.

Azma Bukhari said that Bushra bibi had a complaint of having excess of chillies in food.

She said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder and Bushra bibi had given separate statements and proved themselves wrong.

After the check-up by the medical team it had become clear that both husband and wife were habitual of telling lies.

15 dead, 1,293 injured in Punjab road accidents

Independent Report
LAHORE: At least 15 people were killed and 1,293 others injured in 1,224 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 579 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 714 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams. The data analysis showed that 688 drivers, 42 underage drivers, 189 pedestrians, and 431 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. The

Health Minister meets Deputy Director Bill Gates Foundation for polio

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Deputy Director of Polio for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Michael Galway met with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah at his office on Thursday.

Special Secretary Health for Polio Eradication, Abdul Basit was also present at the meeting. During the meeting, there was an exchange of views regarding potential upcoming visits of the High-Level Polio Oversight Board in May.

Representative of the Bill and Melinda Gates

Foundation commended Pakistan's efforts in polio eradication. He engaged in special discussions with the Health Minister about the measures taken to contain the poliovirus in southern regions. Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah and Michael Galway agreed to take concrete steps to combat the polio virus, which is being transmitted from Afghanistan. Emphasis was placed on vaccinating individuals crossing the border. The Health Minister assured Michael Galway that there would be no compromise on the polio campaign and children's vaccination.

Jinnah House attack: ATC grants bail to 39 accused

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday granted post-arrest bail to 39 accused involved in the Jinnah House attack case of May 9 riots.

The court ordered the accused to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each to avail the relief of bail.

Duty Judge Arshad Javed heard the post-arrest bail petitions of the accused and announced the verdict upon completion of arguments by the parties.

The accused who were granted bail are: Nadir Mehmood, Shan Ali, Muhammad Afzal, Yar Gull, Owais Ali, Muhammad Irshad, Waqar Jameel, Zeeshan Butt, Kashif Khan.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique inaugurates Provincial Stroke Management Centre at Services Institute of Medical Sciences.

Minister stresses cleaning of ponds to save underground water

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Local Governments Department Minister Zeeshan Rafique has said that through collective efforts, the government will be able to provide a safe environment for future generations by keeping the underground water clean.

The Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company (PMDFC), in collaboration with UNICEF, has successfully completed a model project for cleaning waste water ponds in Sheikhupura. The plan to make sewage water reservoirs reusable will be extended in a phased manner.

He was addressing a seminar, organised under the auspices of the PMDFC at the GOR Officers' Mess, as the chief guest. Special Secretary Local Government Department

ASI suspended over bribe

FAISALABAD (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Captain (ret'd) Muhammad Ali Zia has suspended an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of Sadar Jaranwala police station on charge of taking illegal gratification from the shopkeepers.

Police spokesman said here on Thursday that ASI Zameer-ul-Hasan had allegedly extorted money from shopkeepers in Jaranwala and someone made its video and spread on social media.

Taking serious notice, the CPO suspended the ASI Zameer-ul-Hasan and directed SP Jaranwala Division to probe the matter and submit its report at the earliest.

Further action would be taken after inquiry report, he added.

One fatality, multiple injuries in Attack incidents

ATTOCK (APP): Tragedy struck in different parts of Attock district on Thursday, with one fatality and several injuries reported in separate incidents. According to details, in the first incident, 38-year-old Junaid Sadeeq, a resident of Kashmir Colony, lost his life when a speeding truck, driven recklessly by an unknown driver, collided with his motorcycle near Fauji Mill on GT road within the jurisdiction of Hassanabdal.

Punjab Governor says: Sweet Homes children should study diligently and become great person

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that human greatness does not lie in wealth or money but in good character. He was speaking on the occasion of Iftar dinner organized by Pakistan Youth Parliament in honour of children belonging to different Sweet Homes at Governor House Lahore. Members of Pakistan Youth Parliament and others were also present on the occasion.

Punjab Governor, Muhammad Balighur Rehman while addressing the children said that you are on your way to a better and brighter future, you should study diligently and become a great person.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that he welcomes the young guests at the Governor's House.

He said that you should get education and become a great person. Addressing the children, Governor Punjab asked them to develop high moral values in themselves.

He said that the world is a testing place. In every person's life there are also some shortcomings. But we should thank Allah Almighty in every situation.

He said that dear children, the success of the country, humanity and all of us lies in your success.

Governor Punjab said that he is deeply grateful to Sweet Homes, their organizers and staff for providing good care and education to these children. Governor Punjab further said that it is the responsibility of all members of the society to contribute to the care of these children.



GARHI KHUDA BUX: Leaders and activists of Peoples Party showering rose petals and offer Fateha at the grave of martyred Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Founder of Peoples Party (PPP), in connection of his 45th Death Anniversary ceremony held at Bhutto Mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bux.

Minister urges politicians to prioritise national interests over conspiracy politics

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Health and Emergency Services Khawaja Salman Rafique has emphasised the need for politicians to focus on national welfare rather than indulging in conspiracy politics.

During his address at the opening ceremony of the Provincial Stroke Management Centre at Services Institute of Medical Sciences Auditorium here on Thursday, he highlighted the critical state of affairs in Pakistan, likening it to a wartime scenario and stressing the importance of unity and dedication to public service. He denounced favoritism within the Punjab Health Department, asserting a firm stance against nepotism.

Praising the efforts of healthcare professionals in alleviating people's suffering, Salman Rafique acknowledged the costly nature of stroke treatment and applauded the launch of the Provincial Stroke Management Center

project as a significant step forward.

He also revealed the accelerated progress of revamping projects in government hospitals, with an allocation of Rs 16 billion approved by the Chief Minister last week.

Secretary Emergency Services Punjab, Dr Rizwan Naseer, commended the department's monumental efforts in rescuing millions of people, saving billions in losses, particularly during crises like the Covid pandemic and floods.

The event saw participation from esteemed figures in the medical community, including Principal Services Institute Medical Sciences Professor Dr. Zohra Khanum, who expressed gratitude to Minister Rafique for his presence.

Professor Dr. Qasim Bashir underscored the significance of the Provincial Stroke Management Center, while other distinguished attendees, such as Executive Director Punjab.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Mal, Sohail Shaukat Butt, distributes Eid gifts among the staff of the Social Welfare Department.

Corrupt invigilators should be sent behind bars: Minister Bilal Yasin

Independent Report
LAHORE: A meeting of the Cabinet Committee to investigate the cheating in exams issue and other irregularities in the ongoing examination process in Punjab was held at the Punjab Assembly Committee Room, here on Thursday.

The meeting, chaired by Provincial Minister Bilal Yasin, was attended by Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat, Education Secretary, Additional Secretary Home, DIG Special Branch and officers from different education boards.

In the meeting, serious concern was expressed over the irregularities during the recent examinations.

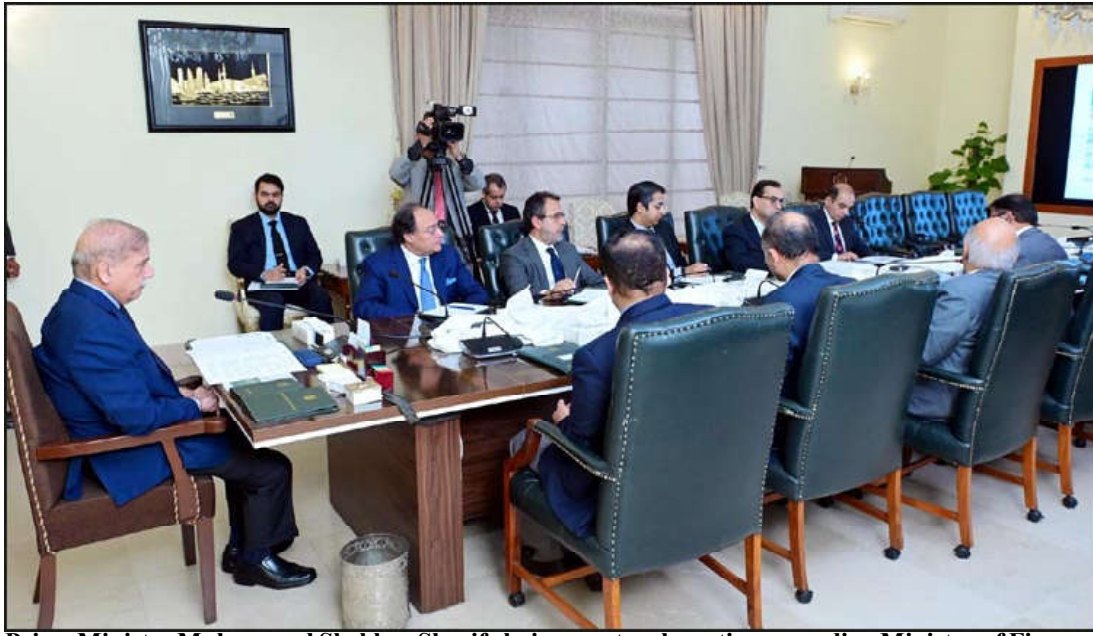
Bilal Yasin, head of the

cabinet committee, said all institutions and individuals involved in the examination process should mend their ways and be more vigilant. Reports of cheating and serious irregularities in the examination process were emerging from several districts, including Lahore. He said that appointment of private invigilators to the matriculation examinations and corruption is a question mark on the efficiency of the administration.

Bilal Yasin said that all examination centres that provincial ministers were visiting and the management's reports were contrary to facts and would not work because the undercover teams in the field were bringing out all



LAHORE: Provincial Minister Bilal Yasin presides over the cabinet committee meeting regarding cheating in Exam and irregularities in ongoing exam process. Provincial Minister for Education Rana Sikandar Hayat and other high ups also present.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a sectoral meeting regarding Ministry of Finance in Islamabad.

PM seeks comprehensive plan for increase in revenue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday directed that a comprehensive plan for increase in revenue should be prepared without putting burden on the common man.

While chairing a high level meeting on Ministry of Finance, he said in the next five years the tax to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would be taken to 15 percent.

He said the federal government would strengthen the provinces and would hand over all the relevant ministries and departments to the

provinces, under the 18th amendment, adding expenditure would be reduced to decrease the fiscal deficit.

He directed to speed up the process of reforms and privatization of the state owned institutions especially those which were running in losses.

He said public private partnership should be initiated with private operators to improve the services at all the large airports of the country.

The prime minister said the government was fully focused on gradually decreasing the public debt, pension and subsidy reforms and privatization of the state owned entities.

He said the conclusion of the standby programme with the International Monetary Fund was a positive development, adding the government would make full effort for the next programme with the IMF.

He said a detailed plan should also be presented for decrease in external debt.

The services of international experts should be hired for achieving economic progress, he added.

The meeting was briefed about revenue, taxes, fiscal deficit, foreign exchange reserves, remittances and current account.

The participants of the meeting were also informed about the progress on the implementation on issues of revenue, subsidies, power sector reforms and on the instructions of the prime minister to reduce government expenditure.

Federal ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema, Dr Musadiq Malik, Ahsan Iqbal, Deputy

Govt to provide policy support to industrial sector in upcoming Budget: Jam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday said that the government will provide economic and trade policy support to the business community and their suggestions will be implemented in the upcoming budget.

The government is fully aware of its responsibilities for economic and industrial competitiveness and productivity and in this regard, full support will be provided to the industrialists.

The Minister for Commerce said this while addressing the Pre-Budget 2024-25 seminar arranged by Ministry of Commerce here. The Seminar was aimed at creating awareness on tariff rationalization for Trade bodies and associations, exporters, and public sector stakeholders from Ministry of Industries and Production, Federal Board of Revenue, National Tariff

Commission, Ministry of Finance, and Board of Investment among others.

The seminar was also attended by representatives by the key chambers of commerce and industry, product associations and sector specialists from all over Pakistan. In his keynote address, the Federal Minister for Commerce, Mr. Jam Kamal termed the tariff rationalization process as a critical function of the government to enhance trade.

CM's aide for increasing home municipal property tax at par with big cities

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Finance, Muzamil Aslam on Thursday expressed displeasure over excise and taxation recovery and said that annual municipal property tax on homes should be like taxes in other major cities.

He was chairing a meeting regarding reforms initiatives and tax recovery by various departments. The meeting was also attended by Secretary Finance, Amir Khan, Additional Secretary, Abdullah, Additional Secretary Energy, Director General Excise and concerned officials.

Chairing the meeting, finance advisor said that ratio of tax is comparatively low in KP and it should be increased like other cities. He also our province needs timely and complete tax recovery.

He also directed tax proposals relating to vehicles that are registered outside of KP saying that these vehicles uses infrastructure of the province. He said that six percent property tax in high and hinted that it would be reduced to facilitate people in transferring their lands.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries & Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain chairs a meeting of the Sugar Advisory Board (SAB).

NEPRA imposes Rs 50 mln fine on DISCOs for over load shedding

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has imposed a Rs 50 million fine on various power distribution companies (DISCOs) for carrying out overloading in May and June 2022.

The authority imposed a fine after the completion of an investigation into the issue, according to a statement issued here Thursday.

Fines were imposed on Peshawar Electric Supply Company, Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO), Sukkur Electric Supply Company (SEPCO) and K-Electric for violation of rules and regulations, it further said.

The said DISCOs were found involved in carrying out 4-16 power load-shedding on a commercial basis. The authority had launched legal action after receiving reports about country-wide load-shedding in 2022. The authority provided a complete opportunity to all DISCOs for their defence.

Real reforms never been attempted in any sector: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that no serious measures have been ever initiated for bringing reforms in different sectors.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, he said that the former governments have deceived international lenders and masses with lip service, but now it has become impossible to run the country by avoiding reforms.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the IMF has been duped continuously for decades, which has made its attitude very rigid. Now, the loan will be received after real reforms, and the country could be run.

The IMF's focus has been on reforming the FBR. Despite spending billions of rupees in the past, FBR could not be reformed to a satisfactory level, he added.

The business leader said that the documentation of the economy has become a compulsion that needs to be supported by the rich beneficiaries of the existing flawed system.

He said that the IMF was increasing pressure on Pakistan to find new taxpayers and stop tax evasion, which was in line with the country's interests, because, without it, it was impossible to get the country out of the debt problem. Realizing this situation, the political and military leadership have jointly taken various measures to expand the tax net, which was commendable. In this regard, bringing wholesalers and retailers into the tax net was the most difficult step, and it requires political commitment. Mian Zahid Hussain said that all such efforts have failed in the past, but now there was no other option left.

Over three million retailers must be brought into the tax net.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, Dr. Kazim Niaz and Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro are signing and exchanging the Notes of Projects.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan aim to boost economic ties, seeking finalization of PTA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Thursday aimed to boost economic and trade ties by seeking finalization of a bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) to increase the bilateral trade between both of countries.

Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, and Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, met here on Thursday to discuss bolstering economic cooperation between the two nations, according to a press release issued here.

Minister Jam Kamal reiterated Pakistan's commitment to strengthening commercial and economic ties, emphasizing the importance of people-to-people contact and the signing of the PTA to bolster trade volume and create new business opportunities.

Highlighting the historical, political, and economic ties shared by Pakistan and Azerbaijan, Minister Jam Kamal emphasized the need to extend bilateral trade to its true potential by addressing trade-related issues.

Minister Jam Kamal noted the increase in exports to Azerbaijan from US\$ 9.70 million in 2021-22 to US\$ 12.08 million in 2022-23, alongside a significant rise in imports primarily due to fertilizers. Both countries are actively negotiating a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), with finalized drafts.

Rupee sheds 01 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday witnessed a devaluation of 01 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.92 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.91.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs277.5 and Rs281 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs2.40 to close at Rs301.74 against the last-day closing of Rs299.34, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.83, whereas an increase of Rs2.72 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound.

Provision of quality agri inputs to farmers being ensured: Ashiq Kirmani

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani has said that zero tolerance policy is being implemented to provide quality agricultural inputs to the farmers as per the direction of Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz.

According to a press release issued here on Thursday, as per the direction of Punjab Agriculture Minister, Deputy Commissioner Okara Dr Zeeshan Hanif along with Director Agriculture Zulfiqar Ali Ghori and Pesticide Inspector Chaudhry Asim Ali raided the office of Spire Agro Chemicals and filed a case against the accused involved in various illegal packing and repacking processes, in police station Sadar Okara.

The stock on the spot was taken into custody and handed over to the police. The said team seized a huge quantity of empty bottles, sealing machine, heat gun, weighing scales and various labels etc from the spot. The accused was arrested by the police party on the spot. The value of the seized property was approximately Rs 3 million. Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani said that action should be taken against the elements involved in the scandalous.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan addressing the Pre-Budget Seminar in Islamabad, focusing on tariff rationalization and its implications for trade competitiveness and economic growth.

SBP announces Eid holidays from 10 to 12 April

KARACHI (APP): All the banks and financial institutions will remain closed from April 10 to 12, 2024 on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here, announced that the central bank will "remain closed from 10th to 12th April, 2024 (Wednesday to Friday) being public holidays on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr." Subsequently, all the banks, Micro Finance Banks and other financial institutions will also observe Eid-ul-Fitr holidays from 10 to 12 April, 2024.

Comprehensive measures in progress to enhance tax net: FBR

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Commissioner (Inland Revenue) Regional Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar, Zafar Iqbal Khan has said that in consultations with the trading community comprehensive measures have been initiated to enhance the tax net.

Addressing an online open court here on Thursday, he said that due to the survey of various markets 65364 new taxpayers have been registered on tax-roll till the end of February 2024 beside the filling of voluntarily tax returns by 21600 individuals, which he termed a positive trend and encouraging progress towards the promotion of tax culture in the country.

The Chief Commissioner said that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has taken a major step for looking into the tax related matters of some specified big industries and their directors and a Large Taxpayers' Zone (LITZ) has been established in Peshawar to facilitate taxpayers at their doorsteps.

Highlighting the performance of RTO Peshawar, he said that a hard target of the collection Rs.162 billion was fixed till February.

SNGLP disconnects 34 more meters over gas theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, who also assumed additional charge of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, on Thursday vowed to make all-out efforts for uplift of the agriculture sector, once considered backbone of the national economy.

After assuming the charge, he said Pakistan faced numerous challenges that threatened the growth and sustainability of the agriculture sector, expressing confidence to tackle them efficiently. "Climate change, water scarcity, lack of access to modern technology and markets are just some of the issues that will be addressing in the coming days in order to realize the full potential of our agriculture sector." He said the government was committed to the growth and productivity of the agricultural sector, adding all available resources would be utilized for the development of this sector.

"The development and prosperity of Pakistan depends on the

Tanveer vows to address confronted challenges in agriculture sector

development of agriculture," he said, adding that he would ensure practical measures for the development of the agriculture sector in Pakistan.

The minister said an integrated strategy would be devised for the improvement of the agriculture sector. "I am aware of the challenges and opportunities that our agriculture sector faces, and I am committed to working towards its sustainable growth and development," he said.

Tanveer Hussain said Pakistan has a rich agricultural heritage, with a diverse range of crops and products that have the potential to not only feed our nation but also contribute significantly to our economy. "The agriculture sector provides livelihoods to millions of people and plays a key role in ensuring food security for our population," he maintained. Earlier, Federal Secretary for National Food Captain Muhammad Asif and senior officers received the minister on his arrival.



GILGIT: Additional Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan Cap (R) Mushtaq and Director SPARKO signing MoUs for giving GIS to the effecties of Diamer Basha Dam.

President ICCI says: PM's initiatives for doubling country's exports commendable

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the initiatives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to double the country's exports are highly commendable.

It should be mentioned here that the prime minister has directed the Ministry of Commerce to prepare a plan in consultations with all the stakeholders and entrepreneurs and submit an action plan to double the country's exports in next five years.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari expressed optimism that PM's initiative will go a long way in boosting country's exports and therein foreign exchange earnings and pulling it out of the existing economic crisis. He expressed hope that all the stakeholders will be taken on board for the promotion of exports of Information Technology, house hold products and textiles etc. It is noteworthy, that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif while chairing a meeting at Ministry of Commerce,

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Twoships namely, Chem Gallium and Alba Gascarrying Chemicals and LPG, berthed at Engro Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile another gas carrier 'Lian Song Hu' also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today morning.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Kyparissia and Silver left the Port on today morning.

753,000 acre cotton cultivation target set for DG Khan

DERA GHAZI KHAN (APP): Commissioner DG Khan Division Dr Nasir Mahmood Bashir said that a target of cotton cultivation at 753,000 acres has been set for the region and all concerned departments have been directed to work as a team for the facilitation of farmers. Presiding over a meeting of the Cotton Crop Management Committee on Thursday, the commissioner said that cotton crop played a vital role in the country's economy and that a reasonable income can be obtained through textile products. He said that the cotton cultivation target would be achieved at any cost adding that all departments have been directed to launch a joint venture for the facilitation of farmers to achieve the target. He maintained that a crackdown has already been launched against adulterated and fake pesticides and fertilizers.



Federal Minister for Privatisation, Abdul Aleem Khan chairing the meeting of Privatisation Commission Board in Islamabad.

Nato marks 75th anniversary with warnings of renewed Russian threat

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: Nato foreign ministers celebrated the alliance's 75th anniversary on Thursday to warnings that Moscow was as great a threat as ever and concern over stalled US aid for Ukraine in its war against Russia.

"Nato's biggest battles to fight are still in the future, and we have to be ready for them," Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis told reporters at Nato headquarters in Brussels, where a ceremony with birthday cake and marching bands could not mask the sombre mood.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, who met his Nato counterparts there, urged the 32 member states to provide his country with new additional air defence systems, especially US-made Patriot missiles.



French President Emmanuel Macron talks to children after their swimming performance during the inauguration of the Olympic Aquatics Centre (CAO), a multifunctional venue for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games construction site which is under the management of the "Metropole Grand Paris" in Saint-Denis, near Paris, France.

Trump calls migrants 'animals', intensifying focus on immigration

Monitoring Desk
GREEN BAY: Donald Trump called immigrants illegally in the United States "animals" and "not human" in a speech in Michigan on Tuesday, resorting to the degrading rhetoric he has employed time and again on the campaign trail.

by a Venezuelan immigrant in the country illegally — Trump said some immigrants were sub-human. "The Democrats say, 'Please don't call them animals. They're humans.' I said, 'No, they're not humans, they're animals,'" said Trump, president from 2017 to 2021.

Italy arrests 22, seizes millions in EU fund fraud case

Monitoring Desk
MILAN: Italian police said on Thursday they had arrested 22 people and seized assets from villas to Rolex worth over 600 million euros (\$652 million) as part of an investigation into alleged fraud tied to European Union and Italian funding schemes.

Somalia expels Ethiopian envoy amid naval base dispute

Monitoring Desk
NAIROBI: Somalia said on Thursday it was expelling Ethiopia's ambassador, closing two Ethiopian consulates and recalling its own ambassador to Addis Ababa amid a dispute over Ethiopia's plan to lease coastline in the breakaway region of Somaliland.

hours to leave the country, and ordered the closure of the Ethiopian consulates in Somaliland and the semi-autonomous region of Puntland, the foreign ministry said.



A protester holds a sign during a rally to demand that the United Kingdom make reparations for slavery, ahead of a visit to Jamaica by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge as part of their tour of the Caribbean, outside the British High Commission, in Kingston, Jamaica.

Video shows US police shooting teen they were supposed to rescue

Monitoring Desk
LOS ANGELES: Newly released video shows US police shooting dead a kidnapped teenage girl they had been tasked with rescuing, in a chaotic incident on a busy California highway.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks next to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and U.S. Ambassador to NATO Julianne Smith as they attend a ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, in Brussels, Belgium.

Palestine revives bid to become UN member

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Palestine on Tuesday officially revived their bid for a full member state in the United Nations — a process with an uncertain outcome but one they say is necessary in the face of Israel's offensive in Gaza.

and seen by AFP. UN envoy Riyad Mansour requested "upon instructions of the Palestinian leadership" that an application dating back to 2011 be re-considered.

Biden speaks with Israel's Netanyahu after strike kills food aid workers

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday, three days after Israel launched an attack that killed seven World Central Kitchen aid workers in Gaza, according to a source familiar with the matter.

Macron says he has no doubt Russia will target Paris Olympics

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday that he had no doubt Russia would maliciously target the Paris Olympics this summer.

represent his most explicit acknowledgement to date of foreign threats to the security or smooth running of the games.

Israel boosts defences after Iran revenge threat

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: The Israeli military halted leave for all combat units on Thursday amid concerns of a possible escalation in violence after the killing of Iranian generals in Damascus this week drew threats of retaliation.



Supporters of a pro-Kurdish party clash with police in Van.

Turkiye's poll body reverses pro-Kurd mayor's ineligibility

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Turkiye's pro-Kurdish party on Wednesday said the country's election authority had reinstated a mayoral election winner in the eastern city of Van, after clashes over the annulment of his victory.

Development Party (AKP), who managed only 27pc. However, the Supreme Election Board (YSK) has since "decided to give the certificate of election to our Van... mayor Abdullah Zeydan," DEM wrote on X, formerly Twitter. It added that the move was "a result of the resistance of the Kurdish people".

US directs Nasa to create lunar time standard

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The White House announced on Tuesday it is directing Nasa to create a unified time standard for the Moon and other celestial bodies, as governments and private companies increasingly compete in space.

Peru's Congress rejects attempt to impeach president amid Rolex scandal

Monitoring Desk
LIMA: Peru's Congress on Thursday voted twice against formally debating the launch of a process to impeach under-fire President Dina Boluarte, who is facing a probe into her possession of expensive jewelry including luxury Rolex watches.

Congress on Wednesday backed the government's new slate of ministers in a vote of confidence in the latest cabinet. Nearly a third of ministers resigned earlier this week, following a weekend raid at Boluarte's residence.

World's most powerful MRI scans first images of human brain

Monitoring Desk
SACLAY: The world's most powerful MRI scanner has delivered its first images of human brains, reaching a new level of precision that is hoped will shed more light on our mysterious minds — and the illnesses that haunt them.

Macron says he has no doubt Russia will target Paris Olympics

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday that he had no doubt Russia would maliciously target the Paris Olympics this summer.

military campaign in Gaza complicating efforts to safeguard the Olympics. Macron has in past months adopted a tougher stance against Russia, vowing that Moscow must be defeated, and has not ruled out that European troops may one day go to Ukraine, although he has made clear that France has no intention of instigating hostilities against Russia.

Hamas official says no progress in ceasefire talks

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Hamas official Osama Hamdan said on Thursday there has been no progress in Gaza ceasefire talks despite the Palestinian group showing flexibility.

prefers a prisoners-for-hostage release deal, refusing to commit to ending its military campaign. In Gaza, Israeli bombardment continued to target areas across the Palestinian enclave, killing 62 people in the past 24 hours, the territory's health ministry said.

Russian minister casts prospective Ukraine peace talks as Western plot to win hesitant Global South

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia's top diplomat warned Thursday that prospective negotiations to end the fighting in Ukraine could be successful only if they take Moscow's interests into account, dismissing a planned round of peace talks as a Western ruse to rally broader international support for Kyiv.

ensure global food security. Lavrov described such arguments as a Western ploy to attract more hesitant countries of the Global South and draw up to 140 participants in order to cast the conference as a show of overwhelming support around the world for Ukraine.

Sri Lanka sees no need for talks with India on island it ceded decades ago

Monitoring Desk
COLOMBO: Sri Lanka does not see any need to re-open talks on a contentious island ceded to it by New Delhi 50 years ago, the foreign minister has said, after the low-key territorial squabble turned into a hot-button election issue in India.

the status of the island, located 33 km (21 miles) off India's coast in the Palk Strait that divides the neighbours. His comments came after Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party made the 285-acre (115-hectare) island an election campaign issue by accusing the opposition Congress party of having "callously" given it away.

PM calls for immediate end to genocidal war against innocent Palestinians

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemning the ongoing Israeli brutalities in Gaza that had continued relentlessly since October 7, 2023, called for an immediate end to the genocidal war against the brave and innocent Palestinian people.

He was talking to Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan Ahmed Jawad A.A. Rabei who called on him here.

He said Pakistan had a historic and close relationship with the brotherly State of Palestine and it had consistently supported the Palestine cause, at the UN, OIC as well as other international platforms.

He expressed deep condolences over the tragic death of over 32,000 Palestinians, including 17,000 children, as well as more than 70,000 injured by the brutal actions of Israeli security forces.

The prime minister recalled the interim ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case filed by South Africa and stated that Pakistan had also made a verbal statement in support of Palestine at the ICJ.

While welcoming the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2728, the prime minister expressed disappointment that Israel had chosen to ignore the resolution and continued to brazenly violate it.

He assured the Palestinian Ambassador that Pakistan would continue to raise its voice at every international forum in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Pakistan has so far, sent seven tranches of relief goods for the people of Gaza. Another tranche is planned soon after Eid.

The Palestinian Ambassador thanked the Prime Minister and the people of Pakistan for supporting the Palestinian people, which was a source of strength for them at this difficult time.

The prime minister thanked President of Palestine Dr. Mahmoud Abbas for his warm congratulatory message to him following his re-election.

The prime minister was assisted by Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, SAPM Tariq Fatemi and the Foreign Secretary.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a meeting with Iranian Parliamentary Delegation at Parliament House.

NA Speaker says: Enhancing trade, business, energy cooperation pivotal for deepening historically strong Pak-Iran ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Thursday said that Pakistan and Iran enjoy historically strong bilateral ties which are based on shared values, similar culture, same religion and being neighbouring countries.

He reaffirmed his commitment for extending parliamentary support to further deepen these ties by supporting cooperation in energy, trade, business and especially by creating synergy among private sectors of both nations said a news release.

Speaker expressed these views during a meeting with Iranian Parliamentary Delegation led by Mahdi Safari, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy along with Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam at Parliament House.

While emphasizing the need for streamlining cooperation in private sector, the speaker said that both nations have vast opportunities in enhancing trade and business by managing border markets, increasing import-export volume, resolving IPP Gas pipe line issues, working on Gawadar-Chahbahar as sister projects and by bringing parliament of both nations closer.

GoB spokesman and Press Secretary to CM condole death of Imtiaz Hussain

Independent Report
QUETTA: The spokesman to Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind and Press Secretary to Chief Minister, Abdul Razzaq Sheikh condole death of brother-in-law of Bureau Chief of Dunya News, Irfan Saeed and Bureau Chief of ABN, Rizwan Saeed and father-in-law of NLE of Suno News, Zain Ali.

They offered fateha for the departed soul of Imtiaz Hussain praying that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul into its eternal peace and give enough strength and patience to the bereaved family to bear the tragic loss of his death.

Meanwhile, central Vice President of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, Saleem Shahid, President Quetta Press Club, Abdul Khaliq Rind, General Secretary, Banaras Khan, General Secretary of Balochistan Union of Journalists, Abdul Shakoor and others also condole the death of Imtiaz Hussain with Irfan Saeed and other bereaved family members and offered fateha for the departed soul.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Deputy Director Asian Development Bank Asad Haleem meeting with Secretary Finance Babar Khan.

84 more applications filed for legal action QESCO crackdown continues against power pilferage

Independent Report
QUETTA: At least 84 more applications have been submitted for legal action against the power pilferers in different police stations located in different operation circles of the province, on Thursday.

According to the spokesman of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), the crackdown remained continued against the pilferage of electricity and defaulters in Quetta, Pishin, Loralai, Sibi, Khuzdar and Makran operation circles of the province.

The QESCO spokesman said that 84 applications were submitted for action against power pilferers in different police stations during last 24 hours.

He also informed that 2,180 units were charged detection fine on the power pilferers in different operation circles the other day. The value of electricity of the charged units becomes over Rs. 3.67 million.

However, Rs. 3.62 million were recovered from the power pilferers on account of the detection fine the other day, the spokesman of QESCO added.



QUETTA: SSP Operation Muhammad Jawad Tariq negotiating with relatives of Humera Bibi holding sit-in at Edhi chowk.

Two bandits held with stolen cash 3.8m in Duki

DUKI (APP): Police along with Chamalang police arrested two alleged robbers and recovered stolen cash 3.8 million rupees in joint operation in Duki on Thursday.

According to police sources, both accused namely Kabir and Ismatullah were tied the shopkeeper with ropes and were robbed him of Rs 3.8 million at around 2 o'clock yesterday in Chamalang.

On the information of which SHO police station Duki and Chamalang conducted successful joint operation at Coal Lease near Spain Masjid Duki.

IHC orders to remove name of Shireen from ECL

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered to remove the name of former federal minister Shireen Mazari from Exit Control List (ECL).

The petition of PTI former leader Shireen Mazari seeking removal of her name from ECL came up for hearing before Justice Samman Rifaat Imtiaz for hearing Thursday.

Shireen Mazari appeared in the court along with her counsel.

Unregistered sellers must register by April 30: FBR

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Spokesperson on Thursday said that all unregistered wholesalers, retailers, dealers and all shopkeepers must register by 30 April 2024 under Trader Friendly Scheme.

He said that already registered shopkeepers don't need to re-register for the Scheme.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan vow to deepen cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Azerbaijan here on Thursday vowed to strengthen cooperation between the two brotherly countries in diverse fields for mutual benefit.

The commitment was made during the meeting of Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov with Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahmad Khan Cheema, said a press statement issued by Economic Affairs Division (EAD).

They engaged in discussions regarding matters of mutual interest.

Minister Ahmad Khan Cheema acknowledged the longstanding fraternal relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, which have flourished since the independence of Azerbaijan.

He emphasized that while trade and cooperation between the two nations have progressed steadily, there remains a need to further strengthen people-to-people contacts.

Cheema reiterated the importance of robust economic relations between the two countries and underscored that through the Joint Commission mechanism, both nations were collaborating across various sectors including Trade and Investment, Defence Industry, Agriculture, Energy, Health, Transport, Banking, Tourism, Sports, Culture, and IT.

He informed that the Ministry of Economic Affairs was diligently monitoring the implementation of decisions taken during the 7th Session of the Pakistan - Azerbaijan Joint Commission.

He expressed eagerness to host the next session of the Joint Commission in Pakistan at the earliest convenience.

Cheema assured continued collaboration and extended gratitude to the ambassador Farhadov for his visit to the Ministry to discuss matters of mutual interest. He pledged full assistance from his office for the prompt organization of the next session of the Joint Commission.

On the occasion, the Ambassador highlighted the significance of the resumption of direct flights between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, which will undoubtedly bolster trade and tourism. The Ambassador concurred on the need for prompt convening of the Joint Commission this year in Pakistan. Both sides resolved to enhance cooperation in key sectors such as business, banking, IT, tourism, energy, sports, health, and transport, and agreed to hold Joint Working Group meetings to expedite progress in these areas.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Head of Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Tamerlan Khalilov and senior officials from the Ministry of Economic Affairs.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power, Awaiz Khan Leghari I na meeting with ADB Country Director Young Ye.

LHC suspends victory notification of Qayyum from NA-81 Gujranwala

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday suspended the victory notification of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) leader Azhar Qayyum from NA-81 Gujranwala.

Justice Shahid Karim passed the orders on a petition filed by Sunni Ittehad Council's candidate Bilal Ijaz Chaudhry challenging the notification for Azhar Qayyum's victory.

The petitioner's counsel argued before the court that his client was declared successful from NA-81 by a margin of 8000 votes, but the Election Commission declared Azhar Qayyum successful in a vote recount. He submitted that the returning officer reduced 2500 votes of his client in recounting. He pleaded with the court to set aside the notification for victory of respondent and suspend the same until the final decision of the petition.

Iran proposes to release Pakistani prisoners

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Iranian delegation on Thursday called on Minister for Law and Justice senator Azam Nazeer Tarar to discuss issues of mutual interest.

The delegation was led by Dr. Askar Galailan, Deputy Justice Minister for Human Rights and International Affairs. Matters of mutual interest were discussed in the meeting.

Iranian delegation said that there are currently 160 Pakistani prisoners in Iran's jails and 60 Iranian prisoners are in custody in Pakistan. Considering the plight of their loved ones, the relatives of the imprisoned Pakistanis, the delegation proposed to release them.

They suggested that in the first phase, the prisoners would be released on humanitarian grounds and sent back to Pakistan.

NAB organizes seminar at FG Boys Degree College

Independent Report
QUETTA: NAB under its awareness campaign organizes awareness seminars, lectures, workshops and conferences in different educational institutes to motivate the students against the evil of corruption. In this connection, the Director General NAB (Balochistan) deputed a team headed by Mr. Muhammad Farooq Azam, Director NAB to conduct a seminar on 2nd April 2024 on the topic of "Role of Students in Eradication of Corruption" at Federal Government Boys Degree College, Quetta.

The Regional Director FGEI Lt. Col. Abdul Mustafa, Principal of the College Mr. Imtiaz Ali Tunio, faculty members and college students participated in the seminar. The primary objective of seminar was to create awareness among young students against corruption through collective efforts with aim to build a corruption-free society.

The Principal FG Degree Boys College, Quetta Cantt shared his views about the topic in his inaugural words, welcomed the participants and appreciated NAB for arranging the seminar.

Mr. Muhammad Farooq Azam, Director NAB delivered lecture and spoke about the vision, mission, functioning of NAB and role of students in eradication of corruption. He conveyed his views to the students about the effects of corruption and its consequences in the light of Islamic teachings as per verses of Quran. He elaborated that the messenger of Allah cursed the one who gives bribe and who takes it. He stated that Quaid-e-Azamin the early days of Pakistan rightly pointed out corruption and bribery as the biggest curse from which we are suffering. Director NAB said that bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism and syndicate corruption are various branches of corruption which are detrimental for the society and the state. While discussing the disadvantages of corruption he pointed out shadow economy, low foreign investment, deficient trade and ill health of economy is the cause of Corruption.

The speaker was of the view that students must know about corruption and its consequences so it will help them in their future professional life. He termed youth as future leader. He said that young people bring fresh perspectives.

Pak condemns terror attacks in Iran

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Thursday unequivocally condemned the heinous and dastardly terrorist attacks at police and security installations in the cities of Rask and Chabahar in Iran.

In a statement, the Foreign Office said, "We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and pray for the recovery of the injured. Pakistan stands in full solidarity with the people and Government of Iran in fighting terrorism."

"Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and is deeply concerned about the growing acts of terrorism in our region. It is a regional and global threat that requires resolute response," it concluded.

ECP refuses JUI-F candidate's plea for recounting vote in NA-266

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) refused the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazi (JUI-F) candidate's plea for a vote recount in NA-266 (Kila Abdullah-Cum Chaman) on Thursday.

Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai won the NA-266 seat with 67,028 votes, while JUI-F's Salahuddin, could only receive 58,439 votes, in the elections.

The ECP also refused the request for vote re-verification at 36 polling stations.

UN to take up Pakistan's resolution on banning arms sales to Israel

UNITED NATION (INP): In an upcoming session scheduled for Friday, the United Nations will address a resolution proposed by Pakistan aimed at banning arms sales to Israel.

The draft of this resolution, submitted by Pakistan to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on behalf of 55 member countries of the United Nations, has stirred significant anticipation and debate within the international community.

The comprehensive eight-page resolution places forth stringent demands on Israel, calling for an immediate end to its occupation of Palestinian territories and Gaza. One of the key provisions of the resolution is the demand for Israel to cease its illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip.

Moreover, the resolution underscores the urgency of preventing the sale or transfer of explosives and other military equipment to Israel, emphasizing the need to curb the proliferation of arms that exacerbates the ongoing conflict in the region.

The proposal has garnered widespread support from the majority of OIC member countries, reflecting a collective effort to address the longstanding humanitarian and security concerns stemming from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The resolution symbolizes a unified stance against the injustices and violations of international law perpetrated by Israel, particularly in its treatment of the Palestinian population.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Jawad A.A. Rabei called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Bilawal visits mausoleum of martyrs at Garhi Khuda Bux Bhutto

LARKANA (APP): Chairman, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday visited the Mausoleum of the martyrs of Bhutto's family in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh in connection with the 45th death anniversary of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

He was accompanied by the central president of PPP (Women Wing) Ms. Faryal Talpur and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah.

They visited the grave of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, laid a floral wreath at the grave, and offered Fateha.

They also visited the graves of late Begum Nurat Bhutto, late Shireen Amir Begum, Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto, and Shaheed Mir Shah Nawaz Bhutto and offered fateha at the grave and laid floral wreaths.

Sheikh Rasheed says Silence is best policy in present situation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former interior minister and Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad said on Thursday that silence was the best policy in the current circumstances.

Talking to the media outside a court here, where he had gone in connection with the hearing of a case against him, he said it was his opinion that one should deal with the situation by remaining calm and tightlipped.

Rasheed said he had accepted his defeat in the February 8 general elections.

Replying to a question about the threatening letters received by the high courts and the Supreme Court (SC) judges, the former interior minister said it was a sensitive matter. "It is better not to talk much about it," he added.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor Bolan University of Medical & Health Sciences Dr. Shabbir Lehri and Dr. Khan Babar meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Tatra Achakzai demands special grant for UoB

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Lecturer of University of Balochistan, Tatra Achakzai has demanded of the federal government to provide special grant to the University to steer it out of the financial crisis.

She also urged the concerned authorities to sit together and find out the permanent solution to the issue.

Tatra Achakzai said that the employees of the university would raise voice for their rights at every forum.

Tatra Achakzai said that the financial crisis of the universities was created after these were given under control of the provincial government after the 18th amendment.

While provincial higher education commissions have been formed in other three provinces, but the same couldn't be set up in Balochistan, she pointed out adding this issue wouldn't be created if the desired funds are provided to the University.

She pointed out that the government has allocated Rs. 2.5 billion for 12 universities of the province while total annual expenditures of the university are more than Rs. 3.5 billion.

She asked the incumbent government to take the issue of employees serious and pay salaries to them.

She also said that the financial crisis of the university is a pre-planned conspiracy to deprive the poor people of the province of education.



QUETTA: Director NAB Muhammad Farooq Azam and Principal FG Boys Degree College Quetta Cantt addressing a seminar against corruption organized by NAB Balochistan.