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Shehbaz, MBS agree to expedite first phase of \$5bn Saudi investment in Pakistan

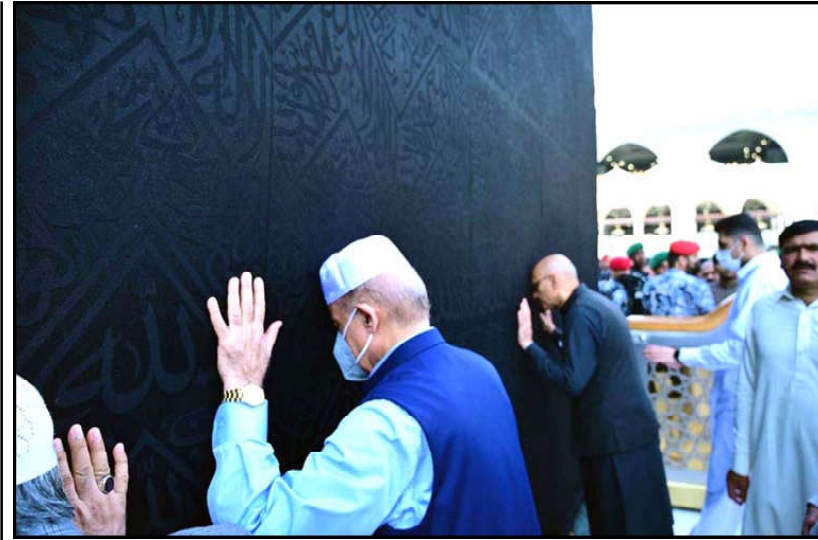
Both leaders emphasise kingdom's "supportive role in Pakistan's economy and the mutual desire to strengthen trade, investment ties"; Urge int'l efforts to pressure Israel to cease hostilities in Gaza

MAKKAH (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud here wherein the two countries affirmed their commitment to expediting the first wave of the previously discussed investment package worth \$5 billion.

The bilateral ties and regional as well as global developments of mutual interest, including the worrying situation in Gaza were discussed in the meeting that took place at Al-Safa Palace here on Sunday during Prime Minister Shehbaz's three-day visit to the Kingdom, according to a joint

statement issued on Monday. The discussions centered on fortifying the fraternal relations between the two brotherly nations and exploring avenues for enhanced collaboration across various sectors. Emphasis was laid on the Kingdom's supportive role in Pakistan's economy and the mutual desire to strengthen trade and investment ties, the statement added.

The two countries called for efforts by the international community to halt Israeli military operations in Gaza and mitigate humanitarian impact besides emphasising the need to advance the peace process. Both sides underscored the imperative for the international community to pressure Israel to cease hostilities, adhere to international law, and facilitate unhindered humanitarian aid access to Gaza.



MAKKAH MUKARAMAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during Ziaaraat of Al Masjid e Haraam.

Govt. decides to introduce AI technology for accountability of ghost and absentee employees in Balochistan province

Result-oriented measures and timeframe formulated; Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti announces to enforce AI system all over province in phases; terms corruption as biggest hurdle in way of good governance; vows to restore trust of people on State

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has decided to introduce the artificial intelligence (AI) technology for accountability of the ghost and absentee employees in the province. This was decided in the first meeting of Reforms Committee held with Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti in the chair at the CM's secretariat on Monday.

The Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development, Abdul Saboor Kakar, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Imran Zarkoon, Special Secretary, Asfandyar Baloch, Chair-

man Balochistan Revenue Authority, Noorul Haq Baloch, Secretary IT, Ayaz Khan Mandokhail, besides other high ups.

The meeting made certain important decisions besides taking result-oriented measures and formulating timeframe for the reforms. The meeting decided to hire services of experts from the private sector for making CMDU functional.

The Chief Minister on the occasion stressed that the experts included in the Reforms Committee to prepare proposals for brining improvement in their related sectors. He also directed the Information Technology de-

partment to prepare the pilot project.

He announced that the AI system would be enforced all over the province in phases. However, the AI technology should be commenced from Bolan Medical Complex and Sandeman Provincial Headquarter Hospitals and Balochistan University for improving governance there, he directed further.

Speaking on the occasion, Mir Sarfraz Bugti regrettably pointed out that the general public are facing hardships due to weaknesses in the governance. In addition to this, there

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PTI to boycott Senate chairman, deputy elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): Declaring elections for the seats of Chairman and Deputy Chairman Senate as "unconstitutional", the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) has said that it will boycott these elections.

According to media reports, PTI's core committee told that the party had now decided that it would move a court against these elections.

Sources disclosed that it was an opinion in the party that since the House of federation was incomplete due to the postponement of Senate elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP); therefore elections for these coveted seats were not constitutional. They further said that the PTI leaders were of the view that the upper House of the parliament was presently not functional due to the absence of its chairman, and the Senate Secretariat could not take any decision other than administrative ones.

Meanwhile the registrar of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday raised an objection to the petition filed by five PTI senators in which they had sought a court order for delaying elections for the seats of Senate chairman and deputy chairman unless elections for the Senate seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) are held.

The senators had also prayed to the court to declare the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) notification, dated April 2, 2024, of postponement of the Senate elections in KP as null and void and give order to hold the elections in the province. The registrar said that since the Peshawar High Court (PHC) was already hearing the KP Senate seats' election case; therefore the PTI was asked to approach the high court for the purpose. Separately, the PTI has also filed a motion against the election of Senate chairman at the Senate Secretariat on Monday.

JEDDAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is seen off by Governor of Jeddah, Prince Saud bin Abdullah Al Jalawi at Jeddah International Airport.

CM announces to set up Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Programme in Balochistan

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has announced to set up the Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Programme in the province. The Chief Minister gave approval to the educational scholarship programme in a review meeting of the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund (BEEF) here on Monday.

The Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan and other high ups participated in the meeting. The Chief Minister said that the provincial government has taken the responsibility of children of the martyrs under the BB

scholarship Programme. The provincial government would pay all the educational expenditures of the children from nursery to the higher education under the programme, he added. Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti also said that the state would see the children of all martyrs as father. Besides, the Chief Minister also directed the Home Department to collect the data of all those declared as martyrs in the province. In addition to this, the Chief Minister also announced complete academic scholarship for every

PESHAWAR: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari condoles with Aimal Wali Khan, KPK President Awami National Party (ANP) over the death of his mother during meeting held in Charsadda.

Arsenic found in letters sent to judges different from ordinary one, say investigators

ISLAMABAD (INP): The investigators have found out that the chemical found in the threatening letters sent to the Supreme Court and the high courts' judges was different from ordinary arsenic, sources said on Monday.

The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) teams went to different stores to purchase arsenic. And when they looked at it, they found out that unlike the arsenic found in the letter which was white, the one they had purchased was yellow, sources said, adding this led them to decide that now they would seek assistance from drugs and chemicals manufacturing companies. The investigators had now prepared lists of pharmaceutical companies, they disclosed. Around six days ago, eight judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC), including the high court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, received letters laced with a chemical, which was initially thought to be arsenic. The incident took place a few days after six of these judges wrote a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) in which they had alleged interference by the country's intelligence agencies in their work, prompting the Supreme Court (SC) to take suo motu notice of it.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti chairing first meeting of Reforms Committee

Police cop martyred; three officers among 10 injured in Kuchlak explosion

QUETTA: A police jawan was martyred while 10 other persons including three police personnel were injured in an explosion took place in Kuchlak area on Monday night. According to the police sources, the explosion took place in Killi Kateer located in Kuchlak. The SSP operation told that the explosion was caused due to the gas leakage. However, as a result of the explosion, a police jawan of the Eagle Squad namely Anwar Kakar was killed and three others were injured. Besides, seven other people mostly passers-by were also injured in the blast.

Soon after the explosion, the police, administration and bomb disposal squad reached the spot while the body of deceased

police cop and the injured personnel were shifted to the civil hospital. The injured persons were being provided medical treatment at the hospital. Meanwhile the spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind had condemned the explosion in Kuchlak. In an official statement issued here on Monday, the Spokesman said that the Chief Minister has given order for investigation of the incident. He said that a police cop was martyred and three others were injured in the blast. The bomb disposal squad has reached the spot and reviewing the nature of blast. The Chief Minister has directed to provide best medical treatment facilities to the injured of blast.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta and Administrator Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat along with Jamal Khan Raisani, MNA, Jahanzaib Khan, Director PDMA and others inspecting the cleanliness drive, at Hazarganji in Quetta.

Lawyer gets six months in jail for misconduct towards LHC judge

LAHORE (Agencies): The Lahore High Court has awarded a six-month jail term to a lawyer on a contempt of court charge for his misconduct towards a judge. During Monday's hearing, LHC Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan sentenced Goraya to six months in jail, fined him Rs100,000 and ordered his immediate imprisonment.

The chief justice had received a reference from Justice Sultan Tanvir Ahmad who alleged that advocate Zahid Mahmood Goraya had misbehaved

during a hearing. After being served a show-cause notice, Goraya appeared before the chief justice and tendered an unconditional apology the previous week, but Justice Khan indicted him under contempt charges. In a subsequent hearing, Goraya, accompanied by his lawyer, LHC Bar Association President Asad Manzoor Butt, and Punjab Prosecutor General Farhad Ali Shah, pleaded for adjournment until after Eidul Fitr, expressing remorse and seeking forgiveness.

PM Shehbaz performs Umrah

MAKKAH (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has performed Umrah during his visit to Saudi Arabia.

According to the details, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Information and Broadcasting Minister Attaullah Tarar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and other members also performed Umrah along with prime minister.

After performing Umrah, Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif and the delegation offered special prayers for the security, development and prosperity of Pakistan and the Islamic world.

Nepa hikes power tariff by Rs4.92 per unit

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Another big shock for the citizens as the government on Monday increased electricity tariff by Rs4.92 per unit under the monthly fuel adjustment. According to the notification issued by the National Electricity Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), the electricity prices are increased by Rs4.92 per unit. The power regulatory body hiked the price for February which would be charged from the consumers from the bills of April 2024.

However, the upward revision in prices of the electricity will not be applicable on the lifeline and K-Electric customers.

Shawwal moon not sighted in Saudi Arabia, Eid will fall on April 10

RIYADH: According to the moon sighting committee in Saudi Arabia, the Shawwal moon was not sighted on Monday (April 8). As a result, Ramadan will continue until April 9, completing 30 days, and Eidul Fitr will be celebrated on April 10 in Saudi Arabia. In the UAE, the Emirates Astronomical Society also predicts that Eid will commence on April 10.



RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) interacting with players of Pakistan cricket team during an Iftar dinner hosted by him

COAS hosts Iftar dinner for PCT at Army House

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) hosted an Iftar Dinner for Pakistan Cricket Team at Army House Rawalpindi. Pakistan Cricket Team underwent and concluded physical training at Army School of Physical Training (ASPT) camp in Kakul, Abbottabad. Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Mohsin Naqvi along with PCB officials also attended the Iftar. COAS while talking with the players wished them all the best in their future endeavours. The cricketers thanked COAS for the excellent training provided to them at Kakul and the role Army plays in supporting the games in Pakistan.

WB approves \$149.7m for two projects in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The World Bank has approved 149.7 million dollars in financing for two projects in Pakistan, says in media reports. As per details, the funds were okayed to support the projects related to digital economy and improved flood resilience. This has been stated in a statement issued by the international financial institution. The allocated funding of 78 million dollars for the Digital Economy Enhancement Project is expected to enhance financial management through technology-driven solutions and data-driven decision-making. The investment in digital economy is also likely to streamline public services, increase transparency and foster economic growth. Simultaneously, the 71.7 million dollars allocation for Sindh Barrages Improvement Project is likely to ensure greater flood resilience.



QUETTA: Woman selecting and purchasing bangles for Eid ul Fitr preparation.

PM returns after concluding visit to KSA

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Monday, arrived here after wrapping up his three-day visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Earlier upon his departure at the Jeddah International Airport, the prime minister was seen off by Governor Jeddah Prince Saud bin Abdullah bin Jalawi, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During his visit, Prime Minister Sharif met with Crown Prince and Prime Minister of KSA Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and discussed further fortifying of the fraternal relations between the two brotherly nations and exploring avenues for enhanced collaboration.

Bilawal visits Wali Bagh expresses condolence with ANP leadership

PESHAWAR (APP): PPP's Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited Wali Bagh, district Charsadda on Monday wherein he expressed condolence with the President of Awami National Party (ANP) Asfandyar Wali Khan, the death of his wife.

The PPP chairman met both Asfandyar Wali Khan and Aimal Wali Khan to express condolence with them. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari offered feteiha for the eternal peace of the wife of Asfandyar Wali Khan and mother of Aimal Wali Khan and fortitude to her other family members.

Azhar Mahmood appointed head coach for Pakistan's New Zealand tour

Sports Desk
LAHORE: In a move ahead of the upcoming tour of New Zealand, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Monday the appointment of former Test cricketer Azhar Mahmood as the head coach of the national team. This decision comes amidst rigorous preparations for the challenging five-match T20 series against the Kiwis.

Azhar Mahmood, a seasoned veteran who represented Pakistan in 164 international matches, brings a wealth of experience to the coaching staff. With 162 wickets and 2,421 runs under his belt, Mahmood's expertise is expected to fortify the team's performance in the series slated to take place from April 18 to 27 in Rawalpindi and Lahore.

Notably, Mahmood previously served as the bowling coach with the Pakistan Men's Cricket Team from 2016 to 2019, showcasing his dedication to nurturing talent and refining skillsets within the squad. Wahab Riaz, Saeed Ajmal take key responsibilities. Alongside Mahmood, the coaching staff is bolstered with esteemed names in cricket. Wahab Riaz assumes the role of Senior Team Manager.

Abbasi approaches ECP to form new political party

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, who has parted ways with the PML-N, approached the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday for the registration of a new political group. According to sources, the disgruntled PML-N leader has submitted the necessary documents to the ECP in this respect. During an informal interaction with a group of journalists, the former premier said that all necessary documents have been provided to the ECP for the registration of a new political group. The former prime minister further said that the new political party would participate actively in the upcoming elections.



MAKKAH MUKARAMAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif performs Umrah.



MAKKAH MUKARAMAH: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif coming out of Khana Kaaba

Eid-ul-Fitr preparations gain momentum in Swat

By Haroon Siraj
SWAT: The preparations for upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr have started gaining momentum with each passing day as a huge number of buyers are seen in the prominent shopping markets of the district. Despite rising inflation and escalating prices of the garments, clothes, shoes and other accessories, Eid shopping is registering an upward trend in the markets.

The illuminated shopping malls and markets displaying stalls of colourful bangles, jewellery and henna outside the shops are attracting the buyers, mostly after Ifar. Women shopping normally starts two weeks earlier as they have to prepare dresses, buy jewellery and other accessories to colour their religious festival with traditional zeal.

Naqvi condemns Khuzdar blast, regrets loss of precious lives

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi strongly condemning the Khuzdar blast has expressed deep sorrow and regret over the loss of precious lives. In a message on Monday, the interior minister expressed heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the families of the martyrs and prayed for bereaved families to bear this loss with fortitude. Mohsin Naqvi prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the blast.

Ruet-e-Hilal Committee to sit today for Shawwal moon sighting

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee is all set to meet on Tuesday (tomorrow) for the sighting of Shawwal-ul-Mukarram moon. Chairman of the committee Maulana Syed Abdul Khair Azad will preside over the meeting scheduled in Islamabad. The meeting will take place at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony.

Dr. Javed participate IDSDP tree planting initiative at Hayat Durrani WSA

Independent Report
QUETTA: On the occasion of the celebrations of the International Day of Sport 6 April 2024, for Development and Peace (IDSDP) Hayatullah Khan Durrani, Founder and CEO of HDWSA, Secretary Pakistan canoe and Kayak Federation welcomed Dr. Javed Anwar Shahwani Secretary Sports and youth affairs Government of Balochistan at the HDWSA to join a meaningful tree planting initiative.

Dr. Javed Anwar Shahwani Secretary Sports and youth affairs Government of Balochistan, symbolically planted a plumb tree to extend an opportunity to the athletes of Pakistan Canoe and Kayak Federation and Hayat Durrani Water Sports Academy International at Hanna Lake Quetta to showcase the role of sport to drive social change and community development, and to foster peace and understanding that how athletes and the whole Olympic Movement actively contribute to a peaceful, healthier and sustainable society through sport and meaningful social activities. Additionally, various other tree species were planted at the specially designated area for International Olympic Committee (IOC) symbolizing the enduring bond of friendship between the Canoe Kayak athletes of Pakistan and International Olympic Community through sports, culture, and environmental defenders within the HDWSA premises. Adjacent to the specially

signed to promote environmental protection, sustainability, and ecosystem restoration. Dr. Javed Anwar Shahwani Secretary Sports and youth affairs Government of Balochistan, visited the headquarters of Balochistan's premier Canoe Kayak and Rowing Olympic Sports International Academy, the "Hayat Durrani Canoe Kayak, Rowing Water Sports Academy (Pvt. Ltd)," along with Abdul Ghafoor Baloch AD Sports and other distinguished guests.

The purpose of the visit was to participate in the celebrations ceremony of International Day of Sport 6 April 2024, for Development and Peace (IDSDP) in the ongoing "Protect Environment Tree Plantation" project initiated in 1986 aimed at restoring the ecosystem and raising environmental awareness among youth and athletes in Balochistan.



designated corners for Pak-Japan and Pak-Britain friendship sports, culture and protection of environment events. This act underscores Mr. Hayatullah Khan Durrani's unwavering commitment to environmental conservation and his dedication to contributing to youth, athletes, the new generation and Protect Environment Tree Plantation Project. The initiative, established by Hayatullah Khan Durrani in 1986 at the renowned Hayat Durrani Water Sports Academy International (Pvt. Ltd) and its sprawling ranch at Hanna Lake, Quetta, is de-

The last weeks of Ramadan also witnessed a huge rush at beauty salons and ready to wear boutique dresses. "I bought a pink dress and now looking for matching shoes and then I have to buy matching jewellery, hair clips, and bangles. I will again come with my family on 'chaand raat' for henna," Aiza Khan, who is five years old, said. "I have visited the market to buy bangles and very few and the prices are not affordable," she said.

He said that the government, security forces and the people were determined in the war against terrorism and this scourge will be eradicated from the land of Pakistan.

Pakistan in contention for Test Championship final

Sports Desk
LAHORE: Pakistan cricket team is in race for the Test Championship final as the Green Shirts have to play four series for a place in the top two.

Pakistan is at the fifth position in the current Test Championship ranking. The team started brilliantly by defeating Sri Lanka 2-0 on their home grounds. But it crumbled against Australia in an away series. The 3-0 whitewash at the hands of kangaroos reduced percentage which is currently 36.66 percent. It has 22 points tally after deduction of two points over slow over rate.

The future prospect depends on the coming four series as Pakistan will play three home series. It will start a two match series against Bangladesh at their home ground in a two match Test series. Later, Pakistan will host England for a three-match Test series. In December, Pakistan will visit South Africa for a two Test series and then host the West Indies for two Tests.

Similarly, 50 each scholarships would also be given to the students belonging to minorities and transgender community in the province. Earlier, he directed to conduct third party audit of the ongoing different scholarship programmes so as to ensure transparency in them. Earlier, the chief Executive Officer of BEEF, Zikriya Khan Noorzai briefed about the BEEF.

national law, and facilitate unhindered humanitarian aid access to Gaza, according to a joint statement issued following the meeting between the two leaders took place at Al-Safa Palace here. Two sides discussed the need for advancing the peace process in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly as well as the Arab Peace Initiative aimed at finding a just and comprehensive solution, to establish an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. The discussions centered on fortifying the fraternal relations between the two brotherly nations and exploring avenues for enhanced collaboration across various sectors. Emphasis was placed on the Kingdom's supportive role in Pakistan's economy and the mutual desire to strengthen trade and investment ties. Both parties affirmed their commitment to expediting the first wave of investment package worth \$5 billion which was discussed previously.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on climate change Romina Khurshid Alam being presented a book on safeguarding Indus river vitality by Indus river team.

Shehbaz, MBS agree to expedite...

Continued from page 1
to resolve the outstanding issues between the two countries, especially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute to ensure peace and stability in the region. The Crown Prince congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on assuming the office and expressed warm wishes for his tenure. Prime Minister Shehbaz also conveyed gratitude for the Kingdom's steadfast support and hospitality and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to bolstering bilateral ties and economic cooperation. PM Shehbaz invited the Crown Prince to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at the earliest convenience which he accepted.

Govt. decides to...

Continued from page 1
is trust lacking between the public and government departments, he added making pledge to restore the trust. He said that we want to set clear direction for improvement in governance. He said that we would give vision to the reforms committee, now it is up to it (committee) to set new direction. He said that corruption is the biggest hurdle in way of good governance. When a youngster would purchase job in millions of rupees then how his trust would remain maintained on the system, he said. The Chief Minister said that we want to provide livelihood to some 30,000 youth annually abroad by making them skilled in different sectors. Referring the meeting of reforms committee, he said that the results of the decisions made in today's meeting would start coming by one decade. He on the occasion stressed the need to overcome the unnecessary expenditures saying that if we didn't overcome the pension bill and unnecessary expenditures, then we would not have resources for the basic facilities after 10 years.

CM announces to...

Continued from page 1
student of the province seeking admission for PhD in the modern science subjects in 200 universities of the world. Ten toppers of matric from all districts would be imparted education in higher educational institutions of the country under BB Scholarship Programme, he added.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanging views with Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz, Commander Coast (COMCOAST) during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

Sindh gov't notifies 4-day Eid holidays

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh government on Monday announced to observe Eid-ul-Fitr holidays from April 10 to 13 across the province. The notification issued by the Sindh Services, General Administration and Coordination Department announced public holidays for all government offices, autonomous bodies, semi-autonomous bodies, corporations and local councils under the administrative control of the Sindh government except essential services. As per the notification, the holidays in the province will be observed from April 10 to 12 in the offices having five working days a week and from April 10 to 13 in the offices having two off days at the weekend. Sindh gov't notifies 4-day Eid holidays. The federal government has already notified similar Eid holidays on April 4. As per the notification

released by the Federal Cabinet Division, the offices observing five working days a week will observe three public holidays from April 10 to 12 and the offices observing six working days will observe four public holidays from April 10 to 13. Moreover, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) also 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". The Met Office had on April 1 predicted that the first day of Eid-ul-Fitr would fall on April 10 as the Shawwal moon was expected to be sighted on April 9. The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) had said the crescent would be born on April 8 at 11:21pm and it would be aged between 19 and 20 hours the next day around Maghrib prayer.

PM returns....

Continued from page 1
ration across various sectors. The federal cabinet members and Punjab chief minister accompanied the prime minister during the visit. The prime minister performed Umrah and offered Nawafil inside Ka'aba as he was granted access inside 'Baitullah', as a special gesture. The prime minister prayed for the country's progress and prosperity, the Muslim Ummah's unity and global peace.

PM returns....

Continued from page 1
The regional and global developments of mutual interests, including the worrying situation in Gaza were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on Sunday as the former was on a three-day visit to the Kingdom. Both sides underscored the imperative for the international community to pressure Israel to cease hostilities, adhere to inter-

Play as per demand of situation, don't care about run rate: Babar Azam

LAHORE (INP): Captain of Pakistan cricket team, Babar Azam has said that he plays as per demand of the situation and don't care much about the run rate.

How I have to build the innings, and how I have to maintain my strike rate, is my concern," Azam said. "See, strike rate is a different story, building an innings, and winning a match are two different things. When you win a match, then both things are covered," he added.

Responding to criticism regarding his batting strike rate, he said that he tries to perform to best of his abilities but yet some critics remain in search for instance to criticize him. Babar Azam and maintained that he always intends to win the match for his team rather concentrating on his personal interests during the match. "You cannot satisfy someone all the time, I am only focused on how to win matches for my team.

The star batter emphasized that he adapts his batting style according to the match situation, as some matches require a cautious approach. "Sometimes you cannot play freely because you have to build the innings, and you have wickets in hand, you can play with a 200-strike rate as well," Azam stated.

CORRIGENDUM

Kindly refer to this office tender for supply of Fork lifters for Balochistan Police during the CFY 2023-24 advertised vide PRQ No. 1732/27-03-2024 in daily newspapers dated 28th March, 2024 and TSE No. 232403386291, the following corrigendum is hereby made:-

Eligibility Criteria	Registration with Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA) is hereby withdrawn
Specification / requirement	Maximum Fork Height (mm) may kindly be read as 3000mm minimum

The tender will now open on 17th April, 2024 on already specified schedule. Rest of the terms and conditions will remain the same.
Tel: 081-9204818 Fax: 081-9201267
Website: www.balochistanpolice.gov.pk
Email: atggen123@gmail.com

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/GENERAL CENTRAL POLICE OFFICE QUETTA

PRQ No.1857/8-04-2024
www.dpr.gov.pk @dpr_gov @dpr_gov @dpr_balochistan

CORRIGENDUM

The Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for THE PURCHASE OF 300,000 BRAND NEW "A CLASS" JUTE EMPTY GUNNY BAGS was published on 29th March, 2024 under PRQ No. 1766/29-03-2024. Now the submission of tenders has been extended as per BPPRA Rule 31(b). The said tender re-scheduled on 16th April, 2024. The said date may be read as 18th April, 2024 instead of 16 April, 2024. The eligibility criteria/condition remain same.

DIRECTOR GENERAL FOOD BALOCHISTAN

PRQ No.1853/8-4-2024
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EXTENSION

TENDER JAINTORIAL ITEMS

An advertisement "JAINTORIAL ITEMS" reference no. AB 349/22-03-2024 was published in newspaper on March 22, 2024 by the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Institute of Cardiology Quetta. The opening date of tender is extended: **New Opening date** 15 April, 2024. **Note:** Venue and all other conditions remain the same as mentioned in earlier notice published on 22-March-2024.

AD (PROCUREMENT) (SMBZAN-ICQ)

AB No.395/8-4-2024
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Maulana Ashrafi commends PM Sharif's Saudi visit for strengthening economic ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Monday lauded Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to Saudi Arabia, highlighting its potential to foster economic cooperation and fortify bilateral relations between the two nations.

In a media talk, he said both the countries are keen in expanding their partnership in various sectors.

Ashrafi emphasized the significance of prime minister's diplomatic outreach, particularly in the realm of economic cooperation adding that the visit holds the promise of unlocking new avenues of economic opportunities for both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Highlighting historical, cultural, and religious bonds, he expressed optimism that the discussions held during the visit would

yield tangible results leading to enhance collaboration in diverse fields, including trade, investment, and infrastructure development. He commended the prime minister's proactive approach in exploring avenues for cooperation and advancing bilateral ties to new heights.

He said in the meeting between prime minister and crown prince, a comprehensive discussion was also held regarding the escalating situation in Gaza and the ongoing crisis in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The meeting, aimed at addressing regional instability and promoting peace, emphasized the importance of international intervention to halt Israeli aggression and ensure compliance with international law.

Ashrafi said both leaders expressed grave concerns over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and stressed the need for the international

community's involvement. They called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, access to humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza, and adherence to international legal frameworks, he added.

Furthermore, the leaders reiterated their commitment to advancing the peace process in line with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, Ashrafi said adding that they emphasized the necessity of achieving a comprehensive solution that includes the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

In addition to the Gaza crisis, he said the leaders also delved into the longstanding issue of IIOJK. Recognizing the significance of resolving this conflict for regional peace and stability, Ashrafi said, they engaged in detailed discussions aimed at finding peaceful solutions of lingering dispute between India and Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam holds meeting with chairperson IWMB Rina Saeed Khan along with experts from Four Paws International to discuss bio rescue and Rehab Centre.

Pakistan, Ethiopia agree to address climate change jointly

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Ethiopia on Monday agreed to launch the Green Legacy Initiative of Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed in the major cities including Lahore, Peshawar, Karachi, Quetta, Sialkot and others.

This was agreed upon in a meeting between Coordinator to the PM on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam and Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan Jemal Bekir Abdula, said a news release.

Ambassador lauded the role played by Romina Khurshid Alam in initiating a joint collaboration between Ethiopia and Pakistan last year for addressing climate related issues.

He recalled the launch of Green Legacy Initiative in Islamabad last year in the presence of senior ministers, government officials, diplomatic corps, business community, media and civil society.

The Ambassador stressed the need for enhanced collaboration between the two countries to address climate issues through skills, technology, information and knowledge sharing.

He said the government of Ethiopia stood ready to work together with the Pakistani government in addressing climate-related issues such as floods, food insecurity and others.

Ethiopia would extend all-out support to Pakistan

on climate mitigation through technological transfer and experience sharing, the ambassador remarked.

He also congratulated Romina Khurshid Alam on assuming the charge of the Coordinator to the PM on Climate Change.

Romina Khurshid Alam expressed keen interest in the launch of the Green Legacy initiative in different cities of her country. She said the climate change was a global phenomenon and joint efforts against climate changes were the need of hour.

The government of Pakistan was looking forward to working with Ethiopia to deal with climate change, she added.

Eid preparations reach its climax

ISLAMABAD (APP): As Eid-ul-Fitr is just around the corner, majority of the people are giving last minute touch to their preparations through visiting the shopping malls and local markets of the federal capital to celebrate this auspicious occasion in a befitting manner.

In various commercial hubs such as Super Market, Jinnah Super, Karachi Company, F-10 Markaz and popular shopping malls, shoppers have been flocking since noon to finalize their shopping amidst prayers and fasting.

Several women can be witnessed in the main markets and shopping malls of the capital looking for dresses, shoes, and other essential accessories to celebrate the Eid festivities in a befitting manner, taking advantage of the Eid sales.

Saira Qasim, a mother of three children, said, "I have completed shopping for my family earlier thinking that there will be more people during the last days before Eid and the required sizes of dresses and shoes may not be available."

Talking to APP, she said, "Although the online shopping platforms have made it easier for many to shop while sitting at their homes during fasting but

still visiting the market physically for Eid shopping has its own charm."

Ansha Mehmood, a young girl, said, "I bought my Eid dress and shoes from the nearest shopping mall, availing of the sale offers. Now I have to buy just bangles, jewelry, and henna on the 'Chaand Raat' with my friends."

She said, "I always try to buy dresses and shoes by the middle of Ramadan as all the good stuff is sold out during the last few days before Eid, while the tailors also stop taking orders during the last week of Ramadan as they also leave for native towns."

Hira Iftikhar, who is a government employee, said, "Shopping during the month of Ramadan is a difficult task, so I am trying to complete it so that I can focus on prayers to seek blessings from Allah during the last Ashra of the holy month."

The prevailing inflation has limited the purchasing capacity of the salaried class, so I completed all shopping for my family at a local market, she said while talking to APP. Eid-ul-Fitr is the biggest festival for all Muslims across the world, and Muslims celebrate this festival with great religious zeal and enthusiasm.



ISLAMABAD: Beautician applies traditional henna designs to the hand of a customer ahead of the Muslim festivities of Eid al-Fitr.

PMD forecast rain from April 10 till April 15 with gaps

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast rain with wind/thunderstorm in various parts of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Sindh, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan from April 10 (Eid-ul-Fitr) till April 15 with occasional gaps.

A westerly wave is likely to enter upper parts of the country from April 10 followed by another strong westerly wave on April 12 that may grip most parts of the country on April 13 and persist till April 15. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, rain-wind-storm/thunderstorm is expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner and Malakand from April 10-15 with occasional gaps while in Waziristan, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Bajaur, Mohmand, Karak, Khyber, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi, Mardan and Kurram with occasional

gaps from April 12-15. Isolated heavy fall and hailstorm is also expected from April 13-15.

In Gilgit-Baltistan/Kashmir, rain-wind/thunderstorm with snowfall over high mountains is expected in Gilgit-Baltistan including Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar and in Kashmir including Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber and Mirpur with occasional gaps from April 10-15. Isolated heavy fall and hailstorm is also expected from April 13-15. In Punjab/Islamabad, rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected in Muree, Galiyat, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal on April 10 and then April 12 (evening/night) to April 15 with occasional gaps while Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Kasur, Okara, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang, Khushab, Sargodha.



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of red rose flowers full blooming on a green belt at 7th Avenue in the Federal Capital.

Foolproof security arrangement to be ensured; DIG HQs

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Operations Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari issued an important message to the general public regarding the security of markets and professional beggars on the occasion of Eid.

In his message, he stated that the Islamabad Capital Police's top priority is to protect the lives, property, and dignity of the public. Citizens are urged to discourage the professional beggars and not to give their charity to beggars and instead, give the charity and financial assistance to relief organizations.

He further said that, citizens should report information about professional beggars on the emergency helpline "Pucar-15" or via the "ICT-15" app.

Similarly, if there are any issues during shopping in commercial centers and markets that harass you or pose security concerns, citizens should inform the police immediately, he added.

At the end, he said that, special teams of Islamabad Capital Police are deployed in commercial centers and markets to ensure the safety of citizens. Protection of citizens' lives and property is the utmost priority of Islamabad Capital Police.

and various markets of the city for public safety, while the Islamabad Capital Police has implemented a joint traffic and special patrolling plan to keep the smooth flow of traffic on special roads.

Moreover, all the vehicles of police stations and falcons would patrol in their respective areas. Special security arrangements have been made for various public and worship places.

Parking will not be allowed near the worship places, strict checking of all entrances and exits of the city will be done, checking of various important places will be ensured through the Bomb Disposal Squad.



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted Islamabad expressway due to Eid Ul Fitr Holidays in the Federal Capital.

Majority of natives move to inbred towns leaving capital deserted

ISLAMABAD (APP): With only a single day left in the religious festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, the majority of the natives have left for their hometowns to celebrate the festival with their families and relatives leaving the capital city deserted, like every year.

A number of people residing in the capital for job purposes belong to the far-flung areas of the country and rush to their native towns to celebrate the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr with their relatives.

Taking advantage of the official holidays announced from April 10 (Wednesday) to April 12 (Friday), majority of the natives took two-day leave on April 08 (Monday) and April 09 (Tuesday) to combine weekends back and

forth, to spend maximum time with their families.

"I left for my hometown in Multan after performing my official duty on Friday to spend quality time with my parents who were anxiously waiting for me for a long", Saad Rafique, a government employee said. "It is difficult to travel to my hometown frequently due to increased petrol prices so visiting there only for five days including traveling time does not seem logical, therefore I took leave of Monday and Tuesday to combine weekend holidays too", he said while talking to APP.

Farhat Jabeen, who is a doctor by profession, said: "I left for my hometown in Kashmir on Friday to celebrate the festival with my family and relatives.

AIOU to hold BA, B.Ed exams 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 autumn 2023 semester from April 23, 2023 throughout the country.

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

Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof Dr. Nasir Mahmood has instructed the examinations department to ensure transparency and provide all facilities to the students during the examinations.

Examination centers are being established across the country in nearby vicinities of the students. Special teams will make surprise visits to the exam centers.

Moreover, last date for admission in the second phase of Semester Spring 2024 is April 15.

Singer Asad Amanat Ali remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 17th death anniversary of renowned classical semi-classical, and playback singer Asad Amanat Ali Khan was observed on Monday. Born in 1955, Asad Amanat Ali Khan hailed from famous Patiala Gharana. He was son of famous singer Ustad Amanat Ali Khan.

His famous songs include: Kal Chowdhwein Ki Raat thi, Ankhain ghazal hain ap ki, awaz woh jaadu sa jagati hui aawaz, ghar wapis jabao gy tum and umraan langyan pabbhaan phaar. Government of Pakistan awarded him Pride of Performance in 2007.

Asad Amanat Ali Khan died on this day in 2007 in London.

Over 60% population residing disaster-prone lacks knowledge on catastrophic climate impacts

ISLAMABAD (APP): A recent survey-based research report launched on Monday here revealed that 60.7% of the population residing disaster-prone or vulnerable to climate impacts lacked knowledge on cataclysmic impacts on environmental degradation triggering serious natural disasters.

President Huqoq-ul-Ebad Development Foundation (HEDF), Syed Muhammad Ashfaq launched the survey report titled "Climate Change Effects in Pakistan 2023" highlighting significant challenges posed by climate change here at the National Press Club.

While addressing media, he said the Foundation having Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with United Nations since 2014, and accredited with UNEP as Observer since 2018 has conducted its study under the supervision of expert international consultants being hired by the Transparency International.

He expressed hope that this report would not only serve as a testament to the urgency of addressing climate change but also as a guiding document for policymakers, environmentalists, and advocates alike. The survey which is

who demonstrated exceptional performance during the training courses.

Addressing the ceremony, CPO Shakir Hussain Dawar praised the dedication and hard work of the officers and cadets who had completed the training courses successfully. He urged them to perform their duties with diligence, dedication, and a commitment to serving the community.

CPO expressed his delight at being part of the Islamabad Capital Police passing out ceremony and congratulated Capital Police College for providing top-notch training to officers and cadets in record time. He emphasized the significance of public service and encouraged the attendees to uphold the high values of law enforcement.

He said, "You are for- the feedback, experience and perception of the people of Pakistan, was conducted in 16 districts spanning over four provinces from November 15, 2023, to December 20, 2023, with 1,600 respondents (400 respondents from each Province). Some 100 respondents from each district took part in the survey.

It meticulously addressed crucial aspects, the questionnaire for survey based on 19 queries, such as rescue efforts, government response, climate awareness, community engagement, biodiversity, concerns about climate change, climate resilience efforts, government policies, climate education, and the Right to information (RTI) Further the report will also present you a critical analysis of Pakistan Climate Change Act 2017 with recommendations.

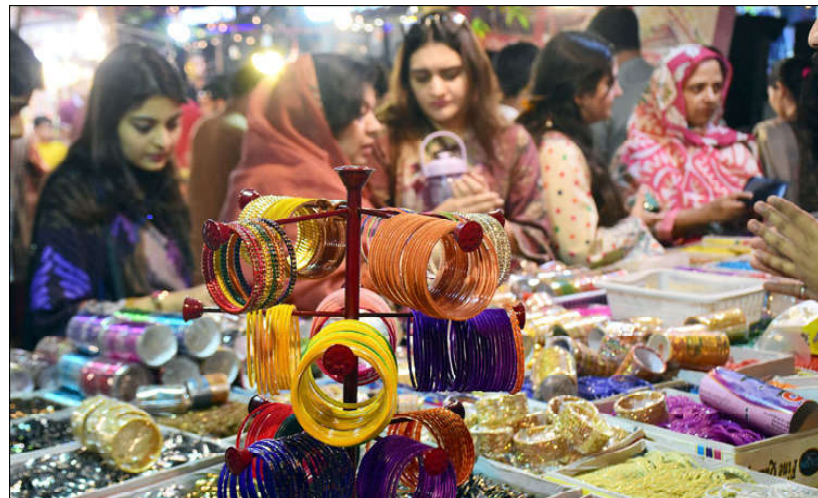
Citizens urged to discourage professional beggars

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Similarly, if there are any issues during shopping in commercial centers and markets that harass you or pose security concerns, citizens should inform the police immediately, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Women busy in selecting traditional artificial jewelry and Mehndi for preparation of upcoming Eid ul Fitr, in the Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Tuesday April 09, 2024

Merchants of death

In an increasingly rights conscious world professing allegiance to humanity, the situation in Gaza stands as perhaps the worst contradiction, fuelled by Israel's relentless military invasion. The recent call by the UN Human Rights Council to halt arms sales to Israel — although a procedural admonition for some critics — is a desperate cry for sanity in a conflict that has spiralled into what can only be called an extermination campaign.

The facts are undeniable: over 33,000 lives snuffed out, tens of thousands more maimed, and those who are left are on the brink of famine, living off fewer than 245 calories a day. The Netanyahu government's actions highlight a flagrant disregard for international law and the principles of human decency. The employment of starvation as a method of warfare, the use of AI to target densely populated areas, and the denial of essential humanitarian aid to 2.4m Palestinians have effectively rewritten the rules of warfare.

The tragic incident involving the World Central Kitchen, where a targeted strike killed seven aid workers, six of whom were foreigners, encapsulates the impunity of Israel's military operations. The event prompted a rare rebuke from US President Joe Biden, who has now hinted at a potential shift in US policy.

However, this should not have been the threshold for international outrage. The fact that it took the deaths of these particular individuals to move Washington is a damning indictment of selective empathy and the disproportionate weight of Western blood over that of the Palestinian people. The US, by continuing arms sales to Israel — it reportedly approved bombs the very day the strike occurred — is complicit in the bloodshed.

A continuation of this death-dealing would further sink the country's stated commitment to justice and human rights on the global stage. Meanwhile, Israel's temporary permission for aid delivery into Gaza, following intense US pressure, is a minuscule gesture in the face of the broader atrocities committed. Such measures are akin to placing a band-aid on a haemorrhage; they fail to address the root cause of the conflict or the systemic violence perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinians.

The need for a paradigm shift in how the international community, particularly the US, approaches the Israel-Palestine conflict is long overdue. It is not enough to condemn actions post-factum or to issue slap-on-the-wrist warnings devoid of substantive action. There must be a concerted effort to halt arms sales to Israel and to hold it accountable for its violations of international law, something it has long become accustomed to.

In the words of UN Secretary General António Guterres "nothing can justify the collective punishment" in Gaza. It has been six long months. The destruction, the bloodlust, the war must end, and they must end now.

Ahmed Bilal
Mehboob

Hardly any election in Pakistan has been free of controversy. This includes Senate elections. The recent presidential election was a rare exception. Mahmood Khan Achakzai, the runner-up and joint candidate of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) — read: PTI — displayed political maturity and a democratic spirit by accepting defeat and congratulating the winner, Asif Ali Zardari of the PPP. Not just that, he went on to acknowledge that it had been a clean election in which, unlike the past, no cash for votes was involved.

Less than a month later, it was a different story in the case of the election of half the Senate. Unlike in the past, there were no allegations of legislators voting for cash — a significant improvement given the background of Pakistan's Senate polls — some serious constitutional and legal controversies arose, which continue to rage even after the winners

have been notified.

The major controversy concerns the ECP's unprecedented move to postpone election in the KP provincial assembly, literally at the eleventh hour, despite the fact that election in the three other provinces and the federal capital had been held smoothly.

KP is the only province where the PTI commands an absolute majority in the provincial assembly and has been able to elect its own chief minister, even though the ECP doesn't recognise PTI as a parliamentary party and continues to treat its legislators as independent members. The ECP refused to hold election in the KP Assembly on the same day they were held in the other legislatures because its Speaker refused to administer oath to some 25 legislators elected on seats reserved for women and non-Muslim minorities belonging to various other political parties.

These were the seats which would have been won by the PTI, or its proxy SIC, had the ECP accepted the PTI or SIC

as a bona fide party in the assembly, which qualifies the allocation of reserved seats in proportion to the general seats won in the election. The PTI is somehow resigned to the fact that these seats can't be given to the party but finds it absolutely unacceptable for the seats which were its right to be distributed among its opponent parties.

In an odd and rather unfair interpretation of the law, some of these parties have bagged more seats reserved for women and minorities than they had secured in the general election. For example, the JUI-F had won seven general seats in the KP Assembly in the Feb 8 election but was able to get 10 reserved seats. The PML-N and PPP, which secured five and four general seats, were awarded eight and six reserved seats respectively.

Sadly, for the PTI, the ECP decision, no matter how unfair it might seem to the party, was unanimously endorsed by a five-member bench of the Peshawar

High Court, and the Speaker was directed to administer oath to members "elected" on the reserved seats. Since administering oath to "elected" members can be done only in an assembly session, and the Speaker has no legal mechanism to call one on his own — he can do so only if at least 25 per cent of the members requisition a session — the assembly session could not be convened and oath to the members elected on reserved seats could not be administered.

In these circumstances, only the provincial government has the authority to give binding advice to the governor to summon an assembly session. The governor tried to summon the assembly session on his own but both the provincial government and the assembly secretariat justifiably frustrated his effort on constitutional grounds. In fact, the high court, in its order, should have directed the provincial government, and not the Speaker, to summon the session.

At stake, besides a

principle, are at least four additional Senate seats which the opposition could win if these 25 legislators took oath and voted for their party nominees. The matter is now before the Peshawar High Court for the latter to hear the Speaker's petition to review the court order endorsing the ECP notification. The court will hear the case after it has delivered its detailed judgement. The matter may ultimately be resolved by the Supreme Court. How long it will take is anybody's guess.

Will the Senate, without 11 representatives from KP, be able to function as usual and elect its chairman and deputy chairman? The key question in this respect is whether the Senate is 'duly constituted' in accordance with Article 60 of the Constitution. There is nothing in the law or Constitution which suggests that the Senate is not duly constituted. It has full representation of the three provinces and the federal capital. The fourth province, KP, is also not without

representation as the term of half its senators elected in 2021 is set to expire in March 2027.

Some analysts have suggested that the Senate in its present form can function under an 'interim presiding officer' but it can't elect its regular chair and deputy chair. Again, there is nothing in the Constitution, Elections Act, 2017, or the Senate Rules of Procedure which stops the Upper House from electing its chairman and deputy chairman. Although, legally speaking, the Senate is "duly formed", it will be rather unfortunate if half the representatives of a province remain missing from this important forum which has been specifically created to safeguard the provinces' rights.

One hopes that the Peshawar High Court and the Supreme Court (if required) will move expeditiously not only to conclusively pronounce on these contentious points but also to interpret the law for the future. -- Courtesy Dawn

The pursuit of uniformity

Dr Ayesha Razzaque

There once was a national university, let's call it the National University of Technology (NUT) located in Metropabad, a major city of a developing nation.

Metropabad was a sought-after place to live, which is why NUT — a public university — was fortunate to attract some of the most qualified faculty available in the country. However, Metropabad was one of only a few well-developed cities in the country which meant that the cost of living there was high relative to most of the country. Faculty members happily joined NUT but soon discovered that they could not make ends meet on their salaries, which were affixed centrally, and country wide.

Kot Sadu, a small town in a rural area of that same country was home to another university, let's call it the Rustic University of Technology (RUT). RUT was located in an underdeveloped part of the country with no industry in its vicinity, Internet connectivity that was spotty, slow, and unreliable, and traveling on roads after sunset could be unsafe. Stu-

dents attending RUT were often from nearby districts that were similarly underdeveloped and were, for the most part, underprepared for university studies.

NUT and RUT were two very different institutions with different resources, different caliber faculty, and students of different levels of preparation. Nevertheless, they were judged by the same yardstick — the number of papers published irrespective of whether they contained anything worthwhile or not.

Universities like NUT were unable to pay their faculty a competitive wage because they were constrained by nationally set remuneration scales that were blind to the needs and context of universities like NUT which was located in a major metropolitan area and had a higher cost of living. It was equipped to do good, valid research but could not afford to retain the talent it needed. The bureaucracy of education refused to acknowledge that all institutions of higher education were not alike, could not have the same mission, and that not all of them were equipped to conduct valid, let alone

world-class, research. Albeit for different reasons, the pursuit of uniformity was strangling both NUT and RUT.

Just like Metropabad's NUT and Kot Sadu's RUT, Pakistan's public universities are either like one or the other or fall somewhere in between. An entry-level faculty position usually goes to someone in their late 20s or early 30s, an age bracket in which many in our society have a young family. At many public universities, the starting salary for an entry-level faculty position, as decreed by the HEC's Tenure Track System (TTS) contracts, even one from one of the world's top universities, is around Rs200,000 (less than \$720 by today's exchange rate).

However, unlike public sector employees all through the government, they are not offered any pension, medical coverage, or other benefits. To add insult to injury, they are working alongside colleagues on legacy BPS contracts that do provide those benefits. Predictably, the result has been acrimony and dissatisfaction because appointees under both service structures want what

the other one has but they do not. This has been a standing problem for over a decade that I have written about on multiple occasions (most recently, 'The fierce politics of Pakistan's academia', The News Intl., December 23, 2023).

In a recent meeting of university leaders and senior members of the education bureaucracy in Islamabad, some of the recommendations on some issues made sense but others were rather lackluster and predictable. On the issue of multiple service tracks for faculty, the recommendation was to create a "standardized performance-based faculty appointment service structure in the HELs" and a "unified pay scale(s) ... in consultation with the Government of Pakistan." Similarly, recommendations included "uniform criteria and pay packages ... for positions like Registrar and Treasurer." The assembly also made recommendations about the procedure for PhD students to change their supervisors, which amounts to external micro-management of universities and is something the learned leaders of universities should be able to figure out

for themselves.

I found it noteworthy that most recommendations amounted to demands from everyone working below the rank of VC (academics, finance departments, curbs on admin promotions, austerity) and many demands from various departments and agencies of the government (demand for guidelines/dictation, more funds for salaries of Pro-VCs, seed funding for endowments, etc). It seems like the only group of whom very little is demanded are VCs themselves — no expectation to fundraise, no expectation to lobby for legal reforms on behalf of their institutions, no expectation to innovate.

On almost every challenge, the default response seems to be to seek assistance, resources, and guidance from outside instead of leveraging the lack of degrees issued from the top as policy space in which to innovate. This is not a suggestion without precedent: Over the years, at least a few public universities have established and grown their endowments and can now afford to pay what they need to retain the right academic talent. They are not beholden to every minor diktat from the education

bureaucracy and can exercise their autonomy like most other universities only dream of. Globally, in many countries this is not an exception — it is the norm.

The only place in our country that could qualify is the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) with a population of 1.2 million and less than 450 public schools. At the current pace of spending on ICT schools and if the population stands constant, it will be more than a decade until all schools can be provided with basic infrastructure that many are missing and achieve a basic level of uniformity of infrastructure — boundary walls, toilets, running water, electricity, classroom furniture, Internet access, computers labs, and libraries.

We should certainly strive for equal opportunity for school and university students although, in a country as large and diverse as ours, we are still decades away from achieving it. And as misguided as it is, there is no possibility of the kind of perfect uniformity that political messiahs keep promising voters. Anyone who tells you otherwise either does not know what they are talking about or is being dishonest.

Human hierarchies

Zarrar Khuhro

We have witnessed horrors over the past six months. We have seen entire families decimated at the press of a button. We have seen entire bloodlines of Palestinians erased from the earth to stake Israel's bloodlust. We have seen hungry men and women rushing for aid only to be gunned down and then blamed for their own deaths. We have seen humans crushed flat by tanks and bulldozers.

We have seen children hunted like mice through the ruins of Gaza, joyfully sniped by Israeli soldiers playing their murderous games, the same soldiers who — joyfully — pose with the lingerie of Palestinian women they have murdered or displaced. They proudly advertise their atrocities, filming TikToks where they mock their victims, eat their food, desecrate their homes, mosques and bodies. They are celebrated for it by a society suffering from a deep sickness of the soul, a country where trophies like the passport of a dead or displaced Gazan child is sold on Facebook, where IDF soldiers post pictures of themselves brutalising Palestinians on their dating profiles and get hundreds of matches from women excited by this display of barbarism.

All this has happened with hardly a mention on Western mainstream media, and with the barest wringing of hands in Western capitals. And that's because there are hierarchies to human lives. There are some — mostly brown, mostly living in the Global South — who are born to be killed. Their lives are pointless, unworthy of comment or eulogy and in death they simply become statistics of the sort that can be easily ignored. Most of the time,

they aren't even killed; they simply die in unexplained explosions apparently caused by no one. Their children's lives are cut short by bullets that seemingly travel through time and space of their own volition. They don't really matter, and their deaths barely elicit a statement of concern from the worthies that run this world. We know this but the knowing brings us no solace, only sorrow.

Proof, if we needed any, was supplied when the Israeli army 'triple-tapped' an aid convoy of the World Central Kitchen, killing brave and selfless aid workers who hailed not from the disposable countries but from the US, UK, Canada, Australia and Poland. This was, of course, "unacceptable" and led to relatively loud condemnation of Israel with even the usually supine 'do you condemn Hamas/Israel has a right to defend itself' sections of the US media treating Israeli government spokespeople with the same ire they usually reserve for Palestinians who have lost their entire families.

Prominently, the hosts of America's President Joe "more Zionist than the Zionists" Biden's favourite show, Morning Joe, tore into Israel's minister of the economy for Israel's handling of the war in Gaza. Biden finally called for a ceasefire, reportedly threatened to condition future aid to Israel on how it addresses concerns and pressured Israel into opening the Erez crossing into Gaza, allowing a few trucks of aid in. This proved that American pressure could make Israel change course.

But don't think for a moment that this is any lasting change of heart where Biden is concerned; he's too old and too rigid in his hawkish views to ever change. It is, how-

ever, an indication of the pressure he now feels, given that Western citizens have been killed and that his chances of re-election seem dimmer. It also helps, of course, that the founder of the WCH, Jose Andre, is a well-known and well-connected figure in Washington, D.C.

Just a day after Biden called for an "immediate ceasefire", the politicians-for-hire of America stepped up with choreographed messages of unconditional support for Israel. Politicians like Brad Sherman, the democratic Cong-ressman, whom many Pakistanis recently became acquainted with, tweeted not just to exonerate Israel of blame but also to indirectly place the blame on WCH itself. This isn't surprising since Sherman is one of the many hired guns of Israel in the US Congress, and has received upwards of \$700,000 over his career from pro-Israel interest groups. Other known Israeli mouthpieces like Richie Torres (over a million dollars from pro-Israel groups) also chipped in as did Republican Ted Cruz and many others.

Speaking of AIPAC and its allies, Biden stands out as the highest recipients of funds from pro-Israel lobbies, clocking over \$11m from various Israeli lobbies over the course of his career. Increasingly, though there are voices calling out AIPAC in the US, something that was unthinkable fairly recently, and these voices will only grow in volume. Change is coming, but slowly and with a lot of pushback.

In the meantime, American citizens can take solace in the fact that if Israel were to kill them, the majority of the US political establishment would immediately rally to the defence of Israel. - Courtesy Dawn

The Rs400bn quandary

Basit Ghauri

The financial instability of distribution companies has led to a conundrum for decision-makers whereby the federal government, under the IMF programme, seeks to alleviate the burden of circular debt and considers shedding the Discos. On the other hand, the provinces and private sector remain cautious about assuming associated liabilities. Their fate remains unclear, as the Power Division, the Special Investment Facilitation Council, the Privatisation Commission, and the provinces fail to reach a consensus on the future of Discos.

Discos are struggling, with multifaceted challenges and structural deficiencies within the broader power sector contributing to their financial instability. A uniform tariff regime equalises the tariff of all Discos based on a national average; it is subsequently reduced through government subsidies from the federal budget. Such regulatory hurdles and lack of corporatisation hold back competition for performance improvement, exacerbating financial woes.

In FY2022, Discos reported a staggering net negative equity of Rs1,426 billion primarily driven by transmission and distribution losses of 16.3 per cent. Last year, low recovery rates and theft resulted in a staggering loss of Rs236bn. Abolishing this regime also risks social backlash and political repercussions, particularly in high-tariff areas.

The culmination of these challenges manifests in annual net losses of Rs400bn, begging the question of how to proceed. Multiple options are being explored, including complete or partial privatisation, management contracting, provincialisation, handing

over to the army, or maintaining the status quo.

Complete privatisation: The 1990s privatisation programme succeeded in privatising 167 entities worth about Rs476bn. However, recent attempts have largely failed, with only one success in the past decade. Successful privatisation demands strong political commitment, resolution of legacy contracts, settlement of liabilities, and negotiations with a sizable workforce. For instance, pressure from 3,500 employees at the Pakistan Steel Mills thwarted multiple privatisation attempts. With Discos employing over 100,000 individuals, gaining employee buy-in for any potential transaction appears highly unlikely.

Further, KE's privatisation has been problematic, with the need for a massive Rs171bn subsidy last year due to regulated consumer tariffs. The current uniform tariff regulations provide little incentive for entities like KE to adopt cost-effective, cleaner alternatives. According to a study by Renewables First, an energy and climate think tank, integrating renewables into its generation mix could have saved KE \$457 million over the past two years.

Moreover, aligning privatisation with liberalised market interventions, such as the Competitive Trading Bilateral Contracts Market, adds complexity. Since the wire business of Discos is a natural monopoly crucial to CTBCM success, determining the cost of using wires for bilateral contracts is a pertinent question. Also, corporatisation is essential, but some Discos lack formal boards, while others are intertwined with political affiliations.

Concession model: Concession models offer

an alternative, permitting government ownership retention while outsourcing Disco operations to enhance efficiency. This public-private partnership model, akin to successful infrastructure projects in provinces such as Sindh, necessitates tailored approaches for each Disco, with awareness of potential job displacements.

Provincialisation: Provincialisation as a solution to the power sector's circular debt addresses the symptoms, and not the disease. Provincial capacity to manage Discos is the same as, if not less than, the federal government's. Imbalances could arise, with wealthier provinces subsidising tariffs, while others face increased tariffs, exacerbating economic disparities. For instance, Tesco (Tribal Areas Electric Supply Company) receives around Rs20bn in subsidies from the federal government for its expenses, with almost negligible recoveries. This makes up some 2pc of the provincial budget set aside for Tesco only. Although incorporating this amount into the NFC award has been proposed, historical issues with timely and complete NFC disbursements remain unresolved.

Maintaining Disco's status quo may seem politically favourable but risks worsening the circular debt and relations with the IMF. Resolving Discos' issues requires assessing social and financial costs, managing assets, and building stakeholder consensus. Regardless of the chosen path, consumers will bear short-term costs, with substantive benefits materialising in the medium term. The government should adopt forward-looking strategies in consultation with stakeholders. -- Courtesy Dawn

CM Murad chairs meeting to review law, order situation

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday chaired a meeting to discuss the law & order situation in the city praised the police for successfully rescuing two kidnap victims from Baldia.

He expressed his desire to cultivate this spirit of dedication and hard work in the police force so that the city could become a peaceful and liveable megalopolis.

The meeting was attended by Additional IG Karachi Imran Yakoob, DIG Mukadas Hyder, and the police party that

participated in the operation to rescue two kidnaped persons.

They include SSP AVCC Zafar Siddiqui, DSP Qaiser Shah, Inspector, Abid Hussain, Sub Inspector Ghulam Rasool, Head Constable Tariq Samad, Khawar Yusuf, lady police Constable Ms Aresha Naz.

Shah said that he was not satisfied with the law & order situation in the city. "I know the police were working hard but special focus was needed in the hotspots where the crime rate was high," he said and directed additional IG to strengthen such police

stations where the crime ratio has increased.

Additional IG Karachi Imran Yakoob told the CM that the crime rate in the city has been recorded at 166 cases per day means less than one per police station. He added that the crime rate in the other big cities of other provinces was high but even then, the situation was being controlled through extensive checking, patrolling and intelligence.

The CM said that every day people were being killed for resisting the robberies. "This is quite painful, and it becomes our responsibility to protect

the life, liberty and property of the citizen by hook or by crook," he said and directed the AdL IG to replace the lethargic police officers with efficient and hardworking.

AdL IG Police Imran Yakoob informed the CM that a raid was conducted on Sunday, April 7th, 2024, with the assistance of modern technical devices at Baldia No.02, near Food Street at Plot No.F.247 Baldia site in Karachi. During the police encounter, four kidnapers - Sabir, Inayat Rehman, Hazrat Ali, and Wahidullah - were arrested in an injured condition on the spot.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting to review Law and Order in the city, at CM House in Karachi.



LAHORE: Provincial Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique, Khawaja Imran Nazir, Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman, Rana Sikandar Haya and Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman presiding over 1st meeting of Cabinet Committee for deadly diseases.

Minister inaugurates facilities for mentally challenged children

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Mal Sohail Shaukat Butt marked a significant milestone when he inaugurated special residential facilities for mentally challenged children at the Chamman institution.

During his visit to the Chamman Institution here on Monday, he also laid the foundation stone of hostel, special washrooms and mess in the building.

Sohail Shaukat Butt personally interacted with the children, distributed Eid gifts, and expressed heartfelt affection towards them. Witnessing the joy on the children's faces upon receiving toys was a heartwarming moment for all present.

Sohail Shaukat Butt emphasized the importance of the project, which is a result of a public-private partnership with the Mushal-e-Rah Foundation. He expressed gratitude to Chairperson Mushal-e-Rah Amina Aftab for their unwavering support towards this noble cause.

The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to providing the best possible care for these special children, stating that these children are the flowers in our garden, and it is our duty to nurture and protect them. "We will spare no effort in ensuring they receive the attention and facilities they deserve."

The minister also addressed the issue of violence against women, announcing the upcoming launch of the 1737 helpline dedicated to the rescue and assistance of women facing litigation and violence. The "CM Punjab Women Protection Helpline" aims to support vulnerable and oppressed women, alongside stringent legislation to combat violence against domestic workers.

The inauguration of these special facilities at the Chamman institution marks a significant step towards providing a supportive environment for mentally challenged children, he concluded.

Home minister orders suspension of SHO following citizen deaths in robbery

KARACHI (APP): In a tragic incident within the jurisdiction of Police Station SITE-A, District Keamari, two citizens lost their lives while resisting a robbery attempt.

Expressing deep concern and dismay over the incident, Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hasan Lanjar swiftly took notice of the matter.

In response to the alarming situation, the Sindh Home Minister promptly ordered the immediate suspension of the Station House Officer (SHO) of SITE-A Police Station. This action follows the fatal outcome of the robbery incident, which claimed the lives of the citizens.

Further directives were issued by the Sindh Home Minister, instructing the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kemari to furnish a compliance report without delay.

Additionally, the SSP Kemari was tasked with

conducting a thorough and comprehensive inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Committing to transparency and accountability, the Sindh Home Minister pledged to receive daily progress reports regarding the investigation from the SSP Kemari.

Moreover, the past and recent anti-crime performance, as well as the tenure of posting, of SHO SITE-A, are under scrutiny.

The Sindh Home Minister reiterated that incidents involving robberies, killings, or injuries to civilians are completely unacceptable.

In a stern message, the Sindh Interior Minister emphasized that Station House Officers who neglect their duty by remaining confined to their offices instead of actively engaging in fieldwork will be relieved of their crucial responsibilities.

Commander Coast calls on Sindh CM

KARACHI (APP): The Commander Coast Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz called on the Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at Chief Minister House here on Monday.

They discussed the professional capabilities in the meeting, a CM's Spokesman said.

Four killed in road accident

By Adeel Ahmed

SHIKARPUR: A Horrible road accident claimed for precious lives including HiAce Passenger wagon driver and three Women on Shikarpur - Larkana Indus Highway road on Monday, in the jurisdiction of Dakhan police station.

According to reports, a speedy HiAce Passenger Wagon coming from Kandhkot to Larkana and went out of control where it's tyre bursted and overturned on road near Thariri Bus Stop of Garhiyaseen Taluka.

As a result of accident, Four persons including it's driver identified as Zameer Ahmed Naseerani died on the spot. While 14 others received serious injured and from them three Women identified as pregnant woman Musamat Husna wife of Ghous Bux Odho, Musamat Samina, Musamat Gulam Fatima all by Cast Odho succumbed to their injuries during their treatment, area police confirmed.

While four other injured passengers were reported as in precarious condition.

Police crack down on drug peddling

WAH CANTT (APP): In a crackdown against the pernicious drugs peddling mafia, law enforcement authorities on Monday apprehended three suspects, each found in possession of narcotics.

According to a police spokesman, the Wah Cantonment Police efforts yielded a substantial haul and recovered

2.20 kg of heroin, 1.30 kg of hashish and 0.52 kilogram of hashish from the possession of Qadeer Khan, Asad, Irum Bibi respectively. The swift and resolute actions of the police have led to the registration of separate cases against the accused

Punjab govt to roll out network of rehab centers to treat, cure ailing wildlife: Marriyum

LAHORE (APP): Senior Minister Punjab, Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday said that government of the Punjab would roll out a province wide network of rehabilitation centers to treat and cure ailing wildlife being poached and mutilated for entertainment purposes and enhance public education and awareness on bio-diversity with the technical assistance of Four Paws.

The senior Punjab Minister visited the Margallah Wildlife Rescue

Centre erstwhile Islamabad Marghazar Zoo to view the newly rehabilitated black bears being rescued by the Punjab Wildlife Department on the special directives of the Chief Minister Punjab and held a press talk, where she was flanked by Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, Chairperson Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), Rina Saeed Khan and team of Four Paws' experts busy in treating the rescued bears.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister Punjab have initiated combing operations against poached wild animals, whereas the Punjab Wildlife Department rescued six dancing black bears who were in a pathetic condition. There were three raids conducted in a row which resulted into a series of actions being underway to curb the menace of illegal wildlife trafficking and poaching, she added.

The IWMB has been working on wildlife preservation.



PESHAWAR: Newly elected Minority MPA Gorpall Singh meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Gulam Ali.

IGP Sindh says Will conduct operations based on intelligence

By Tanveer Ahmed

MIRPUR MATHELO: IG Sindh Police Ghulam Nabi Memon has said in a press conference at the District head quarters Mirpur Mathelo that social media cannot be closed in Ghotki Kachha Area, we have sent a reference to cybercrime, CTD in Kachha has been tasked, they are working to find out who is supplying the arms in Kachcha. When it comes to police operations, we will conduct operations based on intelligence because this is the way to conduct operations in Kachcha, IG Sindh.

He said that we are buying modern weapons which are being given to the police and we are also giving vehicles to the police. The accused killed in the clashes will be arrested. Sindh IG Ghulam Nabi Memon said in the

press conference that Ghotki, Shikarpur and Kashmir are districts in which they want to ensure law and order situation and the police are giving facilities to the police. If we do good work, people will support us.

There have been some incidents, the purpose of which is that the police is fighting with the dacoits. IG Sindh said that if we challenge the dacoits. If you do, there will be problems. Currently, there are no hostages in the Sukkur range, there are no robbers in the possession of the dacoits, not only the robbers, but also the noble people, that's why they conduct intelligence operations. Earlier, he also presided over a high-level meeting attended by top police officers and apprised them about the situation in the area.



PESHAWAR: A large number of vehicles stuck in traffic jam at Saddar market while people busy in shopping as they are preparing for the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitar coming ahead, in Peshawar.

FWMC deutes 3500 workers, 150 vehicles for cleanliness during Eid

FAISALABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Faisalabad Waste Management Company (FWMC) Rauf Ahmad said that the company has deputed more than 3,500 workers and 150 vehicles for cleanliness during Eid holidays.

During his visit to various mosques and Eidgahs here on Monday, he said that leaves of FWMC officers and officials were cancelled and the entire staff would remain available from April 10 to April 13 for immediate disposal of waste material during Eid days. He said that there

were 758 mosques and Eidgahs in Faisalabad and their routes and congregation sites would be cleaned and washed before Eid-ul-Fitr in addition to sprinkling anti-germ sprays.

He said that more than 3500 workers and 150 vehicles would remain active during Eid days. They would ensure mechanical sweeping of 100 kilometers roads in Faisalabad. The people could contact the FWMC through its complaint cell 1139 which would remain active round-the-clock to receive and redress public complaints on urgent basis.

PHC full court reference in honour of outgoing Chief Justice held

Independent Report PESHAWAR: A full court reference of the judges of Peshawar High Court was held in honour of outgoing Chief Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan here on Monday.

Besides judges of Peshawar High Court, advocate general Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and additional attorney general, the full court reference was also attended by vice chairman KP Bar Council, president and general secretary of high court bar associations, president & general secretary of Peshawar bar association, lawyers, director general KP Judicial Academy, district and sessions judges. Addressing the full court reference here at PHC, the Chief Justice said that today marked a

significant milestone in his life to stand here after serving on different key positions during his long 31 years and nine month service.

Highlighting his rich education background and professional experience in the field of law, the Chief Justice said that he has passed thousands of judgments while remaining judge of district judiciary, and around 15000 judgments since elevation, adding 509 judgments were challenged in Supreme Court out of which 279 were upheld whereas 188 are still sub-judice and only 42 small matters have been set-aside.

He also highlighted his valuable service after appointed as Commission to probe APS Peshawar carrange.

Largest Namaz-e-Eid gathering to be held at Gulshan-e-Jinnah at 8a.m

KARACHI (APP): The largest Namaz-e-Eidul Fitr gathering under the management of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) will be held in Gulshan-e-Jinnah (Old Polo Ground), here at 8am.

Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Municipal Commissioner S.M Afzal Zaidi, diplomats of Islamic countries, members of national and provincial assemblies, various social

and political leaders and a large number of dignitaries of the city will offer Eid prayers at Gulshan-e-Jinnah.

According to the instructions of Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, arrangements are being completed for the Eid-ul-Fitr gathering at the Old Polo Ground.

The flags of different Muslim countries are being raised to express solidarity. Apart from cleanliness around the Eid Gah, the entrance and exit routes are also being made better for the faithfuls.



LAHORE: Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman addressing Secretaries Conference at Civil Secretariat.

Police finalizes security plan for Eid-ul-Fitar

KHANEWAL (APP): Police finalized security plan to maintain law and order during celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitar.

The District Police Officer (DPO) Rana Omer Farooq said that foolproof security arrangements would be made during Eid and law violations would not be tolerated at any cost.

He said that more than 648 police officials would be deployed on security duty at 461 Masjid and 51 Imambarghas across the district.

On the other hand, Elite force would continue patrolling in the areas for quick response in any emergency like situation, he added.

1085 vehicles inspected, fines imposed

PESHAWAR (APP): The district administration and the Transport Department have inspected a total of 1085 vehicles and 59 transport terminals. Fines were imposed on 372 vehicle owners, and FIRs were registered against six managers of bus terminals during the last three days.

The authorities have issued warnings to 78 transporters, while 16 were arrested for overcharging. Inspections were carried out at various transport terminals, including General Bus Stand.

Members of global animal welfare organisation calls on senior minister

LAHORE (APP): A four-member experts team of Austria-based global animal welfare organisation, Four Paws, called on Senior Minister Punjab Marriyum Aurangzeb at Margalla Wildlife Rescue centre and discussed different issues, including wildlife conservation, breeding, ecosystem provision, technical assistance, provision and use of modern medical equipment and capacity building of the Punjab Wildlife Department's staff.

Four Paw's Director (Operations) Dr Amir

Khalil, Dr Ivanov, Dr Frank Gorriz, and Welzer Englof arrived in Pakistan for the medical treatment of eight black bears as per the special request of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board for animal treatment. The senior minister expressed gratitude for the visit of the Four Paw's team to technical assistance, provision of wildlife and cooperation in wildlife conservation efforts. The senior minister stated that public awareness campaigns would be launched regarding wildlife conservation.

DCs, DPOs directed to ensure prevention of aerial firing

PESHAWAR (APP): Commissioner, Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud has directed the Deputy Commissioners (DCs), District Police Officer (DPOs) of all districts of the division, authorities of traffic police, Water Supply & Sanitation Programme (WSSP) and administrative officers of the Capital Metropolitan Government also attended the meeting. Divisional Commissioner directed Police in all districts of the division to begin patrolling from the afternoon of the day of moon-sighting night and beside police.

He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting regarding the prevention of aerial firing and maintenance of smooth flow of traffic on the occasion of Eidul Fitr in



LARKANA: A large number of people breaking fast (Iftar) in the holy month of Ramzan ul Mubarak at Madarsa Jamia Ishtatul Quran Wal-Hadees.

Jam for Pakistan's participation in Expo 2025 Osaka to achieve strategic objectives

KARACHI (APP): The Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Monday expressed his desire for Pakistan's maximum participation in the Expo 2025 Osaka to achieve desired goals.

The expo is scheduled to be held from April 13 to October 13 in Japan.

The Minister, earlier, visited the Trade Development Authority of

Pakistan (TDAP) and took briefing about the upcoming international exhibitions scheduled to be held in Japan and Pakistan.

While briefing the Minister Jam Kamal, the Regional Director General Islamabad Muhammad Naseer via video link informed the minister that Expo 2025 Osaka is going to be held in Japan under the theme of 'Designing Future Society for Our

Lives' from April 13 to October 13, 2025 at Yumeshima, Osaka in Japan.

He said that Pakistan out of three sub-themes of the exhibition had shown its interest to participate in Connecting Lives and Empowering Lives.

Naseer said that Pakistan had applied for participating in the exhibition and expected to get approval from the



KARACHI: The Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan getting briefing at Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP).



LAHORE: Members of Kissan Board Pakistan are holding protest demonstration against wheat support price, in Lahore.

Farooq Shaikhani emphasizes pivotal role of private sector to revitalize institutions

HYDERABAD (APP): President Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry Farooq Shaikhani, emphasizes the pivotal role of the private sector worldwide in revitalizing declining institutions through their unwavering commitment, innovation and embrace of new technologies, however suggested that in Pakistan, government institutions should adequately support and incentivize the private sector as well.

He stated that the official rate for a 100 kg sack of wheat has been set at Rs. 10,000. However, following this decision, the price of wheat in the open market has subsequently decreased, resulting in

direct financial setbacks for farmers.

He highlighted Pakistan's significant position as the fifth-largest wheat-cultivating nation globally. However, wheat shortages and fluctuating flour prices, ultimately impacts both the public and traders.

President Chamber Farooq Shaikhani stressed the need to engage the private sector in wheat procurement, aligning with Islamic banking principles. Such involvement promises enhanced efficiency in the procurement process, as private enterprises typically boast streamlined operations driven by profit

Eid shopping reaches its peak in city markets

RAWALPINDI (APP): The shopping in city markets for Eid-ul-fitr reached its peak on Monday and the traders in the city markets were happy with a large turnout of the customers.

A festive environment was noticed at the busy shopping centers including Tench Bhatta, Saddar, Lalkurti, Moti Bazar, Commercial Market and several other markets of the town.

The shopkeepers and their helpers were busy till late night on Saturday and Sunday, in managing the customers, showing them the goods and bargaining with them.

The families were seen to throng the markets to pick up their choices for Eid on Saturday and Sunday.

The shopkeepers of different malls and other

markets said that their business on Saturday and Sunday was better than other days of this Ramadan. Varieties of goods, including foreign brands, particularly Chinese, are found in abundance.

The shops are flooded with garments for men, women and children, with the latest designs, particularly for children.

The rush of the customers at the shopping centers nowadays starts from evening and continue till closing of the shops before seheri.

The illuminated stalls across the city are offering a huge variety of colourful bangles that includes the glittering ones, accessories including necklace, rings, anklets and earrings and a variety of mehndi brands claiming to give darkest shades.

163rd BoD meeting of PIEDMC held

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Industrial Estates Development and Management Company (PIEDMC) Chairman Javed Iqbal here Monday presided over the 163rd meeting of the PIEDMC Board of Directors.

The board approved the sale plan of Bahawalpur Industrial Estate. The meeting also approved the design and cost of the main gates of the Quaid-e-Azam Business Park; the audited accounts of the company for the years 2021 and 2022; the terms of references of the working committees; and the concept paper of the Green Energy Initiatives.

The Board also approved obtaining a license from PTA to

provide telecommunication services in Quaid-e-Azam Business Park; formation of the special committee to acquire land for a new grid station in Sunder Industrial Estate; and initiating the process to fill the vacant statutory seats of the company. While addressing the meeting Chairman PIEDMC Javed Iqbal said that speedy measures were being taken to promote industrial development in Punjab. Special focus is being given to the timely completion of development projects and the provision of facilities to the industrialists under one roof. Board members Shehzad Azam Khan, Sajid Saleem Mehnas, Muhammad Ahmed, Dr. Shahid Raza, Ibrahim Tariq.



LAHORE: Finance Minister of Punjab Mujtaba Shujaaur Rehman presiding over 1st meeting of Cabinet Standing Committee for Legislative Business & Privatization.

PSX closed at historic high level of 69,619 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Monday, gaining 1203.20 points, a positive change of 1.76 percent, closing at historic level of 67,619.99 points against 68,416.78 points the previous trading day.

A total of 335,825,036 shares valuing Rs.15,315 billion were traded during the day as compared to 388,751,782 shares valuing Rs. 17,882 billion the last day.

Some 342 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 202 of them recorded gains and 121 sustained losses,

whereas the share prices of 19 remained unchanged.

In PSX, the three top trading companies were PTCL with 33,757,114 shares at Rs.17.02 per share, the Searle Company with 21,100,371 shares with Rs.61.86 per share and WorldCall telecom with 18,139,120 shares at Rs.1.38 per share.

Rathan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.150.00 per share price, closing at Rs.8,350.00, whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum Company Limited with a Rs.48.88 rise in its per share price to Rs.2,565.86.

Pakistan faces average cost of Rs136bln per annum due to natural disasters: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at a validation session on financial flow and gap analysis of public finance for disaster preparedness and response conducted by FAO Pakistan, a news release said.

The analysis seeks to facilitate specific advocacy and capacity-building steps essential for enabling national, provincial, and district-level systems to finance and support Anticipatory Actions (AA). With a focus on both national and sub-national levels, particularly in Sindh province, the study looked into government climate and disaster risk financing mechanisms, tools, and flows.

Janek Toepper, Climate Change and DRF Specialist, FAORAP, along with Syed Aftab Raza, Public Finance Management Consultant, presented key findings from the research analysis, shedding light on the Disaster Risk Finance for anticipatory action. Following this, Mubushar Hussain, Manager of Disaster Risk Reduction at NDRMF, discussed the Disaster Risk Financing Strategy and NatCat Model.

Emphasizing the necessity for collaborative efforts among public, private, and international stakeholders.

Rupee sheds 02 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed a devaluation of 02 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.94 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.92.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs277.3 and Rs280.4 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 09 paise to close at Rs301.07 against the last-day closing of Rs301.16, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.83, whereas an increase of 10 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded.



LAHORE: Vice President Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry Adnan Khalid Butt meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman.

BISP beneficiaries to receive financial assistance directly into bank accounts: SBP

Independent Report KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan, Monday, rolled out a facilitation framework to enable Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) beneficiaries receive financial assistance directly into their bank accounts.

The central bank, in a statement issued here, said that the facilitation framework has been developed in consultation with the BISP and banks and under the framework banks accounts of BISP beneficiaries will be opened in all banks and Micro Finance Banks across the country.

The decision has been taken to onboard BISP beneficiaries for receiving the social welfare payment into their accounts and under the framework,

Prices of edibles checked, complying of govt-set prices emphasis

SUKKUR (APP): Following directives of the Provincial Government of Sindh, the price monitoring team of the district administration on Monday visited various markets of the city and checked the prices of edibles.

The team visited shops of vegetables and fruits, and bakeries to check prices and inspect the quality of food items.

Shopkeepers were also penalized for ignoring directives of the district administration to display price lists.

They issued a stern

warning to business owners dealing with food items, emphasizing the importance of complying with government-set prices or facing severe legal consequences.

Appealing to citizens, the team urged them to promptly report any artificial price hikes to the food department and provide evidence of responsible citizenship.

They reaffirmed the provincial government's dedication to providing relief to the public by undertaking all necessary measures.



QUETTA: People purchasing dry fruit from Qandhari Bazaar.

Stocks diverge at start of busy week; gold extends record streak

LONDON (AFP/APP): European and Asian equities rose Monday while gold soared to a new record peak at the start of a busy week that will include a eurozone interest rate decision and key US inflation data.

Most Asian markets squeezed out gains as traders weighed the chances of the US Federal Reserve cutting interest rates this year after a forecast-busting US jobs report on Friday dented hopes for a first move in June.

The positive disposition rolled over into European trading but Wall Street wobbled as the session got under way.

"The sense of optimism could stem from the fact the week holds a

lot of big events, including the European Central Bank's interest rate decision on Thursday," said Sophie Lund-Yates, lead equity analyst at stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown.

"There's an expectation that (ECB) rates will be held at 4.5 percent, and even more important will be the commentary around the decision, as investors look for clues of cuts coming in summer."

Gold prices spiked as high as \$2,353.95 per ounce on Monday to extend its record-busting streak, buoyed by its haven qualities amid ongoing Middle East turmoil.

Oil subsided but remained within grasp of recent five-month peaks.

KATI commends surge in LSM Production

KARACHI (APP): President Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), Johar Qandhari, Monday, expressed satisfaction over the recent uptick in production within the large-scale manufacturing (LSM) sector.

President KATI, in a statement issued here, acknowledged the positive impact of increased production, particularly in the textile sector, on exports and opined that the growth surge is transient due to the upcoming Eid festivities.

While underscoring the urgent need of lowering production costs and interest rates thorough cost reduction measures to sustain and bolster industrial activities, Qandhari emphasized that Pakistan's production costs was higher than other countries in the region.

Asserting the vital role of industrialization and exports in fostering economic development, he stressed that government should engage in dialogue with industrialists to address the issue of electricity and gas prices promptly, thereby facilitating economic stability for Pakistan.

They reaffirmed the provincial government's dedication to providing relief to the public by undertaking all necessary measures.

SNGPL punishes 12 consumers for illegal activity

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) punished 12 citizens and imposed a fine Rs 34,000 on illegal use of gas, on Monday. According to officials of Task Force, the alleged outlaws were using gas illegally as they were found making commercial use of gas, offering illegal connections to others and gas theft. The consumers who were involved in illegal activities were punished.

A fine amount totaling Rs 34,000 was imposed on them. The department urged citizens to cooperate and informed about illegal use of gas at phone number 0619220085 as secretary would be maintained.



RAWALPINDI: People are busy in shopping for Eid ul Fitr Festival at Baara Market.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where three ships, Elephant, Swansea and FSM, scheduled to load/offload Rice, Coal and LPG berthed at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile another ship, Gall carrying Palm oil also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day.

A total of ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Ardmore Cherokee and Al-Khor sailed out to sea on Monday morning and another ship FSM.



QUETTA: A vendor selling vermicelli.

Dozen gas connections disconnected over theft, other violations

MULTAN (APP): Task force of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) Multan region disconnected connections of a dozen consumers on Monday on charge of stealing the fuel gas and other violations.

SNGPL Multan spokesman said in a statement that connections of seven consumers were disconnected after they were found to be supplying gas illegally to more than one house.

Connection of a consumer at old Shujabad road was disconnected after the team found that he was using the domestic connection for commercial purposes. Two other connections were disconnected after

consumers were found to be involved in stealing gas by reversing their meters.

Two more connections that were disconnected earlier were found to be operational by way of illegal meters and the task force disconnected these again and took the meters in custody.

Regional Manager SNGPL Multan Hussain Zafar has formed a special cell where executives were deputized to resolve consumers' complaints without delay.

Incharge task force said that action against gas thieves to stop leakage of resources was a national obligation and appealed the people to convey to SNGPL any information related to gas theft.

At least 94 dead in Mozambique after unlicensed ferry boat capsizes

Monitoring Desk
MOZAMBIQUE: At least 94 people died, including children, and 26 are missing after a ferry boat capsized off the northern coast of Mozambique, an official from the country's Maritime Transport Institute (INTRASMAR) said.

The vessel was an overloaded fishing boat and was not licensed to transport people, Lourenco Machado, an administrator of INTRASMAR, said on state television on Monday.

"On Sunday we registered a maritime incident where at least 94 people died when a barge carrying 130 people capsized. We have recovered 94 bodies and 26 are missing," he said.

The boat was ferrying people from Lunga in Nampula province to

Mozambique Island, he said, adding that initial reports indicated that it was hit by a tidal wave.

The passengers were fleeing a cholera outbreak, said state broadcaster TVM, citing another local maritime administrator.

Jaime Neto, secretary of state for Nampula province, also said that the passengers were fleeing cholera, according to the British Broadcasting Corp (BBC).

"Because the boat was overcrowded and unsuited to carry passengers, it ended up sinking," he told the BBC, adding that many children were among the dead.

Videos posted on social media X showed many bodies lying on a beach and some people carrying the bodies of children. Reuters

could not immediately verify these videos.

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Boat that sunk off the north coast of Mozambique killing 96 people on the Island of Mozambique.

Iran FM opens new Syria consulate after deadly Israeli strike

Monitoring Desk
DAMASCUS: Iran's foreign minister inaugurated the country's new consulate in Damascus on Monday, a week after a deadly strike blamed on Israel destroyed the former premises, sending regional tensions skyrocketing.

Tehran, a key Damascus ally, has vowed to avenge last Monday's air strike on the Iranian embassy's consular section that killed seven Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) members, including two generals.

The strike came against the backdrop of Israel and Hamas's ongoing fighting, which began with the group's October 7 attack on Israel.

Damascus and Tehran blame Israel for last Monday's raid, but it has not commented. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian inaugurated the new consular section in a Damascus building in the presence of his Syrian counterpart Faisal Mekdad, whom he also met earlier on Monday, state news agency SANA said.

Russian FM Lavrov due in China today

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will visit China on Monday and Tuesday, his ministry said in a statement.

"On April 8 and 9, the foreign affairs minister ... will undertake an official visit in the People's Republic of China, during which discussions with... [his Chinese counterpart] Wang Yi are planned," it said on Sunday. "An in-depth exchange of points of view is expected on a certain number of 'burning subjects'," the statement said, citing "the Ukrainian crisis and the situation in the Asia-Pacific region".

China constantly coerces Japan and Philippines, US envoy to Japan Emanuel says

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: China constantly uses coercion and pressures other countries, including Japan and the Philippines, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel said on Monday. Emanuel made the remark at a Center for Strategic and International Studies event in Washington days before U.S. President Joe Biden hosts Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr for a summit.

Footage shows a lively Gaza turned to wasteland since war began

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: Drone footage of Gaza over the six months of warfare between Israel and Hamas shows how the once vibrant Palestinian enclave has been transformed into a vast wasteland of rubble and twisted steel by Israeli bombardment.

During normal days, Palestinians used to be able to stand on their buildings' balconies and take in a view of the Mediterranean Sea.

Those structures have vanished, footage from Reuters and other sources shows, crushed under piles of cement and debris.

Residents have been forced to wander Gaza seeking shelter from an Israeli offensive designed to destroy its arch enemy Hamas.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the campaign will not stop until Hamas is eliminated, so the bombardment and destruction are expected to continue.



People watch the solar eclipse on the lawn of Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, California, U.S.

Millions across North America await total solar eclipse

Monitoring Desk
MAZATLAN: A total solar eclipse will have millions of people across a heavily populated swath of North America gazing toward the heavens on Monday. However, the celestial event will not be visible in Pakistan or India.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), the eclipse will be visible from the west in "Europe, North America [and] north in South America, Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic".

"However it will be not visible in Pakistan," it added.

Meanwhile, Hindustan Times reported that the total solar eclipse would also not be visible in India.

The eclipse will be viewable, weather permitting, along a path starting

in Mexico and then crossing through the United States and into Canada. Eclipse fans are gathering in places along the "path of totality" including the city of Fredericksburg in central Texas, where the total eclipse will occur shortly after 6:30pm GMT.

That is where Michael Zeiler, a veteran eclipse chaser from New Mexico who already has witnessed 11 total eclipses across the globe, plans to be.

"First-time viewers of a total eclipse will be gobsmacked by the sight," Zeiler said. "It will be a peak life experience."

At up to 4 minutes and 28 seconds, this one will last longer than the total eclipse that streaked across parts of the United States in 2017, which clocked in at up to 2 minutes and 42 seconds.

Thai PM says Myanmar regime 'losing strength'

Monitoring Desk
SAMUI: Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin told Reuters now is a good time to open talks with Myanmar as the military regime that seized power in a 2021 coup is weakening.

Myanmar is in the throes of an insurgency on multiple fronts, with allied anti-junta groups backed by a pro-democracy parallel government seizing control of several military posts and towns, including parts of a key town on the border with Thailand over the weekend.

The insurgency is the biggest challenge the Myanmar junta has faced since it mounted a coup against an elected government in 2021.

"The current regime is starting to lose some strength," Srettha said in an interview on the resort island of Samui on Sunday, adding, "but even if they are losing, they have the power, they have the weapons."

Global fact checkers battle threats, financial perils
Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: From India and South Korea to Croatia and North Macedonia, fact-checking organisations battling an ever-rising tide of misinformation in a major election year are buffeted by legal threats, harassment and funding shortfalls.

Fact-checkers, largely under-resourced and increasingly under attack, have their work cut out this year as dozens of countries hold elections, a period when falsehoods typically explode. Debunking fake political claims and hoaxes that threaten election integrity, likened by some researchers as a seemingly endless game of whack-a-mole.

der that had fallen across a hiking trail near Hualien's Taroko National Park.

"Have you found something? Let's go over there," said a rescuer to Roger, who did not budge.

"Roger must have found some clues, and his confused look made the handler feel something was up, and then they found the victim," said Mayor Chen Chi-mai in a Facebook post titled "The Paw Paw Team's feat".

Handler Lee Hsin-hung said Roger located a victim "just five minutes after setting off", and praised the dog's confidence in an unfamiliar terrain.

Originally trained as a drug-sniffing dog as a pup, Roger was given his walking papers from that role because he was too friendly, which led to his switch to search-and-rescue missions.

Taiwan's dogs search for quake victims

Monitoring Desk
HUALIEN: A former drug-sniffing dog who lost his job for being too friendly has emerged as the unlikely MVP of the Taiwan rescue teams searching for survivors of the island's strongest earthquake in 25 years.

At least 13 people were killed and more than 1,140 injured by the magnitude-7.4 quake that struck the island on Wednesday, with strict building codes and widespread disaster readiness credited with averting an even bigger catastrophe.

But landslides around epicentre Hualien still blocked tunnels and roads, making the mountainous terrain around the county difficult for rescuers to access survivors and victims.

Footage released by the county fire department on Saturday showed Roger, an eight-year-old Labrador, mounting a boulder



Rescuers search for residents to evacuate as they drive in a flooded residential area in the city of Orsk, Russia.



A Philippine Navy helicopter pilot walks towards the helideck during the first multilateral drills.

Trump raises \$50m from biggest fundraiser yet

Monitoring Desk
PALM BEACH: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's campaign said a major fundraiser in Florida on Saturday raked in a massive \$50.5 million as the former president seeks to replenish diminished coffers in his rematch against Democrat Joe Biden.

The event, his biggest fundraiser yet, is a much-needed boost for Trump, who has been routinely out-raised by Biden and is in the midst of a financial squeeze due to ballooning lawyer fees and legal payouts from his criminal and civil court cases.

The dinner, hosted at billionaire hedge fund manager John Paulson's Palm Beach home, will allocate a portion of the money to be raised to a fundraising group that has spent tens of millions of dollars on Trump's legal fees.

While Trump has struggled to get some major traditional Republican donors on board, he retains the support of some heavy hitters. Co-hosts on Saturday, for example, include hedge-fund investor Robert Mercer and his daughter and conservative activist Rebekah, investor Scott Bessent, and casino mogul Phil Ruffin.

Chad opposition figure was likely shot at point-blank range, experts say

Monitoring Desk
NAIROBI: A prominent Chadian opposition leader, who was killed in February by government troops, appears to have been shot in the side of the head at close range, according to five forensic experts who reviewed a photo of his dead body for Reuters.

The experts' findings, based on the location and nature of the wound visible in the image, call into question statements by Chadian officials that Yaya Dillo was shot dead in an exchange of fire on Feb 28 when security forces tried to arrest him at his party's headquarters in the capital, N'Djamena.

Sabre-rattling threatens already tense Middle East

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: The Middle East tinderbox saw yet another spark on Sunday, as rivals Iran and Israel directly threatened to attack each other for the first time in the six months since Tel Aviv launched its invasion of Gaza.

An adviser to Iran's supreme leader warned that Israeli embassies are "no longer safe" after a strike in Syria, which Tehran blamed on Tel Aviv, killed seven members of the Revolutionary Guards early last week.

In response, Israeli officials have said their forces could "handle Iran". The United States is also on high alert and preparing for a possible attack.

Tehran vowed to avenge the air strike in Damascus that levelled the Iranian embassy's consular annex and claimed the lives of two IRGC generals, Mohammad Reza Zahedi and Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi.

Zahedi, 63, had held several commands during a career spanning more than 40 years.

Argentina faces rising dengue epidemic risk as mosquitoes hatch early

Monitoring Desk
BUENOS AIRES: Mosquitoes are hatching earlier in Argentina and reaching cooler regions than before, as rising temperatures drive the country's worst outbreak of dengue fever and raise the risk of more regular epidemics of the insect-borne virus, scientists said.

So far in the 2023-24 season, the South American nation has recorded 232,996 cases of the disease, sometimes known as "break-bone fever" for the severe muscle and joint pain it can cause.

Russia says Ukraine struck nuclear plant, Kyiv denies it was behind the attack

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia said Ukraine struck the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station controlled by Russian forces three times on Sunday and demanded the West respond, though Kyiv said it had nothing to do with the attacks.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, which has experts at the site, said it was the first time the nuclear plant, Europe's largest, was directly targeted since November 2022 and said the attack had endangered nuclear safety.

Russian forces took control of the plant in 2022 shortly after their full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Both Moscow and Kyiv have repeatedly accused each other of risking a nuclear accident by attacking the plant. Russia's state nuclear corporation, Rosatom, said

Ukraine attacked the plant three times on Sunday with drones, first injuring three near a canteen, then attacking a cargo area and then the dome above reactor No 6.

"Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station has been subjected to an unprecedented series of drone attacks, a direct threat to the safety of the plant," Rosatom said. "The radiation levels at the plant and the surrounding area have not changed," it said.

A Ukrainian intelligence official said Kyiv had nothing to do with any strikes on the station and suggested they were the work of Russians themselves. "Russian strikes, including imitation ones, on the territory of the Ukrainian nuclear power plant ... have long been a well-known criminal practice of the invaders."

People's Liberation Army conducts military drills in South China Sea

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China conducted military "combat patrols" on Sunday in the disputed South China Sea, its army said, the same day as joint drills by the Philippines, the United States, Japan and Australia.

The announcement comes one day after defence chiefs from four countries including the Philippines — which has been engaged in several contentious maritime disputes with Beijing recently — said they would conduct joint drills in the area.

Beijing's People's Liberation Army (PLA) Southern Theater Command said it was organising "joint naval and air combat patrols in the South China Sea". "All military activities that mess up the situation in the South China Sea and create hotspots are under control," it said in a statement, in an apparent

swipe at the other drills being held in the waters. Further details about the Chinese military activities in the waterway were not announced.

The exercises take place days before US President Joe Biden is due to hold the first trilateral summit with the leaders of the Philippines and Japan. Top US officials have repeatedly declared the United States' "ironclad" commitment to defending the Philippines against an armed attack in the South China Sea — to the consternation of Beijing.

China claims territorial sovereignty over nearly all of the South China Sea and has been increasingly assertive in the region in recent years. China's Coast Guard said it had "handled" a situation on Thursday at a disputed reef where several ships from the Philippines were engaged in "illegal" operations.

South Korea launches its 2nd military spy satellite amid animosities with North Korea

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korea has successfully launched its second military spy satellite into orbit, days after North Korea reaffirmed its plan to launch multiple reconnaissance satellites this year.

The Koreans each launched their first spy satellites last year — North Korea in November and South Korea in December — amid heightened animosities. They said their satellites would boost their abilities to monitor each other and enhance their own missile attack capabilities.

South Korea's second spy satellite was launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Sunday evening local time, which was Monday morning in Seoul. South Korea's Defense Ministry said it confirmed the satellite entered orbit and communicated with an overseas ground station after separation from a rocket.

"With the success of the second military spy satellite launch, our military has acquired an additional

independent surveillance ability and further bolstered our 'kill chain' capability," Defense Ministry spokesperson Jeon Ha Gyu told reporters, referring to the military's preemptive missile strike capability.

Under a contract with SpaceX, South Korea was to launch five spy satellites by 2025. South Korea's first spy satellite launch on Dec. 1 was made from California's Vandenberg Space Force Base.

South Korea in 2022 became the world's 10th nation to successfully launch a satellite with its own technology by using a home-grown rocket to place what it called a "performance observation satellite" in orbit. But experts say it's economical to use a SpaceX rocket to launch spy satellites and that South Korea needs more launches to ensure the reliability of a rocket.

North Korea is also eager to acquire its own space-based surveillance network to cope with what it calls military threats posed by the United States and South Korea.

Mexico welcomes home Ecuador embassy staff after armed raid

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: Mexico welcomed the return of its Ecuador embassy personnel on Sunday, two days after police raided the facility in an act that triggered an abrupt diplomatic break while provoking global shock and condemnation of the South American nation.

Ecuadorian police and soldiers forced their way into Mexico's embassy in Quito late Friday night to arrest former Vice President Jorge Glas who had for months taken refuge there, after Mexican officials offered him formal asylum protection earlier in the day.

Ecuador argued it was unlawful to grant asylum to Glas, who had been convicted twice on graft charges.

Glas, 54, who had a preventive arrest warrant out on another corruption case, had been holed up in the embassy in Quito since seeking political asylum in December.

At the Mexican capital's main airport, For-

eign Minister Alicia Barcena hailed the solidarity shown with Mexico from 18 Latin American governments — nearly the entire region and spanning its ideological divides — in addition to 10 European nations, plus the United States and Canada.

While welcoming about a couple dozen embassy personnel who were flown back to Mexico, the diplomat also lashed out at Ecuador's "physical aggression" on the embassy. She also reiterated plans to seek further international rebukes for the government of President Daniel Noboa over the incident.

Earlier on Sunday, Britain became the latest country to condemn Ecuador's incursion into the embassy, according to a foreign office statement. Mexico's ambassador to Ecuador, Raquel Serur, flanked Barcena at the ceremony. "President Noboa made a mistake by taking a decision that didn't just break with all established international conventions.

Govt determined to boost economy to give confidence to business community: Jam

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Monday said that the government was confident and focused to further improve all the factors linked with the economy, so as to boost confidence of the business community. He said this while talking to media after a meeting at the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) here on Monday.

He said that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif also held several meetings regarding economy of the country and business, exports, trade and energy sectors are among our top pri-

orities. Jam Kamal Khan said that the Commerce Ministry is well aware of its responsibility to reach out business community to take the input from them and we are determined to give our utmost to resolve the challenges being confronted by this community.

Referring to a recently held pre-budget seminar at Islamabad, the Federal Commerce Minister said that representatives of the business community from all over the country were invited to take their valuable suggestions to incorporate in the policy and decision-making process so as

to further improve the situation. The commerce minister told that trade diplomacy has been a very vital factor throughout the globe which helps the countries to improve their diplomatic ties. He said that the government as well as the business community are considering the available options to move the things in the positive direction.

Jam Kamal Khan said that the government is very hopeful and taking things forward in a progressive way and in near future we will share with the media and the masses the opportunities we need to ponder

over for our progress and prosperity. He told another questioner that the road map of exports is not like pushing a button to improve the exports immediately rather it is a gradual and continuous process and therefore we will have to take appropriate steps accordingly. He lauded the performance of the previous caretaker government, and said that many things were streamlined by the caretaker setup in the past six months as smuggling was also controlled to a greater extent and some of the initiatives needed to be taken ahead.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan meeting with Pakistan Business Council.



QUETTA: A large number of vehicles stuck in traffic jam at Bacha Khan Chowk while people busy in shopping as they are preparing for the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitar coming ahead, in Quetta.

Govt to establish first-ever center of excellence for climate change: Romina

ISLAMABAD (INP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday expressed the government's intention to establish the first-ever center of excellence for climate change in the country.

She said that the newly planned Centre would be for welfare of wildlife wherein veterinary training, transfer of veterinary technology, awareness for the public would be provided by senior wildlife scientists for betterment of niche, ecology, growth and experimentation of wildlife.

Romina Khurshid Alam held a meeting with

Islamabad Wildlife management Board along with experts from Four Paws at ministry of climate change, a news release said.

The Coordinator to PM on Climate Change was apprised on management, preservation of wildlife, issues and challenges about Margalla Hills National Park & Marghazar Zoo, Dr. Frank Goeritz, head of Institute of zoo & wildlife research and Dr. Amir Khalil, Director reveal and rescue briefed the coordinator to PM on bio rescue & endangered species.

The Coordinator to PM on Climate Change emphasized on setting up a new park dedicated for rare species, endangered species

and vulnerable species. For this purpose 28 acre land, under the ministry would be utilized.

While discussing the challenges of natural life of Pakistan, Coordinator to PM on climate change remarked that she was pursuing for the earliest signing of Islamabad Nature & wildlife management act 2023 after which measures for bio rescue and wildlife would be upscald.

Coordinator to PM on climate change expressed her gratitude to the participants of the meeting adding that there is long way to go for welfare of Pakistani wildlife which was neglected for a very long time

24 vehicles challaned on overcharging of fare on public transport

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Regional Transport Authority (RTA) and Traffic Police continued crackdown against the transporters and drivers on overcharging of the fare on the public transport in Quetta.

According to an official hand out issued here, the team supervised by the Secretary RTA Waheed Sharif Umrani and Traffic Police raided the taxi stand and bus terminal located at Jable Noor, western bypass.

During the course of action, 24 vehicles were challaned on overcharging of the fare. While on the other hand, the extra fare charged from the passengers on some 71 buses and coaches were returned to them.

The Secretary RTA asked the transporters and drivers not to charge extra fare from the passengers taking advantage of the Eid.

Otherwise, stern action would be taken against them, the Secretary RTA warned.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam calls on by Ethiopian Ambassador, Jemal Bekir Abdula at her office.

Six shops sealed, eight shopkeepers arrested

Independent Report
QUETTA: At least six more shops were sealed while eight shopkeepers were arrested on the charges of profiteering and violation of the official rate list in different parts of the provincial metropolis the other day. According to the local administration, the crackdown is continued against profiteering and violation of the official rate list in the metropolis.

The price control committee teams comprising the assistant commissioners and magistrates are heavily engaged in the campaign against profiteering all over the city.

The teams visited more than 400 shops and examined the rate list there.

During the course, six shops were sealed while eight shopkeepers were arrested on the charges of violation of official rate list.

Some 22 shopkeepers were also charged fine while 99 others were issued stern warning not to fleece the people. The district administration has warned the shopkeepers not to violate the official price list, otherwise stern action would be taken against them.

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The Secretary RTA asked the transporters and drivers not to charge extra fare from the passengers taking advantage of the Eid.

Otherwise, stern action would be taken against them, the Secretary RTA warned.

IHC reserves decision on maintainability of plea against chairman senate elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday reserved its verdict on maintainability of a petition challenging the election of chairman and deputy chairman Senate.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the PTI's pe-

tion along with the objections raised by the registrar office. The registrar IHC has objected that the case of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Senate seats is under hearing in the Peshawar High Court (PHC) thus the petitioner should have filed this case to PHC.

PIA announces pre-Hajj operation from May 9 to June 10

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan International Airline (PIA) Monday announced starting its pre-Hajj operation from May 9 to June 10 this year.

During the pre-Hajj operation, more than 20,000 Hajj pilgrims will travel to Saudi Arabia. As per schedule, on the first day of the PIA pre-Hajj operation,

flights will depart from different cities of the country including Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and Peshawar on May 9.

Through the PIA flights on the first day of the pre-Hajj operation, more than a thousand pilgrims will depart for Saudi Arabia. As per the schedule, PIA's

special Hajj and scheduled flights will operate to two cities in Saudi Arabia—Jeddah and Madinah. During the pre-Hajj operations, PIA will use the planes of

Latif hopeful PTI founder to be released in current month

MULTAN (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sardar Latif Khosa has asserted that PTI founder Imran Khan will walk free from jail in current month.

The former prime minister's sentence in the Toshakhana case has been suspended by the court while the cipher case will not stand even a week, he said during his appearance on a private TV channel.

Downplaying former prime minister Imran Khan's conviction in the cipher case, Khosa said that the documents were not presented before the court in the case while the PTI founder's presence was not proved in any case related to the May 9 riots.

The PTI leader reiterated that the PTI founder will neither cut a deal for his release nor will he leave the country. According to Latif Khosa, Khan wanted all institutions to act as per the Constitution of Pakistan and was against the politics of revenge. On political dialogue.

Sardar Awais sets April 23 deadline to curb power pilferage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari has given April 23 as deadline to all Chairmen, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) to curb power pilferage completely.

Termining the current efforts to curb menace of power pilferage insufficient, the minister directed strict action against power thieves, said a statement issued by the Power Division here Monday. The data did not match to the actual damages of power theft, he said.

He said the incumbent government has zero tolerance about power pilferage and committed to rooting out the power theft menace.

Those targeting innocent people not to be spared, asserts Chief Minister

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has asserted that the elements targeting innocent people would not be spared at all.

In an official condemnation statement issued here the other day, the Chief Minister said that it is an inhumane and cowardly act to attack the innocent people.

He said that the terrorists don't deserve any mercy, and as such they would be eliminated by the security forces together

with the masses.

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti pledged that the security forces would be taken to task. He also vowed to ensure peace and protection of life and property of the masses.

The Chief Minister expressed deep sorrow and sympathy with the bereaved families of those martyred in Khuzdar bomb explosion.

He directed to the concerned high ups to provide best medical treatment to those injured in the explosion.

Shuhada Forum distributes cheques among families: Nawabzada Jamal Raisani calls for taking more steps for wellbeing of families of martyrs

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Patron-in-Chief of Balochistan Shuhada Forum and Member National Assembly, Nawabzada Jamal Raisani has underlined the need to take steps for wellbeing of the families of martyrs in the province.

He observed that the bereaved families of martyrs are confronting difficult circumstances, and as such we need to take steps for their wellbeing a lot.

He also stressed the need to provide more opportunities of education and livelihood for the families

of martyrs.

Nawabzada Jamal Raisani was addressing the cheque distribution ceremony among the families of martyrs here at the office of Shuhada Forum on Monday.

The cheques were distributed among 14 families of martyrs at the ceremony.

Also present on the occasion were the spokesman of Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind and others.

Addressing the ceremony, Jamal Raisani paid homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the cause of country and nation.

He said that our organization has been working for wellbeing of the families of martyrs round the clock.

He assured to raise voice for the families of martyrs at every forum. He said that it would be our utmost endeavour that the provincial government and other organizations may do more work for the families of martyrs.

He urged the philanthropists to provide financial assistance to the Shuhada Forum so as to help the families of martyrs in big way.

Govt. orders inquiry into Khuzdar bomb blast: spokesman

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has ordered an inquiry into the bomb explosion took place in Khuzdar on late Sunday night. This was stated by the spokesman, Government of Balochistan in an official hand out issued here.

According to the spokesman, the explosive device was planted in a motorcycle, which claimed life of two persons and left five others injured. The spokesman said that the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to the concerned authorities to provide best medical treatment to those injured in the blast.



MAKKAH MUKARAMAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif kisses Hajr-e-Aswad as part of Ziaaraat of Al-Masjid e Haraam.

Power theft: Government 'okays' deputation of FIA officers to DISCOs

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has 'okayed' deputation of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officers to electricity distribution companies (DISCOs) to end power theft, sources on Monday.

The move has been taken to end power theft and enhance recoveries on the demand of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the sources said.

In this regard, a letter has been penned to the Power Division regarding the deputation of FIA officers in five DISCOs including Islamabad Electric Supply Company, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Tribal Areas and Quetta Electric Supply Companies.

It is to be noted that

FIA officers are already deputed in Peshawar, Sukkur and Hyderabad Electric Supply Companies.

The Power Division has recovered over Rs1.50 billion during a country-wide power theft crackdown from March 24 to 31, taking the overall recoveries to Rs84 billion.

To minimize the losses in the power sector, the caretaker government and military leadership of Pakistan in September 2023 decided to launch a country-wide crackdown on power thieves to minimize the losses. Pakistan has so far recovered Rs84 billion fine during a country-wide crackdown on the power pilfers while over 62,000 people have been taken into custody from September 1 till date.



QUETTA: A large number of people standing in queue to deposit gas bill

Rehabilitation & expansion of Qadeem Eidgah Gwadar completed in 4 months

Independent Report
QUETTA: The project of rehabilitation and expansion of the Qadeem (ancient) Eidgah of Gwadar has been completed under the GDA Old Town Rehabilitation Project in short span of four months.

With completion of the project, all necessary arrangements have been made to offer Eidul Fitr prayer at the Eidgah.

It may be mentioned here that the work on different projects had been started under the GDA Old Town Rehabilitation Project four months back in December last year on directives of the Director General GDA, Dawood Khan Khilji.

These projects were included the reconstruction and expansion of the Qadeem Eidgah of Gwadar, which was completed working on it at fast pace.

Needless to mention here is that the old Eidgah of Gwadar city had historical significance, which was in dilapidated condition.

The GDA decided to reconstruct and expand the Eidgah. The project includes the boundary wall, doors, marble floor, sound system, drain line, water and electricity line, place of ablution in the Eidgah besides its renovation and repair.

The total area of Eidgah is 78,000 square feet where around 10,000 faithfuls can offer prayer simultaneously.

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NTDC to ensure uninterrupted power supply on Eid-ul-Fitr

LAHORE (APP): In compliance with the instructions of Ministry of Energy (Power Division), the National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) has completed all necessary preparations to ensure uninterrupted power supply throughout the country on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

A central control room has been set up to maintain close liaison with National Power Control Center and all distribution companies (DISCOs) which will work round the clock during Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, according to the company's spokesman here Monday.

Regional control rooms have also been set up in Islamabad, Multan and Hyderabad to deal with any emergency situation. All control rooms will be connected with each other through video link. These control rooms has been working throughout Ramadan ul Mubarak.

The teams of Asset Management (North) and (South) have also been constituted for immediate response in case of any fault at NTDC grid stations or transmission lines across the country. The concerned officers will remain present at the grid stations all the time during Eid-ul-Fitr holidays.

Four students die as tractor, trolley rams mini-van in TT Singh

TOBA TEK SINGH (INP): Four students died when a speeding tractor-trolley rams a mini-van carrying the children to school in Toba Tek Singh on Monday morning. Another eight students were injured in the accident occurred near Motorway bridge in Tehsil Pir Mahal of Toba Tek Singh. Rescue personnel rushed to the accident site and shifted the bodies and the injured to a hospital.

Three of the four deceased students were identified as four-year-old Husna, four-year-old Muhammad Mugheer, seven-year-old Muhammad Ahmad.

Giant blue whale spotted along Gaddani coast

KARACHI (APP): The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF-Pakistan) lauded the efforts of local fishermen who recorded the live blue whale and shared its video with the organization and media outlets after they recorded the giant blue whale around two kilometers off Gaddani coast, Balochistan while moving on the surface of the coastal waters on Monday morning.

According to local fishers, the same whale was seen along the Gaddani coast at around 4:40 pm. on Sunday, but could not be recorded on camera. This is the second record of a live sighting of a blue whale in Pakistani waters, a news release said.

Commenting on this sighting, Muhammad Moazzam Khan, Technical Advisor, WWF-Pakistan, said that the blue whale is the second most common whale, after the Arabian Sea humpback whale, found in Pakistani waters.

There is a sizable population of blue whales in the Arabian Sea as local fishermen have been reporting several sightings of the animal for the last 15 years. In September 2017, a gigantic mother blue whale with her calf was sighted off the Churna Island near Karachi coast. He said that WWF-Pakistan through its Observer Programme is building the capacity of local fishers to safely release the entangled whales, dolphins, turtles and other threatened marine species from fishing nets, film the sighting of endangered species and make efforts for the protection. Khan mentioned that the area from where blue whale is recorded is a part of the Chuma-Kaio Island Complex Area of Interest and is adjacent to the North East Arabian Sea Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA) declared by the Marine Mammal

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QUETTA: Consul General of Japan and Chairman Kuchlak Welfare Association signing a MoU