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Corruption element to be ended in Food Department:

Balochistan cabinet approves purchase of wheat at Govt. level; 0.5 million metric tons wheat to be purchased

Wheat support price in Balochistan to be equal to Sindh decides in Cabinet's meeting; Chief Minister forms monitoring committee comprising members of assembly to ensure transparency in wheat purchase

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan cabinet has accorded approval to purchase wheat in the province at government level.

The cabinet also approved fixation of the support price of wheat which would be equal to Sindh in the province.

The Cabinet gave approval in this regard during its second meeting held with the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti in the chair here on Saturday.

Needless to mention here is that it was second meeting of the provincial cabinet on second consecutive day.

Saturday.

All the provincial ministers and advisors to Chief Minister were present in the meeting.

Also in attendance were the Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretaries of planning and development and Home departments besides all administrative secretaries of the provincial government departments and other concerned high ups.

The Chief Minister constituted the monitoring committee for ensuring transparency in the purchase of wheat in the province. The committee would comprise members of the provincial assembly.

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over Provincial Cabinet meeting.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar administering oath to Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar as Chief Justice Balochistan High Court. Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti is also present.

Justice Hashim Khan Kakar sworn in as Chief Justice BHC

Independent Report

QUETTA: The senior most judge of Balochistan High Court (BHC), Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar sworn in as the new Chief Justice of High Court here on Saturday.

The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar administered oath to Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar.

The simple but impressive ceremony of oath taking of Chief Justice was arranged at the Governor House.

The prominent among those attended the ceremony were Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, provincial ministers, members of the parliament, judges of the High Court, senior judicial officers and lawyers besides other dignitaries and elders.

It may be mentioned here that earlier Mr Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar was serving as acting Chief Justice of the High Court after elevation of Mr Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan as judge of Supreme Court of Pakistan.



ABBOTTABAD: Chief Guest, Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Metin Gürak gives away awards to the distinguished cadets during Passing Out parade of cadets of 149th PMA Long Course, 14th Mujahid Course, 68th Integrated Course and 23rd Lady Cadet Course held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul in Abbottabad.

Over 250 polling stations declared sensitive: Polling to be held for by-polls in three constituencies of Balochistan today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The polling is scheduled to be held for by-elections in three constituencies of the Balochistan province today (Sunday).

According to the Provincial Election Commissioner, Muhammad Farid Afridi, the by-elections are being conducted in PB-20, Khuzdar, PB-22, Lasbela and PB-50 Killa Abdullah.

The PEC said that all the necessary arrangements have been made for the by-elections in three constituencies of the province.

There are total 100 polling stations in PB-20 Khuzdar. These are included four for male, three female besides 93 combined polling stations.

All the 100 polling stations have been declared sensitive. The total registered voters in the constituency (PB-20) are 93,425.

Similarly, there are total 129 polling stations in PB-22 Lasbela. These are

included 27 polling stations each for male and female besides 75 combined ones.

Out of these polling stations, 70 have been declared normal and 59 declared as sensitive.

No polling station has been declared sensitive in the election constituency. There are total 139,068 registered voters in the constituency of PB-22.

In PB-50, Killa Abdullah, there are 125 polling stations including 22 each for male and female voters besides 81 combined.

In all 47 polling stations have been declared sensitive with 78 polling stations declared most sensitive in the constituency.

Total registered voters in the constituency are 163,753 which included 104,161 male and 59,592 female.

According to the PEC, services of Police and Levies have been hired for security in the by-elections.

Balochistan cabinet approves grant of Rs. 500 million for Police martyrs

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan cabinet approved the grant of Rs. 500 million for the martyrs of Balochistan police.

The approval was given by the provincial cabinet in its meeting held under the chair of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti here on Saturday.

The provincial ministers, Advisors to Chief Minister and other high ups were in attendance.

The cabinet paid rich tributes to the martyrs of police and other law enforcement agencies who sacrificed their lives for protection of life and property of the masses besides protecting the country.

Another westerly wave to enter in Balochistan on April 25

QUETTA (INP): Another westerly wave will enter in Pakistan from Balochistan on April 25, quoting a weather official on Saturday.

Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfraz has said that the new weather system will not be likely to bring rainfall in Karachi.

"The city will experience hot weather for next three days," according to the Met Office.

Presently the weather has been cloudy as maximum and minimum temperatures will remain 35-degree Celsius and 25-degree Celsius respectively.

Pak-China ties rapidly growing due to CPEC, Chinese language further fostering them: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that the economic and cultural relationships between Pakistan and China were being rapidly growing due to China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

In a message on global observance of Chinese language as one of the largest dialects for communication, he said that a sufficient number of Pakistanis were learning the Chinese language which was further cementing ties between the people of the two countries.

The United Nations (UN) observed the UN Chinese Language Day every year on April 20 to highlight the contribution of Chinese literature, poetry

and language in world culture.

The prime minister observed that steps were being taken at the official and public sectors levels to promote the Chinese language and literature so that the people to people contacts between the two countries could be further strengthened, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Today was the observance of the Chinese language as the global language, he said, adding that the dialect had been an exponent of centuries old Chinese culture. In the last few decades, China had been proving its mettle in economic prosperity besides, the Chinese language and culture had been becoming popular across the globe, he added.

Pakistan rejects US sanctions on commercial entities over ballistic missile allegations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Office Spokesperson on Saturday, commenting upon reports of the United States' decision to impose sanctions against commercial entities on allegations of links with Pakistan's ballistic missile programme, said that such listings had taken place in the past without sharing any evidence whatsoever.

Responding to media queries, the spokesperson in a press statement said while they were not aware of the specifics of the latest measures by the US.

In the past, they had come across many instances where listings had been made on mere suspicion or even when the involved items were not on any control lists but were deemed sensitive under

catch-all provisions, it was added.

"We have pointed out many times that such items have legitimate civil commercial uses. It is, therefore, important to avoid arbitrary application of export controls," the spokesperson said.

There was need for discussions between concerned parties for an objective mechanism to ensure access to technology in pursuit of socio-economic development, it was stressed.

The spokesperson said Pakistan had always been ready to discuss end-use and end-user verification mechanisms so that legitimate commercial users are not hurt by discriminatory application of export controls.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with the Ambassador of Iran Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddam.

Advisors to Chief Minister assigned departments too:

Portfolios allotted to members of cabinet

Buledi gets P&D, Noshervani & Langove find Finance & Interior respectively; Ms. Rahila Hameed Durrani allotted portfolio of Education; Saleem Khosa given C&W, Sadiq Umrani and Sardar Khetran get Irrigation and PHE respectively; Dr Rubaba assigned Women Development

Independent Report

QUETTA: The portfolios have been allotted to the members of provincial cabinet here on Saturday.

According to an official notification issued here by the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD) on Saturday, the Provincial Minister Mir Zahoore Ahmed Buledi has been allotted the portfolio of Planning and Development while Mir Shoaib Noshervani has been given the portfolio of Finance.

The provincial Minister Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa has been allotted the portfolio of Communication and Works while Ali Madad Jatak assigned the Agriculture and Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani given the portfolio of Irrigation.

Similarly, the Provincial Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran has been given the portfolio of Public and Health Engineering while Ms Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani has been allotted the portfolio of Education and Sardar Faisal Jamali has been given portfolio of Health.

Besides, the Provincial Minister Noor Muhammad Durrani has been allotted the portfolio of Food while Sardar Sarfraz Chakar

Domki has been given portfolio of Local Government and Bakht Muhammad Kakar allotted the portfolio of Livestock and Dairy Development.

Moreover, the Provincial Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove has been allotted the portfolio of Interior and Mir Asim Kurd has been given the portfolio of Revenue.

On the other hand, the Advisors to Chief Minister have also been allotted the portfolios.

According to the notification, Ali Hassan Zehri has been given the portfolio of Industries while Naseemur Rehman has been

"First Awami Assembly" held under auspices of JUI in Pishin: Pakistan put on wrong policies; democracy and prosperity seen nowhere in country: Fazal

JUI Chief urges politicians to give up fight for power; announces not to let "present bogus government" in power; would extend Jamiat's movement to whole country from Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The central Ameer of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Maulana Fazalur Rehman has stated that Pakistan has been put

on the wrong policies and path by rulers.

The country had been acquired for democracy but there seems no democracy in it, and so the prosperity. He alleged that Estab-

lishment is responsible for all the issues being confronted by the country for last 75 years.

He said that on one hand, United States speaks

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QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal (JUI-F) head Maulana Fazlur Rehman addressing on public gathering at pishin.

Palestinian ambassador calls on PPP Chairman

KARACHI (APP): The Ambassador, State of Palestine, his Excellency Ahmed Jawad Amin Rabei, paid a visit to Bilawal House to meet Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and MNA Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari here on Saturday.

According to a press release from the Media Cell Bilawal House, discussions on Pakistan-Palestine relations took place during the meeting.

The PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, speaking at the event, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian people, particularly on the issue of Gaza.

He said that Israel's actions in Gaza have created such a history of atrocities that have ashamed the humanity. He said that the Pakistani nation stands united on the issue of Palestine, and "our hearts beat with the Palestinians."

Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Jawad Amin Rabei presented Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari with commemorative photos of Shaheed Mohtarma

Naqvi for greater Pak-Iran collaboration to crush terrorism

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has emphasized the need for greater collaboration between Pakistan and Iran to address the challenges such as that of terrorism across their borders.

Talking to the Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghaddam who called on him here on Saturday, the interior minister said Pakistan valued its brotherly relations with Iran.

The meeting also held discussion regarding the upcoming visit of the Iranian President to Pakistan and the agreements to be signed during the high-level visit.

Mohsin Naqvi maintained that the visit of the Iranian President is very

important in the context of regional situation. He said the Iranian President's visit will be a milestone in the promotion of bilateral relations.

Earlier, Mohsin Naqvi welcomed the Iranian ambassador on his arrival at the Ministry of Interior in Islamabad. In the meeting, the Iranian President's visit to Pakistan and the final arrangements in connection with his arrival were discussed in detail.

The Iranian ambassador informed the minister about the details of the visit of the Iran's President.

The Iranian ambassador also congratulated Mohsin Naqvi on becoming interior minister.

PTI founder writes to CJP, draws attention in seven issues, calls for intervention

ISLAMABAD (INP): Founding chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in a letter written to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has drawn his attention to seven issues calling from prompt intervention.

The PTI founder in his letter dispatched to the chief justice called upon him to take notice of NAB's clean chit to former premier Nawaz Sharif in Toshakhana case; Bahawalnagar incident; seek action against letter of six judges; independent

probe into May 9 events; inquire about Commissioner Rawalpindi's statement; take up petitions regarding rigging in Feb 8 elections; and inquire reserved seats allocation.

While drawing CJP Faez Isa's attention to the seven issues, he noted that inaction in the face of each of the aforementioned matters of grave importance would exacerbate the Constitutional crisis "the country is already faced with and push it closer and closer to the abyss".



WASHINGTON DC: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, met with Mr. Brent Neiman, Deputy Under Secretary for International Finance, U.S. Department of Treasury on the sidelines of the IMF/World Bank Spring meetings in Washington D.C.

Continued on page 2

By polls on 5 seats of NA, 16 seats of PAs today

ISLAMABAD (Online): By polls in 5 constituencies of National Assembly (NA) and 16 constituencies of Provincial Assemblies (PAs) will take place today (Sunday).

Polling process will continue from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Decision has been taken to keep mobile phone and internet service shut in 13 cities of Punjab.

Decision has been taken to hold election under stringent security measures.

Federal government has accorded approval to deploy civil armed forces and contingent of Pakistan army during polls. Contingent of Civil armed forces and Pakistan army will be used as Quick Response Force (QRF).

The civil armed forces and contingents of Pakistan army will be available from today to April 22 in 21 constituencies.

Interior ministry has issued orders following the approval by federal government.

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had requested federal government

to provide security during by polls.

According to ECP, re-polling in PB-50 Qilla Abdullah in Balochistan will be held today too. By polls in NA-8 Bajore, NA-44 DI Khan, NA-119 Lahore, NA-132 Kasur and NA-196 Qambar Shahdad Kot will be held.

According to ECP, there are 174 candidates in by polls at 12 provincial constituencies. The total number of votes stands at 4044552. As many as 2601 polling stations have been established in Punjab.

In Lahore by polls will take place in one seat of national assembly and 4 seats of provincial assembly.

As per ECP, there are 1471000 voters in the by polls of two constituencies in KP. 49 candidates are in field and 892 polling stations have been set up. 139 among them are sensitive.

There are two candidates in NA-196 Sindh. 423781 voters will exercise their right to franchise. 303 polling stations have been set up here.

In Balochistan by election will be held in two pro-

vincial constituencies including 20 and 22. As many as 396246 voters will exercise their right to vote in the by polls. 354 polling stations have been set up in the province.

During by polls, mobile and internet service will remain shut in 13 cities of Punjab. Home department Punjab has written letter to interior ministry in this regard.

According to letter, mobile and internet service will remain suspended in Lahore, Sheikhpura, Kasur, Talang, DG Khan, Gujarat, Ali Pur, Zafarwal, Bhakkar, Chakwal, Sadiq Abad, Ali Pur Chatha and Kot Chatha.

The ECP spokesperson said monitoring and control centre has been set up for by polls wherein the facility of lodging complaint will be available.

The complaint can be got registered at specific help line of ECP NO 051-111327000.

Monitoring centre will work 24 hours on polling day and till the results are received.



ABBOTTABAD: Passing Out parade of cadets present guard of honour during Passing Out parade ceremony of the 149th PMA Long Course, 14th Mujahid Course, 68th Integrated Course and 23rd Lady Cadet Course held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul in Abbottabad.

PAK vs NZ T20I: Pakistan inflict 7-wicket humiliating defeat on New Zealand

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI: In a one-sided match, Pakistan thrashed New Zealand by seven wickets at the Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi on Saturday. Earlier, a very measured pace and spin bowling attack from Pakistan sent the entire New Zealand side to the pavilion for just 90 runs in 18.1 overs.

The Black Caps were never in the game as they were troubled greatly by the Pakistani pace attack.

Soon in the third over, Shaheen Afridi, known for

performing with the new ball, did what he does best and sent the Black Caps' opener, Tim Seifert, back to the pavilion for just 12 runs.

After Shaheen, Mohammad Amir, who was playing his first match for Pakistan in almost four years, came to bowl and struck in his first over, removing Tim Robinson for just four runs.

Amir continued to trouble the visitor's batting lineup as in his second over, he took the wicket of Dean Foxcroft with skipper Babar

Azam taking a simple catch.

The Kiwis managed to save wickets for the next two overs but Abrar Ahmed took two quick wickets in the ninth over, sending Mark Chapman and James Neesham back to the pavilion after contributing 19 and one run respectively.

The remaining damage down the order was done by Shadab Khan and Naseem Shah. Only four New Zealand batters managed to score in double digits as Pakistan dominated the night with the ball.



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's Shaheen Shah Afridi celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of New Zealand's Tim Seifert during the second Twenty20 international cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand, at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Pakistan put on wrong policies...

Continued from page 1

of democracy in the world, but on the other hand, it (US) supports dictatorship in our country.

These and similar other views were expressed by the JUI Chief while the "first Awami Assembly" held under the auspices of JUI at the spacious Taj Lala Sports complex in Pishin on Saturday.

It may be mentioned here that it was the first address of the JUI Chief in any public meeting after his election as Member National Assembly from Pishin.

He could also not come in Pishin for his election campaign even.

Addressing the public gathering which he called Awami Assembly, Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that since it is the Awami Assembly, so the person presiding it (Assembly) would be called as Janab-e-Speaker (Mr. Speaker).

He announced that the people would hold their assembly directly.

Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that he had not come in Pishin for long, and so, he couldn't visit there during the general elections too.

He thanked the people of Pishin on reposting trust on him in elections even in his absence.

The JUI Chief said that we had run the protest movement against rigging in the elections of 2018 for four years with support of people, and thus made successes in it.

But, more shameful rigging was done in 2024 elections, adding he alleged. On this, we totally reject the February 2024 elections, he declared.

Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that we had told wrong what was wrong in the past, and even termed it wrong what's wrong today.

Mohammad Rizwan breaks T20I record of Babar, Kohli

RAWALPINDI (INP): Wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Rizwan has broken the record of Babar Azam and Indian player Virat Kohli for fastest 3,000 T20I runs.

The right-hand batsman achieved the milestone in the second T20I game of the five-match series against New Zealand in Rawalpindi.

Rizwan completed the 3,000 runs in 79 innings whereas Babar and Kohli had reached the milestone in 81 innings.

Pakistan denounces 'political use of export controls' after US sanctions alleged missile suppliers

Foreign Office says it is unaware of specifics of latest listings but says such actions taken in the past too without sharing any evidence.

Portfolios allotted...

Continued from page 1

Ziaullah Langove Sardar Sarfraz Chakar Domki have also served as the Provincial Ministers in the past.

Among them, Ms Rahila Hameed Durrani had also served as Speaker Balochistan Assembly while Noor Muhammad Dummur had remained senior Minister.

Dr Rubaba Buledi had served as the parliamentary secretary for Health as well as Law and Parliamentary Affairs and Science & IT in the past.

Federal Energy Minister's letter to KP CM seeking time for meeting

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Energy Minister Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Laghari wrote a letter to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur asking for time for a meeting.

Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Laghari, while confirming the letter, said that he has sought a meeting with the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin on measures to stop electricity theft.

The Federal Minister of Energy wrote in the letter that the police should be provided with assistance to prevent electricity theft

Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim sworn in as PHC chief justice

PESHAWAR (Online): Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim has taken oath as Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court (PHC). Oath taking ceremony was held in Governor House Peshawar Saturday. KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali administered the oath to the newly appointed chief justice PHC Ishtiaq Ibrahim. Chief Minister (CM) KP Ali Amin Gandapur also attended oath taking ceremony. Supreme Court Judge Justice Musarrat Hilali, judges of the Peshawar High Court, lawyers, chief secretary, IG police, secretary S&GAD and administrative heads of other departments attended the oath-taking.

Balochistan cabinet approves purchase...

Continued from page 1

of "bardana" (bags for wheat) for the first time in province's history.

It decided to end purchase of "bardana" at the government level from next year.

The growers would be paid amount / money instead of bardana from next year, the cabinet decided further. The environment friendly bags would be purchased as per the requirement.

It was decided to distribute 58,000 bardana available with the Food department in transparent manner.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister regretfully pointed out that there happens to be corruption in the bardana which would be stopped anyway.

He on the occasion directed to Secretary Food to ensure availability of bardana in all wheat purchase centers of the province.

He also directed that the bardana would not go outside the purchase centers.

The Chief Minister stressed that the spot of corruption would have to be removed from the Food Department.

Moreover, other important matters were discussed and decisions made in the cabinet's meeting.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Nationalists Parties leaders address to participants during Sindh National Conference arranged by Sindh United Party, held in Hyderabad.

Balochistan cabinet approves purchase...

Continued from page 1

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Finance minister conveys condolences over recent terrorist attack on Chinese

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday met with the Chinese Finance Minister Lan Fo'an on the sidelines of the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington D.C. The finance minister conveyed condolences on behalf of the leadership and the people of Pakistan over the recent terrorist attack against Chinese nationals in Pakistan. He reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety and security of Chinese citizens and investments in the country, said a press release issued here by Ministry of Finance.

The minister lauded China's invaluable contribution to Pakistan's development through initiatives such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and support at international financial institutions.

Apprising the Chinese counterpart of the progress on CPEC, the finance minister stated that Phase-I focused on infrastructure development, while Phase-II would emphasize monetizing assets through the

operationalization of Special Economic Zones and relocation of Chinese Private-Owned Companies (POCs).

He expressed the government's resolve to accelerate Phase-II of CPEC. Finance Minister also expressed gratitude to the Chinese government for the SAFE deposits and their regular roll-overs, which have played a crucial role in addressing Pakistan's external financing gaps.

The federal minister informed the Chinese Minister that Pakistan was entering into a larger and extended program with International Monetary Fund (IMF) and looked forward to China's continued support.

He also briefed him on the government's priorities, including broadening the tax base, fixing the energy sector, and overhauling the state-owned enterprises (SOEs). He stated that Pakistan aimed to tap into the Chinese Bond Market and launch Panda Bonds during the fiscal year 2025-26. Both sides agreed on the need to continue their cooperation within international institutions, reflecting deep-rooted economic ties between the two countries.



ABBOTTABAD: Heavy machinery removing debris after land sliding due to heavy downpour, located on Nathiagali road in Abbottabad.

Pakistani heroes: Unity, resilience shine amidst crisis in Sharjah

SHARJAH (APP): In the face of unprecedented adversity brought on by heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding in Sharjah, the Pakistani community has emerged as a beacon of hope and resilience.

Driven by a sense of duty and compassion, Pakistanis in Sharjah have banded together to provide crucial aid and support to those affected by the devastating floods.

Led by the indefatigable efforts of the Pakistan Social Center Sharjah, volunteers have worked tirelessly day and night, braving treacherous conditions to deliver much-needed assistance to stranded residents. President Pakistan Social Centre, Khalid Hussain Chaudhry described as a beacon of leadership and empathy, told APP that he has led relief

efforts with steadfast determination, ensuring that no individual is overlooked during their time of need.

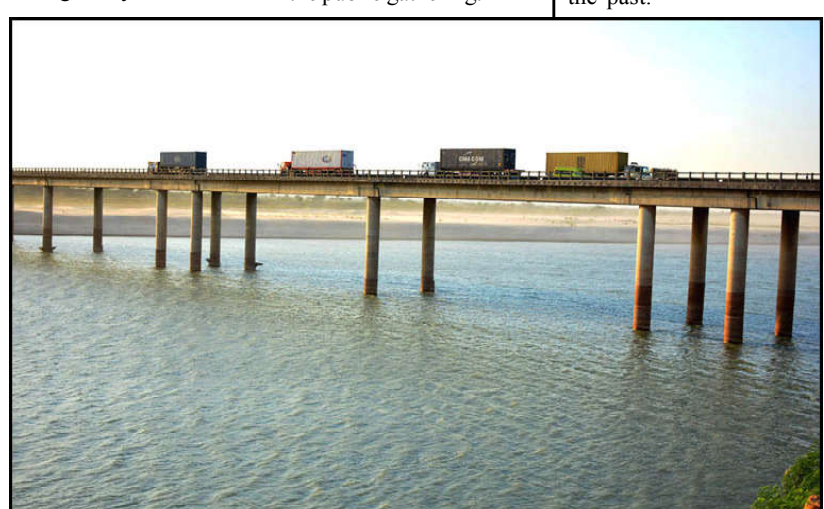
In a remarkable display of solidarity, the Pakistani community has transcended barriers of race and ethnicity, extending a helping hand to all those impacted by the calamity.

Amidst the chaos and destruction, stories of heroism and selflessness abound as ordinary Pakistanis transform into extraordinary saviours, risking their safety to rescue their fellow citizens from the clutches of disaster.

As the waters recede and the city begins to rebuild, the resilience and unity demonstrated by the Pakistani community serve as a powerful testament to the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.



KARACHI: Pakistan Women Cricket Team Players are warming up and improve their cricketing techniques during the net practice match for the upcoming matches with West Indies Women, at National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi.



HYDERABAD: A view of heavy vehicles passing through the bridge on the Indus River at the Bypass area.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

TENDER NOTICE

Tenders are hereby invited in sealed covers from approved Government contractors who have the relevant field of specialization and duly registered/ renewed their enlistment for 2023-24 with Pakistan Engineering Council, in relevant category. The schedule for the purchase of bidding documents, and submission / opening of Bids shall be as quoted below.

i. Submission of Application with documents quoted below up to: 03-05-2024 (Office Hours)
ii. Issuance of Bidding documents on: 06-03-2024 (Office Hours)
iii. Submission of Bids on: 07-05-2024 (till 12.00 PM)
i. Opening of Bids on: 07-05-2024 (at 1.00 PM)

S. No	Name of works	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Cost of Tender
1.	Construction of Driving Track at DLA Kuchlak Quetta.	8448796.00	03% of Bid amount	5000.00

Note in case of any unavoidable situation the second schedule of submission / opening of Bids shall be as

i. Submission of Bids on: 14-05-2024 (till 12.00 PM)
ii. Opening of Bids on: 14-05-2024 (at 1.00 PM).

Other terms and conditions may be seen on PPRA Web site (www.ppra.org.pk)

(Aminullah Khan) Executive Engineer
Central Civil Division No-III
PAK PWD, Quetta

PID(Q)306/23

Pakistan National Shipping Corporation

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

The Pakistan National Shipping Corporation "PNSC" Group of companies, as the National Flag Carrier undertakes global shipping operations. PNSC requires high caliber and result oriented professionals for the position of

Position	Qualification & Experience	Maximum Age Limit
Chief Internal Auditor	Minimum 05 years of relevant post qualification experience in Audit or Finance or Compliance function and member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan or Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan; OR Minimum 07 years of relevant post qualification experience in Audit or Finance or Compliance function and Certified Internal Auditor, or Certified Fraud Examiner, or Certified Fraud Examiner, or Certified Internal Control Auditor. Preference will be given to a candidate having experience of working in shipping industry or a listed company as Chief Internal Auditor.	50 Years

- Company is an equal opportunity employer.
- NCC is mandatory for candidates working in Government Organizations.
- Appointment will be on contract, initially for a period of two years extendable with mutual consent. Selected candidates will be offered market-based remuneration package, commensurate with qualifications and experience.
- Interested candidates may apply through online application form available at PNSC website www.pnsc.com.pk. Last date for submission of application is 07th May, 2024.
- Job description is available on PNSC website.
- Only short listed applicants shall be called for interview.
- No TADA or expenses shall be payable.
- Job quotas as prescribed vide Establishment Division Notification No # S.R.O No. 7471(1/2023) dated 19-08-2023 and quotas prescribed for minorities, person with disabilities and women will be followed.
- Residents of Balochistan are encouraged to apply. Candidates from Balochistan will be given preference subject to meeting the criteria.
- Being the technical position, if the appropriate candidate is not found under the prescribed job quota, then the candidate will be selected on merit.
- Corporation reserves the right to reject any application without disclosing any reason to the applicants.

PID K No. 2964/23

ECP launches Monitoring Center for registering by-elections complaints

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set up the Election Monitoring and Control Center (EMCC) to register and address public complaints during the upcoming by-elections in 21 constituencies scheduled for Sunday.

The ECP spokesperson stated, "Public can reach out to this center to register any complaints related to the elections."

"The center has enlisted trained staff to promptly address grievances and ensure timely resolution," stated the spokesperson.

"ECP has set up control centers at four levels to register public complaints and swiftly address them. These control rooms are located at provincial, divisional, and district levels, in addition to the Election Commission Secretariat in Islamabad," he added.

"The control room will maintain communication with relevant personnel and stakeholders, including Returning Officers (ROs), and District Returning Officers (DROs)," he informed.

He prompted individuals to file their concerns regarding by-elections with EMCC through email at complaints@ecp.gov.pk, emphasizing the availability of a round-the-clock helpline at 111-327-000 for their convenience.



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam near Zero Point on Expressway in the Federal Capital.

Registration of pilgrims under private Hajj scheme in progress with affordable packages: Ashrafi

LAHORE (APP): Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi announced that the registration of pilgrims under the private Hajj scheme was in progress, with 24,000 pilgrims slated to participate in the Road to Makkah project this year.

He made these remarks during a press conference held at the Lahore Press Club, where he was joined by representatives from Hajj Organisers Association of Pakistan (HOAP), including Saeed Ahmed Malik, Chaudhry

Ehsanullah, Malik Abdul Khaliq, Chaudhry Muhammad Adil, Khalid Mahmood Bhatti, Pir Shafaat Ahmed Boudla, and Zeeshan Qamar.

Ashrafi, who is also the patron-in-chief of HOAP, noted that this year, certain private tour operators were offering Hajj packages at a more affordable rate compared to pilgrims participating in the government Hajj scheme.

He emphasized that due to enhanced self-accountability measures, private pilgrims would not encounter issues as they

have in the past. "It is imperative to provide written documentation to pilgrims detailing all the facilities to be provided during the sacred journey," he added.

Furthermore, Ashrafi mentioned that the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah was dispatching high-level officials to train Pakistani pilgrims.

With the concerted efforts of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, he said high-level Saudi delegations had vis-

ited Pakistan. He remarked that Pakistan's shift towards trade rather than aid was a significant development, with Saudi Arabia and other Islamic nations poised to play pivotal roles in Pakistan's future economic and financial advancement.

He commended the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony for implementing corruption-free measures, expressing praise for the current government and the minister for their efforts.

PTI-SIC leaders, workers booked for holding rally without permission

ISLAMABAD (INP): Sixteen leaders of the Sunni Itehad Council (SIC) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have been booked for holding a public rally in Chunan without permission from the district administration ahead of the NA-132 by-election in Kasur district.

The first information report (FIR) registered at the Khaddian Police Station also implicates at least 600 unidentified workers of the PTI-SIC.

The 16 PTI-SIC leaders booked include Sher Afzal Marwat and Sardar Muhammad Hussain Dogar.

The FIR details that the SIC had not acquired a no-objection certificate for the rally, where SIC leaders incited people through "anti-state narrative", and weapons were brandished.

The FIR, lodged under different sections of the Pakistan Penal Code as well as the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), states that the SIC leaders had violated the Election Commission of Pakistan's code of conduct as well.

The NA-132 seat fell vacant after Shehbaz Sharif decided to retain his NA-123 Lahore-VII seat. Shehbaz had won the NA-132 seat, beating PTI-backed independent candidate Muhammad Hussain Dogar with a difference of more than 25,000 votes.



ISLAMABAD: People praying before distribution of "Langar", at Shrine of Hazrat Bari Imam Sarkar at Bari Imam area of Federal Capital.

IIOJK converted into open-air prison since illegal abrogation of Art 370: Mufti

ISLAMABAD (Online): Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti has said that occupied Jammu and Kashmir has been converted into an open-air prison since August 05, 2019 when Article 370 was illegally abrogated by the BJP government, adding there has been an unending onslaught on the Kashmiris' collective identity, land, jobs and resources since that day.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Mehbooba Mufti made the remarks at a press conference in Srinagar while releasing the party manifesto for the Indian parliamentary polls.

The PDP president, who is contesting from south Kashmir's Anantnag-Rajouri seat, said, "Since 2019, after the illegal abrogation of Article 370, Jammu and Kashmir has been converted into an open-air prison. There has been an unending onslaught on our collective identity, land, jobs, resources and infringement upon the very freedom to speak". She pledged to raise a voice against this onslaught in the Indian parliament.

She said people, in the past five years, were being made to believe that our collective disenfranchisement was our fait accompli. "They [the BJP] are trying to enforce a sullen sense of silence and defeat. Our voice is the only weapon to fight these nefarious designs," Mufti said.

Dry weather to prevail in most parts of country: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Saturday has forecast mainly dry weather for most parts of the country and hot in southern parts. However, light rain-wind/thunderstorm is likely in upper Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Waziristan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir and Potohar region.

According to the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing in most parts of the country. A shallow westerly wave was still present in northern parts.

During the last 24 hours, rain-wind/thunderstorm occurred in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir, Islamabad, Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan and north Balochistan.

The rainfall recorded was Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa: Malam Jabba 66mm, Dir (Lower 43, Upper 17), Bacha Khan Airport 36, Peshawar (City 32, Airport 15), Kakul 31.



ISLAMABAD: CDA officials displaying the flags of Pakistan and Iran on Constitution Avenue, as Pakistan to host Iran's president on Monday for official bilateral talks in the Federal Capital.

Modi's Aug 5, 2019 move exacerbated resentment, alienation in IIOJK: Omar

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Conference Vice President, Omar Abdullah has said that decisions taken by the BJP-led Indian government on August 5, 2019, when it illegally abrogated the special status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir, have exacerbated resentment and alienation in the territory.

According to Kashmir Media Service, speaking to reporters in Srinagar, Omar Abdullah interpreted Indian Home Minister Amit Shah's statement that the BJP would not field candidates from the Kashmir region in the ongoing Lok Sabha

Body of young cable worker found in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The body of a 30-year-old cable worker was found in the wee hours of Saturday, who reportedly committed suicide in the Awan Town vicinity of Khanna police station Islamabad.

According to police sources, the victim was identified as Hamza, the young man worked as a cable technician who was residing in a rented house within the locality.

On Saturday morning, the residents were surprised to find Hamza's body hanging from a ceiling fan at his residence, police said.

The authorities initially reported the incident as suicide, but doubts have emerged regarding the cause of death.

Body of woman found in Industrial Area

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a tragic incident of violence on Saturday morning, the body of a woman was found in the limits of Industrial area police station in Sector I-9, Islamabad.

According to police, the victim had been shot and thrown from a moving vehicle. The local police immediately launched an investigation into the tragic incident.

The body was shifted to PIMS hospital for further medico-legal examination. As of the latest updates, her identity remained unknown.

16 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 16 outlaws from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Aabpara police team arrested two accused namely Usman Ghani and Zeeshan Pervez and recovered 720 gram hashish and one dagger from their possession. The Shalimar police team arrested an accused namely Maratab Ali and recovered 1060 gram hashish from his possession. Likewise, the Golra police team arrested two accused namely Muhammad Aqib and Muhammad Awais involved in illegally selling petrol. The Industrial Area police team arrested an accused namely Naeqeb Khan and recovered one 9mm pistol from his possession.

Similarly, the Noon police team arrested three accused namely Sher Ali, Liaqat Ali and Sher Afzal involved in illegally selling petrol.



ISLAMABAD: Citizens crossing the road in a risky way, despite of having overhead bridge on Colonel Sher Khan Shaheed Road in the Federal Capital.

'Socio-Economically, Bicycle Day' a productive activity for human life: Ambassador Agnes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI) and Ambassador of the Philippines to Pakistan, Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, said on Saturday that 'Bicycle Day' was a means of expressing healthy and socio-economic activity, not only for the people of the ASEAN region but also for the rest of the world.

"Bicycles are an important source of economic, social, and physical productivity, which can be promoted towards a sustainable human lifestyle by promoting them like a culture," Ambassador Maria Agnes M. Cervantes said.

Chairman of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEANs), Committee in Islamabad (ACI),

and Ambassador of the Philippines to Pakistan said this while talking to the media on the occasion of Bicycle Day 'organized by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEANs), Committee in Islamabad (ACI) here.

Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Islamabad and Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov and other Ambassadors of ASEAN, including Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, Nguyen Tien Phong, Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan, Chakkrid Krachaiwong, Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Admiral Ravindra Chandrasiri Wijegunaratne, Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan, Mohamed Karmoune, Chardi Affairs

of Indonesia, Rahmat Hindaarta Kusuma, and diplomats of different countries, participated in the events.

She said, "Bicycle is an important activity in human life; it is built into the life of the common man as a healthy activity in ASEAN countries."

"It is a step towards being attracted to a positive activity, and along with this, people from all walks of life in the local Pakistani community are here today with full enthusiasm," she said.

The Ambassador said, "In Pakistan and the Philippines, people of all ages consider bicycles to be a favorite ride, and in both countries, people take it as a positive and healthy activity."

Royal College of Physicians urges stricter regulation to safeguard non-smokers

ISLAMABAD (Online): E-cigarettes remain an important tool to alleviate the burden of tobacco use but efforts should be made to reduce their appeal, availability and affordability to people who do not smoke, including children and young people, and reduce environmental harms.

This is the main finding of a new report by the UK Royal College of Physicians, which looks at the part e-cigarettes can play in preventing death, disability, and inequalities from tobacco use.

The report, E-cigarettes and harm reduction: An evidence review, reviews how e-cigarettes can be used to support more people to make quit attempts while discouraging young people and never-smokers from taking up e-cigarette use. "E-cigarettes should be promoted as an effective means of helping people who smoke to quit smoking tobacco," it said.

Comprehensive evidence reviews on the role of e-cigarettes have been commissioned in the UK at regular intervals by Public Health England (PHE) and subsequently the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID).

The report examines trends in tobacco and vaping use, the effectiveness of e-cigarettes to treat tobacco addiction, the differences in health effects of vaping in people who smoke, vape or do neither, the role of the tobacco industry in the rising use of e-cigarettes, and the ethical dilemmas presented by e-cigarettes.

There is a marked variation in international approaches to e-cigarettes. It added that current evidence suggests nicotine itself confers little risk to health, though acute exposure at typical levels from consumer nicotine products can result in addiction, short-term enhanced cognitive effects, elevated heart rate and systolic blood pressure. It will, however, take decades to accurately quantify any effects of long-term non-tobacco nicotine use.

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Campaign for registration of house servants and tenants data in full swing

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to details, the Islamabad Capital Police "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in full swing, a public relations officer said.

He said that, during this campaign various teams of Islamabad Capital Police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as to inquire about the problems faced by the citizens.

In this regard, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad has registered a data of 162 house servants of 408 houses from Khanna Police Station jurisdiction.

The purpose of this campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital adding that the registration of tenants and domestic workers could not only keep a close watch on miscreants but also prevent the elements involved in any kind of suspicious activity.

Citizens are also requested that they can ask for the identity of a person if someone dressed in civil clothes comes to their house in order to collect the data.

Unregistered employees and tenants could be involved in serious incidents like theft and robbery by impersonating as a common citizen and Islamabad Capital Police is trying to provide a safe environment to the citizens of the federal capital by using all its resources.



Regenerative Economics to revolutionize urban development in developing countries: Experts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts at a webinar on doughnut economics expressed that the concept of regenerative economics intended to revive the human-nature relationship to co-exist in harmony would revolutionize urban development in the developing countries.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organized a special webinar on Doughnut Economics: From concept to practice, said a news release here Saturday.

Kate Raworth, UK on the occasion explained doughnut economics into action in its international, regional and local context.

She mentioned that human economy is embedded in society that can be redesigned and reshaped in very nation in its own local context, whereas being part of nature, humans are bound to ensure protected nature and biodiversity to make economies in harmony with ecology.

She noted that globally market and state conflict dominated the economist review throughout the century, whereas shared values and shared economies steward through common interests ensure regenerative economics to create systems that work with and within the cycles of the living worlds (nature).

Raworth opined that regenerative nature and technical resources management through eco-construction, circular construction, resilient infrastructure development to ensure disaster risk reduction and adaptation to whooping impacts of climate events.

She added that regenerative economics also focused on rediscovering ancestral concepts of circular economy of indigenous communities that are distributive in nature to make it sharing opportunity and value with all who co-create it.

Dr Jemilah Mahmood from Malaysia presented the example of Ipoh which

is the third largest in Malaysia and a doughnut city based on its innovative development, heritage preservation and smart city outlook. "It is the first city in Asia to adopt the Doughnut Model inspiring other cities towards sustainability. There are four dimensions of doughnut economics of social, ecological, peace and justice and forest management," she added.

She said that it could be started from waste management, energy harvesting, preservation of heritage and disaster risk reduction.

Jemilah mentioned that regenerative economics had been achieved through

capacity building and bottom-up approach to uplift communities to embrace the concept which was important to implement doughnut vision. The Ipoh model of regenerative economics have gained attention of the top leadership of the country that could be replicated across Malaysia, she said.

Responding to queries, the speaker underscored the need to translate doughnut economy vision into local languages for the better comprehension of indigenous communities as it was equally beneficial to embrace regenerative economics for economic wellbeing of a nation.

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Isfahan strikes

The Iran-Israel shadow war has very much come out into the open. Tel Aviv had been targeting Tehran's assets for over a decade, particularly in Syria, taking advantage of the chaos engendered by that country's civil war. Moreover, a number of Iranian scientists, especially those associated with the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme, had been assassinated within Iran in hits widely considered to have been orchestrated by Israel.

While the Iranians are known for their 'strategic patience', and for playing the long game, the April 1 Israeli strike on an Iranian diplomatic facility in Damascus, in which a number of senior Iranian generals were killed, had crossed a red line. There was tremendous pressure on Iran from within to reply to this Israeli transgression, and the ayatollah and his generals had to respond without triggering a major regional war. Tehran's response came in the shape of the April 13 assault on Israel, a barrage that was short on destructiveness, yet scored a major strategic and PR victory for Iran. The suspected Israeli strikes targeting Iranian facilities in Isfahan early on Friday are the latest move on this dangerous chessboard. While Tel Aviv has officially kept mum about the Isfahan misadventure — Israel rarely owns up to subterfuge outside of its borders — some politicians in the Zionist state have celebrated the attacks, while American media, quoting sources, have said this is Israel's handiwork. The Iranians themselves appear to be downplaying the event, and an airbase and nuclear facilities in the area seem to be safe.

Once again, the clamour for 'de-escalation' has been echoing from global capitals. Surely a wider war is in no one's interest — except perhaps for the extremists in Israel — but true de-escalation means Israel must start behaving like a normal state, not a rogue nation that threatens the entire region, as well as the forsaken Palestinians captive in the occupied territories.

The UN secretary general has said "one miscalculation ... one mistake, could lead to the unthinkable". But this is perhaps just what Benjamin Netanyahu and the cabal of zealots in the unruly coalition that backs him may want. After all, Israel has been facing global opprobrium for its butchery in Gaza, while PM Netanyahu is facing significant domestic opposition for his handling of the debacle.

Thus, a war with Iran may be a useful distraction to shift the focus from Palestine, and rally Israel's Western friends behind it to protect the Middle East's 'only democracy' against Tehran. Suffice to say, any scenario pitting the Israeli-Western collective against Iran and its 'axis of resistance' allies will result in an explosion in the Middle East, causing oil prices to skyrocket, and global trade to be upended. To avoid this, Washington, London and Brussels need to check Israel's destabilising behaviour.

Reema Omer

In recent years, the rule of law has become a buzzword in Pakistan's political discourse, with a multitude of voices expressing support for this ideal.

For example, the election manifestos of all three major political parties — the PPP, PML-N, and PTI — contain claims of their commitment for 'the rule of law' and promises to prioritise it in their policies and legislation.

In practice, however, we see 'the rule of law' being weaponised and stripped of its fundamental values, taking on whatever meaning that fits the political objectives of those invoking it.

In its reply submitted before the Islamabad High Court earlier this week, for example, the Ministry of Interior defended its arbitrary ban on the social media platform X/Twitter, claiming the ban "upheld the rule of law and principles of democratic governance".

We also hear government officials claim secret military trials of civilians

accused of involvement in the May 9 riots and the conviction and seven-year sentence of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi in a farcical case involving "fraudulently going through a marriage ceremony" are necessary for establishing "the rule of law" in the country.

Earlier, we saw Nawaz Sharif's political opponents and detractors celebrate his lifetime disqualification from contesting elections after a Supreme Court that he was no longer 'sadiq and ameen' as a victory for 'the rule of law'.

As these illustrations show, like in other authoritarian states, the rule of law has been distorted to mean 'rule by law' in Pakistan. It is used to justify the arbitrary implementation of bad laws without adequate safeguards for the protection of fundamental rights or meeting due process requirements.

The authoritarian reconfiguration of the rule of law as 'rule by law' appropriates the language and rhetoric associated with the emancipatory,

liberal idea of this concept to consolidate state power, undermine democratic values, victimise political opponents, and impede the fundamental rights of citizens.

Unlike the rule of law, 'rule by law' is almost always associated with the use of law as an instrument to serve the ends of those in power. It allows the state to use law to control its citizens, but never allows law to be used by the citizens to hold the state accountable.

It is, therefore, important to understand what 'the rule of law' means and identify its core values. Doing so would allow more effective support of the legal and political reforms to advance it and challenge perversions of the rule of law rampant in our political discourse.

Although the concept of the rule of law can be traced back at least to ancient Greece, it has become much more widely discussed in the last three decades, with engagement from jurists, scholars, international organisations, as well as the United Nations.

For the UN, the rule of law is "a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of the law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness, and procedural and legal transparency".

This definition encapsulates at least eight distinct but related principles.

The first principle captures the essence of the rule of law dating back to Aristotle: The rule of law is a "government by laws and not by men", which means no one is above the law and all persons and institutions, including the state, are accountable to the law.

Second, the law must be publicly promulgated so that people know the consequences of their actions.

Third, the law must be appropriately defined and government discretion sufficiently limited to ensure the law is applied in a non-arbitrary manner. A.V. Dicey, for example, warned against laws that gave people in positions of power "wide, arbitrary, or discretionary powers of constraint". Vague laws also undermine the rule of law because they leave the door open to selective prosecution and interpretation, based on discriminatory policies of government officials and the personal predilections of judges.

Fourth, the law must be applied equally and without discrimination to all persons in like circumstances.

This fifth principle embodies a substantive rather than a procedural guarantee of the rule of law, and provides that the laws in a society that honours the rule of law must be just and consistent with international human rights norms and standards. This sub-

stantive requirement is essential, as it distinguishes a government under the rule of law from a government operating with a rule by law. In a number of authoritarian states, for example, some of the elements of the rule of law are present, but unless the laws are just, society is not governed by the rule of law.

Sixth, legal processes must be sufficiently robust and accessible to ensure the enforcement of such laws and human rights protections.

Seventh, the independence of the judiciary must be guaranteed. This means judicial power must be exercised independently of other branches of the state, and individual judges must adjudicate matters before them impartially.

And eighth, citizens and other members of society must have the right to participate in the enactment and refinement of laws that regulate their behaviour. These principles — and consequently, 'the rule of law' — are largely absent in Pakistan. Instead, the garb of the rule of law is being used to establish its very antithesis — 'rule by law'. -- Courtesy Dawn

Dr Naazir Mahmood

The World Bank has sounded the alarm on the 'historic reversal' of development for poor countries. Nearly half of the world's least-developed countries are experiencing a widening income gap with the wealthiest economies, for the first time since the turn of the century.

The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few rich people has been a consistent feature in most countries around the world. The list of the 14 richest people whose net worth is more than \$100 billion is interesting, featuring 10 Americans and one each from France, India, Mexico and Spain. Their collective wealth is nearly \$2,000 billion, enough to eradicate extreme poverty and illiteracy around the globe.

The same applies to wealth concentration in countries like India and Pakistan. Call it 'elite capture' if you will, India and Pakistan are two of the worst examples of economic and social injustices. Though India has at least some achievements to show the world and has become one of the largest

economies, this is just one side of the picture.

Pakistan is even worse as its economy has shrunk, growth lingered, population increased, poverty expanded, and education lagged. The "elite" that comprises big business owners, feudal lords, industrialists, and civil and military bureaucracy appears to be least interested in doing something concrete to modify an inherently unjust system.

The plight of the poor is not a new phenomenon. Just read the works of Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy to understand what poverty looked like in Great Britain. Similarly, the short stories by Chekov, Gorky, Maupassant, and Premchand are great to understand the economic imbalance in France, India and Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Here I would like to recommend two silent movies from nearly a century ago: German masterpiece 'Metropolis' (1927) and Charlie Chaplin's 'Modern Times' (1936). Both serve as an indictment of an increasingly capitalist and industrialized world that treated its ordinary citizens as the 'wretched of the earth', to borrow from Frantz Fanon.

Forgotten cinema

'Metropolis' is a more demanding film experience than 'Modern Times' which blends entertainment while educating its viewers in a characteristic Chaplin style. Both are silent cinema classics and have drawn admiration and respect from audiences for decades.

If you like watching movies and are more interested in educating yourself than in sheer entertainment, start with 'Metropolis'. The enjoyment aspect you can cover while watching 'Modern Times'. There was a time when we used to hunt for such movies, but now it is much easier through online streaming — you can watch movies anywhere, anytime.

The theme of these movies is industrialization and mass production in early 20th-century Europe and America. Though both have graduated from industrial to post-industrial and information-based economies, fundamental contradictions in society remain the same, revolving around wealth concentration in a few hands.

'Metropolis' is more futuristic and based on science fiction, portraying humanity's struggle against science and technology and the compulsive urge in some people to use them for ex-

ploitative purposes. Both films reveal workers as the cogs tied to the city's machinery.

Austrian director Fritz Lang and British actor and director Charlie Chaplin both shared a vision of a grim society and used some of the most impressive images in film history. For example, the opening shots of both films are similar. Lang shows depressed and haggard workers slowly entering a factory located under the city of 'Metropolis'.

Chaplin uses a similar sequence with a more hilarious impact by substituting workers with a herd of sheep that follow each other in a bustling city. Both cities have two distinct classes: industrialists with ample resources and workers enduring a bare-bones existence of backbreaking work.

The story of 'Metropolis' also concerns forbidden love between a young man from the industrial class and a girl who is an activist preaching against the class divide. There is also an element of deceit involving a robot duplicate of the girl, culminating in a revolution with a disaster of sorts. It has a clear message to fight against injustices. But the film was called communist

propaganda. Later, the same thing happened to 'Modern Times'. Years later, both appear on the list of the greatest films ever made.

While 'Metropolis' blends graphics and hand-drawn animation that appear seamless, 'Modern Times' is a milestone for its visual impact. Fritz Lang and Charlie Chaplin drew their inspiration from America's skyscrapers they saw as structures where people worked as slaves for the good of the dominant elite.

In 'Metropolis', a capitalist and a scientist use the face of the activist girl to superimpose on a human machine that brings chaos to the world of workers. In the end, the workers unite and destroy both the robot and the scientist while the industrialist mends his ways and begins respecting the workers.

In the 1930s, most young men had no choice but to leave their farms to work in factories, but after gruelling work on the assembly line, they usually had nervous breakdowns. How true this is even today, especially for countries such as India and Pakistan. In 'Modern Times', the worker goes through the process of institutionaliza-

tion, but after his treatment and release, he accidentally picks up a red flag — prompting authorities to consider him a communist agitator. He goes to jail, successfully escapes, and falls in love with a young girl running from the police after stealing a loaf of bread. They evade the police and keep struggling for a better life.

Luckless workers find themselves unmoved by attempting to cope with the equipment and machinery they operate. The breakdown that we see almost every day in the cities and towns of Pakistan is the result of the same alienation and exploitation that Chaplin and Lang showed in their movies.

Unfortunately, Pakistani films and TV dramas have seldom ventured beyond domestic intrigues and love triangles.

That is one reason I recommend watching good movies of yore to enhance our understanding of the complexities of modern life — to learn some lessons about how the gap between the rich and the poor has been affecting people's lives and how creative artists have contributed to exposing injustices in society. -- Courtesy TheNews

Supporting unions

Parvez Rahim

The country's first tripartite labour conference, inaugurated by its first prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan, was held in February 1949. Subsequently, the government ratified ILO Conventions 87 and 98 relating to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Pakistan has been an active member of the ILO since 1947 and has so far ratified 36 conventions, including eight out of 10 fundamental conventions and two governance conventions, which include Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention 1948 (No 87) and Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No 98). However, the record of our compliance with international labour standards is poor, specifically in the context of these conventions.

At the time of partition, unions existed only in the railways and the port; both in the public sector. Besides, labour associations advocating a socialist society in Pakistan dominated the labour movement, and those belonging to All Pakistan Confederation of Labour and the Pakistan Workers Union, led by Mirza Ibrahim, received financial assistance from the Soviet Union to promote communism. For over 30 years, Ibrahim remained at the helm. But, in a 1981 referendum, a rightist union affiliated with the National Labour Federation (NLF) defeated his union.

The unions in Pakistan thrived from the late 1960s to July 1977 when the PPP government was overthrown. Their leaders were strong and employers across the country had to face volatile situations, such as interventions in

business management and manufacturing units by their unions.

Among several prominent leaders of workers' federations, the more notable and wise were Jamaat-i-Islami's (JI) Professor Shafi Malik and leftist Karamat Ali. Both encouraged union leaders and officials to acquire education and training. Malik acted on the advice of Maulana Maududi who upheld 'the rights of others and own obligation', contrary to what labour leaders of the time believed in. In 1956, Malik established the Pakistan Workers Training Institute in Hyderabad but it did not last long. However, his Pakistan Workers Training and Education Trust — WE Trust — recently completed 40 years of existence in Karachi.

As Malik joined the labour movement in the country's early years, his role as a successful and upright leader of NLF was long and enviable. The key to his success was his education, intellect, temperament and problem-solving abilities; stupendous challenges came his way and he tackled them with astuteness to achieve his goals. Malik garnered applause and laurels for the JI, the kind it has not known in national politics. He was the federation's president from 1969 to 1971, secretary general from 1971 to 1982 and was also re-elected as president until August 2000 when he chose to opt out.

Moreover, other than Pakistan Railways and PIA, unions associated with NLF were also part of the Collective Bargaining Agent in KDA, National Bank of Pakistan, Paracha Textile Mills, Pakistan Steel Mills, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, Karachi Shipyard and the Pakistan Engineering Company among others.

Later, he merged the MMF with powerful federation leader Nabi Ahmad's United Workers' Federation. Their combination proved lethal and the two were able to attain much relief for distressed employees.

Despite their advancing years, both Malik and Ali remain fairly active in educating and training present labour leaders and people keen to learn the intricacies of industrial relations.

Although activities of labour federations and unions are dormant, unions exist and interact with respective managements. Hence, representatives responsible for communication with unions should keep abreast of changes in labour legislations and the industry to hone their skills in managing worker-employer relations. -- Courtesy Dawn

Different approach

Zainab Malik

Last month, UN Secretary General, António Guterres, called for "putting people first" in the global response to illicit drugs. Kicking off the latest session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the secretary general urged governments to balance approaches countering drug trafficking with investments in prevention, stressing rehabilitation, upholding the human rights of people who use drugs, and expanding treatment programmes and health services. The statement comes against the backdrop of an extremely complex landscape.

The World Drug Report 2023 shows that over the past decade the number of people who use drugs and those suffering from drug use disorders increased by 23 per cent and 45pc respectively. It is becoming clear that the extensive use of punitive enforcement in deterring drug use has just not worked. In fact, drug policies globally have fuelled overcrowding, arbitrary executions, extrajudicial killings, and human rights violations against the poorest and most vulnerable.

At the moment, 20pc of the global prison population have been sentenced for drug-related offences. Thirty-four countries retain the death penalty for drug offences — accounting for almost half of all executions. Punitive approaches addressing drug use deliver unequal outcomes for marginalised populations, women and youth. Over 35pc of women in prison globally have been convicted of drug-related offences, compared with 19pc of men.

Despite challenges, countries are moving to-

wards a new way of working — one that puts people's needs, health and human rights at the centre of drug-control policies. Pivoting the focus of drug control from punishment to mainstreaming evidence-based treatments addressing the needs of drug users has shown improved outcomes for drug use, health and well-being and reductions in future harm for individuals and society as a whole. Countries like Mexico are developing therapeutic justice programmes to strengthen alternatives to incarceration and promote responsible drug use.

Ghana's recent drug policy framework monitors better health outcomes, including harm reduction.

The conversation is making its way across justice systems in Asia — where countries with the harshest drug policies can be found. In 2023, Malaysian lawmakers voted to remove the mandatory death penalty for drug trafficking. In India, a National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse has been established to support initiatives related to drug abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

Pakistan has also joined the movement by abolishing the death penalty for drug offences with the Control of Narcotic Substances (Amendment) Act, 2023. Notable efforts are being made in the country to shift towards evidence-based treatments, with Islamabad introducing the 'Minimum Service Delivery Standards for Psychiatric & Addiction Treatment/ Rehabilitation Facilities' in 2021.

The Anti-Narcotics Force is running four model rehabilitation centres and reported almost 22,000 people who had been voluntarily treated in these centres from 2005-

2021. Much more needs to be done. There still remains an urgent need to counter over-incarceration for drug offences and improve access to health/treatment for prisoners jailed for drug use, through the implementation of human rights-based sentencing guidelines and improved standards of healthcare in prisons.

Ministers, senior judges, policy experts, prosecutors, health professionals and human rights activists will convene in Islamabad from April 23-25 to drive the momentum in re-answering drug policies pushing coercion and control to those based on health and human rights. Justice Project Pakistan is holding a conference titled 'Reimagining Justice: Public Health and Human Rights Centred Drug Policy' to take stock of regional and national best practices on a wide range of topics including sentencing for drug offences, over-incarceration, and access to healthcare for persons who use drugs. The event, which will be held in person and online, aims to initiate a public dialogue on how the global drug problem can be solved by focusing on the health needs of people rather than coercion that has neither protected the welfare of people nor deterred drug crime.

More and more countries across the globe are adopting policies and practices that treat drug usage as a public health and human rights issue, and are applying evidence-based, gender-sensitive and harm reduction approaches. The data is clear — this is what works. If we are to finally solve the global drug problem, the momentum must keep building in the right direction. The time is now. -- Courtesy Dawn

Pakistan-China ties strengthening with each passing day: Maryam

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has underscored the deepening ties between Pakistan and China, stating that the relationship is steadily strengthening with each passing day.

In her message on the International Chinese Language Day, she said the Chinese language has acquired a significant importance in the global perspective, adding that it is one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

The world duly acknowledges the importance of China and the Chinese language, she said and added that China has proved its worth as an economic power across the globe. A language holds its significance with the promotion of relations between the people across the globe. China's political, diplomatic and economic importance is highly acclaimed in the world, she mentioned.

The CM said there is a need to acquaint oneself with the Chinese language as it can further strengthen and boost Pakistan-China friendship. China has launched numerous projects for Pakistan's economic stability. Punjab police deputed on the security of Chinese nationals are taught the Chinese language, she asserted.

The CM stressed that there is a dire need to acquire proficiency in the Chinese language in order to link with the Chinese market. "Learning the Chinese language can enable us to understand their culture along with promoting better ties with the people" she said.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur called on by Country Director of United Nations World Food Program (UNWFP) in Pakistan Ms. Coco Ushiyama.

Bilal checks restaurants, food points, imposes heavy fines over violations

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Food Bilal Yasin conducted surprise checking of various restaurants and food points in Faisalabad and imposed heavy fines on violators of the food safety laws.

The minister along with his team reached Koh-e-Noor Plots and checked food in restaurants and food outlets. He imposed a fine of Rs. 300,000 on the owners of restaurants and food points on charges of violating the food safety laws.

He also reached Slaughter House and issued a warning to its incharge besides getting a case registered against the butcher when more than one mound unhygienic meat and fish were seized. The commodities were later discarded.

Speaking on the occasion, the food minister expressed grave concern over the sale of unhygienic food items and said that this would not be tolerated at any cost. He said that only those shopkeepers would be allowed to sell food items who fulfill and implement the pure food regulations.

He said that when he had checked the food outlets and restaurants, he found the employees working without proper medical and training certificates whereas manufacturing and expiry dates were also missing on the food items. Similarly, dead insects, flies and mosquitoes were also recovered from the freezers of various restaurants and food points whereas the food items were processed under complete unhygienic atmosphere.

He said that cases had been registered and fines imposed on the violators of the pure food regulations and the government would not allow anyone to play havoc with the lives of the masses.

In this connection, strict action would be taken against them and they would be taken to task without any discrimination, the minister added.



MUZAFFARABAD: Lawyers protest against Israeli aggression on Azadi Chowk in the city.

Commissioner takes stock of by-election preparations

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Divisional Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Saturday visited the RO (Returning Officer) offices of three constituencies established at University of Engineering and Technology (UET) to review operational measures.

The commissioner scrutinized the dispatch of polling materials, provision of transportation, and monitoring arrangements for by-elections. During his visit to the dispatch counters, he was informed that 70 percent of the materials had been dispatched.

He emphasized the seamless provision of all supplies and transportation from the RO offices.

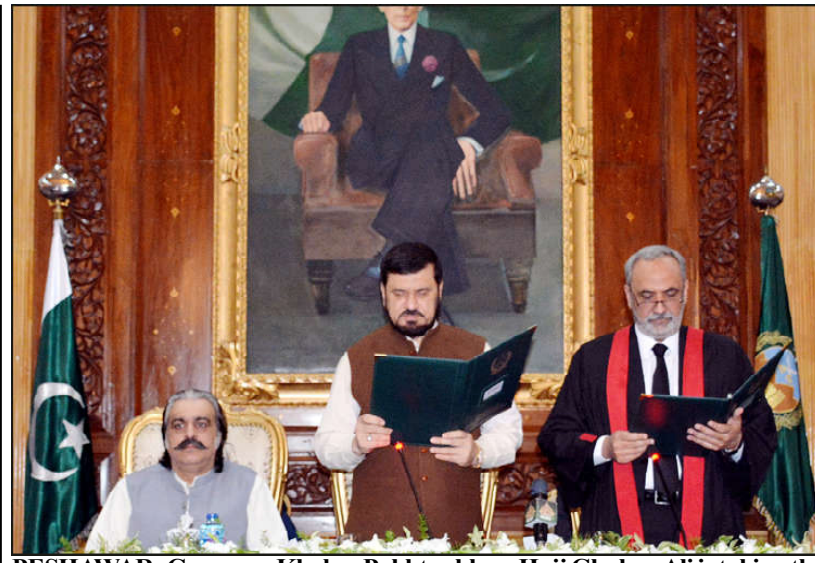
Commissioner Randhawa stated that all departments are in close coordination with the presiding officers and are providing full cooperation. He instructed all personnel to fulfill their duties diligently, warning that strict action will be taken against those who remain absent from duty.

DIG Operations Lahore Ali Naseer Rizvi briefed the commissioner about the security arrangements for the by-elections. The commissioner also received a briefing on the polling scheme from the returning officers of NA 118, PP 147, and PP 149.

Meanwhile, the commissioner made a surprise visit to the Ghari Shahu area to assess the implementation of official rates and weight of roti and naan.

He inspected various tandoors to ensure compliance with government-mandated prices and weights. The commissioner stated that the government-fixed price for 100 grams of roti in Lahore and Kasur is Rs. 16, and the price for 120 grams of naan is Rs. 20, while in Sheikhupura and Nankana Sahib, the price of roti is set at Rs. 15 and Rs. 20 for naan.

He clarified that the Punjab government.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali is taking the oath of office from Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim as the Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court in the swearing-in ceremony held at the Governor House.

CM Sindh directs Excise Dept to achieve recovery targets

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, presiding over a meeting of the Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department (ET&NC) here Saturday, reviewed their revenue recoveries and found that there was a shortfall of Rs19,977 million in their revenue recoveries during the last nine months of the current financial year 2023-24.

The Finance Department shared the collection data of the Excise and Taxation Department for the last three years, from 2020-21 to 2022-23. It was discovered that they were supposed to collect Rs 335,200 million, but they only managed to collect Rs 287,604 million, resulting in a shortfall of Rs 47,596 million.

The chief minister expressed his disappointment and directed the Excise Department to focus on improving their recoveries. He also advised them to explore new taxation regimes, improve the old tax rates, and concentrate on professional tax and provincial excise, which have a large potential.

The meeting was held at the CM House and was attended by Minister Excise Sharjeel Memon, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoti, Secretary Excise Saleem Rajput, Special Secretary Finance Nisar Memon, DGs Excise depts



LAHORE: Secretary Emergency Services Dr. Rizwan Naseer and CEO WWF Pakistan Hammad Naqi signing MoU.

Anti-polio drive to start from April 29

FAISALABAD (APP): The next round of anti-polio drive will start in Faisalabad from April 29, 2024 and for the purpose, necessary arrangements are being finalised.

This was stated by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh while presiding over a meeting of District Polio Eradication Committee, here on Saturday.

He said that 1.6 million children up to the age of five years would be administered anti-polio drops in the district. For the purpose, 4,919 teams had been constituted, which would ensure door-to-door visit in addition to covering the public places like bus stands.

Police arrest two wanted criminals: SSP

LARKANA (APP): Larkana Police arrested two criminals and seized weapons on Saturday in two separate alleged encounters.

According to the report, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Larkana Mir Rohal Khan Khoso said that under the leadership of Hydari Police Station Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Paras Bakrani, Ghulam Bhutto Road and Lashari Police Station Police DSP Rutodero Tabish Ali Shah headed the Labano water canal areas.



LAHORE: The polling presiding officers bringing the ballot box and other equipment from Election Commission Staff at the University of Engineering and Technology in the provincial capital.

Azma regrets private channel airing baseless news about Punjab CM

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bukhari regretted on Saturday that a fabricated and baseless news about Punjab chief minister had been aired by a private news channel.

According to a handout issued here, she said: "We don't care if the 'Tonga' party holds a jalsa. The minister said the provincial government was not bothered about how many people would come to attend that public meeting."

Azma said it was against journalistic ethics to run any news story about the chief minister without confirming its authenticity from the CM Office, spokesperson for the Punjab government and the Punjab Assembly speaker.

The information minister warned that legal action would be taken against the channel for running fabricated news. She said it was shameful to use the media platform as a propaganda cell of a political party. She said that news channel should apologise; otherwise, legal action would be taken against its management.

Mehdi condemns PTI's behaviour during President's address to joint session

KARACHI (APP): The General Secretary Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Sindh chapter and former Senator Waqar Mehdi vehemently denounces the disruption and the resort to unparliamentary behaviour and language by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) lawmakers during President Asif Ali Zardari's address to the joint session of parliament.

In a statement released on Saturday, Waqar Mehdi condemned the PTI for resorting to underhanded tactics. He emphasized that the behaviour exhibited by PTI lawmakers during the joint session, especially in the presence of diplomats, tarnished Pakistan's image on the global stage.

Mehdi reiterated that while the opposition has the right to protest, it should not descend into absurdity.

He praised Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's legal actions against Jamshed Dasti and Iqbal Khan as appropriate measures.

Highlighting President Asif Ali Zardari's political acumen.

CM KP says: Provincial government values cooperation and collaboration of the World Food Program

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of the World Food Program called on the Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur here at CM Secretariat on Saturday.

The delegation was led by World Food Program Country Director Ms. Coco Ushiyama. In the meeting, the issues related to the activities carried out under the World Food Program in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in the adjoining districts, were discussed.

Discussions on further expanding the scope of cooperation between the provincial government and the World Food Program in various fields were also held. The two also agreed to further enhance cooperation in various fields.

Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur said that the provincial government values the cooperation and collaboration of the World Food Program. The provincial government needs more support from other donor organizations including the World Food Program for merging districts, the CM added.

The World Food Program's program of providing educational scholarships to the girls of the merged districts is commendable, CM said, adding that promotion of education in the merged districts and employing the people is the main priority.

Special attention from the government and donor organizations is needed to bring the merged districts into the national stream, Ali Amin Gandapur told the delegation.

He said that the infrastructure in these districts has been badly affected during the anti-terror operations, the Chief Minister informed the delegation. He said that farm-to-market roads need to be constructed in the merged districts.



KARACHI: CM Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting of the Excise, Taxation & Narcotics Control Department.

4th International Public Health Conference concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): The 4th International Public Health Conference hosted by Khyber Medical University (KMU), was concluded here on Saturday.

The theme of the conference was "Power of Prevention: Investing in Complex Issues in Public Health". The conference brought together esteemed national and international experts to deliberate on pressing health challenges and explore innovative solutions.

Secretary Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mehmood Aslam attended the event as the chief guest. Key discussions focused on collaborative approach needed for non-communicable disease (NCD) control, emphasizing early detection, prevention strategies and comprehensive management. The major focus of the conference was advocating for robust tobacco control policies including measures such as increased taxes, comprehensive advertising bans and public awareness campaigns.

Zahid expresses concern over heavy rainfall damages

Independent Report
KAGHAN: In response to the significant damages caused by heavy rains in the province, Advisor to the Chief Minister for Tourism and Archaeology Zahid Khan Zeb, expressed deep regret.

He expressed these views during his visit of Kaghan. The advisor emphasized the importance of caution, particularly for tourists, urging them to refrain from traveling during rainfall, especially in mountainous regions like Kaghan Valley.

The affected areas, including Kaghan and Mansehra valleys, have seen considerable damage due to the relentless downpour.

Zeb, along with local authorities and police, has urged active involvement in assisting and guiding travelers in tourist destinations and mountain resorts. Moreover, he stressed the need for tourists to adhere to standard operating procedures (SOPs) and to prioritize safety measures during their travels.

Personally assessing the situation in Kaghan and Mansehra, he highlighted the inherent risks associated with heavy rainfall in mountainous regions, often leading to natural disasters beyond human control.

He cautioned travelers to exercise prudence and consider avoiding travel under such circumstances.

In addition to cautioning tourists, Zeb directed authorities to ensure the safety of infrastructure, including electricity and other facilities, in tourist areas during rainfall.

Special measures were also recommended to protect travelers during their journeys.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Jamshoro are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Hyderabad press club

Minister food expresses regret over loss of lives, property caused by rains

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister of Food, Zahir Shah Toru, expressed regret and sympathy on Saturday for the loss of lives and damage to property caused by the recent rains in the province.

He reiterated the determination of the provincial government to do everything possible to assist the affected families and assured them that they would not be left alone in this difficult time.

He said this on the occasion of a visit to Village Council Saukai along with Deputy Commissioner Mardan Fayaz Khan Sherpao, where a mother and her children lost their lives due to the collapse of the roof. The minister attended the funeral prayers of the deceased and expressed his sorrow over their martyrdom.

He also expressed his condolences to the families and assured all kinds of cooperation.

Nazim Lal Badshah of Village Council Sokai, Kisan Council Member Taj Muhammad, former Nazim Bilal Ahmed and Nadeem Abbas were also present on this occasion.

Zahir Shah Toru said that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur is personally monitoring the rain and flood situation in the province. He said that a control room has already been set up in the Chief Minister's Secretariat, while emergency control rooms have also been set up in all Deputy Commissioners' offices at the district level. He said that people can contact the authorities anytime for emergency assistance in case of accident and emergency. He said that the government equally shared the grief of the relatives of the deceased citizens and would take care of them in their sufferings. He said that the district administration was surveying the damages caused by the rain and would compensate the victims on an emergency basis. Meanwhile, the minister along with Member Provincial Assembly Abdul Salam Afridi and Deputy Commissioner Mardan Fayaz Sherpao visited Sahadi Yateem Khana.

Finance minister briefs financial institutions on gov't's economic reform initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday briefed the chiefs of international financial institutions about the country's economic reform initiatives and development priorities by the government of Pakistan.

Washington DC. During the meeting, the finance minister expressed satisfaction that the new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) between Pakistan and the World Bank would be finalized soon. He underlined the government's reform thrust in the areas of energy, taxation and state-owned enterprises (SOEs), highlighting the pursuit of both short and long-term goals in these crucial sectors. Referring to his earlier meetings with the

senior leadership of the World Bank, the finance minister stated that the Bank's focus on climate change, digitalization, and human capital development aligns well with the priorities of the government. The finance minister highlighted the government's vision to realize Pakistan's true economic potential in terms of sustainable economic growth. He stressed the importance of timely completion of development projects and

the realization of intended impacts and outcomes, emphasizing the need for effective implementation and monitoring. He also briefed Mr. Raiser on the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a one-window facility for investment promotion and facilitation. Both sides agreed on the need for reforms in the agriculture sector, water management, and waste-water treatment. The finance minister also met with Brent Neiman.



WASHINGTON DC: Finance Minister in a meeting with Mr. Martin Raiser, Vice President, South Asia Region, World Bank.



KARACHI: CM Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting of Board of Revenue.

LCCI for joint efforts to promote Pak-Afghan trade

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Kashif Anwar has said that despite the historical socio-economic relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the trade volume does not reflect the potential. Joint and concrete steps must be taken to boost mutual trade, he added. He expressed these views while addressing an Afghan trade delegation led by Board Member Afghanistan Chamber and Co-President Pakistan Afghanistan Chamber Khan Jan Alokozai here at the Lahore Chamber on Saturday. Other members

of the delegation included Ajmal Safi, Babrak Akbar, Gharibullah, Naqibullah Safi, Muhammad Saleem Afghan, Muhammad Tahir Safi, Essa Khan and Qais Safi. LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that the visit of the Afghan trade delegation is important. There must be good trade relations with neighboring countries because the right of neighbors is first, he added. He said that exchange of trade delegation between the two countries is important, asserting that understanding each other's culture also increases the trade. He said that the information technology

sector in Pakistan is developing with every passing day. Kashif Anwar said that the bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Afghanistan is \$522 million, which has room for improvement. If banking channels are established between the two countries, the trade volume can increase manifold. He said that there is potential to increase trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the fields of pharmaceuticals, carpets, rice, auto parts and others. He said that recently Ministry of Commerce has issued SRO for Barter System which will promote mutual trade.

NPO's four day w'shop on gemstones to hold in Islamabad by

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Productivity Organization (NPO) Pakistan in collaboration with Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Japan, will organize a four days international workshop on value addition of gemstones products for compliance with international standards and enhance the productivity in APO, Japan member states from 22 April at Islamabad.

and from APO member countries, 10 local participants and sessions will be delivered by the international resource speakers from Thailand, said a press release issued here Saturday. The main objective of this program is to review international standards on gemstone products, to provide comprehensive knowledge of cutting, polishing, designing and heating techniques, and to enhance understanding of best practices and technological advances in gemstone value chains including manufacturing, standardization and trading.

FBR conducts crackdown against illegal cigarettes sellers in Haripur

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Despite adverse weather conditions on Saturday, the Regional Tax Office (RTO) squad in Abbottabad has initiated a crackdown against illegal cigarettes sellers in the Hazara division. Shops holding illegal cigarettes in Haripur and Havelian have been sealed for a duration of 15 days. Raids were conducted in various markets, including Abbottabad, Havelian, Haripur, Mansehra and Gari Habibullah.

Chief Commissioner Abid Mahmood has ordered actions against those holding illegal cigarettes, overseen by Zonal Commissioners Fazal Subhan and Ashfaq Masood, with legal assistance from Additional Commissioners Zohair Ali Shah and Zubair Shah. Teams led by officers Shaukat Nawaz, Muhammad Sajid, and Omar Khalid, conducted operations in different areas. Despite heavy rainfall, today's operation resulted in the seizure of over three lakh local and imported cigarettes across Hazara. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is determined to curb the illegal cigarette trade nationwide.

Rs. 777.1m fine imposed on 7,457 power pilferers

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) caught 7,457 power pilferers during the last 224 days and imposed over Rs. 777.1 million fine on them collectively.

Giving further details, he said that FESCO teams detected electricity theft at 1,763 points in Faisalabad First Circle and imposed a fine of Rs.190 million on them under the head of 4315,000 detection units. In Faisalabad Second Circle, the FESCO teams caught 1294 electricity thieves and imposed a fine of Rs.132.9 million under 3114,000 detection units. Similarly, 851 cases of electricity theft were detected in Jhang circle and the company handed down the power pilferers with a fine of Rs.90.7 million.

Chief Commissioner Abid Mahmood has ordered actions against those holding illegal cigarettes, overseen by Zonal Commissioners Fazal Subhan and Ashfaq Masood, with legal assistance from Additional Commissioners Zohair Ali Shah and Zubair Shah. Teams led by officers Shaukat Nawaz, Muhammad Sajid, and Omar Khalid, conducted operations in different areas. Despite heavy rainfall, today's operation resulted in the seizure of over three lakh local and imported cigarettes across Hazara. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is determined to curb the illegal cigarette trade nationwide.

Spokesman Tahir Sheikh said here on Saturday that over 17,386 million detection units were charged and 7,377 cases were registered over power theft in various police stations whereas the police arrested 6,105 pilferers, in addition to recovery of Rs. 553.4 million from them.



ISLAMABAD: Women taking interest in a craft during an exhibition at Sector G-6/3, in the Federal Capital.

WAPDA awards multi million dollar contract for Mangla Dam Project

MIRPUR-AJK (APP): Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has awarded a multi-million dollar contract for the supply of two critical transformers for the Mangla Refurbishment Project, paving the way for a major increase in power generation capacity and a stronger national grid.

at WAPDA House. The project which aims to refurbish the existing Mangla Hydel Power Station will increase its generation capacity from 1000 MW to 1310 MW, a significant increase of 310 MW. The average annual generation will also increase from 5 billion units to 6.6 billion units. The project is being funded by USAID, AFD France, and WAPDA's resources.

In a statement released by WAPDA on Friday, WAPDA has taken a major step forward in the design and supply of two 220 KV, 168.75 MVA Generator Step-up (GSU) Transformers for Unit No. 9 and 10. The contract was signed between WAPDA and Chinese contractor CHINT at a ceremony held

The project is expected to be completed by 2027-28 and will play a vital role in strengthening the national grid and meeting the country's growing power needs. The contract signing ceremony was attended by high-ranking officials, including Member (Finance) WAPDA.

4G for all fundamental to Digital Pakistan vision

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prioritizing the provision of high-speed 4G to rural and semi-urban populations is imperative for realizing the Digital Pakistan vision, said Asif Aziz, Chief Business Officer at Jazz. On its part, Jazz has played a significant role in fostering 4G adoption in Pakistan, witnessing substantial growth over the past five years, he added.

Speaking at a panel discussion titled 'Infrastructure Development in Pakistan: 5G & Cloud Technology' at the Global Digital Summit 2024, Asif highlighted how the digitalization efforts at Jazz were focused on bringing the underserved segments of the population into the fold of digital inclusion.

Currently, 90 percent of mobile broadband subscribers in Pakistan are utilizing 4G, a notable increase from just 17 percent five years ago, with Jazz having the largest 4G subscriber base of 46.38 million with an overall cellular subscriber base crossing 71.5 million mark, said a news release issued here Saturday.

Other speakers on the panel included Zarrar Khan CBO PTCL, Ali Akhtar CEO of DynaSys Networks and Aamir Ahsan Khan President and Key Account Manager Ericsson Pakistan, while it was moderated by Saira Faisal Country Head GSMA. Addressing the digital divide is imperative; if it persists.



ISLAMABAD: Worker unloading the yellow melons at Sabzi Mandi in the Federal Capital.

SPAR6C hosts workshops to drive Decarbonization in Pakistan's Cement Industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supporting Preparedness for Article 6 Cooperation (SPAR6C) program in response to the significant expansion expected in Pakistan's cement industry, which is set to increase its production capacity from 83 million tons per year to 99 million tons by the end of 2023, held crucial workshops in Lahore and Karachi.

These workshops focused on advancing decarbonization strategies within the cement sector, which is responsible for approximately 5 percent of global man-made CO2 emissions, said a news release on Saturday. The events were addressed by united industry experts,

Gold rates up by Rs.1,500 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,500 and was sold at Rs.252,200 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.250,700 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.1,286 to Rs.216,221 from Rs.214,935 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.198,202 from Rs.197,024, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola remained constant at Rs.2,780 and Rs.2,383.40 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$11 to \$2,411 from \$2,400, the Association.

LESCO collects over Rs 2.90m from 146 defaulters in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) recovered more than Rs 2.90 million from 146 chronic defaulters in all its five districts - Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara - on the 202nd day of its recovery campaign. A LESCO spokesman told the media here on Saturday that on the 202nd day, SE (Superintending Engineer) Nisar Sarwar recovered outstanding dues of Rs 0.64 million from 25 defaulters in Northern

Circle; SE Umar Bilal recovered Rs 0.58 million from 20 defaulters in Eastern Circle; SE Shabbir recovered Rs 0.13 million from 18 defaulters in Central Circle; SE Zafarullah Saanghi collected Rs 0.05 million from 03 defaulters in South Circle; SE Muhammad Hussain recovered Rs 0.10 million from 07 defaulters in Nankana Circle; SE Najamul Hassan recovered Rs 0.29 million from 22 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle; SE Jamshed Zaman collected Rs 0.63 million.

Cotton to be sown on 4m acres in Punjab: Iftikhar Ali

MULTAN (APP): Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahu said on Saturday that cotton would be sown at over 4 million acres in the province. Stressing the commitment to achieve cotton cultivation targets, Iftikhar Ali Sahu stated that all possible resources and means were being mobilized. He was chairing a meeting to review cotton crop cultivation. Sahu urged for increased momentum in field activities led by

Divisional Directors to ensure objectives are met promptly. He maintained the importance of monitoring, stating that from May 1st, all field activities will be monitored from field assistants to Divisional Directors. To address staffing shortages, retired agricultural officers and field assistants could be enlisted. Regular meetings of Divisional and District Committees will be convened to address agricultural inputs.



ISLAMABAD: A farmer harvest wheat crops in a field on the outskirts of Federal Capital.

MoU inked to revolutionize country's IT sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and D.I Khan New City have joined hands to revolutionize Pakistan's information technology sector and drive economic growth in the region through signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Saifullah Khan, Chairman D.I Khan New City. Under this strategic alliance, the expertise of NUST in higher education as the premier science and technology university of the country, will combine with D.I. Khan New City's commitment to socio-economic development, particularly in marginalized communities.

According to an official source, the MoU will serve as a significant step towards the pursuit of educational excellence and economic development.

The collaboration, fuelled by National Science and Technology Park and brought to fruition by NUST Professional Development Centre (PDC), seeks to harness power of innovation to drive economic growth and create opportunities for sustainable development.

The MoU was signed by Dr Rizwan Riaz, Pro-Rector Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (RIC) NUST, and Jehangir

Ukraine needs at least seven Patriot air defence systems, Zelenskiy tells NATO

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelenskiy told NATO members that Ukraine needed a minimum of seven Patriot or other high-end air defence systems to counter Russian air strikes, exhorting them to step up their military assistance for Kyiv.

In an emotional speech by video link to the NATO-Ukraine Council, the Ukrainian leader described the current level of foreign aid as "very limited" and said Israel had not been left to fend for itself during Iran's massive air strike on Saturday.

"(Russian President Vladimir) Putin must be brought down to earth, and our sky must become safe again... And it depends fully on your choice... (the) choice whether we are indeed allies," Zelenskiy said in his speech.

Russia has increased its long-range bombardment of Ukraine's energy infrastructure and its cities in recent weeks, ratcheting up the pressure on Kyiv as Moscow's more numerous and better equipped forces slowly advance on the battlefield in the east.

Just this year, Zelenskiy said, Ukraine

had been attacked by almost 1,200 Russian missiles, more than 1,500 drones and 8,500 guided bombs amid a slowdown in Western military assistance.

"We are telling this directly - to defend, we need seven more 'Patriots' or similar air defence systems, and it's a minimum number. They can save many lives and really change the situation," he said.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said after the meeting between allied defence ministers and Zelenskiy that the allies had agreed to provide Kyiv

with additional air defence systems.

"In addition to Patriots, there are other weapons that allies can provide, including (the French system) SAMP/T, and many others, who do not have available systems, have pledged to provide financial support to purchase them for Ukraine," Stoltenberg told reporters in Brussels.

Zelenskiy said Kyiv's troops needed to receive long-range missiles and artillery shells now.

"This year we can't wait for decisions to be made," he said.



Firefighters work at a site of an apartment building hit by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Dnipro, Ukraine.



A soldier stands guard at the entrance of the emergency ward of a hospital in Hilla in the central Iraqi province of Babylon where people wounded in an alleged bombing overnight on an Iraqi military base housing a coalition of pro-Iranian armed groups are being treated.

Foes Azerbaijan and Armenia agree 'historic' return of villages

Monitoring Desk

KORNIDZOR: Armenia has agreed to return several villages to Azerbaijan in what both sides said on Friday was an important milestone as they edge towards a peace deal after fighting two wars since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry spokesperson Aykhan Hajizada posted on X that Armenia would return four villages near the countries' shared border that had been "under occupation" since the early 1990s, and called it a "long-awaited historic event".

In Armenia, the state news agency quoted the prime minister's office as saying: "In this process, the Republic of Armenia receives a reduction in risks associated with border delimitation and security."

It said the handover in

practice involved only "two and a half villages" because Azerbaijan already partly controlled the settlements involved, but added that the demarcation of the border was a "significant event".

The settlements are deserted but are strategically important as they are close to Armenia's main highway north towards the border with Georgia, through which much of its trade is done, and to the pipeline through which it receives gas from Russia.

The agreement was reached at a meeting on the two countries' border, chaired by their deputy prime ministers.

Azerbaijan has been demanding the villages' return as a precondition for a peace deal after more than three decades of conflict, mostly centred on the region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

China unveils new cyber force

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China announced the creation of a new military cyber corps on Friday, saying it would bolster Beijing's capacity to "fight and win" wars.

The Information Support Force will act as a "key support for coordinated development and application of network information systems", defence ministry spokesman Wu Qian said.

China has ploughed billions of dollars into modernising its armed forces in recent years as tensions with the United States and other regional powers have escalated.

President Xi Jinping has also sought to bring the military more firmly under his control.

The new cyber force represents "a strategic step to establish a new system of services and arms and improve (China's) modern military force structure", Wu said.

China's foreign minister says major powers should avoid rivalry in South Pacific

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China's foreign minister Wang Yi on Saturday said the South Pacific region should not become an arena for major power rivalries and that its assistance to countries there is free of political conditions.

The Pacific has become a source of intense competition for influence between Washington, which has traditionally viewed it as its backyard, and Beijing, which has targeted Taiwanese diplomatic allies there.

Wang made the comments at a joint press conference with his Papua New Guinea counterpart during a visit to country.

"The South Pacific region should not become an arena for great powers to play games, and no country should treat the island countries as its own 'backyard' or engage in zero-sum games and exclusionary arrangements," Wang said.

He said any attempt

to provoke confrontation in the South Pacific region does not serve the needs of its people.

"China's engagement and cooperation with the South Pacific island countries is dedicated to mutual support and assistance to achieve common development, without any geopolitical self-interest," Wang said.

He added that China is willing to maintain high-level exchanges with Papua New Guinea and open negotiations for free trade agreements as soon as possible.

State media Xinhua reported Wang saying that all parties should respect the choice of the people of Solomon Islands and refrain from interfering in their internal affairs.

The Solomon Islands' pro-China Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare has retained his seat in a national election, local media reported.

Ukrainian drones strike Russian fuel depot, substations in major attack, Kyiv source says

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukraine attacked eight Russian regions with dozens of long-range strike drones, setting ablaze a fuel depot and hitting three power substations in a major attack early on Saturday, an intelligence source in Kyiv told Reuters.

The overnight attack, which was confirmed by the defence ministry in Moscow, comes amid a Russian airstrike campaign that has battered Ukraine's energy system and pounded its cities in recent weeks.

Facing mounting pressure on the battlefield more than two years since Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine has tried to find a pressure point against the Kremlin by targeting oil refineries and energy facilities inside Russia using drones.

"At least three electrical substations and a fuel storage base were hit, where fires ignited," the Ukrainian source said, citing social media videos showing fires raging at different locations.

The source said the

facilities were targeted for supporting Russian military industrial production.

Russia's defence ministry said it shot down 50 Ukrainian drones, including 26 in the Belgorod region, 10 in the Bryansk region, eight in Kursk region, two in Tula region as well as one in each of the regions of Smolensk, Ryazan, Kaluga and Moscow.

Vyacheslav Gladkov, the governor of Russia's Belgorod region which borders Ukraine, said two civilians were killed as a result of the attack.

The strike targeted a fuel energy facility in the western Smolensk region's Kardym region, hitting a reservoir with fuel and oil lubricants, the local governor confirmed.

"As a result of the work of air defence forces, the aircraft were shot down. However, as a result of falling debris, a tank with fuel and oil lubricants caught fire," he said, adding that firefighters were battling to put out the blaze.

Oil, gas drilling blocked in Alaska wilds as Biden seeks green cred

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday blocked oil, gas and mining operations across tracts of unspoiled wilderness in Alaska, winning praise from environmentalists for safeguarding habitat for polar bears, caribou and other Arctic species.

More than 13 million acres (5.2 million hectares) will come under new federal protection, while a permit to build a major road to access mineral deposits was denied in moves that angered industry bodies and some locals.

"Alaska's majestic and rugged lands and waters are among the most remarkable and healthy landscapes in the world," President Joe Biden said. "These natural wonders demand our protection."

But the state's lawmakers in Washington slammed the measures, forming a bipartisan front to say they would fight to overturn them.

"The Biden administration may be focused on short-term political gains, but at the expense of Alaska's long-term future,"

Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski said, citing future jobs and national energy security.

Democratic Representative Mary Sattler Peltola said that the announcement failed to strike a balance between the need for gas and oil "and legitimate environmental concerns."

Ahead of the US presidential election in November, Biden is seeking to shore up his green credentials, which were damaged by a decision last year to green-light a project by US energy giant ConocoPhillips in Alaska.

The Willow project, estimated to cost between \$8-10 billion, was authorized under former president Donald Trump and later backed by Biden, triggering national protests by activists.

The Interior Department on Friday said the new protections would help tackle the effects of global warming, which is degrading the Alaskan permafrost.

"As the climate crisis imperils communities across the country, more must be done."

Deadly blast at Iraq army base amid Israel-Iran tensions

Monitoring Desk

BABYLON: One person was killed and eight wounded in an overnight explosion at an Iraqi military base housing a coalition of pro-Iranian armed groups, officials said Saturday.

The explosion hit the Kalsu military base in Babylon province south of Baghdad, where Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces, or Hashed al-Shaabi, is stationed.

It comes days after Iran launched an unprecedented assault on Israel which reportedly responded with a drone strike on the Islamic republic, amid tensions fuelled by the Gaza conflict.

The Iraqi security forces media unit said "an explosion and a fire" hit the Kalsu base in the early hours of Saturday, leaving one person dead and eight wounded.

Air defence command reported "no drones or combat aircraft in the airspace of Babylon province before or during the explosion", it added in a statement.

An interior ministry official had initially reported an "aerial bombing" on the site.

In a statement, Hashed al-Shaabi said an "explosion" had inflicted "mate-

rial losses" and casualties, without giving a number.

The group confirmed its premises on the military base had been hit and that investigators had been sent to the site.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Responding to questions from AFP, the security sources did not say who may have been behind the attack.

"The explosion hit equipment, weapons and vehicles," said the interior ministry source.

Shortly after the explosion, the US military said its forces were not behind a reported strike in Iraq.

"The United States has not conducted air strikes in Iraq today," US Central Command (CENTCOM) posted on social media platform X, adding that reports that American forces had carried out a strike were "not true".

The Iraqi military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject, said the overnight explosion had occurred in "warehouses storing equipment".

When reached by AFP, the Israeli army said it "does not comment on information published in for-

eign media".

The Hashed al-Shaabi is an integral part of the official Iraqi security apparatus under the authority of the prime minister.

It brings together several pro-Iran armed factions, some of which have also carried out dozens of attacks in Iraq and Syria against US forces deployed as part of an international anti-jihadist coalition.

"We will retaliate against whoever is behind this aggression," Hashed commander Abu Alaa al-Walaji wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

"Those involved in this odious crime will pay the price." On Friday, strikes blamed on Israel targeted a military base near the city of Isfahan in central Iran.

The explosion came in response to Tehran's unprecedented attack on Israel last weekend, in retaliation for a deadly strike on Iran's embassy in Damascus.

Iraq's foreign ministry expressed "strong concern" on Friday over the blast in Iran, warning of the "risks of military escalation which threatens security and stability in the region."

"This escalation must not be allowed to divert attention from what's happening in the Gaza Strip," it said.



People queue at a flight connection desk after a rainstorm hit Dubai, causing delays at the Dubai International Airport, United Arab Emirates.

Apple pulls WhatsApp, Threads from store after Beijing order

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: Apple said on Friday it had removed Meta Platforms' WhatsApp and Threads from its App Store in China after being ordered to do so by the Chinese government, which cited national security concerns.

Telegram and Signal — two other foreign messaging apps — were also removed from the store on Friday, according to app tracking firms Qimai and AppMagic.

The removal of the four apps suggests growing intolerance on the part of China's central government towards at least some foreign online messaging services that fall outside of its control. It also signals less leeway for Apple in China.

However, other Meta apps, including Facebook, Instagram and Messenger, remained available to download, according to Reuters checks on Friday. Many other popular apps developed by Western companies, including YouTube and X (formerly Twitter), were also available.

It was not immediately clear how WhatsApp or Threads might have caused security concerns for Chinese authorities.

Dubai carriers resume flight operations following record-breaking storm

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Dubai's flagship carrier Emirates and sister airline flydubai have restored normal operations after a record-breaking storm caused severe flooding across the United Arab Emirates earlier this week, the airlines said on Saturday.

Emirates cancelled nearly 400 flights and delayed many more as a result of a record storm that hit the desert city of Dubai on Tuesday, according to a statement released by the airline's president, Tim Clark.

"As of this morning... our regular flight schedules have been restored. Passengers previously stranded in the airport transit area... are en route to their destinations.

"It will take us some more days to clear the backlog of rebooked passengers and bags, and we ask for our customers' patience and understanding," Clark added. He also said that Emirates provided 12,000 hotel rooms and 250,000 meal vouchers to affected customers.

Flydubai also returned to its full flight schedule from the airport's Terminal 2 and Terminal 3 today following the weather-related disruption, a spokesperson

for the airline said in a statement.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) website, various carriers' flights from Pakistan are travelling to and from Dubai.

Due to the impact of the storm, the airline suspended check-in for passengers departing from Dubai and halted its transit operations through Dubai International Airport, a major global travel hub, leaving thousands of travellers stranded.

The airport has struggled to return to normal operations after the storm flooded taxiways, forcing flight diversions, delays and cancellations.

The UAE has suffered the impact of the flooding for days, with roads between the city and Abu Dhabi still partially underwater as of Saturday. In Abu Dhabi, some supermarkets and restaurants faced product shortages, unable to receive deliveries from Dubai.

Researchers have linked extreme weather events such as Tuesday's storm to climate change and anticipate that global warming will lead to higher temperatures, increased humidity and a greater risk of flooding in parts of the Gulf region.

US military strategy tested as Iran-Israeli warfare comes out of shadows

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The US military's success helping Israel stop a massive wave of Iranian missiles and drones last weekend might suggest Washington is well prepared militarily for whatever comes next as Iran and Israel move from shadow warfare to direct confrontation.

But current and former US officials say US forces are not positioned for a major, sustained Middle East conflict and the Pentagon may have to revisit assumptions about military needs in the region if the crisis deepens. "I don't think we have all the forces that we would want to support Israel if there was a direct war between them and Iran," said Michael Mulroy, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East under the Trump administration.

Though Tehran has indicated it had no plans to retaliate for an apparent Israeli strike on Friday, the tit-for-tat attacks have raised fears of an unpredictable re-

gional war that the United States has sought to prevent. In the months since an attack by Hamas militants on Israel triggered a war in Gaza that has ignited unrest throughout the Middle East, the United States has rushed thousands of US service members to a region that had seen a steadily declining US presence over years.

But many of those new US troops are on warships and aircraft that move in and out of the region, and are only temporarily deployed. That US strategy to rely on surge forces could be tested now Iran and Israel have broken the taboo of open military strikes against each other.

From embattled Asian currencies to earnings reports from European banks, these are the business and finance stories to look out for in the week ahead.

"What it means for the US military is that I think we have to revisit this idea of what are the necessary, sustainable (military) capabilities that we have to maintain in the region."



Iranians rest near the Zayandeh Rud River, after a reported Israeli attack on Iran, in Isfahan Province, Iran.

PTI seeks chairmanship of standing committees of its own choice

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI has sought chairmanship of standing committee of its own choice. Speaker National Assembly (NA) has refused to be blackmailed by opposition and asked the parliamentary leaders to provide name once again in connection with establishment of standing committees.

Jadon, Syedal discuss matters pertaining to media codes of ethics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Press Council of Pakistan (PCP), Arshad Khan Jadon, and Deputy Chairman of the Senate, Syedal Khan Nasir Saturday pertaining matters about media codes of ethics and press freedom.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam addressing a meeting during the visit of commissioner office Afghan refugees Punjab.

Amir Muqam stresses dignified return of Afghan refugees

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam has stressed the importance of ensuring dignified return of Afghan nationals to their country. He expressed the views during a visit to the Office of Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees Punjab here on Saturday.



QUETTA: View of newly installed traffic signals for the safety commuters, in Quetta.

Bushra Bibi unable to speak since 'being poisoned': Lawyer

ISLAMABAD (INP): Bushra Bibi, wife of PTI founder Imran Khan, was unable to speak after being fed 'poisonous food' during her incarceration, her lawyer Intezar Panjutha said on Saturday.

One and half months have elapsed since the establishment of NA but the basic decisions have not been taken so far. Even seats have not been allotted to MNAs. They are seated on the seats of their own choice. The decision regarding chairman PAC is still in limbo.

For want of decision about parliamentary leader of PTI in NA, the matters are not moving ahead.

garding the functioning and role of the Press Council of Pakistan. He said that the PCP is dedicated to ensuring press freedom in the country while also being resolute in its efforts to combat false and fabricated news.

The Deputy Chairman of the Senate pledged his full support to the PCP in its efforts to curb false and fabricated news.

He emphasized collaboration between the two entities to advance the nation's media landscape.



WASHINGTON DC: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with Chinese Finance Minister, Mr. Lan Fo'an.

CJCSC says PMA remains cradle of leadership, center of excellence for cadets joining Army's premier institution

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza on Saturday said since its inception, Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) has remained the cradle of leadership and center of excellence for cadets joining the premier institution of Army.

PPP resolves to address problems of Balochistan, GB

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday expressed his resolve to address the myriad problems faced by Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB).

Addressing the press conference flanked by PPP Secretary General Nayyar Bukhari here, Kundi said: "The PPP has always raised the voice against oppression."

Meanwhile, the political personality, from GB Abdul Hameed Khan had joined the PPP. Expressing his thoughts on the occasion, he said, "I have joined the PPP for the sake."



QUETTA: Police contingent presenting guard of honour to new Chief Justice Balochistan High Court Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar upon reaching High Court

Elite Force official martyred in Peshawar attack, accused held

PESHAWAR (INP): An official of Elite Force was martyred after attacked by neighbour over petty dispute. Police arrested the accused.

According to details, the incident took place at Umer Gul Road in Peshawar where accused Umair s/o Afzal shot injured cop Arfat s/o Sardar. The injured Elite Force official was rushed to Kyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) where he succumbed to his wounds during treatment.

ATC confirms bail of Swati in Judicial complex vandalism case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad has confirmed the bail of former federal minister Azam Swati in judicial complex vandalism case.

Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra of ATC Islamabad heard the judicial complex vandalism case Saturday. Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra inquired from investigating officer the accused had alighted from vehicle or otherwise. The investigating officer stated in the court Azam Swati was present in the vehicle.

ethos of the Academy and Pakistan Army alike."

The CJCSC reviewed the parade and along with the Turkish Chief of General Staff gave away awards to the distinguished cadets.

The coveted Sword of Honour was awarded to Academy Senior Under Officer Muhammad Nauman Abdullah and President's Gold medal to Company Senior Under Officer Muhammad Abdullah Javed of 149th PMA Long Course. The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Overseas Gold Medal was awarded to Friendly Country Senior Under Officer Fahad Bin

Finance minister briefs int'l financial institutions on govt's plans for economic reforms

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday briefed the chiefs of international financial institutions about the initiatives of the government of Pakistan for economic reforms and development.

During meeting of the finance minister with World Bank's Regional Vice President for South Asia, Martin Raiser held in Washington DC, he expressed satisfaction that the new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) between Pakistan and the World Bank would be finalized soon.

M u h a m m a d Aurangzeb underlined the government's reform thrust in the areas of energy, taxation and state-owned enterprises (SOEs), highlighting the pursuit of both short and long-term goals in these crucial sectors.

He also briefed Mr. Raiser on the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a one-window facility for investment promotion and facilitation. Both sides agreed on the need for reforms in the agriculture sector, water management, and wastewater treatment. The finance minister also met with Brent Neiman, Deputy Under Secretary for International Finance at the U.S. Department of Treasury, on the sidelines of the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington D.C. Finance Minister briefed Mr. Neiman on Pakistan's positive economic indicators in the wake of the Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) signed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

IHC seeks judge input on six-judge letter controversy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Following an order from the Supreme Court, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) has initiated a process to gather feedback from its judges on the highly-publicized letter penned by six IHC judges alleging pressure from intelligence agencies.

According to media reports, this development marks a significant step forward in addressing the controversy. The IHC Chief Justice's office has issued a directive to all judges, including District and Sessions Judges (East and West Islamabad), requesting their input on the matter by Monday.

Federal Cabinet revises Special Professional Pay Scales Policy 2019

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal cabinet has removed the age limit of 65 years for important appointments, opening doors for new hires with salaries up to Rs 2 million per month.

According to the government sources, the decision, which amends the PTI government's appointment policy, was approved by the cabinet through a circulated summary. The amendments target the Special Professional Pay Scales Policy 2019. Prime Minister

AJK PM vows to utilize all resources for state's progress, people's welfare

MIRPUR-AJK (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has pledged to utilize all available resources and warned that delaying tactics and corruption will not be tolerated.

Addressing a divisional development review meeting on Friday late night, the PM Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq emphasized that the state's resources are solely meant for the development and prosperity of the state and its people.

Anwar ul Haq warned that delaying tactics and corruption will not be tolerated and that all development projects are being carefully reviewed to ensure proper utilization of funds and timely completion.

He directed local government officials to finalize all local government schemes by May 15 and announced that funds for ongoing projects in the Mirpur Division will be released in the second week of next month.



ABBOTTABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza gives away awards to the distinguished cadets during Passing Out parade of cadets of 149th PMA Long Course, 14th Mujahid Course, 68th Integrated Course and 23rd Lady Cadet Course held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul in Abbottabad.

ECP directs by-elections security personnel to uphold neutrality, maintain peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) instructed security personnel, excluding armed forces, deployed in by-elections to maintain neutrality, assist officers, ensure peace, avoid conflicts, arrests, or interference, report irregularities, and uphold impartiality, particularly during the counting process.

In a code of conduct issued for law enforcement agencies deployed on election duty, the arrest of suspects is only permitted upon instruction from polling staff.

Law enforcement personnel deployed for the by-elections in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan must adhere to the code, ensuring they perform their duties lawfully to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan in conducting fair and peaceful bye-elections in 2024.

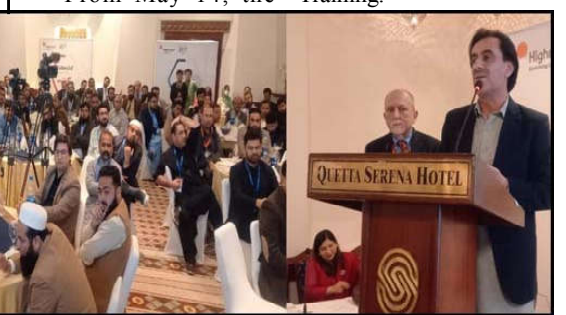
PM to pay official visit to China in May: Mashhood

PESHAWAR (INP): Chairman of Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that the friendship between Pakistan and China was beyond any doubt, but during the last regime, not only the CPEC project was destroyed, but also an attempt was made to spoil the relations between the two brotherly countries.

He expressed these views while talking to the media during his visit to China Window, a Chinese cultural center established in Peshawar.

According to a press release issued here on Saturday, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan visited different galleries of China Window, signed the friendship wall and recorded his comments in the visitor's book.

He said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif wants to make Pakistan a partner in economic development and that is the reason why he is bringing investment from Pakistan's friendly countries to Pakistan so that the country can stand on its own feet. From May 14, the



QUETTA: Secretary Health Abdullah Khan addressing inaugural ceremony of 40th Annual Conference of Pakistan Society of Gastroenterology & GI endoscopy