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ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari address to the joint session of parliament Speaker of National Assembly Ayaz Sadiq presideng the session in Parliament House

Pakistan, Turkiye vow to expand bilateral defense collaboration

COAS, Turkish general discuss matters of mutual interest; General Gürak lauds Pakistan's efforts in fostering regional peace; Both sides agree on forging deeper strategic ties.

edged the robust relation-

ship between their nations

and committed to expand-

Chief of the Turkish General Staff General Metin Gürak met Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir in Rawalpindi on Thurs-

The discussion encompassed various topics of mutual interest, spanning defence, training, and initiatives aimed at bolstering regional peace and stability.

further. The Army Chief underscored the imperative of advancing existing military cooperation between their armed forces.

The visiting dignitary commended Pakistan's efforts in fostering regional

Both sides acknowl- peace and stability, as wel as the Pakistan Army's role in combating terrorism.

Earlier, upon arrival at ing defense collaboration GHQ, the Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Army paid respects at Yadgar-e-Shuhada by laying a floral wreath. A wellpresented contingent of the Pakistan Army rendered a guard of honour to the es-



14-member

Balochistan

cabinet due to

take oath today

Independent Report QUETTA: Th

Balochistan cabinet is due

to take oath today (Friday)

emony of the provincial cabinet will take place at

12:00 noon at the Gover-

nor House where Gover-

nor Balochistan Malik

Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

administer oath to the pro-

spokesman for the provin-

cial government, Shahid

Rind, 14 ministers would

be included in the provin-

here that the formation of

cabinet was delayed for

Badar Shahbaz

appointed PM's

media coordinator

SLAMABAD (APP):

Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif on Thursday ap-

pointed Badar Shahbaz, a

member of the Pakistan Mus-

lim League-N's media team, as

has been pleased to ap-

point Mr. Badar Shahbaz

as Media Coordinator to

Prime Minister with imme-

diate effect. The Prime

Minister has further been

pleased to desire that all

relevant stakeholders shall extend full cooperation to

the Coordinator in dis-

charging the official busi-

ness," according to a notifi-cation issued by the Cabi-

net Division on Thursday.

serves as Central Assistant

Secretary Information of

PML-N, besides being a

key member of the party's

media team. Badar Shabaz

had also served as coordi-

nator to the prime minister

during the previous 16-

month government led by

ration for bye polls in different districts

Shehbaz Sharif

Badar Shahbaz also

"The Prime Minister

his Media Coordinator.

It may be mentioned

According to the

vincial ministers.

cial cabinet.

time being.

The oath taking cer-

RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Turkish General Staff General Metin Gürak meeting with Army Chief General Sved Asim Munir

Pakistan's economic reforms more important than size of new bailout package: IMF

Monitoring Desk LONDON: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is ready to support Pakistan and the package of reforms is now more important than the size of new programme, the global lender's Middle East and

Central Asia director said

on Thursday "I think what is important at this stage is to accelerate the reforms, double down on the structure of reforms in order to provide Pakistan with its full potential of growth," Jihad Azour told a press conference on the sidelines of the IMF 2024 Spring Meet-

who is currently in Washington, initiated discussions with the IMF for a new multibillion-dollar loan agreement to support its economic

Pakistan is nearing the end of a nine-month, \$3-billion SBA with the IMF designed to tackle a balanceof-payments crisis, which brought it to the brink of default last summer

With the final \$1.1 billion tranche of that deal likely to be approved later this month, Pakistan began negotiations for a new multi-year IMF loan programme worth "billions" of dollars, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told AFP in Washington earlier

The statement comes as Foreign Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb,



WASHINGTON: Donald Lu, Assistant Secretary and Ms. Elizabeth Horst, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of US State Department met Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb at World Bank Headquarters to underline the political will in Washington to strengthen Pak-US ties.

GoB fully ready to conduct re-polling & by-elections in transparently & peacefully: CS

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan has stated that the provincial government is fully ready to conduct repolling and by-elections in different districts of the province.

He issued directives to the concerned authorities to ensure timely completion of the arrangements besides providing desired facilities and ensuring transport and security at all the respective polling stations.
The Chief Secretary

urged the political parties and election candidates to

cooperate with the district administration in this regard so as to conduct the elections and repolling in peaceful and transparent

The Chief Secretary was chairing meeting held to review arrangements about the re-polling and byelections in different constituencies here on Thurs-

Those who were present in the meeting were included Provincial Election Muhammad Farid Afridi,

Continued on page 2

Will personally monitor Saudi investment projects; no laxity to be tolerated: PM

foreign investment projects and called for capacity

building of the ministries to achieve the desired results.

Investment, SIFC and rel-

evant ministries to devise a

mechanism to ensure execu-

tion of the projects agreed

with the Saudi delegation. He told the expected

visit of a delegation of

prominent Saudi business-

men to Pakistan was wel-

coming and that further in-

vestment opportunities

would also be explored dur-

ing his visit to Saudi Arabia to attend the World Eco-

nomic Forum to be held in

and Saudi Arabia enjoyed

cordial brotherly ties and

the Kingdom always supported Pakistan in every

Shehbaz thanked the Saudi

King and Crown Prince for

their keen interest in pro-

He said both Pakistan

the Kingdom.

hour of need.

Prime

He asked the Board of

ISLAMABAD (APP): cerned to engage world-Prime Minister class experts to execute the Shehbaz Muhammad Sharif on Thursday said that he would personally monitor the Saudi investment projects and warned against any laxity due to red tape or outdated proce-

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the matters related to the recent high-powered Saudi delegation and Saudi investment in different sectors, thanked Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for sending a highlevel Saudi delegation that would usher new era of Saudi investment in Pakistan, trade partnership as well as business ties.

He lauded the relevant federal ministers, Special Investment Facilitation Council and relevant senior officers for their efforts for converting the Saudi delegation's visit into a mutually beneficial partner-

ship.
The prime minister instructed the authorities con-



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari being received by the Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif upon his arrival at Parliament House.

Interior Minister orders blocking SIMs issued on invalid, expired ID cards ISLAMABAD (INP): Introduce tions established in Punjab

terior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has ordered National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) to block all mobile phone SIMs issued on invalid and expired identity cards.

Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday visited the entire building of NADRA headquarters in Islamabad and inspected all sections in-

cluding printing.

Mohsin Naqvi instructed for setting up model NADRA offices pattern of model police stations established in Punjab. He said establishing model NADRA offices will improve service delivery and provide convenience to the public. NADRA Chairman

Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Afsar welcomed Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on his arrival at the National Database and Registration Authority Headquarters. Federal Interior Minis-

ter Mohsin Naqvi also presided over an important across the country on the meeting at NADRA head-

Five customs officials martyred, two others injured in firing incident

QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding prepa-

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): At least five customs officials were killed as their moving vehicle was ambushed by unidentified terrorists near Saggu area here on Thursday.

According to the police control room, the Customs Intelligence vehicle was on its routine patrol within the limits of Darban police station when the armed assailants targeted it by opening fire indiscriminately, leaving five customs officials

The moving vehicle collided with another vehicle coming from the opposite direction, resulting in injuring two persons including a

The attackers managed to escape after the incident. As information was received about the incident, a heavy contingent of police and Rescue 1122 teams rushed the site and shifted the injured and the bodies to the hospital.

Commissioner Pishin Juma Dad Mandokhail on Thursday asked the leadership of Jameet Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) to postpone public gathering scheduled to be held on 20th April, in Pishin district of Balochistan due to a possible threat alert.

provincial leadership of JUI-F, DC warned unknown terrorists are planning to carry out Attacks at JUI-F public gathering to be held at Pishin held on 20th April.

President calls for meaningful dialogue, consensus to take **Pakistan forward**

Says institutional harmony required for development; Calls for turning new page, making a fresh start; We have little time to waste. Country needs us to move on from the polarisation so common now to contemporary politics; House turns into fish market during address of president Asif Ali Zardari

Calls for steering country out of political crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday, stressing for turning a new page and making a fresh start, called for a meaningful dialogue, parliamentary consensus and fostering an atmo-sphere of mutual respect and political reconciliation to do away with the polarisation and overcome our challenges and foster an

the challenges pervading the atmosphere of mutual recountry.
"In my considered

view, it is time to turn a new page... The challenges we face are not impossible to overcome. They just require the fundamentals of a meaningful dialogue and parliamentary consensus...

spect and political recon-ciliation," the president said addressing the Joint Session

of the Parliament. Chaired by National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the joint sitting was attended by members of the National Assem-

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding Saudi Investment in Pakistan following the recent visit of Saudi Delegation.

Justice Hashim, **Justice Ishtiaq** appointed BHC, PHC CJs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Law and Justice on Thursday notified the appointment of Acting Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) Ishtiaq Ibrahim, as PHC Chief Justice and Acting Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar as BHC Chief Justice.

The ministry, in its no-tifications, said that the appointments were made by the President of Pakistan in exercise of the powers conferred under clause (1) of Article 193 of the Constitution with effect from the date hey would take oath of their offices.

CM grieved over loss of lives of 7 persons during rains in Chaman **Independent Report**

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed sorrow over the loss of lives of seven persons including women and children during the Rai in Chaman. In a condolence statement issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister expressed heartfelt grief over the loss of precious lives in

the natural calamity.
Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti said that we are with bereaved families in the time of grief. The Chief Minister directed all concerned departments and district administration to remain alert during rains.

Threat alert: DC Pishin asks JUI to postpone **public gathering** QUETTA (APP): Deputy

In a letter issued to the

Address of Zardari to joint session of Parliament: **President provides** comprehensive roadmap to political parties for resolving public issues: CM

Independent Report

stated that the President all the resources. Asif Ali Zardari has provided comprehensive President Zardari has exroadmap to all political parties for resolving the public issues through com-

bined platform. stated so in a statement issued here on Thursday marking address of the President Zardari to joint session of parliament on commencement of first parliamentary year.

He described the address of President Zardari and said that he stressed the need to end politics of polarisation from the country because the country is in need of unity.

The Chief Minister recalled that when he (Zardari) had been elected president for the first time ment is center of public serthen he had made historic decisions making parliament empowered.

Sarfraz Bugti said that the President is symbol of would take all provinces

He said that the coun-QUETTA: The Chief Min- try can't afford any chaos

Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has masses a lot by mobilizing In this regard, the

pressed his vision for development and reconstruction of the country, Chief Minister said adding that The Chief Minister the president has also presented comprehensive strategy for resolving the challenges being faced at the internal and external

The president also spoke at length about the future roadmap including opportunities of investment, education, health and employments in the country in his address to the joint session of parlia-

The president gave clear message to all the political parties that parliavice and our survival lies in democracy, the Chief Minister added. He said that PPP

would continue to serve a strong federation and he the masses as per its mani-



HUB: View of Pishukan to Gwadar link Shabi bridge once again washed away in water relay after massive rainfall in Hub

PTI declares CJP responsible for harassment of judges ISLAMABAD (Online): to subordinate courts.

PTI has declared Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) responsible for harassment of judges from Supreme Court (SC) to High Court (HC).

According to PTI spokesperson powers that be ,their tributary administration and puppet elite class together are out to poke last nail in the coffin of justice.

According to spokesperson the courts are being transformed into Kangaroo courts by harassing the judges at all level from SC

The judges who are hearing cases against politically victimized PTI leaders and workers whenever insist on deciding the cases in the light of law instead of taking dictation from secret agents of state are targeted. The judges are being subjected to fear through references and state campaigns of character assassination besides using kidnapping and violence as weapon against the family members and relatives of

Independent

Aurangzeb calls for robust financial safeguards against climate vulnerabilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a high-profile meeting held at the sidelines of the IMF/ World Bank 2024 Spring Meetings in Washington DC, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb emphasized the need for a robust financial safety net and capacity building to address geo-economic impacts and climate vulnerabilities

Speaking at the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan (MENAP) Ministers and Governors meeting with the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva, the minister called for a more proactive and responsive Global Financial Safety Net to tackle elevated risks, according to a press statement issued by Finance Ministry here Thursday. He underlined the importance of rechanneling Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), reviewing the surcharges policy, and prioritizing the Resilience and

Sustainability Trust (RST)

in view of Pakistan's cli-

mate vulnerabilities. The Finance Minister also welcomed the IMF's renewed emphasis on capacity building through Regional Capacity Development Centers (RCDCs).

Aurangzeb highlighted the impact of geo-economic fragmentation on Pakistan's economy and expressed gratitude to the IMF, multilateral development banks, and bilateral partners for their support in helping Pakistan to respond to unprecedented challenges.

He underscored the government's aggressive reform agenda, including broadening the tax net. privatizing loss-making state-owned enterprises (SOEs), expanding the social safety net, and facilitating the private sector.

Friday April 19, 2024

Meanwhile, the minister at JP Morgan Seminar on "Pakistan: Economic Policy Outlook" presented an overview of Pakistan's economic landscape, highlighting the strong performance of the agriculture sector, diminishing inflationary pressures, stable exchange rates, declining trade deficit, and strong remittances

He said that the government was cognizant of the challenges/risks ahead and was taking short and long-term measures to address them.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani in a meeting with Deputy Chairman Senate, Syedaal Khan at Parliament House.

Tarar condemns PTI for jeopardizing national interests, irresponsible statements

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Thursday, stating that individuals involved in last year's May 9 attacks are now jeopardizing national interests.

Speaking to the media, Tarar emphasized that cism of the government and those who undermined the its policies is acceptable, country's interests were criticizing Pakistan is inadversaries of Pakistan.

He expressed dismay at prioritizing political agendas and ego over naing the regrettable pattern of PTI leadership disowning statements against the

country's interests. Tarar noted that PTI leaders were embroiled in lations with friendly councorruption cases, lament- tries.

ISLAMABAD (APP): ing that enemies of Pakistan struggle to accept investments in the country. He prayed for divine guidance for such individuals to speak in the country's

The minister con-

demned the actions stooping to anti-national levels, stressing that while crititolerable. He acknowledged the support of friendly countries in investing and cooperating with Pakistan, tional interests, highlight- expressing optimism for progress with Allah's

> Attaullah Tarar also affirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthen re-

SC suspends ECP's re-polling order in PB-51

ISLAMABAD (APP) The Supreme Court on Thursday suspended the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) order for re-polling in 12 polling stations of PB-51 Chaman on April 21. The three-member SC bench headed by Justice Muhammad Al Mazhar and comprising Justice Ayesha Malik and Irfan Saadat Khan also ordered the ECP to issue a new schedule for re-polling in the area after 10 days.

The court also served notices to the Attorney General for Pakistan and adjourned the case till April

It may be mentioned that Awami National Party's candidate Asghar Khan had approached the apex court against the ECP's decision for re-polling in 12 polling stations of said constituency

Turkish CGS calls on CJCSC, lauds Pakistan Armed Forces professionalism



RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Metin Gürak Thursday called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza here at Joint Staff Headquarters.

During the meeting, matters related to enhancing the level and scope of bilateral military engagements and cooperation were discussed. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to forge deeper strategic ties, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR)

The dignitary lauded the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and knowledged their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism.

Earlier, upon arrival at Joint Staff Headquarters, a smartly turned-out contingent presented 'Guard of Honour' to the visiting dignitary.

Govt chalks out concrete road-map for reforms in power sector: Leghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): and position adding that Minister for Power Di- over-billing would also vision Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Thursday said that on the directives of Prime Minister, a concrete road-map had been chalked out bring comprehensive reforms in country's power sector to control power pilfer-age, over-billing and circular debt.

Addressing a pressing conference, he said after assuming charge of the ministry, short comings of the power sectors were reviewed to address chronic issues permanently.

The government was committed to bringing improvement in the energy sector, he

He reiterated that no leniency would be given to the power pilferers ir-

respective of their status

not be tolerated at any Solid strategy had also been devised to

eliminate menace of power theft in the country. he said. The minister said lower-middle class had been suffering from the

power theft and we had to rectify existing shortcomings in the power system. He went on to say that accumulative loss of power distribution

would surge to Rs 560 billion by June. Electricity worth over Rs 300 billion were consumed by

companies (DISCOs)

the power pilferers, he He said it was the need to hour to deal such

power pilferers and officials involved in this

The country could not afford such misappropriation of billions rupees to the economy, he added. He vowed not spar-

illegal practices strictly

ing even higher officials such as XENs, SDOs, Chief Engineers involved in patronage of power pilferage.

He claimed that around 20 per cent officials of power sector were involved in this dirty practice.

Awais said that all CEOs had already been directed to remove 'kunda' before April 23 failing which strict action would be taken against the responsible officials.

The minister appreciated the support of In-terior ministry and FIA for supporting the DISCOs to eliminate power theft.

By-poll campaigns set to finish late **Friday night**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ongoing by-election campaigns in 21 constituencies of Punjab, Khvber Pakhtunkhwa, and Baluchistan are set to conclude on the night falling between Friday and Saturday, allowing voters ample time to contemplate their choices.

In accordance with election regulations, campaigning will come to an end precisely at midnight falling between April 19 and 20.

The ECP advises that candidates who continue engaging in political activities after this deadline will face legal consequences. The polling

will be held on Sunday. Additionally, the EČP calls upon the media and the public to work together to uphold a free, fair, and transparent

election process. The Election Commission has reminded the candidates participating in the by-elections about Section 182 of the Election Act, 2017.

GoB fully ready... Continued from page 1

Additional Chief Secretary Home, Zahid Saleem and Secretary Local Government, Noor Ahmed Pirkani. while concerned Deputy Commissioners and high up participated in the meeting through video link.

It was informed in the meeting that the te-polling would be conducted in four halqas of Kohlu and total halqas of PB-50, Killa Abdullah.

Similarly, the by-elections would be conducted in the PB-20 Khuzdar and PB-22 Lasbela.

The polling would be held at 100 polling stations in Khuzdar, 129 polling stations of Killa Abdullah and four polling stations of Kohlu. The elections would be held on April 21 and 24, it was informed. Addressing the meet-

ing, Chief Secretary directed to ensure facilities of water, electricity and washrooms at all the polling sta-As per the directions of

Election Commission of Pakistan, CCTV cameras would be set up at the polling stations, he said.

He said that the provision of funds would be ensured to the administration for transport.

Ambassador of the **European Union calls** on PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Plus scheme, which has Ambassador of the European Union Amb. Riina Kionka Thursday paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed matters related to mutual concern.

The prime minister thanked the EU leaders for their congratulatory messages on his re-election and said he looked forward to working closely with the He said Pakistan en-

joyed friendly and cordial ties with the EU and expressed satisfaction at the existing institutional mechanisms that were meeting regularly to exchange views on further strengthening cooperation.

The prime minister appreciated, in particular, U's continued support to Pakistan through the GSP

now been renewed till

He also expressed Pakistan's interest in engaging constructively with the EU's Global Gateway Strategy through the European Investment Bank.

The prime minister sought EU's support in providing consultancy and expertise to help Pakistan carry out important reforms in various sectors.

The EU Ambassador

briefed the prime minister on various cooperation initiatives, including the ongoing dialogue on migration and mobility issues between the two sides, as well as facilitating European businesses operating in Pa-

Progress on resumption of flights from Pakistan to EU countries was also discussed.

AJK PM, federal minister discuss Kashmir situation

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq and Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam held a detailed meeting at Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis on Thursday.

They discussed mutual concerns, including the political and human rights situation in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), and ongoing development projects in Azad Jammu Kashmir

The federal minister reiterated Pakistan's unwavering political, moral, and diplomatic support for Kashmiris' legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Ms. Jane Marriot called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

CCPO reviews by-elections, security arrangements for Pak-New Zealand matches

LAHORE (APP): Capital fessional abilities in main-City Police Officer Lahore taining peace and security, Bilal Siddique Kamyana emphasizing that there was presided over a review no room for negligence in meeting of the performance their duties or lack of interof Sadr and City Divisions est in governmental affairs. at his office here on Thurs- He urged the police offic-

by-elections arrangements. Vaisakhi celebrations and security matters for Pakistan-New Zealand cricket matches Addressing the meet-

ing, the CCPO emphasized that misuse of authority, corruption, and discourteous behavior with citizens would not be tolerated. He stated that any collusion with criminals would not be acceptable and strict action would be taken against those involved.

Siddique Bilal Kamyana directed the

their duties diligently.

The CCPO highlighted that the police service was not just a job but a lifestyle sed on public service. He issued directives to

expedite operations against robberies, snatching incidents and property crimes. He emphasized to ensure joint planning and teamwork for the eradication of crimes through joint search operations

The CCPO emphasized that information sharing and better coordination among police units was of SDPOs to utilize their pro- utmost importance.



ڈائر یکٹر کالجزاینڈ ہائیرا یج کیشن بلوچستان،کوئٹہ

ىندرجەذىل اشهاەكى نىلامى جابتا ب

فِولُوسٹیٹ مشین 01عدد وغیرہ

رکورہ بالا اشیاء جیسا ہے کی بنیاد برتمام عوام الناس کے لئے مورخہ 25 ایریل 2024 کو نیلامی کے لئے ینڈر بوقت20:00 کے دوپہرڈائر کیٹوریٹ کالجز ہائیرتعلیمات بلوچتان واقع شاہ وکشاہ روڈ کوئٹہ کھولیں جا نمینگے۔خواہشمندحفزت معائنہ و بولی کے لئے مقررہ وقت پر رابطہ کریں۔

PRQ No 1890/17-04-2024 dpr.gob [f]@dgpr.balochistan

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232404391193 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Executive Engineer Maintenanace Divsion-III Quetta invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee Rs.1000/- and Bid Security 2% S.No Name of Work/s

1 Re-Modelling and Institutional Revamping BMCH as per Master Plan Package-III

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 43,742,438 PKR Amount in3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Gurantee, Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank, Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Documen can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gob.pk Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gob.pk Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 22 April, 2024 till 12:00 PM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening**: All tenders will be opened on same day at 01:00 PM on EPPS System **Address**: Office The Executive Engineer Maintenance Division-III Provincial B&:R District Quetta Phone no: 0333302861

Fax no: 0812835395 Email: QA4543@bppra.gob.pk

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
MAINTENANCE DIVISION **QUETTA** PRQ No.1896/18-04-2024

President calls for meaningful dialogue, consensus to take Pakistan forward.....

bly and Senate, while in the galleries were provincial chief ministers and legislators, diplomats, and representatives from political

The president's address was in pursuance of Article 56 (3) of the Constitution which marked the beginning of the first parliamentary year, following the general elections.

The address encompassed major national and international matters, and challenges from economy, poverty, social welfare, women empowerment and foreign policy to Kashmir and Palestine as well as climate change

He said having given away his powers to the Parliament, his role was as a unifying symbol of a joint robust federation, where all people and provinces should be treated as equal before the law.

As a new beginning, he said, the country needed to build its strengths by investing in people, focusing on public needs, and harnessing its resources to create pathways to inclusive growth.
"We have little time to

waste. The country needs us to move on from the polarisation so common now to contemporary politics," he remarked and sought the role of two Houses of the Parliament in rebuilding public confidence in the parliamentary pro-

Calling for resetting the political atmosphere with 'more light than heat", he emphasised reforms to promote good governance and turn challenges into oppor-President Zardari said

that by embracing the vi-

sions of the great leaders

Quaid-e-Azam

Muhammad Ali Jinnah,

Shaheed Zulfikar Ali

Bhutto, and Shaheed

Continued from page 1 Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, we can effectively tackle challenges and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and political reconcilia-The president emphasised that in order to align the country with the 21st Century requirements, it was imperative to move forward on reforms with

provision of optimal social entitlements to the citizens. He said besides working on economic reforms, spurring jobs, reducing inflation and expanding the tax net, the Federal Government should also promote positive working relationships and effective coordination, within the constitutional framework, with the

"This is absolutely essential for promoting an inclusive national development agenda and rolling out policies that execute tangible action on the ground."

President Zardari stressed the government to intensify its efforts for attracting foreign direct incomprehensive ease-of-doing-business reforms and simplifying the existing regulations to provide an enabling environment to

At the same time, he also emphasised to diversify exports, enhance the competitiveness of domes-

tic products in global markets, introduce value addition, and venture into new international markets. Similarly, the huge untapped potential in the agriculture, marine life, information technology and textile sectors should also be exploited to earn foreign exchange, he added. Commending the establishment of the Special In-

vestment Facilitation Coun-

cil (SIFC), he said it was a

step forward in the right

direction as it was aimed at

attracting and facilitating

investments in key sectors. As regards climate change impacts, the president said Pakistan had been serially devastated by dif-

ferent impacts of climate change, especially in the shape of catastrophic floods in 2022. "We urgently need to invest in climate-friendly and climategood governance for the resilient infrastructure to mitigate the rapidly compounding risks of climate change. Speaking about the im-

portance of the provision of primary & secondary education, President Zardari pointed out that as a massive number of children were out of school, all the provincial governments should focus their energy on transformative reforms

in the education sector. He also highlighted the urgent need of rebuilding and scaled-up expansion in the health sector, saying that regular investments in the primary and secondary health infrastructure, as well as human resources, were needed to ensure that vestment, implementing every citizen had access to quality healthcare services and that no one lacked

medical care. He said a large number of population was slipping both foreign and domestic to extreme poverty due to combination of factors including climate impacts and sheer cost-of-living pressures.

"It is our responsibility to ensure that they move out of extreme vulnerability, with the ability to access opportunities for jobs, and resources to reinvest in farms, livestock and small businesses. The president viewed

that the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) had been providing a lifeline to millions of vulnerable women across the country, offering them financial assistance and social protection, while giving many women the incentives and seed capital to start up small pre-1967 borders, with Al-

The number of benefi-

OUETTA: Chief Engineer Irrigation Quetta Divi-

sion Engineer Bashir Uddin Tareen on the instruc-

tion of Chief Secretary and Secretary Irrigation

Department visiting Sara Ghurgai Dam.

ciaries of the poverty alleviation programme had risen to over 9 million, he The president expressed the hope that the

new government would actively work to reduce social and economic fragility while aggressively promoting girls' education and health, including programmes to reduce maternal mortality and enhance mother and child nu-

Highlighting the Kashmir issue, the president reminded the world of the unsung sacrifices of Kashmiri people in their ongoing struggle for the freedom of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kash-

He said the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A was part of India's strategy to reduce the Kashmiri Muslims to a minority in their own homeland, and called upon India to reverse all illegal measures taken on or after August 05, 2019.

"I assure our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that Pakistan will continue to provide moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of occupied Kashmir until they get their right to self-determination," he said and termed the implementation of the United Nations Security Council's resolutions a key to durable peace in South Asia.

President Zardari also expressed deep concerns over the tidal wave of indiscriminate killings of innocent Palestinians and genocide committed by the Israeli forces. He reiterated Pakistan's condemnation of the brutality and impunity of the occupation forces and commitment to its principled support for the establishment of an independent and viable Palestine state, based on the

Quds Al-Sharif as its capi-

Today, I reaffirm the nation's resolve to eliminate terrorist elements. My late wife, the twice-elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, gave her life standing up to terrorists, so you will never find me wanting in building the unity and momentum behind such an effort," he re-

marked. He said the country's armed forces and law enforcement agencies had rendered immense sacrifices and played a heroic role in the fight against terrorism and defence of national frontiers.

policy, President Zardari thanked the friendly countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, China, Turkiye, and Qatar for supporting Pakistan in difficult times. He also recognised the United States, European Union and United Kingdom having a history of cooperation with Pakistan in many sectors and hoped to grow

Referring to the resurge of terrorism and its threats to the nation's security as well as regional peace and prosperity, he called the menace a shared concern that required collective efforts. He urged the neighboring countries to take strong notice of terrorist groups involved in launching attacks against Pakistan's security forces

and people.

Coming to foreign

The president particularly expressed gratitude to China for its unwavering support to Pakistan in various fields, and reiterated the country's steadfast commitment to collaborating with it to advance shared goals of fostering regional peace, promoting connectivity, and stability, including the completion of the China-Pakistan Economic

British HC calls on Maqbool; discussed challenges, chances in education sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms Jane Marriott, here on Thursday called on the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui to discuss the challenges and opportunities being faced by the country in the education sector.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary of Education Mr Mohyuddin Wani and the Country Director British Council Mr James Hampson.

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that the Ministry of Education is working on a programme that aims to declare education emergency in Pakistan.

He said that the number of out-of-school children in Pakistan is ballooning and the only way to address this issue is by making it a national agenda. The minister said that due to rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation slums in major cities are propping up.

He said that these slums are ignored in every education policy. He high-lighted the importance of ensuring that no child should be left behind. He encouraged the UK to pro-

of eliminating out-of-school

stakeholders especially dochannelled and streamlined, he added.

"We are burning the midnight oil in ensuring that the cause of education becomes one of the main agendas of national effort towards progress".
Ms Jane Marriott,

British High Commissioner to Pakistan said that UK and Pakistan are the oldest partners and have been shoulder to shoulder since

She informed the minister that the UK encourages expansion of its green programme which can lead to an increase in enrolment of Pakistani students in UK universities via distance

She also informed the minister that Google Education is highly interested in supporting Pakistan in its bid to address the issue of access to education.

British High Commissioner and the education minister also discussed the that the mental health of our challenges and opportunities that come with the tered to by professionals.

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Jane Marriott, British High Commissioner to Pakistan

called on the Minister for Federal Education & Professional Training Dr.

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui in his office. Secretary Education Mohyuddin Wani and the Country Director British Council James Hampson are also present.

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a demonstration of collabora- "USAID is committed to Following the directives of

tive efforts as development the people of Khyber Punjab government, the stakeholders, the United Pakhtunkhwa. Together,

along with our international

and local partners, we have

laid the groundwork for a

brighter future, and I am

optimistic for what lies

aĥead. Our dedication to

working hand in hand to-

wards our shared goals and

sustained impact remains

through USAID, has spear-

headed transformative in-

frastructure projects, sig-

nificantly bolstering the

province's energy capacity

and connectivity.

Landmark projects

such as Gomal Zam Dam

and Golen Gol Hydro-

power project, coupled

with the augmentation of

Tarbela dam, have added

253 megawatts to the na-

Khyber tional grid, marking a sig-

ergy self-sufficiency.

Pakhtunkhwa and fellow nificant step towards en-

ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate

Change & Environmental Coordination Romina

Khurshid Alam in a meeting with the Danish Am-

Terrorism case:

ATC confirms bail of

PTI leaders, Raja,

Tahir Sadiq others

He gave these remarks

Raja Basharat, Tahii

The counsel for the

during hearing of bail before

arrest plea here Thursday.

Sadiq and Umar Sultan ap-

peared in the court along

with their counsels while

prosecutor Raja Anwar too

petitioner told the court

when the bail plea was re-

jected the situation was dif-

ferent at that time. Judge

Tahir Abbas Sipra while

addressing counsel re-

marked he should tell the

court about situation in

Sipra remarked if there is

no reason for dismissal of

first bail plea then the bail

Judge Tahir Abbas

writing.
Who will write.

will not be granted.

appeared in the court.

bassador H.E. Jakob Linulf at her office.

The United States.

stronger than ever.

US celebrates transformative

achievements in KP with govt,

int'l donors collaboration

States (US) government,

represented by Consul

General Moore and US

Agency for International

Development (USAID)

Somvongsiri, in conjunction

with pivotal allies, on

Thursday commemorated a

sequence of groundbreaking

accomplishments within

the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

unwavering dedication to enhancing livelihoods and

promoting enduring devel-

opment in the area, said a

Somvongsiri commended

the outstanding progress

stemming from its strategic

alliance with the Govern-

of

international contributors.

ISLAMABAD (Online):

Anti Terrorism Court

(ATC) Islamabad has con-

firmed the bail of PTI lead-

ers Raja Basharat, Maj

(Retd) Tahir Sadiq and

Umar Sultan in the cases

registered against them in

police station Ramna

Islamabad under terrorism

clauses. Judge Tahir Abbas

Sipra has remarked when

the man becomes pro-

claimed offender then the

basic rights remain no more.

while reprimanding the

lawyers on lack of prepa-

ration in the case remarked

you are just playing with

your clients . You are tak-

ing things as routine mat-

ter. Whosoever appears in

my court he comes here

prepared.

The judge Tahir Abbas

press release issued here.

USAID reaffirmed its

Mission Director

Director

Mission

vide support in the cause devolution of education to the provinces

Secretary of Educa-We need to bring all the tion Mr Mohyuddin Wani highlighted that the Minisnors on the same platform try of Education is develso that all the effort can be oping a comprehensive plan which will declare an education emergency in the country and will furthermore align all the stakeholders on the same page.

He said that all the donors and NGOs operating in Pakistan are working in silos and compartments.

He said that there is a concerted effort on the way to ensure that a single platform can align and channel the efforts of all stakeholders in the education sector of Pakistan.

Khalid Magbool said that we have set a target to train one million youth in the IT sector.

He said that he hopes that in the medium term. Pakistan will become one of the biggest suppliers of IT professionals to the world. He asked the UK to help in attaining IT certification for this IT-trained professional that would be recognised globally.

Furthermore, he said students must be also ca-

Tandoor

owners launch

protest on price

reduction

the prices on 'Roti' and

'Naan' and started selling

essential commodity at af-

fordable rates to facilitate

owners launched protest

against this move in the

Nanbais are protesting over price reduction of 'Roti'

and 'Naan' in different ar-

tration has set the new

prices at Rs 16 and Rs 20

for a standard serving size

that held between officials

and the Nanbai Associa-

tion, a complete strike was

also observed in different

localities against price cut

Talking to APP, Muhammad Naveed, a

Tandoor owner, expressed

concerns over high cost of

living in the capital and rent

of shops besides commer-

cial gas charges for baking

Funeral prayer

of Lady Head

Constable

offered

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The fu-

neral prayer of Lady Head

Constable Rubina Shehbaz

was offered at Police Lines

Headquarters. DIG Secu-

rity Division Awais Ahmad

Malik, senior police offic-

ers, law enforcement de-

partment officials and a

large number of police offi-

cials offered the funeral

prayer. Lady Head Con-

stable Rubina Shehbaz was

posted at the security divi-

sion of Islamabad Capital

Police. She suffered a road

accident and could not sur-

vive and was reunited with

unit of the police force pre-

sented a guard of honor, and

the DIG Security division

draped the coffins with

vision condoled with the

family of the deceased and

said that Islamabad Capital

Police stands with the be-

reaved family and will take

care of them in every pos-

sible way. He also issued

orders to the senior police

officers to provide full sup-

port to the family of the

A smart contingent

The DIG Security di-

his real Creator.

flower wreaths.

deceased

Roti and Naan.

of 120 grams

However, Tandoor

Tandoor owners and

The district adminis-

Despite discussions

the common man.

Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the European Union, Riina Kionka calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

UNHCR Country Representative calls on federal minister for SAFRON, discusses Afghan refugee's issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR's) Country Representative Ms. Philippa Candler on Thursday called on Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Engr Amir Muqam here at his office. During meeting, the minister acknowledged continued support of UNHCR towards the Afghan Refugee's issues in Pakistan for the last 45 vears. He said that Pakistan is generously hosting millions of Afghans and providing protection, liveli-

rently Pakistan is hosting 1.45 million registered Af-tion will help in their better ghan Refugees having POR card. 0.8 million Afghan Citizen Card holders and about 0.5 to 0.7 million unregistered Afghans, he added. Engr Amir Muqam who is also Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan said that government of Pakistan highly value the role of UNHCR for verification of 1.30 million POR cards of Afghan refugees and processing 0.145 UMRFs (Unregistered members of registered families) under

drive exercise He said that the ention will help in their better management and would also benefit the country of origin in their resettlement and reintegration on their dignified return. The minister said that the verification of URMF has been extended till 30 April 2024 and we hope that UNHCR will mobilize and add more resources to complete verification of UMRFs. Engr Amir Muqam said that it is matter of great pleasure to share that British Registration Certificates to the children of registered PORs families have resumed at Proof of Registration (PoR) card.

DC calls for intensive anti-polio drive in ICT

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Thursday reviewed arrangements for a seven-day anti-polio campaign in the federal capital.

hood, education and health

facilities to them. "Cur-

Talking to APP, ICT's Spokesman, Dr Abdullah Tabassum said that the campaign would start on April 29 which aimed to ensure administered the anti polio drops every child under the age of five years.

In this regard, the deputy commissioner chaired a high-level meeting which was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, and Health Department representatives. to bolster the anti-polio polio-free future.

campaign.

Deploying a ground-level strategy, the DC directed the healthcare workers and polio teams to ensure door to door campaign. Additionally, polio teams would cover public places and bus stands, leaving no child unvaccinated.

Memon issued clear directives mandating the immunization of every child under the age of five, emphasizing the dual doses of polio drops as a crucial step towards a polio-free Paki-

Underlining parental responsibility, he stressed the importance of collective action in advancing the nation's aspiration for a

Court adjourns reference against Sindh CM

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Accountability Court on Thursday adjourned hearing of the Nooriabad Power Project reference against Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah till June 26

the directions of the top court. The reference was transferred to another court but later it was returned to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).



Chief Minister Gilgit Engr Amir Muqam on as- its smooth supply.

degradation challenges ISLAMABAD (APP): fer heavily if attention is not paid at this point of time, she underlined.

Romina for climate diplomacy

to address environmental

Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change,

Romina Khurshid Alam

Thursday emphasized on

climate diplomacy to ad-

dress the climate challenges

including global warming, melting of glaciers, urban

deforestation, heat waves,

endangered rare species and

meeting with Danish Am-

bassador Jakob Linulf who

called on her here, a news

on closer collaboration,

signing of joint activities on

tribution of funds to devel-

against the climate crisis.

The coordinator un-

"It is now or never to

She stated this in a

carbon credits.

release said

climate change.

stressed Romina upon regionwise solutions of climate as few countries had drought issues while others had flooding chal-

The Danish ambassador while extending his felicitations to PM's coordinator on assuming responsibility on such an important subject applauded the proactive role and her vision to address the climate challenges.

The both sides agreed The coordinator thanked the ambassador for extending help to Pakistan during 2022 floods. knowledge sharing and de-

The both sides reiterderscored the equitable disated their resolve to deepen cooperation on climate change. Romina expressed oping countries for fighting her gratitude for visiting and also extended invitation to deal with climate crisis to her Danish counter-part to save our future generations formalize the cooperation which will otherwise sufon climate



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Gulbar Khan called on Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engr. Amir Muqam at his office.

CM Gilgit Baltistan calls on Federal Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Gulbar Khan on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan and States and Frontier Regions Engr Amir Muqam here in his office. Federal Secretary Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Rafique Jawad Malik and Inspector General Gilgit Baltistan Afzal Mahmood Butt were also present on the occasion, said a press release.

Baltistan congratulated eral government will ensure

suming charge as Federal Minister of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Engr Amir Muqam thanked the Chief Minister and said that he will soon visit Gilgit-Baltistan to discuss issues with people. The minister said that the problems of people of Azad Jammu Kashmir and

Gilgit-Baltistan would be resolved on priority. Engr Amir Muqam said that Gilgit-Baltistan will not have any problem of wheat shortage and fed-

Entrepreneurship curriculum introduced in FDE schools

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has introduced an entrepreneurship curriculum in schools working under the ambit of the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE).

The official sources told APP that as per the declaration of the education ministry, from the next academic session, students from grades 6 to 10 will have an opportunity to venture into the world of entrepreneurship.

flects the successful model years, they informed.

entrepreneurial skills in students, equipping them with the necessary tools and mindsets for innovation and creativity. According to the dec-

laration, unlike traditional assessment-based learning, this curriculum will focus on project-based learning. This will help the students to apply the theoretical knowledge to real world scenarios, it added. The This curriculum re-

implemented in Gilgit-Baltistan in the last two The curriculum is care-

sources further stated that to ensure the successful implementation of this initiative, training will be provided to 200 teachers in FDE (ICT). Meanwhile commenting on this decla-

ration, the Secretary Edu-

cation said that introducing fully designed to develop entrepreneurship.

Delegation of CUST students visits the Safe City Islamabad **Independent Report**

SLAMABAD: According

Emergency Control Center, Data Hub Unit, Dispatch to the details, following the special directives of the Control Center, E-Challan



CPO Safe City/Traffic, the Deputy Director Technical and DSP Telecommunications welcomed the delegation of CUST University at Safe City Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

He said that the delegation visits the command and control center, the data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the police operations center hall. They were fully briefed about the procedures and advantages of this project.

Furthermore, the student delegation was informed that Safe City Islamabad is playing a significant role in various departments through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center,

The delegation was also apprised of the functionality and benefits of the

Safe City cameras in the city. The modern cameras of Safe City are playing a crucial role in ensuring the safety of the city, preventing crimes and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens. 42% of crimes are resolved through the Safe City Command and Control Center. Face recognition cameras have been installed at the entry and exit points of the city which are playing an important role in identifying suspicious elements, he maintained. The delegation acknowledged the modern technical system of the Islamabad Capi-

tal Police and its benefits.

Tirmizi lauds Consulate's efforts to address needs of Pakistanis stranded at Dubai Airport ISLAMABAD (APP):

53rd Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

"We have mobilized

according to a news release. During his visit to the Dubai Airport on Thurstributed food items, medicine, milk for children and other necessary items among the Pakistani families waiting there due to delayed flights.

ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaisar

Sheikh, former Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chief Justice of the Fed-

eral Shariat Court Iqbal Hameedur Rehman, High Commissioner of

Bangladesh Ruhul Alam Siddiqui and others cutting cake to celebrate the

cerned in view to expedite flights departures and mitigate issues confronted by the stranded passengers, mostly en route to Karachi, Pakistan.

60 passengers who will be departing via two different flights today", the consul said. A separate team of the Consulate General also paid a courtesy visit to Pakistani cricket players Misbah-Ul-Haq, Abdur Razzaq, Umer Gul and Kamran Akmal waiting at the Dubai Airport due to their delayed flight en route to Houston, United States.

fare Wing of Pakistan's Consulate General in Dubai coordinated with Social Centre Sharjah.



Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates Faisal Niaz Tirmizi on Thursday acknowledged the collaborative efforts undertaken by the Pakistan Consulate General, Dubai in response to the recent

swiftly to address the needs of our fellow Pakistanis, with a particular focus on those stranded at the Dubai Airport. Led by Hussain Muĥammad, Consul General, and his dedicated team, we have been on the ground, helping and supporting those in need. Our commitment to serving our community remains unwavering, and we stand ready to extend further aid as required. "Together, we are stronger, and together, we will overcome any challenges that come our way," Ambassador Tirmizi said

Consul General

He spoke to the authorities of airlines con-

"These are more than

The Community Wel-



ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclists on the way at Islamabad Highway during light showers that experienced the Federal Capital.

IHC bar seeks inquiry regarding judges' letters

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA) on Thursday moved a constitutional petition to Supreme Court of Pakistan seeking interrogation per-taining to the letters of IHC's judges.

The petitioner prayed the court to ensure a transparent inquiry related to the allegations and after this actions should be taken against the responsible.

It said that if the matter was related to Supreme Judicial Council (SJĈ) then the court could send the recommendations to the council. The petition said that the IHC's judges have mentioned serious incidents in their letters.

CDA to start free Yoga classes for Islamabad residents

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sports and Culture Department of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) plans to launch complimentary yoga sessions for Islamabad residents at the Multipurpose Ground in Sector F-6 Markaz and Mehran Gate near Baradri in F-9 Park, from May 2.

Yoga classes will be divided into two shifts: morning sessions, which will run from 6 am to 8 am, and evening sessions.

Daily soice of Masse Independent

Friday April 19, 2024

IMF's projections

The next few years are likely to see Pakistan trapped in lowgrowth mode. International lenders maintain that economic growth in the country will remain subdued, hovering in the range of 1.8pc-3.5pc in the medium term because of plummeting investment, persisting fiscal and external imbalances, and a large state presence in the economy.

In its flagship World Economic Outlook 2024, released on the eve of the spring meetings of the World Bank Group, the IMF has predicted tation of various communi-Pakistan's economy will grow by 2pc this year and 3.5pc in the next. The estimates are based on the Fund's recently concluded review of Pakistan's macroeconomic position under the \$3bn Stand-by Arrangement. Even these projections hinge on continued fiscal consolidation and a new IMF bailout. No wonder Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb is in Washington to lobby for a larger, three-year Fund programme of \$6bn-8bn to support planned economic reforms.

As stated by him, the country will request a three-year programme "to help execute the structural reform agenda". Referring to reduced market volatility and economic stabilisation achieved under the SBA, he ing the ties between Pakisaid that market sentiment was more positive in the current fiscal year. "It's really for that purpose that we have initiated the discussion with the Fund to get into a larger and an extended programme," he explained. If approved, it will be gagements was the urgent Pakistan's 24th engagement with the IMF since 1958. Will as soon as the ongoing this new programme break Stand-by Arrangement what the minister was reported to have referred to as the "chain of financial struggles and bailouts"? The fact is that Pakistan has never been able to complete a longer programme with the Fund because of a breach in policy goals thanks to political reasons. What will be different this time around? So far, the minister has shown an understanding of the issues that have dragged the economy down and D.C. Three years later, in his commitment to implementing long-delayed structural reforms without any proviso.

"If we do not go through the structural reforms, unfortunately, we will still be looking at another programme," he told an Atlantic Council meeting. He knows what needs to be done two, patrons of the last reand said that Pakistan does not require "too many policy prescriptions". The problems are well-known and the country is aware of what is needed to stabilise the economy. The challenge is follow-through and implementation.

Unlike his predecessors, Mr Aurangzeb intends to discuss the programme's "growth aspects" with the IMF as well. But he has not elaborated on how he plans to grow the economy breaching without programme policy steps that must focus on tough stabilisation reforms.

With the economy going through its worst crisis, the budget for next year is set to reveal how steadfast the government will be in its commitment to undertaking reforms. and how Mr Aurangzeb balances stabilisation with relatively faster growth.

Curious case of Priya Kumari

Shahab Usto

It was on Ashura, Aug 19, 2021, when nine-year-old Priya Kumari went missing. Just before her disappearance or abduction she had been happily helping her father — a syncretic Hindu who runs a sabeel every year in Muharram in San--grar, a small town near Sukkur — serve sherbet to thirsty mourners. It is a turious case. For one, she disappeared' from a place that was thro--nged with hundreds of people, and yet, reportedly, the police found little by way of evidence or even a witness. And for another, her tragedy touches upon every element that has rent apart society, ie, faith, gender, class, and abuse.

Faith: Priya, a Hindu girl, was targeted when she was engaged in religio-cultural services for Muslims. She symbolised a tolerant tradition that goes back centuries, ie, peaceful cohabities in Sindh, and beyond. In defiance of an obscurantist mindset that has spawned violence against religious minorities, she and her father transcended

victimhood, therefore, not only exposes a corroded criminal justice system, but goes deeper into the conceptual recesses of a state caught between two conflicting philosophies. The state can either be viewed in terms of a benevolent democracy that accords equality before the law, and grants freedom of worship to every citizen, regardless of colour or creed. Or it can be seen as an ideological tool cast in the mould of a particular policy strand. Priya and many other individuals, groups and communities come under the latter.

edy shows the threat to 'gender justice', which envisages the systemic removal of inequalities between men and women in both law and practice. She is among the countless children and women who are targeted for their gender, in different forms and to varying degrees. Thus, many of the better educated and more aware urban women are less vulnerable to extreme forms of gender crimes, though they may also face incidents of violence, abuse, or harassment. But the hotbeds of gender-

Gender: Priya's trag-

cated in the rural and tribal areas where a combination of feudal, tribal, and obscurantist elements continue to regulate rural life, aided by an ineffectual or complicit state machinery.

Even here, the ratio of

gender-based crimes forced marriages, 'honour' killing, domestic violence, kidnapping for ransom, etc is relatively higher among the half-literate and poorer sections. Clearly, the state has been criminally negligent in enforcing the rights of these hapless women — largely on account of the substantial influence that the local feudal-tribal patriarchy exercises over social policy and governance. But can the state flout local and international laws - particularly the Convention on the Elimi-nation of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women that obligates states to protect women's rights just to appease its local surrogates?

Class: Priya's plight also highlights the social angle of crimes against women. She comes from a poor family and is possessed of all the vulnerabili-

disempowerment. Statistically, a majority of sexually victimised children come from poorer and underprivileged classes. Perhaps the offenders are emboldened both by the victim's incapacity to bring them to justice, and the state's routinely tepid response. As a result, these 'ordinary' cases are left undetected, or

invariably 'settled' Recently, we saw two instances of our lame-duck criminal justice system. In 2021, Nazim Jokhio, a wildlife activist, was brutally murdered near Thatta when he tried to stop the hunting of protected birds. His was, as they say, an open-andshut case. But the powerful offenders were 'pardoned' by the victim's family out of desperation and helplessness. In August last year, Fatima Fariro, a nine-year-old maid, died in mysterious circumstances in Ranipur, located near Khairpur. The investigation report (including the video footage of the crime scene) has attributed the cause of her death to the abuse and torture allegedly committed by her employer, an influential pir. But the prosecu-

cluded, despite the lapse of many months. It is feared that the delay, even if not intentional, will be used to settle the matter out of

Abuse: Priya's case

pertains to 'disappearance' or 'abduction', but abuse cannot be excluded. Child abuse is on the rise. Of the 2,227 abuse victims reported in 2023, more than half (54 per cent) were girls. Let's not forget that children, like women, enjoy multiple protections under general, special, and international laws. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular requires the state to ensure the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. But it is unfortunate that child abuse, like forced disappearances, is rampant and neglected — more so if the victim comes from a poorer background. In fact, most successfully prosecuted cases are those vigorously pursued by the victim's family; otherwise, they end up in the amnesiac entrails of our criminal justice system.

Priya is lucky that the media, civil society and government constituted another JIT under public pressure. But will the new JIT bear fruit in terms of recovering her and ensuring justice for her? The answer hinges on many variables, including the victimfamily's perseverance, the investigator's diligence, the suspect's clout, the prosecutors' capacity, and more importantly, the court's willingness to decide the matter expeditiously and

In a curious way, Priya's unexplained disappearance, Fatima's unending prosecution, and the 'pardoning' of offenders by Nazim's family reflect respectively the incapacity, dysfunctionality, and discomfiture of the entire criminal justice system the law, police, investigation, prosecution, and adjudication. Ergo, a perception is gaining ground that our legal order has lost its effectiveness, hence, legitimacy. Desperate people are taking the law into their own hands. 'Mob justice' and vigilantism are on the rise. Which raises the critical question: can a state see stability and advancement without an effective and le-

Shifting gears

Khurram Husain

After many years of exreme uncertainty and political instability, it now seems like things are finally starting to move.

Two developments this week point to this. First is the visit of the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, during which the talks seem to have focused in significant measure on some form of economic engagement etween Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The language used by the Saudi foreign minister at the joint presser at the conclusion of the visit was also unusually bullish on the prospects of growstan and Saudi Arabia.

The second developnent is Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb's round of engagements in Washington, D.C., where he is attending the spring meetings of the IMF and

need for a successor programme with the IMF ended. He also made clear gun, and outlined three key areas that will be targeted for "structural reforms": taxation, power and stateowned enterprises. His emphasis was on execution, indicating that he will press hard on the matters he com-

These are two very critical developments, although how far they are beneficial for the general populace remains an open question. For now, it is clear that the storms of uncertainty and the perilous brushes with default that have marked the preceding two years are now receding. This does not mean the country is in the clear. Any country that is busy negotiating a programme with the IMF cannot be described as being in the clear.

What it means is that sanity is returning, decision-making is beginning to articulate itself at the top, the correct priorities are being talked about by people who have clout and One thing he made credibility within their own clear in all his public en- circle of peers, and foreign investors are beginning to look again at Pakistan's prospects. In short, it means the gears are shift-

There is a temptation that talks on this had be- that some in government ment package' that we are

the temptation to declare victory. It is entirely premature for that at this point, and it is important to bear in mind that a country that is struggling to enter a longterm IMF programme cannot be described as a country that is in good health, or one whose authorities have much reason to celebrate. It means the bulk of the hard work lies ahead,

and that the chances of fail-

ure are legion.

The finance minister said during one of his interviews in Washington that everyone knows what all needs to be done. The problem is in execution. He should have been asked what prevented preceding governments from executing the agenda he is chalking out, and what makes him so sure he will succeed where they failed. Sadly, this question never arose. Perhaps some TV anchors at home will pose this ques-

But for now, without possible to say that a direction is becoming visible. Three questions now arise.

tion to him upon his return.

What exactly is the shape of the Saudi 'invest-

are succumbing to. This is told totals \$5 billion? How far will the Saudi or perhaps more broadly, the Gulf interest in Pakistan go? And most importantly, will all this really be beneficial for

Or are we simply going to repeat an old story where the government of the day fetches dollars from abroad, whether borrowed or begged, and burns them in the furnace of the country's economic dysfunctions to produce a short-lived, feel-good, growth experience followed a massive crash?

Twice we have repeated this story. First during the Pervez Musharraf years, and second in the years running from 2013 to 2017, when the third PML-N government of Nawaz Sharif ran the country. The problem is in execution. He should have been asked what prevented preceding governments from executing the agenda he is chalking out, and what makes him so sure he will succeed popping any corks or fuel-ling undue optimism, it is where they failed. Both these periods were unique in one sense: the country an IMF was on programme, yet it registered high rates of economic growth. These are two an-

tithetical outcomes. Fund

slow the economy to allow it to build reserves and fiscal buffers, while undertaking deeper reforms.

What happened in both these periods was that geopolitics trumped economics. The problem is in execution. He should have been asked what prevented preceding governments from executing the agenda he is chalking out, and what makes him so sure he will succeed where they failed. In the first period, it was the post-9/11 bonanza and its associated inflows that were used to power an economic boom, with which a dictator struggling to find his feet procured his legiti-

In the second period, an elected government borrowed heavily from bilateral donors, especially China and the Gulf monarchies, to power a growth boom that clearly could not last, and whose bills would weigh heavily on the country for years thereafter, economy's potential. He is but nevertheless gave the government of the time on execution, rather than enough material with endlessly discussing policy which to portray itself as options. But it seems the the party of growth and development

story not be repeated one own cabinet members.

programmes are designed to more time. The temptation to see the dollar inflows that may perhaps be materialising soon (there is as yet no guarantee that this will happen, but the indications are there) as fuel for a short-lived growth boom must be resisted. It should be the success of the underlying reforms, especially the extent to which they enable investment, whether foreign or domestic, that should be the driver of the growth to come.

A liquidity-fuelled boom could well break the Imran Khan fever that has gripped the electorate and weighs so heavily on the shoulders of the current rulers. But this will be much the same folly as the dictator using a short-lived economic boom to procure for himself an equally short-lived legitimacy.

The finance minister is right to point to the deeper reform agenda as the key to unlocking the most important constituency that needs to be per-It is critical that this suaded of this may be his

Three to tango

F.S. Aijazuddin

part of the world. The US-Pakistan duo and the Saudi-Pakistan pair has become a threesome, choreographed

ter Liaquat Ali Khan met president Harry Truman in Washington, 1953, governor-general Ghulam Muhammad was hosted by King Ibn-e-Saud in Saudi Arabia. Since then, bilateral relationships between Pakistan and these countries, while shifting and erratic, have nevertheless maintained one golden vein of consistency: Pakistan has remained a poor supplicant and the richer

US attitudes towards Pakistan have usually been determined by the policies of its presidents and by State Department mandarins. Occasionally, they would agree to disagree. The most notable occasion occur-red in the 1970s during the Richard Nixon vs William Rogers bouts over contacts with China.

Saudi monarchs as a whole have remained partial towards Pakistan. Among them, the most unconditionally generous was King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz. It is said that he funded the 1974 Second Islamic Summit held in Lahore. He conceded its stage management to PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who acknowledged that concession by renaming Charing Cross as Faisal

Few will be aware that in 1974 King Faisal gave \$100 million to be disbursed to any projects of PM Bhutto's choice. The money went straight into the projects, without deductions for middlemen. Half of that — \$50m — was given to the Mirpur Mathelo fertiliser project, which, even though it was not a joint venture, was re-

The Saudis came just when Pakistan genuflects before the IMF for the 24th quake victims in the In 2023, the IMF agreed to the Stand-by Ar-

rangement of \$3bn. to rescue PM Shehbaz Sharif's government. The Saudis greased the rails with a reclaimable deposit of \$2bn to window-dress Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. This year, on March 13, ahead of the IMF mission's visit to Pak-istan

from March 14 to 18, the

finance ministry cheerfully

annou-need that it had "met

all targets for successful completion of the programme' Two days later, on the 15th, the IMF team expressed its displeasure over the ministry of finance's announcement "that it had materialised all structural benchmarks, quantitative

and indicative targets even

prior to scrutinising and

completion of the review by

the Fund staff" According to one news report, the IMF review mission "grilled the finance ministry team in the maiden session of the review talks and everyone seemed clueless how to respond". Finance Minister Aurangzeb assured the IMF that "such an episode would never be repeated in

Shakespeare foresaw the IMF's seemingly openended commitment to Pakistan: "'Tis not enough to help the feeble up, but to support them after"

The fate of our application to the IMF will be known very soon, after April 20. The US will decide its next president at year end. Meanwhile, the US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan continue to cavort in a three-party tango. To paraphrase the US singer Melody Gardot, Pakistan, on its own, may be "a bad walker [but] it can dance the

Ali Burhan Mustafa

The illicit global drug market, which is valued over \$400 billion, is second only to the counterfeit products market in terms of the world's main crime rackets. Cocaine, heroin, cannabis, and amphetamines are top sellers. Afghanistan leads in opium and heroin production, while Bolivia and Brazil are at the forefront of cocaine production. Mexico is a key player in cannabis and heroin circulation. The US is a leading market, which mainly receives drugs through Mexico. Canada is

another market, to a smaller degree though. The Golden Crescent, which includes Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, serves as a significant centre for opium and heroin trade, fuelled as it is by regional politics and a legacy of conflict. In Afghanistan, the grip of the Afghan Taliban over key drug-producing regions further complicates the issue. Meanwhile, the international pressure is on Pakistan to escalate its antidrug campaigns.

According to one estimate, just a decade ago, illicit drugs valued at \$30bn flowed through Pakistan from Afghanistan, underscoring serious security threats at both the local and international level. There remains a degree of uncertainty about the effectiveness of current methods to combat drug trafficking, underscoring the urgency for worldwide collaboration and a concentrated effort to address the fundamental reasons and consequences of this

deadly activity.
A 2013 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Pakistan's narcotics control authorities revealed that 6.7 million adults had used illicit drugs in the previous year, with cannabis use seen to be most com-

2022 points to a worldwide uptick in the use of substances such as cannabis and amphetamines, which coincides with a rise in health emergencies, including hepatitis C and HIV, particularly among individuals who use drugs via syringes. This situation underscores the critical need for widespread public health strategies to address the alarming level of substance abuse in the Founded in 1957, the

Pakistan Narcotics Control

Board has been pivotal in

the crackdown against ille-

gal drugs. It joined the interior ministry in 1973 and went through several transformations before emerging as the Anti-Narcotics Force in 1995. In Afghanistan, the grip of the Afghan Taliban over key drug-producing regions further complicates the issue. Meanwhile, the international pressure is on Pakistan to escalate its antidrug campaigns. The ANF aims to stop poppy farming and drug trafficking. Besides prevention and global partnerships, the ANF runs Model Addicts Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres, which have been treating over 14,000 people since 2005 by combining enforcement with rehabilitation. A recent study has fo-

cused on Pakistan's escalating drug overdose emergency, revealing that 700 people die each day due to drug overdose complications. Faced with around 7m regular drug users, 4m of whom favour cannabis and another 2.7m struggling with opioid addiction, Pakistan is grappling with a significant problem. Tackling this issue calls for a unified strategy that includes strict regulation, improved medical training, and a thorough revision of public health initiatives.

Centres for the treatment of drug addiction in

Fighting addiction mon. Additionally, the re- Pakistan face substantial cent World Drug Report of challenges. Both public and private facilities struggle with inadequate infrastructure, a lack of skilled professionals, and weak enforcement of sound management practices. Although we live in the 21st century, Pakistan still has not recognised drug addiction and rehabilitation as an official subspecialty in psychiatry, while the absence of qualified drug addiction psychiatrists, especial--ly when compared to branches like forensic psychiatry, is deeply worrying. Although mental health laws are in place, the lack of specific legislation for overseeing drug addiction treatm-ent and its regulation means the field is not officially recognised.

> This situation impedes the development of specialist training and programmes in the coun-

Hospitals and pathology labs in Pakistan seldom conduct important tests such as breathalysers, drug screenings, immunoassays, let alone employ advanced techniques such as GC-MS. In Afghanistan, the grip of the Afghan Taliban over key drug-producing regions further complicates the issue. Meanwhile, the international pressure is on Pakistan to escalate its antidrug campaigns. The country is also severely lacking in facilities for opioid substitution therapy, which incorporates medication.

Despite the availability of medications that can prevent drug relapse, their usage is uncommon, indicating a hesitation in adopting contemporary and evidence-based approaches to diagnosis and treatment. Pakistan urgently needs a coordinated policy, better healthcare education, strong regulation, and uniform addiction treatment to halt the increasing number of deaths caused by overdose and substance abuse

named Pak-Saudi Fertilisers

\$10m for Pakistan's earth-

Karakorams. (The US pledged only \$25,000.)

Such generosity did not go

unpunished. King Faisal

was shot four months later

by his US-educated

nephew Faisal bin Musaid

Abdul Aziz dy--na-s--ty

and Pakistan's inextin-

guishable Sharif family

have shown that they en-

joy an almost umbilical re-

lationship. Crown Prince

Moh-ammed bin Salman

has famously called Paki-

stan his second home. To

the Sharif family, Saudi

Prince Mohammed bin

Salman visited Pakistan

during the tenure of PM

bromance appeared to yield

the prospect of \$20 billion

in investments. Deals were

signed, sealed but remained

undelivered. As Napoleon

once advised: "Promise ev-

erything, deliver nothing."

Shehbaz Sharif has received

fresh assurances of finan-

cial support — this time

5bn - from the same

crown prince. During their

recent meeting, the prince

reaffirmed Saudi Arabia's

resolve never to leave

Pakistan's side and ex-

pressed his government's

boundless affection for the

ered Saudi delegation led by

Foreign Minister Prince

Faisal bin Farhan bin

Abdullah to grout that com-

mitment. The composition

of the delegation under-

scored the seriousness of its

mandate. It consisted of the

Saudi ministers of water and

agriculture, of industry and

mineral resources, the

deputy minister of invest-

ment, and senior officials

from its ministry of energy

and the Saudi Fund for

General Investments. It

He sent a high-pow-

Imran Khan.

Prime

In 2019, the Crown

Their

Minister

Arabia is their first haven.

More recently, the Bin

Al Saud

Again, in January 1975, King Faisal gave

It takes three to tango in our by the US In 1950, prime minis-

visited Pakistan this week, in the absence of our finance minister.

33 people died, 46 others injured in rain, flood related incidents

PESHAWAR (APP): As occurred in various In addition, PDMA many as 33 people have districts of Khyber, Dir has provided relief died and 46 others have Upper and Lower, Chitral materials to the affected been injured so far due to
heavy rains in various
districts of Khyber
Pakhtunkhwa province.
According to the report
According issued by Provincial Disasters Management, 17 children, eight men and eight women are among the dead, while the injured include six women, 32 men

were damaged due to the collapse of walls and roofs in different districts, in which 326 houses were completely damaged and has released 8.1 million.

Minister of Knyper continuing tener activities in the rain-affected districts and rains are likely to continue intermittently till has released 8.1 million. April 21, PDMA has 1606 houses were partially

life and financial accidents emergency situations.

Nowshera, Bunir, Hangu, Battghramn, Bannu, North and South Waziristan, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan and Orakzai

districts. and eight children.

A total of 1932 houses were damaged due to the Winister of Khyber continuing relief activities rupees

Relief supplies include tents, mats, kitchen sets, blankets, beds, tarpaulins, solar lamps and other daily life items.

The PDMA and all issued a letter to all district administration of various administrations to be alert Due to heavy rains, districts to deal with and take precautionary measures



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawai Salman Rafigue and Provincial Minister for Food Bilal Yaseen inspecting the revamping project of Govt Mian Munshi Teaching Hospital.

AJK Usher o Zakaat signs up for payments through S-Paisa

MUZAFFARABAD remote areas are facing (APP): The AJK harsh weather conditions department of Usher o and SCO is providing them Zakaat and Special Communication Organization (SCO) has signed an agreement to make payments through S- transmitted billions of Paisa under which the rupees to needy people Zakaat and payments to the poor and Support Program (BISP) destitute segments of the through S-Paisa system society would be ensured and our utmost effort timely on fast track basis.

ceremony was held at SCO Headquarter Muzaffarabad here on Thursday signed by Sector Commander SCO Col. Muhammad Rashid Khan and Chief Administrator Usher o Zakaat Ch. Abdul Razaq.Speaking on the occasion, the Sector Commander has said that AJK region mostly comprises on difficult terrains, mountains and steeply up and down tracks and saying that the people of Neelum valley, Leepa Haveli districts as a pilot

telecommunication services

Sector Commander said that SCO has already Usher under Benazir Income would be to deliver Zakaat agreement funds to poor, needy and destitute segments through S-Paisa system on priority in the same way.

He was of the view that S-Paisa and S-net system would introduced across Azad Jammu and Kashmir in near future to facilitate the people. Administrator Usher o

Zakaat Ch. Abdul Razaq while speaking in the ceremony he said that initially the system would be launched in Neelum and valley and Haveli like project because the people.



Bukhari take keen interest in dresses during the exhibition organized by Dandy School of Fashion Design held at Al-Humra in Lahore.

In order to avoid the outstanding liabilities Effective mechanism for early payment to media houses devises: Memon

Independent Report KARACHI: Secretary In-Nadeem-ur-Rehman Memon said that action will be taken against those advertising agencies, who deliberately delays in submission of the bills, this he said while chairing a meeting with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Advertising Agencies, which are on the panel of Information Department in his office on Wednesday. He said that the effective mechanism for early payment to media houses has been devised in the department in order to avoid the outstanding li-

abilities at maximum level. Secretary Information said that a third party audit firm is being hired to clear the liabilities of media houses by ascertaining the genuineness and verification of the claim bills accordingly and the payment details will be uploaded on the website. Stressing on

early submission of the bills, Secretary Information formation Department Nadeem-ur-Rehman directed the advertising agencies to submit the bills of the campaigns within the fifteen (15) days after release of any public awareness campaigns to print, electronic or social/digital media. Secretary Information said that the scope of the information department is not only limited to the publicity of the Government but also to get public issues to be redressed by sending the media reports of public demands and grievances to the concerned quarters. He said that effective steps are being initiated for the revamping and improvement of the Information Department by using the latest tools of Information and Communication Technology. He said that advertisements are being released by the department as per the criteria mentioned in the Ad-

vertisement Policy-2023.

Sindh Tourism Minister calls on Governor

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Antiquities Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah called on Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor's House here on Thursday.

In the meeting, the improvement of tourist places, measures to promote the culture of the province and other issues were discussed. The governor said

to provide better facilities at the tourist places of the He further said that tourists' countless

that steps should be taken

attractions were available across Sindh. Kamran Khan Tessori said that integrated measures were also

necessary for promoting culture of the province. Earlier, Provincial Minister Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah gave a detailed briefing to the Sindh Governor about his departments.

PIBC ED resigns

MULTAN (APP) Bringing an end to the controversies development owing to appointment issue of a general surgeon on plastic surgeon seat, Pak Italian Modern Centre (PIBC) Executive Director, Dr Naveed Akhtar has tendered resignation from

his post. PIBC Official sources told this news agency here on Thursday that Dr Akhtar sent his resignation to Secretary Specialized healthcare and Medical Education, Lahore today.

" It is with heavy heart that I'm taking this decision, but recent circumstances rendered it necessary for well-being of myself and the institution" reads the resignation.

Four arrested over gang rape FAISALABAD (APP): City Jaranwala police have arrested four accused

involved in a gang rape

A police spokesman said here on Thursday that a woman (F) filed a complaint, contending that she was returning home along with coworker Kashif Hussain after performing duty in a local mills when accused Humanyun alias Doctor resident of Pak Land Town, Sajawal Masih an employee of Municipal Committee, Suno resident of Usmania Park and Shahid resident of Abdullah Park intercepted him and her coworker near Karmanwala Chowk on April 06 and abducted her. They severely tortured Kashif Hussain and snatched cash in addition

to take her to a house.



ZAFARWAL: Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal visited NADRA centre in Zafarwal, Punjab, which will be opened soon as a state of the art facility to citizens of Zafarwal for processing all their ID related documents.

Lahore revamping plan gets deadline of June 30

LAHORE (APP): The Muhammad Punjab government has set a deadline of 30 June for the completion of "Chief Lahore Minister Revamping Plan" and to transfer the authority of Punjab Local Governments Department as a executing agency to Metropolitan Corporation Lahore

The decision was made during a meeting chaired by Punjab Local Governments Minister Zeeshan Rafique held here at WASA head office on Thursday, attended by Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Political Affairs Zeeshan Malik, Director General LDA/ Commissioner Lahore

SUKKUR (APP): Speaker

of the Sindh Assembly,

Syed Awais Qadir Shah,

stated that the provincial

government is dedicated to

developing and providing

health and education

facilities in underprivileged

of Saleh Putt taluka at his

residence here on

Thursday, he said that the

and the results of it would

delegation briefed the

be visible soon.

Talking to a delegation

areas of the province.

Awais Shah says:

Govt fully focused

on development in

underprivileged areas

government is taking matter relating to problems crucial steps in this regard with the authorities

The members of the in hospitals and teachers in

Randhawa, Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Lahore/Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider, MD WASA Ghufran Ahmed and other concerned officials.

During the meeting, a detailed review of the progress in "Lahore Revamping Plan" was made. Local Governments Minister Zeeshan Rafique while addressing the participants said that according to the revamping plan, launched under the directions from Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, 188 schemes of MCL and 207 schemes of Wasa would be completed. "The GIS mapping of each

Governor regarding

problems faced by the

called for their resolution.

backward districts is the

joint responsibility of all

stakeholders and they

would have to play their

due role in this regard. He

assured the delegation that

he would take up the

concerned to ensure the

availability of medical staff

Speaker Sindh said

scheme will be completed by April 25", he hoped The chair directed that PC-1 should be completed within 10 days and the tendering of schemes be done within 30 days. He said the Deputy Commissioner as the administrator of MCL would supervise the whole plan. Zeeshan Rafique emphasized that direction of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to create a single dashboard of all relevant agencies should be fully implemented. "After the revamping is completed, there will be no need for any new development scheme in

years", he resolved. **KPCM** of custom

Lahore for next four to five

Minister people of the area and that the development of all Ismail Khan.

He expressed grief Customs officials and directed police to arrest the culprits of the incident and bring them to justice.

The chief minister patience for them to bear the loss with fortitude.

condemns killing officials

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur on Thursday strongly condemned the incident firing on a vehicle of Customs Intelligence and killing officials in Dera

over the martyrdom of the

expressed heartfelt Lancashire, Aga Khan sympathy and condolences University, to the bereaved families of University. the martyrs and prayed



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique presides over the meeting of Lahore Revamping Plan. SACM Zeeshan Malik

60% recommendations of water commission implemented: CS Sindh

Independent Report HYDERABAD: The Chief Secretary (CS) Sindh Syed Asif Hyder Shah has said that during the last three weeks, 138 RO (Reverse Osmosis) plants have been activated in Sindh.

He informed the honorable court that the recommendations of the Water Commission are being implemented, which include short-term, midterm and long-term measures and about 60 percent of the water commission's recommendations have been implemented in the province, but some projects have faced delays

Speaking to the media after a hearing in Hyderabad on Thursday

regarding the implementation of the water commission's report, Syed Asif Hyder Shah said that due to a lack of funds, complete implementation of the recommendations could not be achieved. However, we will submit progress reports to the honorable court every three months as per directives.

He revealed that between the last and current hearings, as many as 138 RO plants have been revived within three weeks, and another 200 will be activated by June.

12 dead, 1270 injured in Punjab

Independent Report LAHORE: At least twelve people were killed and 1270 injured in 1124 road accidents in all 37 districts Faisalabad.

road accidents

of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of them, 589 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 681 victims with minor injuries were treated on the spot by Rescue medical teams. Analysis show that 616 drivers, 30 underage drivers, 156 pedestrians, and 510 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. Statistics show that 235 road accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 261 people placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by 83 in



KARACHI: Diarrhea patients are being treated at Civil Hospital in Karachi. During the Jirga, the DC

Minister Education inspects exam hall, assures transparency

Independent Report

ESHAWAR: Provincial Education Minister Faisal Khan Tarakai on Thursday visited the examination hall of Government High School City No-1 and inspected arrangements for ongoing matric exams.

said practical steps were being taken to ensure transparent examinations across the province. The future of the nation, he said, depends upon students who were the builders of the nation and ensuring supremacy of merit was prerequisite to ensure achievement of this

Secretary Education Masood Ahmad, Special Secretary Asfandyar Khattak and Chairman Peshawar Educational Board Nasrullah were also present on the occasion. The Minister said he

himself and his team were inspecting the matric examination process across the province and no negligence in this regard would be tolerated. He said the educational boards have made sufficient arrangements, assuring the Expressing well students that they would wishes for the students, he get the fruit of their hard students that they would work. He informed that for

> transparent assistance from district administration, police, WAPDA and relevant departments has been

He said during the current matric exams a total of 893524 students from across the province were taking part of which 457000 were from the ninth class while 435000 from the 10th class. For this purpose, he informed that a total of 3569 examination halls have been set up in the province.



HYDERABAD: Chief Secretary Sindh Asif Hider Shah going after court hearing from High Court Hyderabad circuit.

KP Minister attends 4th Int'l Public Health **Conference at KMU**

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister, Syed Qasim Ali Shah attended the Fourth International Public Health

Conference as a special

guest held at Khyber

Medical Univ University four-day The international conference is being held from April 16 to April 19 at (KMU).

Eminent experts and speakers from the University of Central

lectures on infectious diseases, communicable diseases, health hazards under climate change, and strengthening healthcare systems. Addressing the conference, the minister stated that thirty per cent of our society is afflicted with diabetes, and symptoms like high blood pressure are prevalent among eighteen-year-olds. We not only need to talk about health but also take practical steps", he added.

"In this regard, we are Qatar launching initiatives under 'Live Well' to emphasise University of Health healthy living among Sciences, Baqai University, Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, World Bank, students to participate WHO, and other relevant institutions delivered he maintained.

Meeting discuss financial losses of landowners due to recent rains

(APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture, Sajjad Barkawal chaired a meeting here Wednesday and discussed matters including financial losses of the landowners due to current rains and floods in the province, prevention of erosion of agricultural land due to floods and damage to crops. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Secretary Agriculture, Javed

FAO

Representative

due to recent rains and floods. Participants pondered over the ongoing measures for development of agriculture and welfare landowners and appreciated initiatives of World Food Organization in KP and merged districts. Provincial minister termed efforts

Florence Rolle and FAO

Regional Chief Farrokh

discussed the emergency

situation in the province

Tayrif.The

international organization FAO as ideal and valuable in agricultural development Marwat, United Nations and expressed hope that this Country mutual cooperation would Miss continue in the future.



Matriculation (Matric) paper at Government High School No 2 as the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams have started in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Jirga held to maintain peace in district Kurram

KURRAM (APP): An extraordinary jirga of tribal leaders from across the Kurram district was held at Governor Parachinar in which GOC 9 Division Major General Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti, prominent tribal leaders and elders of Upper, Lower and Central Kurram were in attendance. The grand Jirga in District Kurram was chaired by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Javed Ullah Mehsud to ensure law and order in the area.

outlined its aims and objectives, emphasizing that peace has been restored in the Kurram district through many sacrifices. He urged the leaders of the area to cooperate with the government to maintain this peace. Addressing the Jirga, GOC 9th Division Major Gen Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti said in his address that peace will be maintained in the district of Kurram and action will be against taken miscreants.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding Power Sector. comprehensive plan in the presented.

PM orders for boosting privatization, outsourcing process of power Discos

Sharif on Thursday country. directed the relevant companies (Discos).

meeting regarding power sector here, the prime elements to harm the country's treasury. minister said the assistance of private sector experts and globally accepted models should be taken improve the management affairs of distribution Dispatch

prepare and present a transmission

The promise, for which the full

credit goes to the leadership of United

Business Group (UBG),

who had promised this

during the election campaign," he added.

Pakistani women were

extremely talented and the

chamber was striving to

empower them in the

economic field."If Pakistan

is to progress, we have to

make our women educated,

skilled and empowered

to business women," he

Ikram said that

FPCCI waives off

50% membership fee

of women chambers

Independent Report

Federation of Pakistan

Chamber of Commerce and

Industry (FPCCI) on

Thursday announced

membership fee for women

Ikram Sheikh in a statement

issued here said that the

country and society cannot

progress without the full

President FPCCI Atif

waiver

ISLAMABAD (APP): next meeting to improve Prime Minister Shehbaz the power system in the

The prime minister authorities to accelerate the said reforms in the power process of privatization sector would help reduce ensure and outsourcing of the the country's circular distribution debt. He also vowed not to allow electricity Chairing a high-level thieves and other

recommendation and measures with respect to prevent the power theft, reorganization of National Transmission and Dispatch Company companies (DISCOs). (NTDC) and new projects
He also directed to of the electricity

Khan transmission line and Ghazi Barotha-Faisalabad line will be constructed to transmission Southern part of the The meeting was

further informed that a

The meeting was told that Matiari-Rahim yar

comprehensive strategy In the meeting, the had been evolved for the reorganization of NTDC to bring reforms in the power transmission system and minimize the government's circular

The prime minister directed to complete all

The meeting was attended by the federal ministers Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ahad Khan Cheema, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Dr Musadik Malik, Abdul Aleem Khan, Ataullah Tarar, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, former power Muhammad Ali, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan, Member of National Assembly Bilal

Azhar Kayani, Engineer Qamar ul Islam, Rana Ehsan Afzal, Salman the reforms' initiatives Ahmed and other within the stipulated concerned officials.

Prudent policies, reforms poised to result in sustainable economic growth: Governor SBP

Independent Report KARACHI: Governor State Bank of Pakistan participants about the effect. (SBP) Jameel Ahmed highlighting country's in substantial improvements macroeconomic outlook in macroeconomic outlook hoped that time bound as a result of a prudent reforms will put the economy on the path of adequately by fiscal sustainable economic

Governor SBPexpressed the views during his meetings with key international investors during multiple events organized by leading global banks and financial firms, including JP Morgan, Citibank and Jefferies, on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington DC, said a statement issued consolidation, ease in

He informed the agriculture output and base substantial improvement

Pakistan's achieved over the past year monetary policy, backed consolidation and beginning of the implementation of

key structural reforms. Governor referring to sharp decline in inflation over the past year from a peak of 38 percent in May 2023 to the two-year low of 20.7 percent in March 2024 explained that the deceleration in inflation is broad-based, reflecting the stabilization policies, combined impact of monetary tightening, fiscal

import supplies, improved

'More importantly, core inflation declined markedly, reaching 15.7 percent in March, after persistently staying above 20 percent throughout last year," he added.

informed the participants that the external sector has also stabilized, as reflected in the sharp reduction in the current account deficit (CAD) to \$1 billion during Jul-Feb FY24 from \$3.8 billion in the same period last year.

In addition improved agriculture output has contributed to higher food exports.

Finance

Minister

rules out rupee

devaluation in

talks with IMF

ISLAMABAD (Online)

Muhammad Aurangzeb

has ruled out any further

significant rupee devaluation ahead of talks

roundtable meeting with

Bloomberg team in

Washington, he said there

is no reason for rupee

devaluation as Pakistan has

solid foreign-exchange

reserves, stable currency,

rising remittances and

Monetary Fund.

Speaking

Minister

International

Finance

role of women, adding the initiative of reducing membership fee was important for women empowerment



to earn their livelihood for support their families, at a field located on Tando Jam near Hyderabad.

Country prepared to become tech hub: Shaza Fatima

LAHORE (APP): State Minister for Information Technology Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday said that the country was prepared to

become regional tech hub and IT leader. She said this while addressing a press conference along with Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) Secretary General Deemah

Al Yahya at a local hotel.

She said, "Youth is our asset and we have strong connectivity," adding that Pakistan had partners like Saudi Arabia and other countries which wanted to strengthen this

The State Minister said that recently Saudi Arabia foreign minister and representative of Investment Ministry visited Pakistan, adding that country's IT sector was also highlighted during

She further said that Digital Foreign Direct Investment conference would be organized at the end of this year, adding that World Economic Forum, Digital Cooperation Organization and Pakistan would host conference every year to bring investment in the country for ΙT sector, manufacturing, software

and telecommunication

sides as well.

She further said that these initiatives and the policies of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif aimed at supporting private sector would yield positive results to put the country on road to progress.

Shaza Fatima said that the incumbent government was working on various policies and legislation whether it was related to data protection, cyber security, cloud policy to create feasible environment for growth of IT, tech and



SIALKOT: A person filling water in pot at water filtration plant with petrol pump style water nozzle at Mubarak Pura.

WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb interacted with representatives of Deutsche Bank. KP Govt decides to **ICCI** pledges to

have a female president soon ISLAMABAD (APP):

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry **Independent Report** PESHAWAR: The (ICCI) has pledged to have its first female president soon followed by other chambers across the

facilitation The centers for women homebased workers would be established in all the

provincial capitals. This was disclosed by the Chairperson National Commission on the Status Women (NCSW) Nilofer Bukhtiar during the Eid Milan and Award Ceremony held here

Thursday.

On this occasion, Lansana Wonneh, Country Representative of UN women Pakistan, also praised the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) efforts in the Economic Growth of Women at the Eid Milan and Award distribution

He emphasized that individuals, societies and nations thrive when women are empowered to overcome economic barriers.

PSX loses 43 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday lost 43.20 points, a slight negative change of 0.06 percent, closing at 70,290.12 points against 70,333.32 points the previous trading day.

A total of 440,314,409 shares valuing Rs.24.362 billion were traded during the day as compared to 442,096,653 shares valuing Rs.16.034 billion the last day.Some 359 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 166 of them recorded gains and 174 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 19 remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Cnergyico PK with 33,241,232 shares at Rs.4.55 per share, K-Electric Limited with 29,877,440 shares with Rs.4.43 per share and Pak Refinery with 28,448,438 shares at Rs.29.27 per share. Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.81.10 per share price, closing at Rs.8,380.10, whereas the runner-up was Hallmark Company Limited with a Rs.52.00 rise in its per share price Rs.748.00.Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.52.50 per

share closing Rs.7,547.50.

establish Gem Processing & Export Centre and Technical Education Abdul Karim Tordhir in the

government of Khyber Besides, Secretary Pakhtunkhwa has decided Industries, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah and Special to develop gemstone sector as formal export sector and Secretary Muhammad Anwar Khan, Chief for this purpose the gemstone cluster at Namak Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mandi would be develop in the shape of Gems Processing & Export Economic Development The Gem Export
Center will be redesigned

Management Company (KP-EZDMC) Javed Iqbal Khattak, Executive Director of Federal Export Executive Development Fund (EDF) Samiullah Khan and Director Zafar, PDA and Government Local Thursday in the committee Officers, representatives room of the Industries of Sarhad Chamber of Department here at Civil Commerce & Industry (SCCI) Special Assistant to Chief Association and officers of Minister Khyber other relevant departments also attended the meeting.

PTCL posts 14 % revenue growth

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication

and shifted to a spacious

and suitable building

equipped with all international standards.

Secretariat, Peshawar with

In this regard, a highlevel meeting was held on

Company Limited (PTCL) has announced its financial results for the first quarter of 2024 posting 14 per cent revenue growth Year-on-Year basis to Rs 49 billion, mainly driven by strong performance in the consumer segment led by fixed broadband, mobile data, and wholesale & business solutions.

The announcement was made during a board of directors meeting on

Thursday. PTČL continued its

which is 13% higher than last year, mainly driven by growth in fixed line and business segments, said a news

Flash Fiber, PTCL's premium Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) service, continues to show tremendous growth with the highest Net adds share within the FTTH market (since Dec'23) and now stands as the leading FTTH service provider in Pakistan.

This phenomenal growth has been possible through the aggressive expansion of PTCL Flash strong performance expansion of PTCL Flash throughout Q1, 2024 and Fiber and dedicated achieved revenue of Rs 26 customer experience billion for this quarter, throughout the country.

Mobilink Bank registers solid start to year by doubling its revenue in Q1 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's leading digital microfinance institution, Mobilink Bank, has reported a staggering 97% increase in revenue during Q1 2024 compared to the same period last year, marking a powerful start to the year.

The Bank's Profit before Tax (PBT) also witnessed 110% growth, said a news release.

The substantial Bank's robust financial performance, heightened customer & stakeholder and run by women. confidence, and the positive momentum within the country's economic

and business environment at the outset of the year.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of world's population. Mobilink Bank champions financial inclusion and works to advance the growth and increase in the revenue and sustainability of micro, PBT underscore the small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). particularly those owned

The Bank leverages microfinance and fintech to foster access to finance



QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Lt (retd) Saad Bin Asad presides over the meeting of Poultry Farms and Shopkeepers Association.

MoU signed for skilled manpower in AJK: PM lauds initiative MIRPUR (APP): Azad reducing unemployment in Jammu Kashmir Prime the region. The signing

Chaudhry termed signing of a memorandum of Executive Director understanding (MoU) NEVTTC Aamir Jan and between state-run TEVTA TEVTA Chairman and NAVTTC as a Chaudhry Farid Ahmed

He emphasized the importance of talented and particularly the youth, leveraging this opportunity

ceremony, held at Jammu Anwar ul Haq Thursday Kashmir House in the

Senior Minister Col. (retd) Waqar Ahmad Noor,

significant development. present on the occasion.

Amir Altaf, Chief Secretary Dawood Muhammad

educated individuals, Minister TEVTA Sardar for skill development.

The AJK PM highlighted that the MoU

Burich, Chairman NEVTTC Ms. Gulmina Bilal, and other officials



LAHORE: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Ms. Deemah Al-Yahya, Secretary General Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) cutting ribbon to inaugurate 24th ITCN Asia 2024 at

Zong business revolutionizes digital landscape for CGCMS through recent partnership ambitious goals without various sectors including

Zong Business, Pakistan's leading telecom operator has joined hands with Construction Management Services (CGCMS) to networks, and innovative

Empowering

Celebrating Diversity
WWWSAARCBAZAARCOM,

the innovative e-commerce

platform designed to

revolutionize trade within

entrepreneurs, particularly

women who own home-

Gezhouba seamless

here on Thursday.

China Gezhouba Group

Founded in 1970, generation, infrastructure construction, and real Corporation (CGGC) is a estate development, key subsidiary of China encompassing design, Energy Engineering Group construction, investment, Co., Ltd., a prominent and operation services.

CGCMS' expertise combined with Zong 4G's proficiency in network

state-owned enterprise, said a news release issued digital solutions to help the CGGC specializes in architecture, security.

economic integration and

empowering businesses

and consumers alike. The

SAARC BAZAAR – A way Forward for South Asian Businesses **Independent Report** industries, Businesses from all corners those in peri-urban and SAARCBAZAAR is of the SAARC region can strategically positioned to now showcase their ISLAMABAD/ SAARCBAZAAR: capitalize on this growth Trade, Fostering Growth, and by fostering regional

country. Explore the best entrepreneurial

of art, cuisine, and history opportunities. For women

the SAARC region, is now officially live. With a vision to connect global poised for a significant consumers by providing a 100% free-of-cost, user-SAARCBAZAAR trade friendly e-commerce portal that bridges traders across the SAARC region, including MSMEs (Micro, highlighting the rich cultural heritage and tourist Small, and Medium Enterprises) and attractions of each SAARC

products, services, and source materials effortlessly. The platform facilitates connections between SAARC region, projected traders, manufacturers, and

by the World Bank to be consumers with just a the world's fastest- click. SAARCBAZAAR growing region in 2024 with serves as an invaluable a 6% output growth, is resource for accessing upto-date economic data, news, and information on events goes beyond commerce by exhibitions within the SAARC region. It is committed to fostering self-employment and

remote areas, the platform provides a level playing field to showcase their talents and products. Businesses registered with commerce chambers and women entrepreneurs receive distinctive identity badges. This spotlight feature enhances visibility and credibility, promoting trust

among consumers. SAARCBAZAAR proudly pioneers a firstof-its-kind reporting mechanism for NTMs and NTBs. An open database system ensures prompt resolution of potential trade issues through formal while conducting business. entrepreneurs, especially channels. "SAARCBAZAAR

is more than an e-commerce platform; it's a gateway to economic prosperity. By connecting businesses, celebrating diversity, and addressing trade barriers, we aim to transform the SAARC region." – Zohaib Mushtaq, Project Mushtaq, Project Coordinator, SAARCBAZAAR

A b o u t SAARCBAZAAR: SAARCBAZAAR is a non-profit initiative supported by trade bodies, and development agencies. Its mission is to create a vibrant ecosystem that fosters economic growth, inclusivity, and crosscultural exchange within the SAARC region.

European Union official urges G7 to step up air defense for Ukraine and expand Iran sanctions

Monitoring Desk CAPRI: The European Union's top diplomat urged ministers on Thursday to take quick, concrete steps to provide more air defense systems to Ukraine, warning that continued delays could tilt the war in Moscow's favor.

Without more Patriot air defense missile systems to guard against incoming Russian strikes, "the electricity system of Ukraine will be destroyed. And no country can fight without having electricity at home, in the factories, in the front line," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned.

He was speaking on the sidelines of a G7 foreign ministers meeting on the Italian resort island of Capri, where Russia's war in Ukraine and surging tensions in the Middle East over Iran's unprecedented

U.S. Secretary of State

Antony Blinken echoed Borrell's call, saying he hoped U.S. funding for Ukraine would soon come through Congress but that other allies needed to step up. "In this moment, it is urgent that all of the friends and supporters of Ukraine maximize their efforts to provide Ukraine with what it needs to continue to effectively defend itself against this Russian aggression," Blinken said after meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani opened the first working session by calling for new sanctions against Iran for its weekend attack and concrete help for Ukraine to defend itself from Moscow's invasion. "If Ukraine loses,

Putin will never sit at the

Ukraine and the Israelter stage at the Capri meeting of the foreign ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, which dovetailed with other regional diplomatic efforts sending the same messages. On Wednesday, EU leaders meeting in Brussels vowed to ramp up sanctions on Iran to target its drone and missile deliveries to proxies in Gaza, Yemen and Lebanon. Borrell said the existing EU sanctions regime would be strengthened and expanded to punish Tehran and help prevent future attacks on Israel. At the same time, he said, Israel needed to exer-

cise restraint. "I don't want to exaggerate but we are on the edge of a war, a regional war in the Middle East, which will be sending shockwaves to peace table," Tajani warned. the rest of the world, and in particular to Europe.



Palestinian forensic experts and others search for bodies near Al-Shifa Hospital, in Gaza City.

Tel Aviv under pressure to defuse tensions with Iran

Monitoring Desk

matic flurry aiming to calm a region already on the edge, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saiď on able. Wednesday his country would decide how to re
Meanwhile, Mr
Cameron said that "we're

said its military and air force were ready to confront any Israeli attack. Israel faces pressure

from its allies to refrain from striking back at Iran.

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron and his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock were the first Western envoys to visit Israel and urge calm, but Netanyahu told the visiting ministers that Israel "will reserve the right to protect itself," his office said.

The German FM called for "prudent restraint", saying the region must not slide into a situation whose outcome is completely unpredict-

very anxious to avoid es-Tehran, however, calation and to say to our friends in Israel: It's a time to think with head as well as heart.'

The US has already made clear it won't join any attack on Iran and has called for de-escalation, as have a host of other Western and Arab leaders.

Israel's military chief Herzi Halevi has already vowed "a response" to Iran's first-ever direct attack, while military spokesman Daniel Hagari stressed that Tehran would not get off "scot-free"

Europe wants two things from China

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: Europe wants two things from China: First, a shift in its relatively pro-Russia position on the war in Ukraine. Second, a reduction in the trade imbalance — Chinese goods exports to the EU exceeded its imports from the 27-nation bloc by 291 billion euros (\$310 billion) last year.

It's not clear if it will get very far on either front. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz became the latest European leader to leave China with promises to talk but little more. The Chinese statements on his meetings in Beijing this week didn't appear to give ground on the issues that divide the EU and China.

There is some reason for hope in Europe. China badly wants foreign investment to boost its sluggish economy. And China has made efforts to mend its relationships from Europe to the United States and Australia, despite its differences with them. But those considerations may not

outweigh the larger strategic ing itself with Russia as it seeks an alternative to the U.S.-led global order and for promoting its green energy companies as it tries to build the nation into a tech-

U.S. are complaining that Chinese policies to promote green energy have incentivized companies to build too much manufacturing capacity for electric cars, solar panels and other related products.

Low-priced exports have taken a toll on solar companies in Europe and America and pose a potential threat to other industries. The EU launched an investigation last fall into Chinese subsidies and could impose tariffs on electric vehicles exported from China. China has agreed to talks on production capacity with the U.S. but remained steadfast in defending its exports of green en-

ergy products.

nology leader. Both the EU and the

Jordan says Israeli retaliation for Iran strikes risks wider regional war Monitoring Desk AMMAN: Jordan's For-

eign Minister Ayman Safadi said on Wednesday an Israeli retaliation against Iranian strikes could bring a real risk of dragging the whole region into a devastating

In an interview re-Safadi said his country was lobbying major powers against an escalation that would have far-reaching consequences for regional stability and security.

"The risks are enormous. That could drag the whole region into war, which would be devastating to us in the region and we'll have very, very serious implications for the rest of the world including the US," Safadi said.

Haniyeh to visit Turkey this weekend: **Erdogan Monitoring Desk**

Hamas chief

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Wednesday he will host the leader of Palestinian group Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, in Turkey

this weekend. "The leader of the Palestinian cause will be my guest this weekend, Erdogan, an outspoken critic of Israel, told lawmak-

Private television channel NTV reported that the two men would meet on Saturday Dolmabahce palace in Istanbul.

Their last meeting was in July 2023 when Erdogan hosted Haniyeh at the presidential palace in Ankara alongside Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas.

Erdogan has been one of the strongest critics of Israel since the start of the war in Gaza, sparked by the group's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023.



Polling officials carrying EVMs at Sukma, in India's Chhattisgarh state, embark an aircraft bound for a polling station.



British Foreign Secretary David Cameron, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Melanie Joly, French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne and Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani meet on the second day of a G7 foreign ministers meeting on Capri island, Italy.

Russia reports downing 5 Ukrainian military balloons in Kyiv's latest apparent war innovation

Monitoring Desk NEW YORK: Kussian air defenses downed what authorities described as five Ukrainian balloons overnight, the defense ministry in Moscow said Thursday, as the sides kept up longrange strikes that have featured heavily in what has largely become a war of attrition. Neither Russian nor

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: India begins

its crucial national elections

on Friday amid hopes and fears for its troubled de-

Narendra Modi, the most

right-wing leader to head the

country, is hoping to win a

third consecutive term. the

first time since Jawaharlal

Nehru, while his rejuve-

nated rivals say he could

confident of getting more

than 400 seats in the 18th

Lok Sabha a brute major-

ity of in the 545-seat lower

Mr Modi says he is

mocracy.

Prime

secretive balloons, which Moscow authorities and media have reported on the battlefield in recent weeks. Ukraine's military has been driving innovation since the war began in February 2022, notably adapting drones for wide use against the bigger Kremlin forces.

According to Russian news reports, the Ukrainian Ukrainian officials have provided details about the a GPS module and carry

explosives. They reportedly are harder to detect and could carry a bigger payload than more common small drones. It is not clear if they are helium or hot air or another type of balloon.

The balloons aren't

able to maneuver in the air. The GPS module is likely used to coordinate the release of explosives if the balloon floats over a spe-

Indian polls from Friday to decide future of its democracy

The Bharatiya Janata Party hopes to increase its tally from 303 to 370, the rest coming from other members of the ruling National Democratic Alliance It is widely feared

that Mr Modi would seek to use the majority to change the constitution to align with his idea of Hindu Rashtra. Mr Modi's hitherto

fractious rivals comprising regional parties plus the Congress, recently cobbled the India National Development Inclusive Alliance (ÎNDIA) bloc

UN Security Council to vote on Friday on Palestinian UN membership

Monitoring Desk JNITED NATIONS: The United Nations Security Council is scheduled to vote on Friday on a Palestinian request for full UN membership, said diplomats, a move that Israel ally the United States is expected to block because it would effectively recognize a Palestinian state. The 15-member council is due to vote at 3 pm (1900 GMT) on Friday on a draft resolution that recommends to the 193-member UN General Assembly that "the State of Palestine be admitted to membership of the United Nations.'



sults of the country's parliamentary election, in Zagreb, Croatia.

Nine arrested for \$20m Canada gold heist

Monitoring Desk ONTARIO: Canadian police have made arrests and

issued nine warrants in the largest gold theft in the

country's history, the BBC reported on Wednesday. More than 6,500 gold s worth C\$20m (£11.6m), were stolen from Toronto Pearson Airport, in April 2023, along with mil-

lions in cash According to the report, the alleged driver was arrested in the US carrying dozens of guns that police say were intended for use in Canada

Police said the Netflix-series"-style heist

was executed by a "wellorganised group of crimi-

The announcement on Wednesday by the Canadian Peel Regional Police and the US Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau came exactly one year after the massive gold heist, reportedly the sixth largest in the world.

The year-long joint investigation was codenamed Project 24K. It has included dozens of search warrants and interviews. So far, police have recovered C\$90,000 of "pure

gold", fashioned into six "crudely made" bracelets.

Thousands evacuated as Indonesia volcano erupts, causes tsunami threat

Monitoring Desk MANADO: Indonesian

rescuers raced to evacuate thousands of people Thursday after a volcano erupted five times, forcing authorities to close a nearby airport and issue a warning about falling debris that could cause a tsunami.

The crater of Mount Ruang flamed with lava against a backdrop of lightning bolts overnight after erupting four times on Wednesday, forcing authorities to raise its alert level to the highest of a four-tiered system.

The volcano in Indonesia's outermost region was still billowing a rocks that fell.

column of smoke on Thursday morning, prompting authorities to shut the nearest international airport in Manado city on Sulawesi island for 24 hours.

Authorities said they were rushing to evacuate 11,000 residents from the nearby area that included the remote island of Tagulandang, home to around 20,000 people.

Some residents were already trying to flee in a panic, according to officials.

"Last night people evacuated on their own but without direction due to the volcano's eruption and materials in the form of small

UAE reels for a third day after recordbreaking storm **Monitoring Desk**

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was still grappling on Thursday with the aftermath of a record-breaking storm this week that brought much of the country to a standstill.

In Dubai, operations at the airport, a major travel hub, remain disrupted after Tuesday's storm flooded the runway, resulting in flight diversions, delays and cancellations. The airport said on Thursday morning it had resumed receiving inbound flights at Terminal 1, used by foreign carriers, but that flights continue to be delayed and disrupted.

EU needs to turbocharge defence-industrial capacity

Monitoring Desk BRUSSELS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Wednesday that the EU needs to turbo-charge defence-industrial capacity in the next five years amid rising global threats. Speaking at a defence

and security conference in Brussels, she added that the focus will be on innovation.

"We will focus on innovation to ensure Europe has that edge in the new technologies, which we see being deployed across the world in different conflicts."

China accuses US of hypocrisy over Biden's 'xenophobic' claims

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: Beijing on Thursday accused the United States of hypocrisy in response to accusations by President Joe Biden that China is "xenophobic" and 'cheating" on trade.

"I would like to ask him: are you talking about China or the US itself?" foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said when asked about the comments.

In a speech on Wednesday to union members, Biden called for a hike in steel tariffs on China, accusing it of cheating as he courted blue-collar voters on an election campaign trip to the battleground state of Pennsylvania.

'They're not competing, they're cheating. looking for competition. They're cheating and we've but fair competition.

seen the damage here in America," the 81-year-old Biden said to cheers at the headquarters of the United Steelworkers union in Pitts-

The Democrat said Chinese steel companies "don't need to worry about making a profit because the Chinese government is subsidising them so

Biden said he had called for the US Trade Representative to triple the tariff rates for Chinese steel and aluminium if Beijing was confirmed to be using anti-competitive practices. "They're xenophobic," he added. "They've got real problems. I'm not looking for a fight with China, I'm looking for competition –

Another mass grave found in Gaza hospital

Monitoring Desk GAZA CITY: A fresh mass grave was found in Gaza Strip's Al-Shifa Hospital this week, according to Al

The grave was found after some employees informed relief and rescue workers that an unspecified number of bodies were dumped in the hospital's premises over the past few months because the incessant bombardment by Israel had made it almost impossible to ensure a normal

The channel's correspondent quoted an employee of the hospital as saying he was confident that another mass grave would be found at Beit Lahiya, a town near Gaza City which bore the brunt of Israeli bombing soon after the crisis unfolded on

According to the channel's correspondent, Palestinian families have

contains the bodies of their loved ones. Walid Radwa Ftima was one of them. He said he was able to identify the body of his mother thanks to a distinctive mark

on her leg. Israel's onslaught in Gaza was triggered by the Hamas' raid inside the Jewish state on Oct 7, which by its tallies killed 1,200 with 253 taken prisoner.

The subsequent bombardment has killed more than 33,000 Palestinians, displaced the majority of Gaza's 2.3 million people and caused a grave humanitarian crisis.

Israel has faced growing global opposition to the relentless bombardment of Gaza, which the United Nations and aid agencies have warned has pushed the north of the territory to the brink of famine. But Netanyahu rejected any claims about famine on Wednesday, saying Israel is doing "above and beyond" been visiting the hospital to what is needed "on the hufind out whether the grave manitarian issue".

No end in sight to Libya crisis after UN envoy quits

ignation of the United Nations special envoy for Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, is the latest sign of the failure of reconciliation efforts in the war-torn North African country, analysts told AFP. The Senegalese diplomat, who on Tuesday tendered his resignation after only 18 months at the helm of the UN support mission UNSMIL, has repeatedly accused rival leaders of perpetuating divisions to serve their own interests.

Libya is still struggling to recover from years of war and chaos after the 2011 overthrow of longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi, and the country remains split between a UN-recognised government based in Tripoli and a rival administration in the country's east.

Speaking to reporters after submitting his resignation to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who accepted it, Bathily said the situation has deteriorated in recent months.

Taking aim at leaders in the country that has seen repeated cycles of violence since 2011, the diplomat the Haftar-backed.

Monitoring Desk decried a "lack of political major Libyan actors who are comfortable with the current stalemate". General elections scheduled for December 2021 were postponed indefinitely amid persistent disagreements between Abdelhamid Dbeibah's Tripoli-based government and the eastern-based administration backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar. "The selfish resolve of current leaders to maintain the status quo through delaying tactics and manoeuvres at the expense of the Libyan people must stop," Bathily said, also condemning the foreign backers of both camps without naming

To Jalel Harchaoui, an associate fellow at British think-tank Royal United Services Institute Bathily's resignation did not come as a shock "for the simple reason that the process he was leading had been completely defunct for several months" Harchaoui said that Bathily's efforts have been undermined by Egypt, which alongside the United Arab Emirates is the main power supporting

Climate impact set to cut 2050 global GDP by nearly a fifth

Monitoring Desk PARIS: Climate change caused by CO2 emissions already in the atmosphere will shrink global GDP in 2050 by about \$38 trillion, or almost a fifth, no matter how aggressively humanity cuts carbon pollution, researchers said on Wednes-

But slashing greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible remains crucial to avoid even more devastating economic impacts after mid-century, they reported in the jour-

Economic fallout from climate change, the study shows, could increase tens of trillions of dollars per year by 2100 if the planet were to warm significantly beyond two degrees Celsius above mid-19th century

Earth's average surface temperature has already climbed 1.2C above that benchmark, enough to amplify heatwaves, droughts, flooding and

tropical storms made more destructive by rising seas.

Annual investment needed to cap global warming below 2C — the cornerstone goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement — is a small fraction of the damages that would be avoided, the researchers found. Staying under the 2C threshold "could limit average regional income loss to 20 percent compared to 60 percent" in a high-emissions scenario, lead author Max Kotz, an expert in complexity science at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), said. Economists disagree on how much should be spent to avoid climate damages. Some call for massive investment now, while others argue it would be more cost-effective to wait until societies are richer and

technology more advanced. The new research sidesteps this debate, but its eye-watering estimate of economic impacts helps make the case for ambitious near-term action.

Sharif on Thursday wit-

nessed singing of a letter of

intent regarding the United

Nations Generation Unlim-

ited (GenU) programme

between Prime Minister's

Youth Programme and the

Children's Emergency Fund

by the Secretary General of

the United Nations in 2018

with the aim to empower

the youth through educa-

tion, technical training and

entrepreneurship and working towards early edu-

start its full operations in

Pakistan with an initial in-

vestment of 20 million Eu-

ros in youth related

will help provide equal op-

Signing the document

GenU is planning to

cation and training.

GenÚ was launched

(UNICEF).

International

PM witnesses signing of

letter of intent between

PMYP, UNICEF

ISLAMABAD (APP): portunities to education and Prime Minister training to the youth. GenU

Programme will work to-

gether on operational strategic framework in this re-

delegation headed by representative of UNICEF in

Pakistan Abdullah A Fazil

called on the prime minis-

ter. Chairman PM Youth

Mashhood was also present

in the meeting.

The delegation ap-

about the collaboration be-

tween the PM Youth

Programme and UNICEF

regarding increasing the ca-

pacity of the youth in Pa-

appreciated the steps being

taken by UNICEF for the

welfare of children all over

the world, including Paki-

The prime minister

rised the prime minister

Programme

Earlier the UNICEF

Tarar for enhanced collaboration between public, private sector to ensure rapid economic dev.

ISLAMABAD (APP): which we can offer to the sponsibility through col-Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday stressed the need for enhanced collaboration between the public and private sectors to fast track the process of economic development of the coun-

Addressing the First Pakistan Semiconductor Summit, he said that the Special Investment Facilitation Council had been set up to attract investment in Pakistan and ensure 'ease of doing business'. He said it was main thrust of the government policy to encourage innovation and investment in the country.

He said that Pakistan, as the fifth largest democracy in the world, was endowed with great natural resources and its biggest resource was its human resource. "We are blessed with a huge population of youth which constitutes 68 per cent of its population" That is a huge potential

world, he added.

He said Pakistan was crossroads of the world ness' which was a source of pride for the nation.

He said that the Government of Pakistan as a policy encouraged innovation and investment in the country which this summit was offering precisely - a collaboration between public and private

He said that the federal cabinet meeting on Wednesday had approved a public private partnership policy framework to eventually facilitate investment in the country.

He said that the job of only to regulate but also their primary responsibility as a facilitator which

and private sector and by strategically located at the ensuring 'ease of doing busi-He said that Pakistan has been producing 50,000

laboration between public

engineering graduates every year and it has the best engineering universities in the world. "Our engineering graduates are well placed globally but unfortunately we are not able to reap the benefits of the semiconductor industry. It is \$ 550 billion industry at this moment with the projection of \$ 1 Trillion by 2030."

Tarar said that Pakistan had great potential to deploy its human resource in this industry.

The minister said that the government was not he was proud to inform that Shehbaz Sharif during his facilitate investment. He stints as chief minister of said unfortunately some- the Punjab had attached times governments forgot great importance to vocational training and skill development. From day one, mpered the investment. the priority of the PML-N He said that the gov- was skill development of



singing of a letter of intent between Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

Quetta, Gwadar submerged, roads washed away as stormy rains lash Balochistan

GWADAR (INP): Continuous heavy rains have caused widespread destruction in Balochistan. Quetta and Gwadar submerged and mostly areas lost ground connectivity as roads and highways were washed away on Thursday. According to the chan-

nel, continuous rainfall has been reported in Quetta and Gwadar regions since last night, leading to water entering houses, roads being closed for traffic, and disrupting daily life.

Due to the unprecedented downpour in Gwadar regions, highways also washed away and ground connectivity with Karachi and other Sindh areas was disturbed.

The SP Coastal Highway confirmed that traffic between Gwadar and Karachi has been sus- submerged, and the roofs of

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

on Thursday said that Pa-

kistan attached great impor-

tance to its longstanding

relations with the United

Kingdom (UK) which were

based on mutual respect

and shared perceptions on

broad range of regional and

ther solidify this cordial

bond through increased

people-to-people interac-

tions, enhanced parliamen-

tary engagements, and bol-

stered economic ties for the

mutual benefit of the two groups.

It is high time to fur-

international issues.

Pakistan, UK ties

based on mutual

respect: Speaker

pended at Makran Coastal Highway near Princes of Hope as the road has been blocked by flood and other routes were also washed away. In Quetta, it has continued to rain since last night and water entered the houses while highways and

The downpour also badly affected the areas of Turbat, Panjgur, Noshki, Pishin, and Chaman as well. Reportedly, flooding caused roads to wash away in Chaman and rain waters entered into houses.

linked roads were closed for

Intense rainfall in Ziarat, Pasni, Ormara, Jiwani, and Jhal Magsi has led to flash flooding in streams and nullahs.

According to the report, numerous settlements in these areas have been

friendly countries, he ex-

pressed these views while

talking to the British High

Commissioner to Pakistan,

Jane Marriott, who called

on him. Highlighting the sig-

nificance of parliamentary

cooperation, Speaker Sadiq

underscored that parlia-

mentary diplomacy had

historically played a piv-

otal role in strengthening

continuous exchange and

collaboration between the

two parliaments through

He emphasized the

bilateral relations.

many houses have col lapsed while ground con nectivity has also been dis rupted in several villages.

Karachi was also affected by the westerly rain system as it experienced downpour in areas like Metrowell and SITE, Orangi Town, and Sher

In the early morning in Lahore, the weather became pleasant due to rain in different parts of the city.

Tĥe Meteorology Department has predicted heavy rains in Sindh and Punjab for the next three days as a spell of rains is expected from April 18 to

As per the met office report, Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan will also receive rain during next

PM exchange greetings with MPs

Prior to President Asif Ali Zardari's address to the Joint Session of Parliament on Thursday, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had an interaction with parliamentarians of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and allied par-

He went across the National Assembly Hall to exchange greetings, besides shaking hands, with the members of Parliament (MPs), including Pakistan Peoples Party





(ISSI) here on Thursday. The think tank is the

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed

along with others inaugurating Pakistan Africa

Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR)

at Institute of Strategic Studies under the Thematic

Focus: 'Reviving the Bandung Spirit of Afro-Asian

Mushahid launches

Pakistan's first think

tank on Africa

Solidarity: Pakistan-Africa Relations'.

President of PAIDAR. The think tank was launched at a Seminar guests included a number of

ambassadors, especially

well as scholars, students,

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's

first think tank on Africa,

Pakistan-Africa Institute

for Development & Re-

search (PÂIDAR) was

launched at a well attended

event at the Institute of

Strategic Studies Islamabad

dignitaries and think tanks, a news release said.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed noted the launch of PAIDAR coincides with the 69th anniversary of the Bandung conference of Asian and African nations held on April 18, 1955 in Indonesia in which Pakistan participated along with China as

well as countries from Africa. He termed Africa as the pivotal player in the tiative as the founding resurgence of the Global South with 54 members of the African Union. Referring to Pakistan-Africa re hosted by the ISSI with the lations, Senator Mushahid theme: "Reviving the Hussain said that Pakistan's Bandung spirit of Afro- ties with Africa predate the Asian solidarity: Pakistan-Africa relations". The Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Founder of Pakistan visited Egypt in 1946

key African country.

The President presented his vision on all the

social issues of the country

including law and order,

rights of Balochistan, con-

struction and development

joint session of the Parlia-

ment which was a good

Opposition's protest amid President's address taints Parl. norms: Raisani

from African countries as to forge friendly ties with this

ISLAMABAD (APP): Youngest Member of the National Assembly (MNA) and Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP-Balochistan) Nawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani on Thursday said the Opposition's protest durto the joint sitting of Parliament tainted the parliamentary norms of the coun-

sion as guests

ing the President's address try that brought bad name to the country before foreign dignitaries who were attending the special ses-

projects which should have been listened by the opposition, the youngest lawmaker from Balochistan said while talking to APP outside the Parliament. Raisani praised President Asif Ali Zardari for his constructive address to the



QUETTA: Deputy Controller Station Director Radio Pakistan Aneesur Rehman meeting with **Director General Public Relations Balochistan** Muhammad Noor Khetran. Deputy Controller Radio Pakistan Siddiqa Khan and Senior Producer Saleem Khan are also present.

Iranian envoy for making Pak-Iran border a'commercial gateway'

Iran's Ambassador in Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam on Thursday proposed transforming the Pakistan-Iran border into a 'commercial gateway" in a bid to strengthen trade ties between the two countries.

Talking to a private

He said strides had been made in enhancing economic, commercial, and cultural ties between the two nations.

A m b a s s a d o r Moghadam said that although Pakistan-Iran relations witnessed an improvement in recent years, there remained a significant untapped potential for deeper collaboration.

He underscored the need to elevate the trade volume between the two countries from the current \$2.8 billion to a target range of \$10 to \$25 billion

ernment could fulfil this re- the youth.

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, and Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, at Parliament House.

All areas cleared thanks to administration: **Commissioner, DG PDMA** visit different areas of Quetta; review cleanliness situation

Independent Report QUETTA: The Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafqaat and Director General, Provincial Disaster Management Au-(PDMA), Jahanzaib Khan visited different areas of the me-

post-rain situation of clean-They visited double road, Jinnah road, Airport road, Liaquat bazaar, Shahrah-E-Iqbal and other areas saying that all these areas have been cleared

tropolis and reviewed the

from the rain and sewerage

ferent areas, which have been cleared following the timely steps taken by the administration.

He urged the general public to adopt preventive measures and ensure drainage of rain water from the roofs of their homes.

He also asked the people to contact the control room in case of emergency so as to give timely response.

The Commissioner said that it is our aim to serve the masses for we are all ready.

He said that all possible steps are being taken Speaking on the occa- to provide maximum relief sion, Commissioner said to the people during the rain that he has inspected dif-

World Bank demands tax reforms from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The the elimination of sales tax World Bank has put forth major demands for tax reforms from the Pakistani government and eliminating the exemptions on duties

The World Bank released its report on Pakistan and suggested the government of the urgent need for tax system reforms and

exemptions to promote economic and social improvement.

The report calls upon the government of Pakistan to establish a national policy for the child development and advocates for reducing subsidies on energy and other commodi-



QUETTA: Commissioner & Administrator Quetta Hamza Shafqaat and Director General PDMA Jahanzeb Khan visiting city during rain.

PTI announces to support PkMAP's candidates in bye-elections of PB-50 & 51

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to support the candidates of Pashtoonkhaw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) in the bye-elections taking place on the Provincial Assembly's constituencies of PB-50 and

This was announced by the provincial president of PTI Balochistan, Dawood Shah Kakar while addressing joint press conference with the senior leader of leader of PkMAP, Abdul Rahim Ziaratwal here at the Quetta press club on Thursday.

The provincial president of PTI said that the

bye-elections are going to be held on PB-50 and 51, and the PTI would support candidates of PkMAP in the by-elections.

Speaking on the occasion, the PkMAP's Abdul Rahim Ziaratwal thanked the leadership of PTI and especially Qaidi No. 804 for supporting the party's candidates in the by-elections.

Ziaratwal announced that Mir Wais and Abaseen Khan are our candidates in the by-elections of PB-50 (Killa Abdullah) and PB-51 (Chaman) respectively.

The PkMAP's senior leader said that the country is passing through critical time and there's a political instability in the country.

Pakistan to commence Hajj flight operation from May 9

SLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan to commence Hajj 2024 operation from May 9 from eight airports of the

According to details, the arrangements for the Hajj 2024 flight operation have been completed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Har-

Four Airlines including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Saudi Airlines, Air Blue and Serene Air will take part in the Hajj opera-

The vaccination of the pilgrims will start on April 30 at the Hajj Camps. As many as 69,500 pilgrims will depart on the spiritual

journey under the government's scheme. Hajj 2024 flight operation will be carried out from Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Multan, Quetta, Sukkur, Sialkot, Rahim Yar Khan and Faisalabad airports.

Acting Speaker BA slams bid on life of Akhunzada

Independent Report QUETTA: The acting Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms Ghazala Gola has strongly condemned the bid of life of leader of Pakistan Peoples Party and its new nominated candidate for National Assembly, Akhunzada Chatan.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Thursday, Ms Ghazala Gola said that the anti state elements are trying to spoil the peaceful situation of the country under preplanned

conspiracy. However, the morale of political workers can't be downed through such cow-

The acting Speaker of provincial assembly demanded of the Khyber Pakhtunkaw Government to provide every possible protection to the masses of province.

Speaker NA meets Chairman Senate

ISLAMABAD (APP) Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday met with Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani at Parliament House. The Speaker congratulated Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani on assuming the office of Chairman Senate and expressed his best wishes, said a press release issued by the Senate Secre-

Ambassador Jiang says Chinese workers will continue contribution to Pakistan's socio-economic development

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chi-demned by all sections both nese staff and workers at at the government and the different CPE-related projects will continue contribution to Pakistan's socio-economic development with same spirit and zeal, said Jiang Zaidong, the Ambassador of China to Pakistan.

Headquarters.

In an interview with private Tv channel on Thursday, the Ambassador expressed his satisfaction that the high-level inquiry initiated by the government of Pakistan into recent terrorist attack in which five Chinese personnel were killed was progressing smoothly, hoping that it will pave the way safeguarding the safety of the CPEC-projects and the Chi-

He noted that the inci-

ment and the security agencies took immediate steps to expose the culprits and bring them to book. His government, the Ambassador said is willing to work with Pakistani security agencies to achieve the security objectives. To ensure, consistent progress of CPEC, the government

public level. Following this

tragic mishap, the govern-

will have to ensure the safety of those who are engaged in the development work at various locations of the country. Ambassador Jiang congratulating the new government in Pakistan said that it showed its serious-

ness in maintaining the depth of Sino-Pak decades



QUETTA: Balochistan National Party (BNP) Senior Vice President, Sajid Tarin Advocate addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting at NADRA Govt, security forces launch anti-narcotics operation across country

ISLAMABAD (INP): Th Govt of Pakistan, in collaboration with security forces, has initiated an antinarcotics operation aimed at curbing drug trafficking and apprehending offend-

During the course of this operation, authorities have seized a very large quantity of narcotics totaling 1,024,399 kg from various regions across the coun-

Additionally, a total of 1,244 drug dealers have been arrested, signaling a significant blow to the ille gal drug trade. Recent figures from

April 7th to 14th reveal

notable seizures in differ-

ent provinces. Gas leak claims life in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): A woman was killed and another man sustained critical injuries in a gas leak incident, the police said on Thursday. They said that vic-

residents of Akhtarabad area of the provincial capital, were brought to hospital after they suffered injuries as a result of gas explosion.

Later, the woman suc cumbed to injuries. The police registered case and started investigaISLAMABAD (APP):

Ambassador Moghadam suggested expanding border markets and opening new crossing points to facilitate trade.

news channel, he expressed optimism about furthering Pak-Iran bilateral cooperation across various sectors.

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