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Bilawal Bhutto calls for 'Charter of Reconciliation' among all political parties

PPP chief warns of dictatorship if politicians do not focus on national reconciliation

GARHI KHUDA BAKHSH (INP): PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that all politicians and political parties should work on a Charter of National Reconciliation' to avoid fighting with each other and shun politics of foul language.
"Rather than playing

dharna dharna, we should sit on the table and have a political dialogue to bring improvement in our system, democracy, and institutions through amendments." he said while addressing a large crowd in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, Sindh on Sunday.
The PPP chief's rec-

ommendation comes as the newly formed alliance of opposition parties Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Aain will launch a massive movement. This alliance kicked off

its protest movement against alleged rigging in the February 8 general elections



from Balochistan by staging two separate public gatherings in Pishin and "When Zulfikar Ali Chaman on Saturday.

Without naming the multi-party confab, Bilawal described it as the "PNA (Pakistan National Alliance) 2" and added that the alliance was beating drums for alleged vote-rigging to cause "economic and political instability.

movements, warning them Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, Sindh

of the risk of dictatorship

Bhutto was the PM of this country, some conspirators like 'nine stars' started a campaign and thought that they would oust Bhutto and come into power. But because of their campaign Pakistan had to bear dictatorship for 10 He reminded the par- today," he said while ad-

years and this risk exists ties of the result of such dressing a large crowd in

The country would not develop and democracy would be at the receiving end if politicians make such an environment and not fo-

cus on national reconcilia-

tion and are involved in politics of bad-mouthing. While advising the politicians to "come to their senses", he called for dialogue between political parties. The PPP chief added that the party would try to provide relief to the people

in the provinces ruled by

He also mentioned about the 'Charter of Democracy', saying that the party achieved 90% of its target under the agreement. The remaining 10 per cent was related to the judicial reforms, he said and hoped to do it with all parties, legal fraternity, and civil so-

Bilawal called for reviving people's trust in the national institutions. Every worker of the PPP wants

BAKHSH (INP): President

Asif Ali Zardari says Paki-

stan People's Party will

continue to support the

government for economic

stability and prosperity in

public gathering on 45th

death anniversary of

Shaheed Zulfikar Ali

The President said Pa-

kistan is blessed with vast

potential of minerals and

natural resources and we

will emerge from current

economic crisis through ex-

ploitation of these re-

Paying tribute to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali

Bhutto, he said Bhutto fam-

ily always sacrificed their

lives for the country and

President Zardari

He was addressing the

the country.

on Sundav.

sources.

President Zardari says

PPP will continue to

support govt to achieve

economic stability

Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Benazir Bhutto had ap-

Bakhsh Bhutto in Larkana pointed him as the chairman

KHUDA ing their confidence on Pa-

general elections.

kistan People's Party in

Islamabad saying Pakistan

was not a poor country but

it had been made so by

mindset of the 'babus' [of-

ficers] sitting in the capital.

Zardari recounted how

former prime minister

of the Pakistan Peoples

Party, despite doubts from

some friends about his lead-

emphasised that Pakistan's

status as a poor nation was

not predetermined, adding

that despite Allah's provi-

sion of abundant wealth, the

nation suffered from a lack

of intellect. Zardari stressed

the importance of cultivat-

ing a mindset that seeks to

understand and address the

country's challenges com-

ership capabilities.

the bureaucracy

The President assailed

the implementation of the charter of democracy, he

President Asif Ali Zardari also addressed the people. He shunned the impression that Pakistan was a poor country and blamed the "thinking, understanding and softheaded" of 'Babus in Islamabad".

He said that such thinking has made Pakistan a poor state, reiterating that the country was not poor.

The country has everything, but lacks intellectual capacity, Zardari said and called for sitting together. "What is in power? Power is about people's service and we fight for it," he said and stressed the need for dia-

"If you cannot come to that point then withdraw. The PPP for the past 40 years have been fighting. Sometimes it withdraws, advances, sidesteps and takes a front step," the president said and called for thinking before taking any step.



GARHI KHUDA BAKHSH: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing a gathering on the occasion of the 45th death anniversary of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Iran warns Israel against retaliation, global powers urge restraint

US will not take part in retaliatory action against Iran, says White House

Monitoring Desk

JERUSALEM: Iran warned Israel and the United States on Sunday of a much larger response if there is any retaliation for its mass drone and missile attack on Israeli territory overnight, as Israel said "the campaign is not over yet"

The threat of open warfare erupting between the arch Middle East foes and dragging in the United States has put the region on edge as Washington said America did not seek conflict with Iran but would not hesitate to protect its forces

and Israel. Iran launched the attack over Israeli strike on its consulate in Syria on April 1 that killed top Revolutionary Guards commanders and followed months of clashes between Israel and Iran's regional allies, trigred by the war in Gaza.

mostly tack. Iranian Foreign Mindrones,

President, PM

felicitate Sikh

community on

Baisakhi festival

Muhammad

In their message on

launched from inside Iran, caused only modest damage in Israel as most were the US, Britain and Jordan.

An Air Force base in southern Israel was hit, but continued to operate as normal and a 7-year old child was seriously hurt by shrapnel. There were no other reports of serious damage. "We intercepted, we repelled, together we shall win," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on social media ahead of a planned 1230 GMT meeting of the war cabinet to discuss a re-

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said despite thwarting the attack, the military campaign was not over and "we must be prepared for every scenario" Israel's Channel 12 TV

sponse to the attack.

cited an unnamed Israeli official overnight as saying

ister Amir Abdollahian said Tehran had informed the United States its attack on shot down with the help of Israel would be "limited" and for self defence. He said Israel's neighbours had also been informed of its planned strikes 72-hours in

> Global powers Russia, China, France and Germany as well as Arab states Egypt, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates urged restraint.

'We will do everything to stop a further escalation," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters during a visit to China. "We can only warn everyone, especially Iran, against continuing this way.

Turkey also warned Iran it did not want further tension in the region.

The Islamic Řepublic's mission to the United Nations said its actions were aimed at punishing "Israeli However, the attack there would be a "signification crimes", but that it now from hundreds of missiles cant response to the at-



Sindh CM directs relevant departments to remain alert amid rain forecast

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed all relevant departments to remain alert in view of rain forecast in different areas of the province.

Talking to media at Sehwan Sharif, he said the provincial government to stay prepared to handle would spare no effort to prevent any loss due to heavy rainfall. Meanwhile In antici-

pation of heavy rainfall, the Government of Sindh has issued a high alert for all municipalities, administrative bodies, and hospitals across the province.

Chief Secretary of Sindh, Syed Asif Haider Shah, has instructed all relevant authorities to remain

pected rainfall. Addressing all commissioners and deputy commissioners, Mr. Shah emphasized ensuring the effective drainage of Board, Karachi Electric, WASA, and Cantonments any emergency situations. Additionally, Chief Secretary urged the installation of de-watering pumps on key city roads and emphasized the completion of all

necessary arrangements in

districts to tackle any exi-

gencies. Simultaneously,

under the supervision of

cording to Abdul Rasheed Solangi, Director-General of Sindh Building Control Authority, technical staff in the Rain Emergency Cenrainwater from major thor- ter will be on duty in shifts oughfares and low-lying ar- of twenty-four hours to eas. He directed the Water manage any emergent situ-

Leaves for staff have been canceled. Furthermore. a campaign has been initiated to vacate residents of 515 dilapidated and dangerous buildings to ensure their safety. According to Engineer Asadullah Khan. Chief Operating Officer of the Water Corporation said that on the special directives of the Chief Minister of Sindh, Director Demolition, Mr. the Chief Secretary of Sindh, Abdul Sajjad Khan, a Rain and the Mayor of Karachi, Emergency Center has been various sections of the established in Sindh Build- city's important roads are on high alert during the ex- ing Control Authority. Ac- equipped with machinery.

thanked the people for pos- prehensively. Mayor says efforts to drain rainwater under way as Karachi receives showers

Independent Report (ARACHI: Mayor Murtaza Wahab said on Sunday that efforts were under way to drain rainwater from the main arteries after rainfall hit parts

of the metropolis. According to the met office, Surjani Town received the most rain (29mm), followed by Nazimabad (21.2mm) and

Gulshan-i-Hadeed (20mm). Rainfall was also recorded in PAF Faisal Base (19mm), Kemari (19mm), Mansoor Base (18mm), Korangi (17mm),

Met Office University road (15.7mm), Airport Old area (15.1mm), North Karachi (15mm), Saadi Town 15mm), Orangi Town (14.4mm), Saddar (13mm) and Malir (12mm). Jinnah Terminal (1.2mm), Quaidabad (5mm)

and Defence Phase II (5.5mm) received light showers whereas areas such as Gaddap, and Gulshan-i-Maymar received no rain. In a post on X, Karachi

Mayor Murtaza Wahab said, "The staff is busy

The mayor said he visited various areas of Karachi, including Naagin Chowrangi and KDA Chowrangi, where he appreciated the teams working to deal with the rain situation.

"The rain is continuing for the past three hours and the main arteries are clear,' he claimed.

In another post, Wahab ISLAMABAD (Online) said that all staff of the President Asif Alí Zardari and Prime Min-KMC, Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation, and Sindh Solid Waste Manage-Shehbaz Sharif have fement Board were present on licitated Sikh commuthe ground to tackle the rain nity on the celebration of Baisakhi festival. "For the first time, ve-

hicles with suction, jetting this event, they that this and pumping features have occasion gives message also been deputed on major of love, happiness, peace and affection. He arteries to deal with the situation," he added. said that Pakistan felt He later said that water pride over its diverse accumulated on the Korangi cultural heritage. side of Qayyumabad

The President said Roundabout was being that Pakistan will ensure all steps to facili-According to a weather tate the Sikh commuforecast issued today, the PMD said "intermittent

In his felicitation rain/thunderstorms of modmessage, Prime Miniserate intensity with isolated ter Shehbaz Sharif said clearing rainwater from [areas] where it has collected." heavy falls" were today in Karachi. heavy falls" were expected Government of Pakistan and all the provincial governments are ensuring provision of all facilities to the Sikh Yatrees who were visiting their religious places in Pakistan.

Shehbaz Sharif termed Baisakhi as the festival of spreading love and happiness. Prime Minister proudly said that Pakistan was a beautiful blend of different faiths and culture and the colours of Baisakhi further add to this beauty.

raeli genocide in Gaza at Karachi Press Club Pakistan concerned over ongoing developments in ME, calls for restraint

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday said that Pakistan was watching with deep concern the ongoing developments in the Middle East (ME) and called upon all the parties to exercise the utmost restraint and move towards

de-escalation.

KARACHI: Palestine Foundation stages a protest demonstration against Is-

"Today's developments demonstrate the consequences of the breakdown of diplomacy. These also underline the grave implications in cases where unable to fulfill its responsibilities of maintaining international peace and security," the Foreign Office added.

Spokesperson said in a It was now critically

urgent to stabilize the situation and restore peace, it was further stressed. The spokesperson

said that for months, Pakistan had underlined the necessity of international efforts to prevent the expansion of hostilities in the region and for immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

On April 2, Pakistan had pointed to the dangers the UN Security Council is of an attack on the Iranian consular office in Syria as a major escalation in an already volatile region, it was

Three dead, 8 injured in collision between two buses

KARACHI (INP): At least three people including two baby girls were killed and eight were seriously injured when two passenger buses collided with each other at Superhighway, in Karachi.

As per rescue sources, two passenger buses collided with each other near Jokhia Morr at Superhighway as the drivers lost control of vehicles due to rain.

As a result, three people including two baby girls and eight people were seriously injured.

The injured and bodies were moved to the Jinnah Hospital. As per initial reports, the identity of the injured could not be revealed.

Parts of Karachi received light to moderate rain on Sunday morning due to the influence of a westerly wave. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) forecast thunderstorms accompanied by heavy rain in Karachi will persist till April 15.

Sharif family afraid of Qaidi No. 804, says Umar Ayub

Independent Report

QUETTA: The central He claimed that the gov-Secretary General of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) and leader of Opposition in National Assembly, Umar Ayub Khan has stated that we want supremacy of law and constitution in the country, and nothing else for the movement has been started for protection of the con-

He believed that the coming era of government the crucial meeting of the

47 would be winded-up. ernment formed through Form 47 would no more from Quetta on Sunday

the protest public meetings held in Pishin and Chaman besides attending is of PTI after the incum- six-parties alliance, which Siddiq Tareen and others.

bent government of Form are part of the movement for protection of constitution in the country.

A leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) run. The senior leader of PTI was addressing hurnounced to join the PTI riedly called press confer- after resigning from his ence before his departure party. Also present on the occasion were leaders of PTI including Akhunzada Umar Ayub had come Hussain, Dawood Shah Kakar, to Quetta to participate in Noor Khan Khilji, Muhammad Asif Tareen, Sardar Zainul Abdin Khilii. Barat Khan Khilii Khursheed Kakar Najeebullah Kharoti.



HYDERABAD: Fire fighters extinguishing burning bus which caught fire due to electric short circuit, at M-9 Motorway in Hyderabad.

Joint session of parliament rescheduled

ISLAMABAD (Online): The joint session of parliament has been rescheduled. According to Parliamentary affairs sources, the joint session of parliament

will take place on April 18 instead of April 16. President Asif Ali Zardari will address the joint session of parliament on the commencement of

new parliamentary year

be attended by prime ministers of AJK and GB, chief ministers of all the four provinces, governors and all the three services chiefs will attend the joint session of parliament

Arrangements have been made in guests gallery for foreign ambassadors In order to participate in joint

Daily Joice of Masse Independent

Monday April 15, 2024

Escalating tension between Iran-Israel

While Iran's use of hundreds of drones and missiles to directly target Israel overnight on Sunday in retaliation for an Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus set some major political and military precedents, but it has escalated tension between Iran and Israel and so in the region and world aggravating the conflict.

It was the single largest drone attack ever carried out by any country, and it was the first time Iran directly attacked Israel after almost a half-century of being archenemies.

Here's a look at what political military and economic considerations Tehran might have factored in while deciding on the attack that has amplified fears of a larger regional war and that could also affect the direction of Israel's war on

Pakistan has already issued a clear statement by highlighting the escalatory steps of 1st April by Israel and Pakistan has squarely put the blame of escalation to where it rightfully belongs. There's call for international community and UN especially UNSC to follow through internationally accepted norms and obligations is the right way to proceed for dialing back. Under the prevailing circumstances, rather amidst escalating tension, Pakistan calls for restraint and step back is the most pragmatic way forward.

Obviously, Pakistan continues to have a very clear and lucid stance towards Palestinian and Gaza issue and would like that the ongoing humanitarian crisis is not pushed back due to focus on these new develop-

Under all circumstances, Pakistan fully supports and stand by the Palestinians who are suffering from tempts to legislate his way the brutal attacks and naked aggression by Israeli forces in Ghaza.

What Pakistan wants is that Israeli must stop ongoing naked aggression against innocent Palestinians, rather the world community should also force it to do so putting an end to the war crimes.

While Iran has taken revenge of the April 1 Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus that | What will the world look had killed seven IGRC members, including two generals in charge of leading operations in Syria and Lebanon, along with six other people, it (Israel) and it's allies and supporters must take cognizance of the situation and play role for bringing peace instead of taking any action against Iran. At the same time, critical importance of a strong defence and security apparatus in any country especially Pakistan which has multiple external threats, a strong and immoral enemy like India as well as externally sponsored terrorism in the country. It is also clear that nexus between Israel and India is meant to destabilise the region.

Amidst the external and internal security threats, strong Armed Forces are need of every country and so of Pakistan especially in view of the nefarious designs of India evident from it's past moves.

This cannot be overemphasised than in the ongoing conflict in the region.

What's most important is that social media and vested political interests need to stop their heinous propaganda and think of Pakistan rather than playing in the hands of

They must think and take care of the vested national interests of the country instead of their petty ones.

All the responses given by the countries have asked for cessation of hostilities rather than following jingoistic rhetoric or war mongering less the social media propaganda trolls sitting in and outside of Pakistan just to hurt Pakistan national interests.

The big test ahead

Muhammad Amir Rana

Pakistan finds itself in the midst of a delicate balancing act with regard to its relationships with Iran and

Saudi Arabia. This became evident ecently when, at the same time that it secured a \$2 billion deposit from Saudi Arabia — which will boost total Saudi deposits in the State Bank to \$5bn — Pakistan banned the Iranianbacked Zainebiyoun Brigade. Despite this move, President Asif Ali Zardari reassured his Iranian counterpart of Pakistan's commitment to cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including security. These developments highlight Pakistan's growing dependence on Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states due to evolving regional security concerns and persistent economic challenges. This increased reliance, however, may come with a few strings

Tensions are soaring in the Middle East as the Israel-Hamas conflict threatens to escalate in the larger region. The US has restricted staff travel in Israel, fearing Iranian retaliation for a susthe Zainebiyoun Brigade's pected Israeli strike on Iran's involvement in sectarian vioconsulate in Damascus In lence in the country and rethis context, clipping the cruitment for the Iraq and Svria conflict, but the govwings of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps ernment had not acted ear-(IRGC) and its principal lier because of circumstances subsidiary, the Quds Force, linked to the alleged preshas become essential for the ence of Baloch insurgents on US, Israel, and its allies in Iranian soil. The loyalty of the Gulf. The Ouds Force its members, who prioritise ideological affiliations over employs all semi-conventional warfare tactics, innational ties, also remains a cluding sophisticated techmajor challenge for security niques of guerrilla warfare institutions. The involvement of a and militancy. It operates section of Shia youth in through its regional proxies, the Iraqi Hashd al-Shaabi. transnational political activ-

the Afghan Fatemiyoun Brigade, the Pakistani ism and militancy goes back to before the 1979 revolu-Zainebiyoun, and Yemen's tion, with figures such as Houthis. The Zainebiyoun Arif al-Husayni playing key Brigade is believed to have roles. The Brigade has acbeen involved in supplying knowledged ties with the weapons to the IRGC in the Quds Force since around the Middle East. Last month. 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan, and its formation reports emerged of alleged Zainebiyoun members of was announced in 2014 dur-Pakistani origin being aping the conflict in Syria. It prehended in international has recently pledged its waters for carrying weapreadiness to follow orders from the IRGC. The insurons to be given to the IRGC in the Middle East. In another incident, the death of a Pakistan-origin commander in Syria affiliated with the group paved the way for Pakistan to ban it. ist organisation by both

gent Sunni Baloch group, Jaish al-Adl, has been a longstanding source of tension between Iran and Pakistan, though labelled as a terror-

countries. Jaish al-Adl has

intensified its operations

against the Iranian security

forces, which is building pressure on Pakistan to act against it. Iran savs Jaish al-Adl is a Saudi proxy operating from Pakistani soil Iranian drone and missile attacks in Balochistan in

> January this year and Pakistan's tit-for-tat response aggravated tensions between the two countries. Though immediate diplomatic efforts eased immediate tensions, mistrust continues to lurk beneath the surface. Jaish al-Adl has continued attacking the Iranian security forces, while recruitment for Zainebiyoun has also continued. Meanwhile, Iranian government has not taken any concrete action against the Baloch insurgents on its soil. The Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline remains a major reason for Pakistan's tolerance of some key security issues with Iran. The pipeline was an old idea, but implementation began much later, when Asif Ali Zardari was nearing the completion of his first term as president. Iran has built its part, but Pakistan is hesitant to proceed at its end, due to pressure from Saudi Arabia and the risk of debilitating US

not to pursue the project. If Pakistan fails to fulfil its commitment to building the ipeline, it could face a hefty fine, potentially having to pay \$20 billion. The last interim government had tasked a company with building Pakistan's portion of the gas pipeline. How-

ever, the changing situation in the Middle East and

Pakistan's internal economic

situation may delay con-

ously signalled to Pakistan

Apparently, the combination of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari is a feasible way to maintain a balance between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Sharif's family is considered close to the Saudi camp, while the Saudis have doubts about the PPP leadership's credentials on sectarian matters and their approach to Iran. Prime Minister Sharif has secured a commitment from the Saudi crown prince to accelerate the implementation of the massive \$5bn plan. President Zardari has invited his Iranian counterpart, Ebrahim Raisi, on an official visit to the country to

Iran will remain a tough The US has continu- diplomatic, political, and

ease tensions

security challenge for Pakistan. It remains to be seen how President Zardari copes with the challenge especially if the conflict in the Middle East escalates and leaves few choices for Pakistan's closest allies in the Gulf. Meanwhile, an IMF bailout for Pakistan is also seen to be linked to how the latter country conducts its relations with Iran.

A concerning scenario could emerge if the Middle East crisis worsens and forces Iran to utilise the full potential of its alleged proxies in the region, including in Pakistan. This could have security ramifications, as pro-Iranian organisations could launch large-scale anti-Israel, anti-US, and anti-Saudi protest movements in support of Iran. Other religious parties would likely be forced to choose sides, potentially disrupting the sectarian equilibrium the country achieved after a long struggle. One can recall the first Gulf War in 1990-91 when the power elites and the masses were divided into opposing camps

Pakistan's real test ahead is to remain neutral and maintain its relationships with both Iran and

Will Iran react to Israel?

for him. Abbas Nasir

Will Iran be provoked by Israel or exercise restraint?

This is obviously a uestion that many in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and beyond are asking as Israel desperately tries to suck in more players to escalate and widen the Gaza conflict so that Western support to it, which was showing signs of waning, is galvanised

Even Tel Aviv, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's place of residence, has seen mass demonstrations in recent weeks, calling for his resignation and fresh elections. The number of demonstrators seems to be risng daily and includes those who are angry at his handling of the hostage cri-

When the current conflict erupted, Netanyahu running at nearly 13,000 charges and, despite atout of trouble by tweaking the judicial system in the name of 'judicial reforms'. it looked like he was going to end up in court, even prison. Many saw the Hamas attack as a godsend

dictated by domestic politics, such as President Joe Muslim votes in states such as Michigan, and the support of countless proare outraged by the Gaza genocide and say they are

presidential election.

cluding some 400 security Hamas also took about 240 Israelis back to Gaza as hostages in order to swap them for several thousand Palestinian prisoners, many being held without charge on 'administrative orders' in Israeli jails. A little over half of those hostages have been currently home to some 1.7 released, but over 130 re-

main captive in Gaza For over six months, Israel may have been carrying out a relentless pogrom in Gaza, with the death toll of children alone was facing corruption among the nearly 34,000 Palestinians killed so far, but it is beginning to realise its military campaign now has an end date slapped on it by its Western allies.

Pakistani law-enforce-

ment agencies are believed

to have sufficient proof of

this

Netanyahu and Israel's

strategy is clear. They

want to continue their

long-drawn-out ethnic

cleansing with unqualified

Western material support,

following Hamas's shock-

ing daylong attack on Oct

about 1,200 Israelis, in-

personnel.

last year, which killed

stage

The West's waning support doesn't owe itself to any sudden awakening of the conscience, but is

Biden's desperate need for gressive Americans who unsure if they'll vote for him in this November's

In contrast to its support over six months, recently the US has briefed journalists about "tough and candid discussions" during a phone call between President Biden and Minister Netanyahu, particularly over Israel's planned invasion of camps in Rafah,

million displaced Gazans. Over several months, Israel has tried to provoke Hezbollah, seen as an Iranian proxy in Leba-non, in the north, but failed to draw it into a full-fledged confrontation. It has attacked not just south Lebaing commanders, but has also bombed targets in Syria, which forms part of the 'axis of res-i-s-tance' along with Iran, Hezbollah and Yemen.

However, all these

blatant acts of provocation failed to draw Hezbollah and Syria into the Middle East conflict because the 'axis' powers possibly saw through Israel's tactics and chose restraint, so the focus remained solely on Israel's brutality in Gaza, which was slowly but surely beginning to change Western attitudes.

The US has remained a staunch ally, offering unconditional support to Israel's 'right to self-defence' (a term that normally applies in the context of external aggression) against forces in areas under its own occupation, and has supplied unprecedented levels of arms, armament, fighter jets and

But adding to domestic political compulsions has been the recent killing of around half a dozen Western aid workers in a targeted strike on three vehicles belonging to the global relief organisation non and Beirut and hit World Central Kitchen, Hezbollah targets, includ- which resulted in international anger and opprobrium; even Western governments sounded concerned and expressed unease at Israel's continuing military campaign.

I have tried hard to

ascertain the time of the as the bane of its existence, WCK strike that killed seven Western aid workers on April 1 so as so ascertain whether the Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus on the same day was a diversionary tactic. In any case, the two attacks served two

different purposes. The one major consequence of the WCK killings was that the relief organisation suspended its operations in Gaza. That fitted perfectly with Israel's policy of depopulating the Strip through mass killings and widespread destruction of its infrastructure, including homes, schools, hospitals, libraries and universities, and by preventing food aid from reaching the Palestin-

The thousands of Palestinians who were being served hot meals by WCK must be going hun-

raeli air attack on the Ira-tion. nian consulate in Damascus was an act of extreme the consulate attack and provocation designed to force Iran and its influential Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps into retaliating. Any retaliation by Iran, which the West sees

would pull not only Israel but likely the US and other Western military powers into at least an aerial campaign against it.

This would serve Israel's cause no end, as on the one hand, it can continue its Gaza genocide and the land grab in the West Bank through more and more settlements, displacing thousands of additional Palestinians, and on the other, the West's attention will be diverted to, and remain focused on, its favourite hate figures, ie, the Iranian clergy, and not on Israel's mass murder.

As these lines are being written, the US has stated it will unequivocally support Israel in case of Iranian aggression, while calling on Tehran to desist. It has to be seen whether Tehran decision-makers can take a step back and think through the regional gry again. consequences before decid-ing on their course of ac-

> the killing of a senior IRGC commander force their hand? Any violent reaction would only be a bailout for an under-pressure Israel

World of 2035

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

like about a decade from now? Given that geopolitics, geo-economics, and technologies are evolving rapidly, the future is uncertain. However, there are trends that give us a clue regarding the direction of global geopolitics. transitioning from a world

order to disorder: major power rivalries are intensifying, global military expenditure is rising steeply, unilateralism is ascendant multilateralism is in decline, and xenophobia is embedding itself in al-

most every country. Four theatres of global contestation are contributing to the global disarray: Indo-Pacific (US-China competition), Europe (Russia-Ukraine war), Middle East (Palestine conflict, Israel-Iran tensions), and the Indian Ocean, where major powers including the US, UK, France, Australia, China and India want to enhance their presence. American maritime strategist Alfred Mahan had rightly predicted in the 19th century that the future of the 21st century would depend on whoever dominated the

Indian Ocean.

Shifting alliances are being formed, essentially along three broad categories: the US, Europe and Australia have an informal broad alignment against Russia, China, and Iran. For some countries, such as India, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan, and other middle powers, the preferred option is to exercise strategic autonomy. Across these two broad categories, multialignments are emerging to pursue common interests, such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which has expanded to include

other countries, including Iran and Saudi Arabia; QUAD, a platform created by the US, Australia, India and Japan to contain China; and I2U2, which has brought together India, Israel, the US, and UAE for economic cooperation, but has been halted, for now, by the Gaza war. For its part, China is engaged with over 100 countries in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and six economic corridors, including CPEC.

These shifting alli-

ances will be affected by six cross-cutting trends: (i) emerging technologies, such as AI platforms, multi-role drones, big data, and semiconductors, which are currently at the centre of the US-China tech war; (ii) climate change, which can spell havoc for countries with low fiscal space through extreme weather and food insecurity; (iii) de-dollarisation, an option many countries have begun to explore; (iv) rare earth elements, which are required for advancing technologies — such as smartphones, digital cameras, semiconductors, etc and that are evoking stiff competition between China and the US, Europe, and Japan; (v) nontraditional security threats, including energy politics, cyberwarfare, disinformation campaigns and lawfare; and (vi) re-

certed international response wanes. Global contestations, shifting alliances, and the six trends that will shape the world in the coming decade will all play out in the high-risk areas of potential global conflict, including the South China Sea, Ukraine, Middle East, Afghanistan, and Kashmir. The probable nature of conflict will be hybrid, with countries using ev-

surgent terrorism as con-

power at their disposal to achieve their goals, including kinetic options (military strikes, use of proxies), economic instruments (sanctions, lucrative aid packages, coercion through the international monetary system) and information tools (propaganda, media, entertainment industry).

Consequently

power potential will also

change. The US is a waning power, but the instruments of its national power are largely intact and can sustain it through the next decade as a leading superpower. It is also taking steps to recover ground lost to China in nigh-tech industry and the manufacturing sector. China is a rising power, and is interested in continuing its peaceful rise to become industrialised, for which it will resist involvement in major kinetic conflicts. Russia is seeking to revive its lost glory, but its energies are likely to be consumed by the conflict in Europe. India is also a rising economic power, though its geopolitical profile will be constrained by ideological politics, the North-South divide, restive minorities,

and agitated farmers. The UN would remain sidelined in matters of peace and security, but stay relevant for sustainable development and climate change. The OIC is not likely to dent the future in any major way. Asean will continue as a success story of regional integration. Europe is a resilient continent but the focus of global attention will remain on Asia in the

coming decade. The world of 2035 appears to be even more fragmented and polarised than it is today. Only countries exhibiting economic resilience and societal harmony will stand a chance against the Muna Khan

An old, rickety house in upstate New York has served as a landmark since I began visiting family here in 2017. It is hard to miss because it has a massive Trump sign, painted in the colours of the American flag, with the years '2016', '2020' and now '2024' next to his name. I am unaffected by its presence, but the folks I know who live here see it as a sign of all that is

wrong with politics. They are distressed by an April 3 poll by the Wall Street Journal placing Trump in the lead in six of the seven most competitive states. These states tend to determine the election outcome. The poll reported on "voter dissatisfaction" with the economy and "deep doubts" about President Joe Biden's capabilities. I have since been lis-

tening to fears about Trump's return and how folks will migrate to Canada. Funnily enough, I first heard that in 2004. when George W. Bush was re-elected, the data shows around 10,000 Americans became permanent residents in Canada following Bush's re-election, and dipped after Barack Obama was elected in 2008. The data for Trump showed a 350 per cent increase in search for "how to move to Canada" when he won, and around 9,000 made good on their promise and migrated in 2017. On the subject of

data, there is plenty to show the US economy has done well under Biden. Unemployment and inflation are low and economic growth "is growing faster than expected", reported Politico in January. Yet Biden's age gets a lot of media time, like Hillary ery tool of national mighty winds of change. | Clinton's emails got in dislikes, biases. Journal-

seem to distract from the economic strides made by his administration the very thing respondents expressed dissatisfaction about. Where are they getting their information then, or should the media be reporting on the economy (boring) and not Biden's latest gaffe (fun and gets clicks

which gets advertisers).

Biden has had missteps and falls, but beyond confusing people or places, he has not threatened to derail democracy like the other guy; the one who is not exactly a spring chicken at 77. The one who faces a slew of criminal charges, attempted an insurrection. and has vowed to deport iust about everybody. Why are more people willing to believe he is a better candidate to manage the economy than the guy who is actually do-

I have often wondered why people's memories are short, but I am now sure the media helps create this amnesia. It does so partly because the business model favors clicks over context. assumes audiences want this and not that, and believes it must remain ob-Since I began reading academic material on

journalism, I have learned how problematic objectivity can be. It often pits the oppressed with the oppressor for the sake of balance over informed that is, factual — storytelling. Imagine families of disappeared sharing the same media space with the powerful men often responsible for doing the disappearing. How is that fair?

On the first day of class. I always tell students it is impossible not to have personal likes.

Polls apart 2016. I am not here to suggest Biden being 81 is a non-issue, but it does will never support a will never support a policy that is racist, sexist, anti-women, antichildren, anti-poor, antiscience. I oppose whatever is masquerading as democracy these days. I dislike climate change deniers too. Does my transparency mean I cannot practise journalism? On the contrary, I tell students that knowing our biases allows us to practice journalism better, because we work harder to ensure we have been

> The elections in the US are six months away but the focus is already on polls. It looks like the media has not learned from its mistakes. We saw this in Pakistan too, when many in the media wrote the PTI off, didn't take voter sentiment into account, and had to eat humble pie on election day. When you cover elections like you would a horse race - who's leading, who's behind you are not helping audiences make informed decisions. Especially if you are reporting a candidate's falsehoods without challenging them because you're worried you will be seen as partisan or you're scared you'll lose their subscriptions. That's lazy journalism. And it's denying the truth about what is at stake.

I don't have any stakes in the US elections. It will not matter whether Biden or Trump throws drones or sanctions at us. But I think we can learn a lot from how their media covers this election, even if it is 'what not to do'. I hope that includes calling out leaders that threaten Pakistan's stability, which includes the economy, which can be gauged by numbers. People lie.

Punjab CM felicitates

PM over improving

economic indicators

LAHORE (APP): Chief investors' confidence is Minister Punjab Maryam enhancing. For the first

Nawaz, while paying time in the history, 100

tributes to Prime Minister index Stock Exchange has

Muhammad Shehbaz crossed its 70 thousand

psychological barrier.

The chief minister

said, "Good news are

awaiting Pakistanis and

their is a strong likelihood

of reduction in inflation

rate up to 12.2 per cent next

year. For the first time, Rs

the price of 20-kg flour bag

and there is further possibility of Rs 300

reduction in the flour price

according to market

Social Survey of Asia &

Pacific Region termed

Pakistan's economic indicators excellent. In the

UN Report, Pakistan's

economic progress has been

predicted in the next fiscal year. The growth rate

would increase from 2 per

cent to 2.3 per cent during

the current and next

"The Economic &

indicators.

500 reduction occurred in

Sharif on improving

Pakistan's economic

indicators, said on Sunday

that under the vibrant

leadership of PML-N

Quaid Nawaz Sharif,

Pakistan's economy had

once again started treading

economic progress during the tenure of PML-N

prominently coming to

surface, Maryam said

adding that "the common

man would be provided

relief with reduction in

electricity rates and

international financial

institutions including

IMF, ADB had acknowledge Pakistan's

PM Shehbaz Sharif's

She said, "Owing to

economic policies."

government

The fruits of

on the path of progress.

OMMERCENEWS

Pakistan economic growth forecast to rise 2.8% in FY2025, ADB reports

ISLAMABAD (INP): In FY2025, up from the 0.2% contraction last fiscal year.

Gwadar Pro stated on Sunday quoting Asian Development Bank (ADB) economic forecasts report for Asia April 2024.

positive growth will come toward a marketfrom a recovery in both agriculture and industry. However, domestic demand will remain confidence, to support constrained by the surge in

FY2024 and pick up in costs, higher tax rates on growth

Pakistan, growth is forecast to rise at 1.9% in FY2024 (ending on 30 June 2024) and 2.8% in FY2025, in FY2024 driven by a rebound in private sector investment linked to progress on reform measures and transition to a new and more stable government. An expansion in private consumption and According to the a rise in workers' report, the shift back to remittances from a move

should buttress growth. However, low recovery in industrial living costs and tight output in the latter half of policies.

FAISALABAD: Women are buying clothes on a stall at Sunday weekly bazaar

Mian Anjum Nisar

Medium

sustainable

said that we need to

highlight the critical role of

Enterprises (SMEs) in

medium enterprises, as businesses, the SME sector assets, and extravagant

have been availing economy, fostering their tax data; some government's all major employment, growth, and traders' tax is only a few

export diversification, he

despite their significance,

more than 5 million SMEs

face a significant credit gap.

receiving limited credit, far

below the neighboring

countries. The State Bank

of Pakistan is committed to

increasing SME credit share

to 17% by 2023. To

achieve this, we must

advocate for targeted and

fixed SME allocations in

concessional financing

schemes, particularly those

aimed at the export-

President said that the

State Bank of Pakistan has

for the promotion of SME

due to unknown reasons

They said they would send

and bring their goods by

an extra burden of fare by

road. They demanded

traders, commuters and

resident of Shah Nikdur.

who used to travel daily

from Shah Nikdur to

Sargodha by the train, said

the train was the best and

cheaper source of travel

for daily commuters, and

now, after the suspension

of the train operation he

had to commute daily by

Tanveer Ahmed, a

The FPCCI former

He observed that

Central bank needs to

review credit policies in

SMEs favor: Anjum Nisar

ISLAMABAD (INP): sector, as Pakistan needs

Chairman Businessmen millions of jobs annually.
Panel (BMP) of the Mian Anjum Nisa

review its credit policies by fixing a special quota to finance the small and estimated 5.2 million

only the large industries was a cornerstone of our

added

Small

Federation of Pakistan

Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), Mian

Anium Nisar has said that

review its credit policies by

concessional export loaning

facilities, with very limited

financing is left for the

SMEs which are the

backbone of the economy, contributing around 40

percent to the national

gross domestic product

on Sunday, he said that the

government with a view to

help grow the businesses

will have to take solid

measures to strengthen the

industry, especially the

livelihood of millions of

the small industries. He

said the government will

have to make a visible

Social circles and traders

have demanded railways

larger interest of people of

Muzammil of Sargodha,

Muhammad Yaseen of

Jhang, Muhammad Noman

Muhammad Atta of

Multan said that the Sandal

Express used to run from

Sargodha to Multan via

Shaheenabad, Sillanwali,

Jhang, Shortkot and

Khanewal but railway

authorities suspended it

operation three years ago

Shah Nikdur, Shah Jewna,

Khanewal and

SARGODHA

including

help grow the businesses, for the particularly the SME finance.

saving

the

reduction in markup rate to launched various policies

Locals demand

restoration of train

authorities to restore the the train at a cheaper fare.

Sandal Express train in the and now they had to bear

Talking to APP here railways authorities to

Sunday, traders restore the train as early as adding Chaudhry possible for the interest of

other people.

bus or van

(APP):

workers associated with oriented sector.

In a statement issued

the central bank needs to driving

have been availing economy,

determined exchange rate

implemented in the FY2024 budget, and rationalization of public investment to consolidate the fiscal position.

Growth in services is projected to strengthen in FY2024 as recovery in agriculture and industry benefit services.

If reforms implemented, growth is forecast to restart gradually this fiscal year and improve slightly next year. Inflation is projected to moderate somewhat this year, and more next year, stabilization

macroeconomic policies.
Growth is projected to remain subdued in the year. Construction will remain weak due to financial inclusion is elevated construction critical to strengthen

FBR completes

preparations for

action against

tax evaders

SLAMABAD (INP):

The Federal Board of

Revenue (FBR) has completed preparations

for action against tax

sources, within a few days

final notices will be issued

to tax evaders, traders, and

industrialists, who will also

be sent notices. Their

expenditures, do not match

thousand while their annual

According to FBR

evaders.



PAJCCI commend Railways over increasing its revenue, suggests launching of cargo trains

Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) has commended Pakistan Railways over increasing its annual revenue to highest peak of Rs. 66 billion in nine months of current year and has suggested for launching of cargo trains to further

The revival of people's confidence on Railways in the wake of better management decisions taken by Chairman Mazhar Ali Shah and GM, Amir community especially

improved travelling facilities, opined Zia who is also Member Advisory Committee of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Pakistan Railways.

He said Railways is safest and cheapest travelling facility in the country but due to some management loopholes, travelers had diverted to buses and other mode of travelling.

people will prefer travelling in trains and

Afghan trade.

He said Railways should also cater to transportation of loose cargo being sent by exporters and importers within the country.

By focusing on plying of cargo trains, Railways can triple its annual earnings from existing one besides providing relief to people especially business community who have to pay exorbitant rates to owners for transportation of goods.

Zia said in the wake of increase in prices of petroleum products, fare for transportation of goods from port city (Karachi) to Peshawar through heavy vehicles has

Prices of most capital goods fall in China

BEIJING

The figures, released every 10 days, are based on the survey of nearly 2,000 wholesalers and provincial-level regions



MULTAN: Labourers off-loading watermelons

Increase in taxes hurt cars'sale, purchase business: APCDA

MULTAN (APP): All Pakistan Car Dealers Association (APCDA) demanded of government to reduce duties, taxes, registration and transfer fees on sale, purchase of cars as the high fees were hurting their business

badly.

Vice Chairman All

Or Dealers Association Chaudhary Tariq Kareem, General Secretary district Multan

including duties, taxes, register and transfer fees on cars also increased manifold. A good number of dealers have left the profession.

They demanded of government to pay focus on condition of car dealers Pakistan Car Dealers and reduce prices of the cars. Different measures on part of the government Secretary district Multan could help improve Abdul Qadir Khan stated business of car's sale tubes, gasoline and fertilizer, 26 saw price linked to sale purchase of linked to sale purchase of taxation department. cars were worried due to taxation department.



LAHORE: People are buying vegetables in Sunday weekly bazaar at Shadman area, in the Provincial

'Asia has consequential position in the world'

LAHORE (APP): Kyrgyzstan's Honorary Consul Meher Kashif Younis has said that Asia holds a consequential position in the world due to its large population, strategic locations, rich mineral resources and diversity.Presiding over a workshop on "Importance of BRICS for Pakistan" organized by Gold Ring Economic Forum here Sunday, he added that Pakistan, as an important partner in the region has sought membership in order to align with this trend. With its abundant natural resources, strategic location and fifth-largest world population, Pakistan's absence from

if not addressed. He said Pakistani leadership should consider BRICS while assessing ground realities. He said BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) can pave the way for sustainable development and growth in the region. New doors for trade and investment will be opened under the supervision of developed countries like China and Russia.

He said the individual who coined BRICS has predicted that these nations' economies will dominate the world by 2050. He said a golden opportunity has been presented to these advancing countries under BRICS could have the leadership of this repercussions in the future group.

Agricultural emergency unit established to help farmers in view of rains

Sindh government has set an Agricultural Emergency Response Unit to help the farmers in view of the rains in the province and the leaves of all the employees and officers of the agriculture department have been cancelled.

On the directives of

the Sindh Agriculture Minister Bakhsh Muhammad Mahar, the leaves of all the officers and employees of the Sindh Agriculture Department have been

KARACHI (APP): The cancelled and the staff has been instructed to remain alert.A spokesman for the Sindh Department said that the DG Agriculture Head of Agriculture Emergency Rapid Response and DGs of Research, Engineering Wing and On Farm Management Wing will be

> He further said that the field assistants of the Department of Agriculture will go door to door to provide information about safety measures to the farmers

part of the team.

PESHAWAR (APP): Pak- Baloch for provision of

piling up of earnings.

În a press statement issued here on Sunday, Coordinator PAJCCI KP, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi said it appreciating development that Pakistan Railways has increased it annual revenue to record

phenomenal jump in earnings reflect

If such decisions were kept on taking, more

revenue will increase with passage of time, he opined.

Coordinator PÁJCCI also suggested Pakistan Railways to focus on launching of cargo trains from Karachi to Peshawar for facilitation of business

increased manifold, inflicting huge burden on business community of the country.

APP):Most of the capital goods monitored by China's statistics authorities registered price decreases from late-March to early-April, official data

Of the 50 major goods classified in nine categories, stakeholders, especially including seamless steel heightened prices, and 4 remained unchanged, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Hog prices increased 0.7 percent to 15.3 yuan (about 2.16 U.S. dollars) per kg during this period, the NBS said.

distributors in across the country.

Economic growth linked to durable regional peace

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry's former president chamber of Commerce and Industry's former president added.He said Iftikhar Ali Malik has advocated the cause of achieving durable peace in the region, a prerequisite to economic growth. prosperity

income runs into billions. Sources say that many have purchased multiple plots and are also running businesses outside. sometimes allowed to pay their taxes, they turn their black money white. region's progress and potential. One of the major Lists of most traders and industrialists have concerns contributing to been made, including Akbari, Shah Alam Market, this instability has been the Azam Cloth Market. presence of terrorist Anarkali, Liberty Market Road, and Gulberg. sanctuaries on Afghan soil,

development for all countries of South Asia. Talking to a delegation of traders led by Muslim Khan Buneri from KP here Sunday, he said South Asia has long been plagued by instability and conflicts that have hindered the

which have posed a severe threat not only to Afghanistan but to counterterrorism

cooperation collaboration closely with regional and international Pakistan, to eliminate terrorist sanctuaries can help eradicate the breeding grounds for extremist elements and bring about much-needed stability. About economic

integration, he said, "We must embrace economic integration initiatives within the South Asian region and enhanced economic cooperation can create an environment conducive to peace, prosperity, development for all."

He believed that by taking these steps



MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) has imposed a fine Rs 132,000 eight different consumers for illegal use of

are included.

Official sources told on Sunday that two consumers were using domestic gas meters on a commercial basis. Their connections were cut by the department team. Similarly, another four consumers were offering illegal connections to some other homes. Action was taken against another two

consumers for violations.

The team imposed a fine of Rs 132,000 on the consumers. **SNGPL**

administration also vowed to continue action against the illegal consumers.



LAHORE: People are buying steel crockery in Sunday weekly bazaar at Shadman area, in the Provincial Capital.

Large scale structural changes vital in power sector: Chairman PIAF

LAHORE (INP): Chairman Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) Faheemur Rehman Saigol has stressed the need for large scale structural changes in power sector, controlling line losses of DISCOs by using modern technology, and customeroriented business approach, as the public exchequer has incurred a loss of over Rs400 billion in the fiscal year 2022-23 by the power distribution companies.

Quoting the media report, he observed that that the performance of distribution companies (DISCOs) throughout 2022-23 remained very poor, and the expected power sector reforms were not achieved. Given the ongoing poor performance, it is apparent that, under the existing circumstances,

the current DISCO setup is unlikely to be able to deliver the desired results. Faheemur Rehman

Saigol said that no significant improvement has been witnessed on part of some DISCOs in this regard. During FY2022-23, the overall actual losses of DISCOs were 16.38% against the actual loss of 16.69% in FY 2021-22. The actual T&D losses are much higher than the allowed T&D losses for FY 2022-23, which is 12.21%. said

unfortunately, the majority of DISCOs have not adhered to the NEPRA given targets, except FESCO, GEPCO, and K-Electric which have managed to keep their losses below the levels or equal to targets set by NEPRA. However, other DISCOs have exceeded

MULTAN: A worker preparing khas for the air cooler at his workplace. **Price controller** revises bread

The controller of prices and supplies/ Commissioner has revised the rates of open market loafs (Naan-Roti) in the city. Following the Punjab Price Control of Essential Commodities Ordinance 2023 (V of 2024), the price controller issued a notification regarding the

According to the notification issued on Sunday, the unit price for 100g Roti Tandoori (per Loaf) will be Rs. 16.0 and that of 120g Naan (per loaf) will be Rs. 20.0.

intimates that new prices for mentioned essential commodities for the open

loaf rates RAWALPINDI (APP)

The notification

market will come into force with immediate effect in revenue limits of the district.No person or shopkeeper shall charge or cause to be charged the prices of the aforementioned items offered for sale

100-member Saudi delegation to reach Pakistan on April 16

Saudi Arabia commits \$1b investment in Reko Diq project

ISLAMABAD (INP): encompass all relevant pected to ink agreements Saudi Arabia is set to inject a hefty \$1 billion into the Reko Diq Copper-Gold Project nestled in the scenic Chagai District of Balochistan Province, Pa-

The investment is anticipated to take place next month, pending the clearance of any hurdles by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

To ensure a seamless process for Saudi Arabia's investment, the Prime Minister will establish a dedicated committee within the Ministry of Fi-

stakeholders from Paki- aimed at strengthening instan, ensuring a collaborative approach.

This milestone underscores the fruitful endeavors of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in fostering a conducive environment for foreign investment within the nation.

Such an injection of capital is poised to not only pave the way for further foreign investments but also aligns with SIFC's mandate to spur economic

Following this significant investment, Pakistan dustries, mineral resources and Saudi Arabia are ex- and energy.

vestment within the mining sector.

Online adds: Saudi Arabia has decided to make investment of overall 7 billion dollars in Pakistan.

According to government sources a high level 100-member delegation of Saudi Arabia under Saudi foreign minister prince Faisal bin Farhan will arrive in Pakistan on April

for an immediate cessation of these hostilities." "I am The delegation will indeeply alarmed about the clude Saudi ministers for very real danger of a devasinvestment, water and agtating region-wide escalariculture, environment, intion. I urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint to avoid any action that could lead to major military confrontations on multiple fronts in the Middle East."

UN chief

'condemns'

on Israel



GARHI KHUDA BAKHSH: President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Safaraz Ahmed Bugti, President PPP Balochistan Mir Changez Khan Jamali and others offering Dua on eve of death anniversary of Shaheed Zulfigar Ali Bhutto

Govt committed to providing complete religious freedom to people of all faiths living in country: Khawaja



ATTOCK (APP): Federal Minister for Defense, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, has said the present government is committed to providing complete religious freedom to people of all faiths living in the country. He was talking to newsmen after participating in the Bhog ceremony in connection with the Besakhi festival at Gurdwara Punja Sahib Hassanabdal on Sun-

In his address, he expressed that the Sikh Marriage Act had been passed in 2018, and now it would be implemented soon after the

approval of the provincial cabinet. He said that around six gurudwaras across the country would be open and handed over to the local Sikh community for the observance of rituals.

Bhog ceremony, Khawaja Asif said that the Pakistani people and government were proud to host the Sikh pilgrims on their holy land. The present government believes in the freedom of the minority and would extend all its resources for the better preservation of their sacred places" he added.

mous Baisakhi celebrations. to mark the advent of the order of the *Khalsa by 10th Sikh Guru Gobind





Bilawal highlights climate crisis amidst rain-related losses in country

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has conveyed heartfelt condolences for the tragic loss of lives resulting from multiple accidents amidst heavy rains across various regions of the nation, notably Puniab. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan

He also voiced his concern regarding the incidents of lightning strikes exacerbated by the changing climate conditions during the inclement weather. According to the press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House here Sunday, the PPP Chairman lamented the loss of lives caused by lightning strikes as well as other rain-related incidents in South Punjab, including its districts Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar. Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur and Lodhran. He urged the provincial government to deploy all available resources to fulfill its duty in aiding the rain-affected victims throughout Puniab. Bilawal Bhutto expressed regret over the loss of lives in ac-

ince, including the lower and upper Chitral areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He urged the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and related disaster management agencies to provide immediate assistance to the rain victims, aiding citizens trapped in various problems including landslides. He further conveyed his heartfelt grief and sorrow for the tragic loss of lives and property resulting from lightning strikes and other accidents in various areas of Balochistan, including Chaman, Dera Bugti, and Kohlu. He expressed confidence that the People's government in Balochistan will stand by the rain victims, ensuring they are not left alone during this challenging time.

Bilawal Bhutto highlighted the surge in lightning incidents nationwide as indicative of climate change, emphasizing the imperative role of universities and research institutions in addressing this issue.

He underscored the necessity for exceptional spirit and leadership at the government level to shield citizens from climate

cidents during the rains in various areas of the provchange impacts Over 230 candidates vie for 23 vacant seats

of NA, PAs: ECP ISLAMABAD (APP): A sion has schedule to comtotal of 239 candidates mence printing the ballot were vying for 23 vacant seats in both national and provincial assemblies during the upcoming by-elections slated for April 21, an official of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)

A total of 239 candidates will contest in the by elections, with 50 of them competing for vacant National Assembly seats. Notably, the first lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari has already been elected unopposed for

NA 207, he said. He said that a total of 23 candidates were vying for the vacant seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, while 154 candidates were seeking their fortunes in Punjab. In Sindh, Zubair Ahmed Junejo secured his seat unopposed

on PS-80. Twelve contenders are in the running for the empty seats in the Balochistan Assembly. The Commispapers for the by-elections upon the finalization of candidate lists by the relevant returning officers on March 30, he added.

He stated that neces-

sary election materials had

been provided to provincial election commissioners. Additionally, district Returning Officers and Returning Officers are fulfillgoing efforts. ing their duties according to Over the past ten days, from April 3 to April the established election schedule. He said close coordination has been maintained by the commission with the Ministries of Interior and Defense as well as provincial law enforcehave returned. ment agencies. On March 13, the Commission announced the schedule for byelections across 23 National and Provincial Assembly hicles for their journey. seats. These elections encompass six National Assembly seats, twelve Punjab

in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. World Bank approves \$1b loan for Dasu **Hydropower Project**

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan received a muchneeded boost for its energy sector as the World Bank approved a \$1 billion loan for the 2,160megawatt Dasu Hydropower Project. This critical infrastructure project aims to provide Pakistan with affordable and reliable electricity.

The loan approval comes after some delays, with initial reports suggesting a May approval. However, government sources now confirm the World Bank's board greenlit the financing in June.

This represents the third major investment by the World Bank in the Dasu project, highlighting its significance for Pakistan's energy future.

Pakistan's current energy woes stem largely from the high cost of electricity generated using imported fuel. This burden is felt across the country, with domestic consumers, factories, and even institutions like mosques and hospitals resorting to installing solar panels to escape the expensive grid. The Dasu project has faced setbacks in the past, with its initial completion target set for December 2021. However, the World Bank has now set a new target date of 2028 for completion. The project's cost has also increased by 13%, with the World Bank's revised estimate

Assembly seats, two seats

reaching \$4.9 billion. Despite these challenges, the project offers significant long-term ben-efits. The World Bank estimates that Dasu will save Pakistan a staggering \$1.8 billion annually in fuel import costs. Additionally, the project is expected to contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 5 million tons per

The Dasu Hydropower Project is a signifistep towards Pakistan's goal of achieving energy security and economic growth. With the World Bank's renewed commitment, the project is well-positioned to deliver a brighter energy future for

JIT comprising police, army officers formed to investigate Bahawalnagar incident ficers of Inter Services In-

LAHORE (INP): A sixmember Joint Inquiry Team (JIT) comprising officers of police, military and local administration has been constituted to probe the Bahawalnagar incident wherein a faceoff broke out between some police officials and military personnel, The News reported on Sunday. The Punjab Home Department has formed the team and appointed Special Secretary Interior Atta-ur-Rehman as its convener. The JIT also includes the Bahawalpur Division commissioner, DIG police special branch Punjab and of-cently,

telligence (ISI), Military Intelligence and Intelligence Bureau

After short video clips showing dozens of masked men wearing military garbs thrashing cops Bahawalnagar went viral on social media, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Friday said the Pakistan Army and the Punjab Police had decided to jointly investigate the incident. The military's media

wing in a statement had said an unfortunate incident occurred in Bahawalnagar rewhich

promptly addressed and resolved through collaborative efforts of military and police authorities.

'Despite this, certain factions with vested motives started fanning vitriolic propaganda on social media to create divisions between state institutions and government departments," the statement read.

A string of videos went viral which purportedly showed men in army uniforms beating up police personnel in Bahawalnagar, which drew criticism from different segments of social



ISLAMABAD: A view of Saudi Arabia and Pakistani national flags fixed on a green belt in front of Prime Minister Secretariat in the Federal Capital, in connection with Saudi delegation, led by Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan will visit in Pakistan.

Repatriation efforts continue as illegal Afghans return home

ISLAMABAD (INP): The repatriation of Àfghan nationals from Pakistan continues at a steady pace. with significant progress made as of April 13, 2024. A total of 535,940 illegal Afghans have now returned to their homeland, marking a significant step in the on-

13, a total of 8,581 Afghan citizens have made the journey back home. Among them, 3,127 men, 1,972 women, and 3,482 children

In a coordinated effort, 310 families have been safely repatriated to Afghanistan, utilizing 287 ve-

Police arrest dacoit involved in multiple robberies and shootings

Karachi's Mominabad police apprehended Dacoit Farhan, who was injured during his arrest, police confirmed on Sunday. SSP West Abdul Hafeez Bugti revealed that accused Farhan was involved in a robbery near Orangi Town Football Chowrangi on Eidul-Fitr, where he shot and injured a woman. Bugti further disclosed that Farhan, along with his accomplices, was also involved in a robbery at Bahram Store in Site A's Metroval area last month. CCTV footage confirmed his presence during the robbery. The investigation uncovered Farhan's criminal history, including dent of Bawani Chali, who injuring a Suzuki driver by

(INP): firing during a resistance incident last year and stealing over 2,000 mobile phones through street crimes since

His accomplices, Adnan and Farhan, were identified as receivers of stolen mobiles, selling them after altering their IMEI numbers. Police have registered cases against Farhan under various provisions, including the Mawa Act, for his past criminal activities in Site A, Mominabad, and Pirabad police stations.

A manhunt is currently underway to apprehend Bilal, Rehman, another Adnan, and Rehman, a resiare part of Farhan's gang.

Buner IBO martyr laid to rest in native town



RAWALPINDI (APP): The Buner intelligence-based operation (IBO) martyr was laid to rest in his native town with full military honor on Sunday.

On April 13th during an intelligence-based operation against terrorists in Buner district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Lance Havaldar Mudassar Mehmood, age 35 years, resident of Rawalpindi district had embraced martyrdom while gallantly fighting against

A large number of senior officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army, relatives of the martyr and local people participated in the funeral prayer, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Canada sacks Indian staffers working at its diplomatic missions in India

Monitoring Desk

Canada and India have deregime's plan to assassinate pro-Khalistani Sikhs

Canadian Sikhs voted for the Canadian High Com-

Khalistan Referendum in several Canadian cities on the call of Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), led by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun who is a dual Canadian and US national.

The relations hit rock bottom when Indian assassinated SFJ and Khalistan Referendum's Canada coordinator Hardeep Singh Nijjar at the Canada's biggest Gurdwara in June 2023 and also tried to kill Pannun in New York.

A spokesperson for

mission stated that the reduction in the number of Indian employees was required in light of the country's shrinking Canadian workforce. "I can confirm that the Government of Canada has implemented some staff reductions across our network of missions in India," the official said. The spokesperson, however, said that the high commission expressed its sincere gratitude for the resilience, dedication, and service of its local staff in India.

Adil Raja loses crucial stage of defamation case to Brig ® Rashid Naseer

DIAMER: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan meeting special

ISLAMABAD (APP): to pay a further interim Controversial Youtuber payment on account of Major ® Adil Raja has suffered a crushing blow as a UK High Court Judge rejected all his applications including his application to stay a defamation trial progressing against him by former senior military officer Brigadier ® Rashid

The judge ruled that Mr Raja had published words which were seriously defamatory of Rashid Naseer in nine publications on social media sites YouTube, Facebook and Twitter/X

Deputy High Court Judge Mr Richard Spearman KC ruled that Adil Farooq Raja should pay £5,000 to the now retired Brigadier for the rejected application to stay the defamation trial and the judge also ordered Adil Raja

costs in the sum of £5,000 for the failed security for costs application. Adil until 17 April 2024 to pay

this money With help from his lawyer and PTI UK leader Mahtab Anwar Aziz who also represents PTI activappeared before the court and baseless allegations remotely by video link and argued that the case of Brig ® Rashid Naseer should be staved on a number of grounds but the court rejected all his arguments which included allegations that Pakistan was an authoritarian state in which the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) controlled the Judiciary and

in Pakistan.

to pay a further interim payment on account of costs in the sum of £5,000 In the case on meaning, the High Court Judge ruled that 9 out of the 10 publications published by Adil Raja were defamatory Raja, the defendant, has of Brig ® Rashid Naseer at common law and were matters of fact, rather than expressions of opinion. Brig ® Rashid Naseer's name had surfaced when former PM Imran Khan named him ist Shayan Ali, Adil Raja as Mr 'X' in making wild

party stepped back from and failed to prove at any In deciding the meaning of the publications, Deputy High Court Judge Mr Richard Spearman KC ruled that Brig ® Rashid Naseer was defamed at UK common law when Adil Farooq Raja made the following allegations, without the Government and allegations of election rigging any evidence, in the publications in June 2022.

the allegations Khan and his



HYDERABAD: Large number of people enjoying themselves on the bank of River Indus near Ghulam Muhammad Barrage Jamshoro of River Indus, during rainy and cloudy weather.

LONDON: Ties between teriorated further as the former has dismissed dozens of Indian staffers from service who were working at its diplomatic missions in India over the Indian

on Canadian soil. Relations between Canada and India started deteriorating last year when tens of thousands of