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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

Calls for steering country out of political crisis 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

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 atmosphere of mutual respect and political reconciliation to do away with the polarisation and overcome the challenges pervading the country.

"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... We can effectively tackle our challenges and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and politi-cal reconciliation," the

president said addressing and Palestine as well as clithe Joint Session of the Par-liament. Chaired by Namate change. He said having given tional Assembly Speaker away his powers to the Par-Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the joint liament, his role was as a sitting was attended by unifying symbol of a joint members of the National robust federation, where all Assembly and Senate, people and provinces should while in the galleries were be treated as equal before the provincial chief ministers law. As a new beginning, he

and legislators, diplomats, said, the country needed to and representatives from build its strengths by investing in people, focusing on The president's address public needs, and harnesswas in pursuance of Article ing its resources to create 56 (3) of the Constitution pathways to inclusive which marked the beginning growth. "We have little time of the first parliamentary to waste. The country needs vear, following the general us to move on from the polarisation so common The address encomnow to contemporary poli-

passed major national and tics," he remarked and international matters, and sought the role of two challenges from economy, Houses of the Parliament in poverty, social welfare, rebuilding public confidence women empowerment and in the parliamentary proforeign policy to Kashmir cess. Calling for resetting the

PTI declares

CJP responsible

for harassment

ofjudges

ISLAMABAD (Online)

PTI has declared Chief

Justice of Pakistan (CJP)

responsible for harass-

ment of judges from Su-preme Court (SC) to High

According to PTI

pokesperson powers

that be , their tributary ad-

ministration and puppet

elite class together are out

to poke last nail in the cof-

person the courts are be-

ing transformed into Kan-

garoo courts by harassing

the judges at all level from

SC to subordinate courts.

hearing cases against po-

litically victimized PTI

leaders and workers when-

ever 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 vio-

lence as weapon against

the family members and

Instead of taking deci-

sive action on the letter

written by 6 judges of IHC

the matter is being prolonged

and this way the state rogues

are being given chance to

play at their will

relatives of judges.

The judges who are

According to spokes-

Court (HC).

fin of justice.

political atmosphere with 'more light than heat", he emphasised reforms to promote good governance and turn challenges into opportunities. President Zardari said that by embracing the visions of the great leaders Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto,

"we can effectively tackle challenges and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and political reconciliation". The president emphasised that in order to align the country with the 21st Century requirements, it was imperative to move forward on reforms with good governance for the provision of optimal social entitlements 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

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

stressed the government to intensify its efforts for attracting foreign direct investment, implementing comprehensive ease-of-doing-business reforms and simplifying the existing regulations to provide an enabling environment to both foreign and domestic

investors.

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.

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of the Turkish Genedged the robust relationeral Staff General Metin ship between their nations Gürak met Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir in Rawalpindi on Thursday. The discussion encom-

and committed to expanding defense collaboration further. The Army Chief underscored the imperative of advancing existing milipassed various topics of tary cooperation between their armed forces.

mutual interest, spanning The visiting dignitary commended Pakistan's efdefence, training, and initiatives aimed at bolstering regional peace and stability. forts in fostering regional

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

Earlier, upon arrival at 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 esteemed visitor.



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

Interior Minister orders blocking SIMs issued on invalid, expired ID cards

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 including printing. Mohsin Naqvi instructed for setting up model NADRA offices across the country on the pattern of model police sta-

ISLAMABAD (INP): In- 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 meeting at NADRA head-quarters. During meeting Mohsin Naqvi directed that SIM cards issued on ineffective and expired identity cards should be closed as soon as possible.

The death certificate fee is being abolished for the convenience of the people

appointed BHČ, PHC CJs ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Law and Justice on Thursday notified the appointment of Acting Chief Justice of the President Zardari Peshawar High Court (PHC) Ishtiaq Ibrahim, as PHC Chief Justice and Act-

ing Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court (BHC) Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar as BHC Chief Justice.

The ministry, in its notifications, said that the appointments were made by the President of Pakistan in exercise of the powers conferred under clause

Justice Hashim,

Justice Ishtiaq



political parties.

elections

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

Speaking to the media after a hearing in

Hyderabad on Thursday

implementation of the

water commission's report,

Syed Asif Hyder Shah said

that due to a lack of funds,

of the recommendations

could not be achieved.

However, we will submit

progress reports to the

honorable court every

three months as per

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.

He revealed that

the

regarding

directives.

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. complete implementation

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 due to resource shortages.



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

Three abducted people rescued in police operation KANDHKOT (INP): Three people abducted for ransom were rescued after minor

resistance during police operation in Kacha area of Kandhkot on Wednesday-Thursday night.

According to details, the police on a tip-off regarding presence of kidnappers launched a crackdown for recovery of abducted people in Durrani Mehr Kacha area of Kandhkot. Over sight of police, the abductors started firing and retaliatory action of police forced the abductors to flee leaving behind their three hostages.

The police took the rescued people Ali Bahar, Shaman and Zeeshan Sehriani and shifted them to an undisclosed location.

Saudi investment projects; no laxity to be tolerated: PM

Will personally monitor

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister Prime Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that he would personally monitor the Saudi investment projects and warned against any laxity due to red tape or outdated procedures

well as business ties.

mutually beneficial partnership. The prime minister in-

cerned to engage world-class experts to execute the foreign investment projects and called for capacity building of the ministries to The prime minister. chairing a meeting to review achieve the desired results.

He asked the Board of the matters related to the recent high-powered Saudi Investment, SIFC and reldelegation and Saudi investevant ministries to devise a ment in different sectors, mechanism to ensure executhanked Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin tion of the projects agreed with the Saudi delegation. Salman for sending a high-He told the expected

level Saudi delegation that visit of a delegation of prominent Saudi businesswould usher new era of Saudi investment in Pakimen to Pakistan was welstan, trade partnership as coming and that further investment opportunities He lauded the relevant would also be explored during his visit to Saudi Arabia

federal ministers, Special Investment Facilitation Council and relevant senior officers for their efforts for the Kingdom.

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

Independent Report maximum level.

KARACHI: Secretary Information Department Nadeem-ur-Rehman Memon said that action will be taken against those advertising agencies, who deliberately delays in sub-mission of the bills, this he said while chairing a meeting with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of early submission of the



digital media.

(1) of Article 193 of the Constitution with effect from the date hey would take oath of their offices. converting the Saudi Similarly, the Law Min-

delegation's visit into a istry also notified the ap pointment of three additional judges Justice Fazal Subhan, Justice Shahid Khan and Justice Dr. Khurshid Iqbal as the PHC judges

Sindh Tourism **Minister calls** on Governor

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Antiquities Syed Zulfigar 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 that steps should be taken to provide better facilities at the tourist places of the province

countless tourists' attractions were available across Sindh.

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.

Badar Shahbaz appointed PM's media coordinator ISLAMABAD (APP):

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday appointed Badar Shahbaz, a member of the Pakistan Muslim League-N's media team, as his Media Coordinator.

"The Prime Minister has been pleased to appoint Mr. Badar Shahbaz as Media Coordinator to Prime Minister with immediate effect. The Prime Minister has further been pleased to desire that all relevant stakeholders shall extend full cooperation to the Coordinator in discharging the official business," according to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division on Thursday.

tions established in Punjab. He said establishing model NADRA offices will improve service delivery and provide convenience to the public.

NADRA Chairman

Mohsin Naqvi said. He said that the establishment of model police stations in Punjab improved the image of the public along with convenience.



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

Five customs officials martyred, two others injured in firing incident

DERA ISMAIL KHAN martyred. (APP): At least five cus-toms officials were killed as

The moving vehicle collided with another vehicle coming from the opposite their moving vehicle was direction, resulting in injurambushed by unidentified ing two persons including a child.

> The attackers managed to escape after the incident.

control room, the Customs As information was received about the incident, a its routine patrol within the heavy contingent of police and Rescue 1122 teams rushed the site and shifted ants targeted it by opening the injured and the bodies fire indiscriminately, leav-ing five customs officials to the hospital.

Tarar condemns PTI for jeopardizing national interests, irresponsible statements

ISLAMABAD (APP): of PTI leadership disown-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.

According to the police

Intelligence vehicle was on

limits of Darban police sta-

tion when the armed assail-

Speaking to the media, Tarar emphasized that those who undermined the country's interests were adversaries of Pakistan.

He expressed dismav at prioritizing political agendas and ego over national interests, highlighting the regrettable pattern

ing statements against the country's interests.

Tarar noted that PTI leaders were embroiled in corruption cases, lamenting 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 favour. The minister condemned the actions stooping to anti-national levels, stressing that while criticism of the government and its policies is acceptable, criticizing Pakistan is intolerable.

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 liabilities at

bills, Secretary Information 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/

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

to attend the World Economic Forum to be held in

He further said that

terrorists near Saggu area here on Thursday.

Kamran Khan Tessori Secretary Information

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OPINION

Daily **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 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 clear in all his public en-gagements was the urgent Pakistan's 24th engagement with the IMF since 1958. Will this new programme break this new programme break what the minister was reported in that talks on this had be-that talks on this had beto 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 supplicant and the richer knows what needs to be done two, patrons of the last resort. and 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 occur-red in the 1970s dur-ing the Richard Nixon vs 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 It is said that he funded the he plans to grow the economy 1974 Second Islamic Sumwithout breaching 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

faith-driven fault lines. Her victimhood, therefore, not Shahab Usto

only exposes a corroded It was on Ashura, Aug 19, criminal justice system, but 2021, when nine-year-old goes deeper into the con-Priya Kumari went missing. ceptual recesses of a state Just before her disappearcaught between two conance or abduction she had flicting philosophies. The been happily helping her state can either be viewed father — a syncretic Hindu in terms of a benevolent who runs a sabeel every democracy that accords year in Muharram in equality before the law, and San--grar, a small town near grants freedom of worship Sukkur — serve sherbet to to every citizen, regardless thirsty mourners. It is a of colour or creed. Or it can curious case. For one, she be seen as an ideological tool disappeared' from a place cast in the mould of a parthat was thro--nged with ticular policy strand. Priya hundreds of people, and and many other individuals, yet, reportedly, the police groups and communities found little by way of evicome under the latter. dence or even a witness. Gender: Priya's trag-And for another, her trag-

edy shows the threat to edy touches upon every el-'gender justice', which envisages the systemic reement that has rent apart society, ie, faith, gender, moval of inequalities between men and women in Faith: Priya, a Hindu both law and practice. She girl, was targeted when she is among the countless chilwas engaged in religio-culdren and women who are tural services for Muslims. targeted for their gender, in She symbolised a tolerant different forms and to varytradition that goes back cening degrees. Thus, many of turies, ie, peaceful cohabithe better educated and tation of various communimore aware urban women ties in Sindh, and beyond. are less vulnerable to ex-In defiance of an obscurantreme forms of gender tist mindset that has crimes, though they may spawned violence against also face incidents of vioreligious minorities, she and lence, abuse, or harassment. her father transcended But the hotbeds of genderbased crimes are largely logence 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 in-

fluence 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 Člass: Priya's plight

also highlights the social angle of crimes against women. She comes from a poor family and is possessed of all the vulnerabilities that accompany indi- tion remains to be con-

and disempowerment. Statistically, a majority of sexually victimised children come from poorer and underprivileged classes. Perhaps the offenders are emboldened pacity to bring them to jus-

pertains to 'disappearance' or 'abduction', but abuse both by the victim's incacannot be excluded. Child tice, and the state's rouabuse is on the rise. Of the tinely tepid response. As a result, these 'ordinary' 2,227 abuse victims recases are left undetected, or ported in 2023, more than invariably 'settled'.

half (54 per cent) were girls. Recently, we saw two Let's not forget that chilinstances of our lame-duck dren, like women, enjoy criminal justice system. In multiple protections under 2021, Nazim Jokhio, a wildgeneral, special, and interlife activist, was brutally national laws. The UN murdered near Thatta when Convention on the Rights he tried to stop the hunting of the Child, in particular of protected birds. His was, requires the state to ensure as they say, an open-andthe civil, political, ecoshut case. But the powernomic, social, health and ful offenders were 'parcultural rights of children. doned' by the victim's fam-But it is unfortunate that ily out of desperation and child abuse, like forced dishelplessness. In August appearances, is rampant last vear, Fatima Fariro, a and neglected - more so if nine-year-old maid, died in the victim comes from a mysterious circumstances poorer background. In fact, most successfully prosin Ranipur, located near Khairpur. The investigation ecuted cases are those vigreport (including the video orously pursued by the footage of the crime scene) victim's family; otherwise, has attributed the cause of they end up in the amneher death to the abuse and siac entrails of our criminal torture allegedly committed justice system. by her employer, an influential pir. But the prosecu-

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

Abuse: Priya's case

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 justly.

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 legitimate legal order?

Priva is lucky that the media, civil society and political activists have kept

Khurram Husain

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

class, and abuse.

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 World Bank.

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 commits to These are two very critical developments, al-

though 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 circle of peers, and foreign

Shifting gears are succumbing to. This is told totals \$5 billion? How far will the Saudi or perthe temptation to declare haps more broadly, the Gulf victory. It is entirely preinterest in Pakistan go? And mature for that at this point, and it is important to bear most importantly, will all in mind that a country that this really be beneficial for is struggling to enter a long-Pakistan term IMF programme can-Or are we simply go-

not be described as a couning to repeat an old story try that is in good health, where the government of or one whose authorities the day fetches dollars have much reason to celfrom abroad, whether borebrate. It means the bulk of rowed or begged, and burns the hard work lies ahead, them in the furnace of the and that the chances of failcountry's economic dysure are legion. functions to produce a short-lived, feel-good, The finance minister said during one of his intergrowth experience followed views in Washington that a massive crash? everyone knows what all Twice we have re-

needs to be done. The probpeated this story. First durlem is in execution. He ing the Pervez Musharraf years, and second in the should have been asked years running from 2013 to what prevented preceding 2017, when the third PMLgovernments from executing the agenda he is chalk-N government of Nawaz ing out, and what makes Sharif ran the country. The him so sure he will succeed problem is in execution. He where they failed. Sadly, should have been asked this question never arose. what prevented preceding Perhaps some TV anchors governments from executat home will pose this quesing the agenda he is chalktion to him upon his return. But for now, without

ing out, and what makes him so sure he will succeed popping any corks or fuelwhere they failed. Both

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 right to place the emphasis government of the time on execution, rather than enough material with endlessly discussing policy which to portray itself as the party of growth and most important constitudevelopment. 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

investors are beginning to need for a successor look again at Pakistan's prospects. In short, it means the gears are shifting

Ltd.

Prime

Three to tango

F.S. Aijazuddin

It takes three to tango in our part of the world. The US-Pakistan duo and the Saudi-Pakistan pair has become a threesome, choreographed by the US.

Such generosity did not go In 1950, prime minisunpunished. King Faisal ter Liaquat Ali Khan met was shot four months later US president Harry by his US-educated Truman in Washington, nephew Faisal bin Musaid Al Saud 1953, governor-general More recently, the Bin Ghulam Muhammad was Abdul Aziz dy--na-s--ty hosted by King Ibn-e-Saud and Pakistan's inextinguishable Sharif family

in Saudi Arabia. Since then, bilateral relationships behave shown that they entween Pakistan and these joy an almost umbilical recountries, while shifting lationship. Crown Prince and erratic, have neverthe-Moh-ammed bin Salman less maintained one golden has famously called Pakivein of consistency: Pakistan his second home. To the Sharif family, Saudi Arabia is their first haven.

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 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. the mit held in Lahore. He con-ceded its stage management boundless affection for the to PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto nation. who acknowledged that concession by renaming Charing Cross as Faisal

Square. 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. Halfofthat—\$50m—was given to the Mirpur Mathelo fertiliser project, which, even though it was not a joint venture, was re-

named Pak-Saudi Fertilisers visited Pakistan this week, in the absence of our finance

Again, in January minister. 1975, King Faisal gave The Saudis came just when Pakistan genuflects before the IMF for the 24th \$10m for Pakistan's earthquake victims in the Karakorams. (The US pledged only \$25,000.) time In 2023, the IMF

agreed to the Stand-by Arrangement 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-nced that it had "met all targets for successful completion of the programme" Two days later, on the

15th, the IMF team ex-In 2019, the Crown Prince Mohammed bin pressed its displeasure over Salman visited Pakistan the ministry of finance's during the tenure of PM announcement "that it had Imran Khan. Their materialised all structural bromance appeared to yield benchmarks, quantitative the prospect of \$20 billion and indicative targets even in investments. Deals were prior to scrutinising and signed, sealed but remained completion of the review by undelivered. As Napoleon the Fund staff". once advised: "Promise ev-According to one

erything, deliver nothing." news report, the IMF re-Minister view mission "grilled the Shehbaz Sharif has received finance ministry team in the fresh assurances of finanmaiden session of the recial support — this time view talks and everyone \$5bn — from the same seemed clueless how to recrown prince. During their spond". Finance Minister recent meeting, the prince Aurangzeb assured the reaffirmed Saudi Arabia's IMF that "such an episode resolve never to leave would never be repeated in Pakistan's side and exfuture' pressed his government's Shakespeare foresaw the IMF's seemingly open-

ended commitment to Pa-He sent a high-powkistan: "'Tis not enough to help the feeble up, but to ered Saudi delegation led by support them after' Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin The fate of our appli-Abdullah to grout that comcation to the IMF will be mitment. The composition known very soon, after

of the delegation under-April 20. The US will descored the seriousness of its cide its next president at mandate. It consisted of the year end. Meanwhile, the Saudi ministers of water and US, Saudi Arabia and Pakiagriculture, of industry and stan continue to cavort in a mineral resources, the three-party tango. To paraphrase the US singer deputy minister of investment, and senior officials Melody Gardot, Pakistan, from its ministry of energy on its own, may be "a bad walker [but] it can dance the and the Saudi Fund for General Investments. It tango

ling undue optimism, it is these periods were unique possible to say that a diin one sense: the country was on an IMF rection is becoming visible. programme, yet it registered

Three questions now arise. What exactly is the high rates of economic growth. These are two antithetical outcomes. Fund

options. But it seems the ency that needs to be per-It is critical that this suaded of this may be his

Fighting addiction

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-

mon. Additionally, the re- Pakistan face substantial cent World Drug Report of challenges. Both public 2022 points to a world- and private facilities wide 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 fied drug addiction psysubstance abuse in the country.

Founded in 1957, the Pakistan Narcotics Control Board has been pivotal in the crackdown against illegal 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.

increasing number of deaths caused by overdose and ment of drug addiction in substance abuse

Centres for the treat-

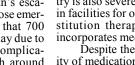
struggle with inadequate infrastructure, a lack of skilled professionals, and weak enforcement of sound management practices. Although we live in the 21st century, Pakistan still has not recognised drug addiction and rehabilitation as an official subspecialty in psychiatry, while the absence of qualichiatrists, especial--ly when compared to branches like forensic psy-

chiatry, 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 sub stitution 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



Daily Aoice of Masse, Independent Friday April 19, 2024



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

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

Independent Report here. KARACHI: Governor State Bank of Pakistan participants about the effect. (SBP) Jameel Ahmed highlighting country's in substantial improvements macroeconomic outlook markedly, reaching 15.7 in macroeconomic outlook hoped that time bound as a result of a prudent reforms will put the monetary policy, backed economy on the path of adequately by fiscal sustainable economic consolidation and beginning growth.

Governor SBP expressed 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

MoU signed for

skilled manpower in

AJK: PM lauds initiative

MIRPUR (APP): Azad reducing unemployment in

Jammu Kashmir Prime the region. The signing

Anwar ul Haq Thursday Kashmir House in the

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

significant development. present on the occasion.

Chaudhry

substantial improvement Pakistan's achieved over the past year 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 combined impact of monetary tightening, fiscal

ceremony, held at Jammu

Senior Minister Col.

import supplies, improved He informed the agriculture output and base

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

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 broad-based, reflecting the stabilization policies, improved agriculture output has contributed to higher food exports.

Finance Minister rules out rupee devaluation in talks with IMF

ISLAMABAD (Online) Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has ruled out any further significant rupee devaluation ahead of talks International with Monetary Fund.

Speaking roundtable meeting with Bloomberg team in

FPCCI waives off 50% membership fee of women chambers

the

power

companies (Discos).

"We have fulfilled our

credit goes to the leadership of United

Business Group (UBG),

who had promised this

during the election campaign," he added.

Ikram said that

Independent Report

The promise, for which the full SLAMABAD: Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on Thursday announced off waiver 50% membership fee for women chambers.

President FPCCI Atif Pakistani women were Ikram Sheikh in a statement extremely talented and the chamber was striving to issued here said that the country and society cannot empower them in the progress without the full economic field."If Pakistan role of women, adding the is to progress, we have to initiative of reducing make our women educated, membership fee was skilled and empowered important for women to business women," he empowerment added



HYDERABAD: Farmers are busy in their works 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

for

IT

sides as well.

manufacturing, software

and telecommunication

these initiatives and the policies of Prime Minister

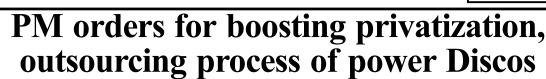
Shehbaz Sharif aimed at

supporting private sector

would yield positive

She further said that

and



CommerceNews

ISLAMABAD (APP): next meeting to improve Prime Minister Shehbaz the power system in the Sharif on Thursday country.

The prime minister directed the relevant 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

meeting regarding power elements to harm the sector here, the prime country's treasury. In the meeting, the minister said the assistance of private sector experts recommendation and

and globally accepted measures with respect to models should be taken prevent the power theft, improve the reorganization of National management affairs of ent affairs of Transmission and distribution Dispatch Company companies (DISCOs). (NTDC) and new projects He also directed to of the electricity

prepare and present a transmission were

The meeting was told time. that Matiari-Rahim yar

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 minister Muhammad Ali, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb

Page

03

Khan, Member of National Assembly Bilal Azhar Kayani, Engineer Qamar ul Islam, Rana directed to complete all Ehsan Afzal, Salman the reforms' initiatives Ahmed and other within the stipulated concerned officials.

Khan transmission line and

Ghazi Barotha-Faisalabad line will be constructed to the power transmission from

Southern part of the country The meeting was further informed that a

comprehensive strategy had been evolved for the reorganization of NTDC to bring reforms in the power transmission system and to minimize the government's circular debts. The prime minister

WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb interacted with representatives of Deutsche Bank.

to develop gemstone sector

and shifted to a spacious

and suitable building

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan

Telecommunication

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 &

was made during a board

of directors meeting on

Mobilink Bank, has

reported a staggering 97%

increase in revenue during

Q1 2024 compared to the

same period last year,

The announcement

PTCL continued its

business solutions.

Thursday

In this regard, a high-

Centre.

ICCI pledges to have a female president soon ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has pledged to have its first female president soon followed by other chambers across the

country. The as formal export sector and facilitation for this purpose the centers for women homegemstone cluster at Namak based workers would be established in all the Mandi would be develop in the shape of Gems Processing & Export provincial capitals. This was disclosed by

the Chairperson National Commission on the Status Women (NCSW) of Nilofer Bukhtiar during the Eid Milan and Award Ceremony held here Thursday. On this occasion,

equipped with all international standards. level meeting was held on Lansana Wonneh, Country Representative of UN women Pakistan, also praised the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) efforts Secretariat, Peshawar with

KP Govt decides to establish Gem Processing & Export Centre

Independent Report PESHAWAR: The and Technical Education Abdul Karim Tordhir in the The government of Khyber chair. Pakhtunkhwa has decided

Besides, Secretary Industries, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah and Special Secretary Muhammad Anwar Khan, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and 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) Gemstones

importance of talented and educated individuals, Minister TEVTA Sardar particularly the youth, leveraging this opportunity

He emphasized the

Minister,

for skill development. Burich, Chairman The AJK PM NEVTTC Ms. Gulmina highlighted that the MoU Bilal, and other officials would contribute to attended the event.

(retd) Waqar Ahmad Noor, Washington, he said there Amir Altaf, Chief Secretary Dawood Muhammad steady exports.

LAHORE (APP): State Minister for Information is no reason for rupee Technology devaluation as Pakistan has Telecommunication Shaza solid foreign-exchange Fatima Khawaja on reserves, stable currency, Thursday said that the rising remittances and 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 sector.

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 meetings with the delegation from Saudi

Arabia.

She further said that Digital Foreign Direct in the Economic Growth of Women at the Eid Milan Investment conference and Award distribution would be organized at the event end of this year, adding that He emphasized that World Economic Forum, Digital Cooperation Organization and Pakistan

sector,

individuals, societies and nations thrive when women are empowered to would host conference overcome economic every year to bring barriers. investment in the country

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 Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.52.50 per share closing Rs.7,547.50. at

Special Assistant to Chief Association and officers of Minister Khyber other relevant departments Pakhtunkhwa Commerce also attended the meeting.

PTCL posts 14 % revenue growth

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

> 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): and business environment Pakistan's leading digital microfinance institution, 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 enterprises (MSMEs). particularly those owned

The Bank leverages microfinance and fintech to foster access to finance

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

Zong business revolutionizes digital landscape for CGCMS through recent partnership

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zong Business, Pakistan's hindrance. leading telecom operator has joined hands with Gezhouba China Construction Management Services (CGCMS) to ensure seamless connectivity state-owned enterprise, robust networks, and innovative said a news release issued digital solutions to help the here on Thursday. organization achieve its

Expo Centre.

ambitious goals without various sectors including water conservancy, power Founded in 1970, generation, infrastructure China Gezhouba Group 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 CGGC specializes in architecture, security.



filtration plant with petrol pump style water nozzle at Mubarak Pura.

SAARC BAZAAR – A way Forward for South Asian Businesses

Independent Report I S L A M A B A D / S A A R C B A Z A A R : Empowering Trade, Fostering Growth, and Celebrating Diversity WWWSAARCBAZAARCOM, the innovative e-commerce platform designed to revolutionize trade within the SAARC region, is now officially live. With a vision to connect global consumers by providing a 100% free-of-cost, userfriendly e-commerce portal that bridges traders across the SAARC region, including MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) and entrepreneurs, particularly women who own home-

based SAARCBAZAAR is of the SAARC region can strategically positioned to now showcase their capitalize on this growth by fostering regional source economic integration and empowering businesses facilitates and consumers alike. The connections 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 uppoised for a significant economic leap. SAARCBAZAAR trade goes beyond commerce by exhibitions within the SAARC region. It is

highlighting the rich cultural heritage and tourist attractions of each SAARC country. Explore the best entrepreneurial of art, cuisine, and history opportunities. For women while conducting business. entrepreneurs, especially channels."SAARCBAZAAR

industries, Businesses from all corners those in peri-urban and remote areas, the platform provides a level playing products, services, and field to showcase their talents and products. materials effortlessly. The platform Businesses registered with direct regional commerce between chambers and women entrepreneurs receive distinctive identity badges. This spotlight feature enhances visibility and credibility, promoting trust to-date economic data, among consumers. ŠAARCBAZAAR news, and information on events and

proudly pioneers a firstof-its-kind reporting mechanism for NTMs and committed to fostering NTBs. An open database self-employment and system ensures prompt resolution of potential trade issues through formal

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

 $\begin{array}{ccc} A & b & o & u & 1 \\ S & A & R & C & B & A & Z & A & R \\ \end{array}$ 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.

to Pakistan



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

increase in the revenue and sustainability of micro, PBT underscore the small, and medium

marking a powerful start to the year. The Bank's Profit before Tax (PBT) also witnessed 110% growth, said a news release.

The substantial

positive momentum within the country's economic



create feasible environment for growth of IT, tech and telecom sectors. She said, "Pakistan is a founding member of

Daily **Independent**, Karachi

PM witnesses signing of letter of intent between **PMYP, UNICEF**

Minister Prime Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday witnessed singing of a letter of intent regarding the United Nations Generation Unlimited (GenU) programme between Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

GenÚ was launched by the Secretary General of the United Nations in 2018 with the aim to empower the youth through education, technical training and entrepreneurship and working towards early education and training.

GenU is planning to start its full operations in Pakistan with an initial investment of 20 million Euros in youth related projects.

Signing the document will help provide equal op-

ISLAMABAD (APP): portunities to education and training to the youth. GenU and the PM Youth Programme will work together on operational strategic framework in this regard.

Earlier the UNICEF delegation headed by representative of UNICEF in Pakistan Abdullah A Fazil called on the prime minister. Chairman PM Youth Programme Rana Mashhood was also present in the meeting.

The delegation apprised the prime minister about the collaboration between the PM Youth Programme and UNICEF regarding increasing the capacity of the youth in Pakistan

The prime minister appreciated the steps being taken by UNICEF for the welfare of children all over the world, including Paki-



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses singing of a letter of intent between Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

Ambassador of **Tarar for enhanced collaboration** the European between public, private sector to Union calls on ensure rapid economic dev. ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the Euro-

ISLAMABAD (APP): 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 country

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 in-

vestment 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 re-

source. "We are blessed with a huge population of youth which constitutes 68 per cent of its population". That is a huge potential which we can offer to the world, he added. He said Pakistan was strategically located at the crossroads of the world which was a source of pride for the nation.

He said that the Gov-ernment of Pakistan as a ment with the projection of



\$ 1 Trillion by 2030." Tarar said that Pakistan had great potential to deploy its human resource in this industry.

Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and dis-The minister said that he was proud to inform that cussed matters related to Shehbaz Sharif during his mutual concern. stints as chief minister of thanked the EU leaders for the Punjab had attached their congratulatory mesgreat importance to vocasages on his re-election and tional training and skill desaid he looked forward to velopment. From day one, working closely with the

the priority of the PML-N was skill development of the youth. joyed friendly and cordial 'The manifesto of the political party that I repre-sent, highlights the importies with the EU and expressed satisfaction at the tance of enhancing skills existing and placing importance on mechanisms that were meetskill development, on seting regularly to exchange ting up institutes where views on further strengthening cooperation. skills training is imparted to vouth and this is the way

collaboration.

posals.

The prime minister apforward", he remarked. preciated, in particular, Expressing gratitude to Founder and CEO of GS EU's continued support to Pakistan through the GSP Microelectronics (GSME) Plus scheme, which has now been renewed till Farhat Jahangir, he said he had done a great job by organising this summit to bring public and private 2027.

SC suspends sectors together and bring-**ECP's re-polling** ing members of esteemed order in PB-51 universities of Pakistan under one roof for optimum ISLAMABAD (APP) The Supreme Court on He urged the luminar-Thursday suspended the ies from leading universities Election Commission of to come up with workable Pakistan's (ECP) order for solutions and tangible prore-polling in 12 polling stations of PB-51 Chaman on April 21. The threemember SC bench headed

by Justice Muhammad A

Mazhar and comprising

Justice Ayesha Malik and

Irfan Saadat Khan also or-

dered the ECP to issue a

new schedule for re-poll-

ing in the area after 10

Bullet riddled

body of

voungster

davs

PM Shehbaz

pean Union Amb. Riina

. Kionka Thursday paid a

courtesy call on Prime

The prime minister

He said Pakistan en

institutional

Friday April 19, 2024

Zulfikar Ali Shah vows to start conservation projects at world heritage sites of Sindh Independent Report sion of Chairman People

sion of Chairman People's KARACHI: Sindh Minis-Party Bilawal Bhutto ter of Culture, Tourism, An-Zardari. tiquities and Archives.

Underwater heritage ex-

the support of UNESCO.

he said during a meeting with

a UNESCO delegation com-

prised of Italian archaeolo-

gists Dr. Cristina and Jawad.

said a statement issued here.

world heritage sites.

Zulfikar Shah said that

services of renowned ar-

cheological experts from all

over the world will be ac-

quired for protection of the

cultural heritage of Sindh,

adding that all the heritage

sites of historical and ar-

cheological importance will

be promoted around the

world according to the vi-

Syed Awais Qadir Shah,

developing and providing

health and education

facilities in underprivileged

of Saleh Putt taluka at his

residence here on

Thursday, he said that the

government is taking

Talking to a delegation

The members of the

areas of the province.

Dr. Christina, at the occasion, said that ancient and historical heritage of Sindh due to its civilization, culture and equality has drawn attention of the entire world while Makli tombs also possessed special importance like other world heritage

Dr. Christina further said that the absence of any kind of weapons at archeological sites of Sindh is a testament to prevalence of a pacifist society in ancient Indus valley civilization, which we do not observe in other ancient cultures or civilizations. She felicitated Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah on assuming the post of Minister of Culture, Tourism, Antiq-The minster discussed with the delegation project uities and Archives and assured that UNESCO will of expeditious conservation of the historical tombs of continue its all possible Makli Necropolis, Mohan Jo Daro and Bhanbhor, support for conservation of the historical heritage of which have been declared Sindh

Later, the provincial minister presented gifts of replicas of antiquities found at Mohan Jo Daro, Ajrak and Sindhi cap to the delegation. Secretary Culture and Tourism Khalid Chachar, Managing Director Tourism Fayaz Shah, Director Archeology Abdul Fattah Sheikh and others were also present at the occasion.



KARACHI: Diarrhea patients are being treated at Civil Hospital in Karachi on Thursday, April 18, 2024. Sindh has seen an outbreak of diarrhea and dysentery in recent as more than 181,000 cases have been reported so far this year. Health practitioners attribute the surge in cases to contaminated water sources in the province.

Awais Shah says: **Govt fully focused** on development in underprivileged areas

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.

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 confer-

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

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

policy encouraged innovation and investment in the country which this summit was offering precisely - a collaboration between public and private

sector He said that the federal cabinet meeting on Wednesday had approved a public private partnership policy framework to even-

tually facilitate investment in the country. He said that the job of the government was not

only to regulate but also facilitate investment. He said unfortunately sometimes governments forgot their primary responsibility as a facilitator which hampered the investment.

He said that the government could fulfil this responsibility through collaboration between public and private sector and by ensuring 'ease of doing business'

He said that Pakistan has been producing 50,000 engineering graduates everv 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 bil-

ence on the sidelines of the IMF 2024 Spring Meet-

as Foreign Minister AFP in Washington earlier Muhammad Aurangzeb, this week.

programme worth "billions" of dollars, Finance Minister The statement comes Muhammad Aurangzeb told

country liquor and vowed

to take strict action against

any police officers found

involved in drug-related ac-

the importance of perfor-

mance, stating that officers

showing dedication will be

encouraged while those

lacking performance will

He reiterated the com-

The directive includes

The Sindh Police are

face departmental action.

mitment to crush organized

crime and urged any indi-

viduals involved to rectify

their actions immediately

targeting crime profession

als, narcotics peddlers, sell-

ers, manufacturers, suppli-

ers, and their facilitators.

elements from the region.

The DIG emphasized

Sindh police crackdown on organized crime, narcotics

tivities.

MIRPURKHAS to eradicate the storage of (APP):Under the directives of Sindh Provincial Home Minister Zia Lanjar and IG Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon, a meeting was convened with police officers from the three districts of Mirpurkhas range on Thursday

Chaired by DIG Police Mirpurkhas Range Javed Sonĥaro Jaskani, the meeting at the DIGP Office Mirpurkhas addressed the rampant issue of organized crime, narcotics, and other illicit activities in the region.

SHOs from Mirpurkhas, Umarkot, and Tharparkar districts, along with other office staff, participated in the meeting.

DIG Mirpurkhas Range Javed Sonharo determined to root out such Jaskani initiated a campaign

AC Dokri visits PPHI Taluka Hospital

LARKANA (APP): Assistant Commissioner Dokri (Larkana) Ms. Farzana Mirani, on the directives of DC Larkana on Thursday paid a visit to PPHI Taluka Hospital Dokri to review arrangements made for patients suffering from various diseases, uring visit, she inquired about the problems of patients and directed the Incharge of the Hospital to ensure provision of proper healthcare facilities in all wards of the hospital. She took notice of the shortage of medicines in the hospital, poor cleanliness and security issues. She said that health facilities in the hospitals should be improved and treatment and medicines should be provided to the patients.



LARKANA: Commissioner Larkana, Ghulam Mustafa Phul presided over the meeting regarding the revenue department held at his office in Larkana

CS Sindh chairs meeting to accelerate Sehwan development initiatives

HYDERABAD (APP): to improve parking for vehicles, revive the bus stand The Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Hyder Shah and enhance drainage chaired a meeting on Thursschemes. The chief secreday at Shahbaz hall tary stated that there should Hyderabad to discuss varibe a road from the shrine to ous matters including the the fort as well. He strictly renovation of Sehwan city directed the officers of the and the shrine of Lal Augaf department to devise Shahbaz Qalandar, as well a regular procedure for devoas the construction of the tees to visit the shrine. dual carriageway road from

The CS also directed the Jamshoro to Sehwan. chairman to ensure effective According to a handout, tax collection within the limaddressing the meeting, the chief secretary Sindh Syed its of Sehwan municipality.

He instructed the secre-Asif Hyder Shah said that tary works and services during the Urs of Hazrat Lal Syed Aijaz Shah and other Shahbaz Qalandar, visitors relevant officials to form a face difficulties in reaching scheme for the widening of the shrine, and the purpose the road leading to the of this meeting is to discuss shrine and to prepare the efforts to expand the roads scheme of bus stand and and streets leading to the submit it to the secretary shrine, eliminate encroachlocal government while he ments and improve the city instructed the secretary pubof Sehwan Sharif. Apart lic health to ensure the from this, there is also a need completion of the remaining to widen the road leading to drainage scheme by visiting the shrine from the bypass Sehwan city. and build a footpath.

The SSP Jamshoro He emphasized the need Tariq Ali briefed the meetbeing lost.

Anti-Vehicle Lifting Cell

(AVLC) Thursday handed

over 18 snatched and sto-

len vehicles to their owners

at a ceremony held at AVLC

Headquarters Sharifabad,

Rao handed over the keys

of the vehicles including

cars and Mazda Truck to

their owners. The citizens

expressed their gratitude to

the AVLC after getting their

snatched from parts of

Karachi were recovered by

the Anti-Vehicle Lifting

The vehicles that were

SSP AVLC Arif Aslam

Karachi

vehicles back



HYDERABAD: View of water level increasing in the Jamshoro Canal while many nearby residents evacuate from their homes due to increased water level and over flowing canal water, in Hyderabad

ing that a large number of devotees participate in the Urs from all over the country, and the internal and external locations of the shrine are very narrow, which creates difficulties in fulfilling security duties.

The secretary health Rehan Baloch informed that the medicine warehouse in Sehwan is in the process of completion. Secretary LG Syed Khalid Haider Shah, secretary public health Sohail Qureshi, secretary health Rehan Baloch, Commissioner Hyderabad Divi-

sion and Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad were also the incident could be a suipresent in the meeting. Meanwhile, the chief

till late evening. over a separate meeting

gation into the matter is in delay in the construction

Bid to smuggle Siberian cranes foiled,

accused held

The new route will SUKKUR (INP): The Wildinitially start with a life Department foiled a bid frequency of two to smuggle nine precious weekly flights connect-Siberian cranes and arrested ing both cities. The Fly an accused here on Thurs-Jinnah's spokesperday. son said that following

The joint team of the successful launch Sukkur and Khairpur Wildof international flights life Departments on secret connecting Islamabad information checked a and Lahore to Sharjah, Kohat bound passenger Fly Jinnah is proud to coach at Babarloi Bypass mark another milein Sukkur. stone with the intro-

During search, nine duction of third interprecious Siberian cranes including two dead were re-Islamabad to Muscat, covered and an accused was the capital city of Oman. This expansion arrested.

The wildlife depart aligns with our comment took the recovered mitment to providing birds into custody and our customers with nabbed accused was being new options for affordinvestigated. able and value driven added.

SUKKUR (APP): Speaker regarding Governor of the Sindh Assembly, problems faced by the people of the area and called for their resolution. stated that the provincial government is dedicated to

Speaker Sindh said that the development of all 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 matter relating to problems with the authorities concerned to ensure the availability of medical staff in hospitals and teachers in delegation briefed the schools



KARACHI: Women players are in action during the 1st One Day International (ODI) Match between Pakistan and West Indies, at National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi

Fly Jinnah launches new non-stop flights between Islamabad & Muscat

KARACHI (INP): Fly air travel domestically Jinnah, Pakistan's and internationally. Fly low-cost carrier, has Jinnah remains steadannounced the launch fast in offering conveof its new non-stop nient and affordable flights between Islamabad and Muscat service to its passengers. in Oman, starting from May 10.

With its modern fleet of five Airbus A320 aircraft, the airline serves five major cities Pakistan i-e Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar,

and Quetta. This new route adds to Fly Jinnah's growing list of international destinations, complementing the existing flight route to Sharjah, UAE.

Customers are advised that they can national route from book their flights by visiting Fly Jinnah's w e b s i t e , www.flyjinnah.com by calling the call centre (111-000-035) or through travel agencies, the spokesman

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AVLC hands over snatched,

stolen cars to owners

KARACHI (INP): The Cell (AVLC) in three weeks.

hicles

The SSP AVLC vowed to

control the snatching of ve-

Citizens-Police Liaison

Committee (CPLC) re-

leased a report on Karachi

street crimes in the first

that as many as 22,627

crimes were reported in the

first three months (Jan-

March) of 2024. During the

91 days, 59 people lost

their lives while resisting

robberies in the port city,

while over 700 people sus-

tained injuries.

three months of 2024.

Earlier this month, the

The report revealed

village Habib Kot near Lakhi Ghulam Shah was found out of his village from Agricultural land. There was bullet shots marks on the head of youngster deceased Maqsood

Ahmed Mahar were seemed and received a pistol from the area of incident. The cause behind the incident was not ascer

tained, area police added. Similarly as per local sources, the cause behind

cide No FIR was registered secretary also presided

Further police investiregarding the loss of lives and property due to the

process of dual carriageway road to Sehwan. He expressed regret that due to the incomplete road, valuable lives are

found crucial steps in this regard Independent Report and the results of it would SHIKARPUR: One dead be visible soon. body of youngster was found out of his village Habib Kot in the jurisdic-

tion of Mari Police Station on Thursday. According to initial reports, one dead body of youngster identified as Maqsood Ahmed of 25 son of Ĝhulam Ali Mahar of