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Pakistan warns India of befitting response in event of any misadventure

FO denounces Indian minister's provocative remarks on cross-border operations; says Pakistan stands resolute in intent, ability to safeguard sovereignty against any aggression

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif warned India on Saturday of a befitting response in the event of any misadventure against Pakistan.

The minister's statement followed provocative remarks made by his Indian counterpart, Rajnath Singh, in a televised interview.

Referring to the capture and subsequent release of Abhinandan, a pilot from India, the defence minister stated that one of the Indian pilots, who was apprehended during India's attempt to infiltrate Pakistan a few years ago, was later freed by Pakistan as an act of charity toward its arch-rival.

He cautioned India of similar consequences if it were to engage in another misadventure.

Asif suggested that all the boasting and fiery rhetoric by Indian ministers these days were merely tactics for

electioneering in the neighboring country. "India's anti-Pakistani statements are aimed at gaining attention from the public," he added.

While emphasising that Pakistan does not seek tensions in the region, the minister warned India of a tit-for-tat response in case of any misadventure.

The minister also noted that India was sponsoring terror activities both inside Pakistan and abroad.

Asif urged India to exercise caution in making such statements and to refrain from taking any actions during the election period that could lead to unfavourable consequences.

"Let us hope that their plane does not crash again, forcing us to once more extend charity by sending back their pilot," remarked the minister.

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MADINAH MUNAWARAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is being received by Governor of Madinah H.R.H. Prince Salman bin Sultan Al Saud at Madinah Airport.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting regarding security of foreign nationals.

Didn't de-notify Gen Qamar Bajwa despite 'betrayal': Imran

Caims some party leaders in contact with 'establishment'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Saturday asserted that he did not de-notify former Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen (ret) Qamar Javed Bajwa despite his actions "felt like a betrayal".

"Although General Bajwa's actions felt like a betrayal, we [the then PTI government] refrained from convening a committee to confront him," the deposed prime minister said while speaking to journalists in an informal conversation during the hearing of the Toshakhana reference in Adiala jail.

During the conversation, PTI founder Imran Khan once again called for negotiations for the better-

ment of the country. "It's for the betterment of Pakistan, so convince me for negotiations," he said.

"If I could meet Gen Qamar Bajwa twice following removal of our government, then I can meet anyone. Right now, it is not about me, but is about Pakistan," the former prime minister told reporters.

PTI founder Imran Khan said that he could have de-notified General Bajwa despite his "betrayal", however, he chose not to as he did not want to confront the Pakistan army.

On the Toshakhana reference, the former prime minister said that he and his wife Bushra Bibi were convicted in the reference by claiming that the value of

the jewellery set was Rs3 billion while the real value was Rs18 million.

In this regard, he said that he would file a case against the chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the prosecution witness Inam Shah. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Saturday claimed that some of his party leaders were in contact with the "establishment".

"These people want to break the party [PTI] and they are the same people levelling allegations against Bushra Bibi," the former prime minister said in an informal conversation with journalists during the hearing of the Toshakhana reference in Adiala jail.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan called on Federal Minister of Industry and Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain

10 terrorists killed by security forces in KP operations: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Security forces killed 10 terrorists in two separate intelligence-based operations (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan and North Waziristan districts, according to the military's media wing.

A statement from the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that security forces conducted an IBO in Dera Ismail Khan on Friday based on the reported presence of terrorists.

"During the conduct of the operation, after an intense fire exchange, eight terrorists were killed," the statement said, adding that the militant had remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces and target killing of innocent civilians.

It said weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from them.

The ISPR added that a "sanitisation operation" was under way to eliminate other terrorists in the area. "Locals of the area appreciated the operation ... The security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country."

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded the security forces for the successful operation.

The ISPR said the second IBO was conducted in North Waziristan today.

"During conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which two terrorists were sent to hell. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from them," the ISPR said.

It said that a sanitisation operation was being conducted to eliminate any other militants found in the area.

Two terrorists killed in Panjur IBO

RAWALPINDI (APP): The security forces have killed two terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted in Panjur District of Balochistan.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Saturday, on the night of April 5-6, the security forces had conducted the IBO on reported presence of terrorists.

Among the killed two terrorists, one was identified as Asad alias Hasrat who were killed after an intense exchange of fire during the conduct of operation, whereas a cache of arms, ammunition and explosives was also recovered.

Railway Police registers case against DC Quetta

Independent Report QUETTA: The Railway Police has registered a case against Deputy Commissioner Quetta and personnel of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) here in the Railway Police Station on Saturday. According to the Railway Police, the case has been registered by the Station Master Railways Quetta Station, Abdul Aziz.

It may be mentioned here that a railway crossing was removed by the district administration during the anti-encroachment drive being supervised by the Deputy Commissioner in the city.

PM arrives in Saudi Arabia on three day visit

MADINA MUNAWARAH (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Saudi Arabia here on Saturday along with his delegation on a three day visit.

Governor of Madina Munawarah Prince Salman Bin Sultan Al Saud received the prime minister at the airport.

The prime minister will stay in Madina Munawarah and will offer prayers at Masjid e Nabwi (PBUH).

PM Shehbaz travelled on a commercial flight and during the flight mingled with the passengers.

The passengers took selfies with the prime minister and had a chat with him.

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif and members of the federal cabinet including Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Asif, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Abdul Aleem Khan, Attaullah Tarar and Ahad

Cheema accompanied the prime minister.

Earlier Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday departed to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in a commercial flight for a visit from April 6 to 8.

This would be the prime minister's first foreign visit since his election.

He is accompanied by federal ministers including Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Abdul Aleem Khan, Attaullah Tarar and Ahad Khan Cheema. Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz also accompanied the prime minister.

The prime minister, after his arrival in KSA tonight, would stay in Madina Munawarah. The prime minister will perform Umrah and offer prayers at the Masjid Nabwi Al-Sharif, Foreign Office said in an earlier press release.

No compromise to be made with state & public enemies:

CM Bugti pays tribute to security forces for successful Panjur IBO

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti had expressed satisfaction over the successful intelligence based operation carried out by the security forces in Panjur. In an official statement issued here on Saturday, the Chief Minister said that the writ of state would be maintained at every cost by eliminating the peace enemies.

He said that those involved in the attacks on the security forces would not be spared at all.

The Chief Minister vowed to take the terrorist elements to task.

He paid rich tributes to the brave jawans of security forces saying that we are proud of them.

He asserted that no compromise can't be made with enemies of the masses and state.

Naqvi directs foolproof measures for protection of Chinese nationals in Pak

ISLAMABAD (Online): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed foolproof measures for the protection of Chinese nationals in Pakistan.

Chairing a meeting in Islamabad regarding security arrangements for Chinese citizens, he said protection of foreigners, especially Chinese citizens, is the top priority.

He directed to ensure implementation of SOPs

for the safety of foreigners, especially the Chinese nationals.

Mohsin Naqvi said the enemy does not want the development and prosperity of Pakistan. He said we will never allow the nefarious designs of the terrorists to succeed.

The meeting was briefed about the arrangements made for the protection of foreigners, especially the Chinese nationals.

Action ordered against senior KP police officials for negligence: Tarar

Disciplinary action will be taken against RPO Hazara Division, DPOs Upper Kohistan, Lower Kohistan within 15 days; Govt taking matter of Chinese's security very seriously, says Tarar

LAHORE (INP): Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Saturday said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had ordered disciplinary action against senior police officers for "negligence" in light of an inquiry report on the Shangla district attack that killed five Chinese nationals.

Addressing media in Lahore, Tarar said the prime minister had constituted an inquiry committee on the March 26 attack on a vehicle carrying Chinese engineers to the Dasu Hydropower Project.

"The PM has directed to take action against the regional police officer (RPO) Hazara Division; district police officer of

Upper Kohistan and Lower Kohistan; director security, Dasu Hydropower Project and commandant special security unit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa within 15 days," he said.

The inquiry committee was formed to probe the matter and identify the lapses in security protocol.

At least six people including five Chinese engineers working on the Dasu project were killed in the suicide attack that took place on the Karakoram Highway in the Bisham area, Shangla district.

They were travelling from Islamabad to the dam construction site in the Dasu area of the Upper Kohistan district.

Highlighting the swift response of the Pakistani authorities, Tarar said the PM immediately went to the Chinese consulate after the incident and also personally visited Dasu area to boost the morale of Chinese engineers.

"We want peace in the region but our desire should not be misconstrued as a weakness. We are taking the matter of the security of the Chinese very seriously. PM Shehbaz is himself overseeing security of the Chinese projects and engineers," he said adding that the nation's morale was high and they would not let anyone destroy the peace.



ISLAMABAD: CEO of HanGeng Trade & Yuanhua Industrial Andy Liao, calls on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, to discuss foreign investment opportunities in Gwadar and ways to expand exports.

Jam, Liao discuss Investment opportunities in Gwadar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) HanGeng Trade & Yuanhua Industrial, Andy Liao here on Saturday called on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan to discuss foreign investment opportunities in Gwadar and ways to expand exports. They explored Gwadar's potential for economic growth and collaboration between foreign companies and local authorities, said a press statement issued by commerce ministry.

Three Policemen including DSP martyr in attack on Police vehicle in Lakki Marwat

PESHAWAR (APP): Three Police officials, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), were martyred on Saturday after an attack on their vehicle in Lakki Marwat, Police Control Lakki Marwat confirmed the incident, said.

The police vehicle was ambushed at night by militants.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Gul Muhammad Khan and his

gunman Constable Naseem Gul received fatal injuries while another police official Salamat Khan, who received critical bullet injuries, succumbed to his injuries later on at the hospital later on, the Police Control Lakki Marwat said.

The casualties were shifted to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Sarai Naurang and the area was cordoned off for investigation.

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Birth registration basic right of every child, says CS

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan has stated that birth registration is basic right of every child. If a child doesn't have birth certificate then he can face numerous problems in future.

This and similar other views were expressed by the Chief Secretary while chairing a meeting about birth registration certificate here on Saturday.

The Chief Secretary said that birth certificate gives certain benefits to certain benefits. He said that the birth certificate is an important documentary record, the importance of

which is recognized well. If the registration of a child is not done in the childhood, and if the identity card is prepared in 16 years of age then it means he leads 16 years without any citizenship, he said.

The Chief Secretary said that when registration of children would be done and the government would have their record, then the government could be able to make planning for their welfare, he added.

He said registration of birth enables children to have access to the facilities of education and health besides legal identity and inheritance.



QUETTA: People are busy in Eid shopping ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr at Bacha Khan Chowk

UN relief chief calls Gaza war a 'betrayal of humanity'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Israel's war on Gaza has turned into a "betrayal of humanity", the United Nations' humanitarian chief has said.

In a statement on the eve of the six-month anniversary of the war, Martin Griffiths, the outgoing under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief, called for a "collective determination that there be a reckoning for this betrayal of humanity."

"Each day, this war claims more civilian victims," said Griffiths, who will leave his post at the end of June due to health reasons.

The destruction wrought across the Gaza Strip by Israel since Oct 7 makes for grim reading — over 33,000 people killed and, according to the World Bank, over one million Pal-

estinians are without homes, close to 90 per cent of health facilities have been damaged or wrecked and schools have been destroyed or turned into shelters for the newly homeless.

"Rarely has there been such global outrage at the toll of the conflict with seemingly so little done to end it and instead so much impunity", Griffiths said.

He said the grim milestone should not be just a moment of remembrance and mourning, "it must also spur a collective determination that there be a reckoning for this betrayal of humanity."

It's still unclear how much more destruction and death Gaza will endure before peace settles across the troubled enclave, nor what type of society will emerge from the conflict, but six months after hostilities

started UN agencies are already strategizing for the future, however uncertain.

"Gaza has witnessed an almost complete destruction of economic activity in all sectors." That's the damning analysis of Aya Jaafar, an economist at the UN's International Labour Organization (ILO).

The ILO estimates that more than 200,000 jobs have been lost in Gaza, some 90 per cent of the pre-conflict workforce. The UN agency further calculates that income losses there have reached \$4.1 million per day, which equates to an 80 per cent decrease in the enclave's GDP (the amount of money earned from the sale of all goods and services). This includes Palestinians who received salaries for work carried out in Israel but who are now unemployed in Gaza.

Construction has typically been one of the most important industries in Gaza, but according to the ILO, activity in the sector is down some 96 per cent. Other key productive areas, including agriculture and the industrial and services sector, have also all but ceased. The few businesses that are still operating are generally small-scale local enterprises, including bakeries, other food-related businesses and some pharmacies.

The ILO estimates that perhaps 25 per cent of the people killed in Gaza have been men of working age — generally, women do not work.



QUETTA: People are busy in Eid shopping ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr at Qandhari Bazar in Quetta



HYDERABAD: Members of Hindu Community are holding protest demonstration for recovery of innocent hindu girl Priya Kumari

Three Policemen including...

Continued from page 1

According to details, DSP Gul Muhammad Khan and another official, Naseem Gul, were martyred in an attack by miscreants near Manjiwala Chowk, Lakki Marwat District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on late Friday night while another Policeman Salamat Khan was also injured in the attack and later on succumbed to his injuries in the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Sarai Naurang.

According to details provided by a police spokesperson, DSP Gul Muhammad Khan was on patrol duty in the area when he was attacked. A policeman has been injured in the attack and was undergoing treatment in the hospital, later on died.

Following the attack, law enforcement agencies swiftly responded, collecting evidence from the scene. Additionally, efforts have been initiated to apprehend the perpetrators responsible for this cowardly act. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has strongly condemned the attack on the police vehicle, and expressed grief over the martyrdom of DSP Gul Muhammad Khan and his gunman and another Police constable in the incident.

He also prayed for the martyred, and demanded necessary action for the immediate arrest of the elements involved in the firing.

"The families of the

martyrs will not be left alone, and they will be fully supported," Gandapur remarked.

He also announced financial assistance for the families of the martyrs under the Shuhada Package.

"Steps should be taken for timely payment of the martyrs' package to the families of the martyrs," the CM instructed the police officials.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali also condemned the firing on the Police vehicle in Lakki Marwat and expressed grief over the martyrdom of the three police personnel.

He expressed sympathy and condolences to the families of the martyred officials and prayed for the departed souls.

KP Information Advisor Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif also condemned the attack and extended his condolences to the families of the martyred Policemen.

"The morale of the police cannot be lowered by such cowardly actions", Barrister Dr. Saif said.

"Targeting the police who are responsible for protecting the people is a cowardly act", Barrister Dr. Saif added.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have made eternal sacrifices to protect the lives and property of the people, said Barrister Dr. Saif. The funeral prayers of martyred police officers were performed in the Police Line Bannu.

Funeral prayers of martyred DSP offered

LAKKI MARWAT (APP): The funeral prayers of martyred Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Gul Muhammad Khan and another official, Naseem Gul, were offered with official honours at Iqbal Shaheed Police Line in Bannu on Saturday.

According to the spokesman of Lakki Marwat police, two policemen, including a deputy superintendent of police (DSP) Gul Muhammad Khan and constable, Naseem Gul, were martyred in an attack occurred near Manjiwala Chowk in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat district on Friday night. One policeman sustained injuries and is currently receiving medical treatment.

A large number of people including the police and Army officers attended the funeral. District Police Officer (DPO) Bannu Ziauddin Ahmed, DPO Lakki Marwat Taimur Khan, SP Operation Bannu Sanaullah and Army officers laid flower wreaths on the coffins of the martyred and prayed for them.

DPO Bannu Ziauddin Ahmed praised the martyrs as being brave, dutiful and noble, adding that the Bannu police stand with the bereaved families in their hour of grief.

Anti-Corruption Dept. decides to probe into additional recruitments, misuse of authority in UoB

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Anti-Corruption Establishment Department has decided to conduct inquiry into the additional recruitments and misuse of authorities in the University of Balochistan.

The Director General, Anti-Corruption, Abdul Wahid Kakar informed that the Vice Chancellor of UoB has been summoned in the matter on April 18.

The record of recruitments and use of the budget has also been required for the period of six months, he added.

In addition to this, the provincial government has also decided to probe into the funds provided to other public sector universities of the province.

Pakistan warns India...

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile Pakistan has denounced the provocative remarks made by Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during a recent televised interview.

In a statement, Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan stands resolute in its intent and ability to safeguard its sovereignty against any act of aggression, as demonstrated by its robust response to India's reckless incursion in February 2019, which laid bare India's hollow claims of military superiority.

The spokesperson said India's ruling dispensation habitually resorts to hateful rhetoric to fuel hyper-nationalistic sentiments, unapologetically exploiting such discourse for electoral gains.

Such myopic and irresponsible behaviour not only undermines regional peace but also impedes the prospects of constructive engagement in the long term.

Baloch said Pakistan had always demonstrated its commitment to peace in the region. However, Islamabad's desire for peace should not be misconstrued as weakness. "History attests to Pakistan's firm resolve and ability to protect and defend itself," she said.

The spokesperson recalled that Pakistan had provided irrefutable evidence, elucidating India's campaign of extrajudicial and transnational assassinations on Pakistani soil.

She said India's assertion of its preparedness to extrajudicially execute more civilians, arbitrarily pronounced as "terrorists", inside Pakistan constitutes a clear admission of culpability.

She urged the international community to hold India accountable for its heinous and illegal actions.

Giving further weight to Islamabad's allegations of India's sophisticated and sinister campaign of extrajudicial and extrajudicial killings inside Pakistan, a leading British publication has revealed that the Indian prime minister, who directly controls the Indian spy agency, ordered assassinations on Pakistan's soil.

Citing both Indian and Pakistani intelligence operatives, The Guardian states in the report that the Indian government "assassinated individuals in Pakistan". Delhi has implemented a policy of targeting those it considers hostile to India, it adds.

The report notes that Indian agents were behind the killings of at least 20 individuals inside Pakistan since 2020.

The report credits Indian intelligence sleeper-cells for the surge in killings in Pakistan in 2023, adding that these deaths were orchestrated by Indian intelligence sleeper-cells. Back in January, Pakistan's Foreign Office claimed that Islamabad had credible evidence linking Indian agents to the assassination of two Pakistani nationals, Shahid Latif and Muhammad Riaz, on Pakistani soil.

Need to create awareness about Kashmir dispute in new generation stressed

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell, Wajahat Rashid Baig, has said that the Modi-led Hindutva Indian government is rapidly advancing its colonial plan to turn the Muslim majority into a minority in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Wajahat Rashid Baig, addressing a special meeting of focal persons of universities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir at Kashmir Center Rawalpindi, said, "We need to create awareness in our new generation regarding the historical background of the Kashmir dispute and the nefarious intentions of the Modi government regarding Jammu and Kashmir."

He said inter-university speech competitions will be organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell under the theme of "Indian demographic engineering in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and its impact on the right to self-determination" in May organized so

that the students could be made aware of conspiracies of the Modi government.

Wajahat Rashid Baig urged the students of universities and colleges across Azad Jammu and Kashmir to fully use social media for highlighting the Kashmir cause and inform the international community about the ongoing Indian atrocities and illegal actions in occupied Jammu and Kashmir by the Modi regime.

He said the endless sacrifices of Kashmiris for freedom from illegal Indian occupation will surely bring fruit one day.

On the occasion, Raja Muhammad Aslam Khan, Director, Operations, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell, briefed the focal persons about the speech contests and other issues. He said the selection of the students for the final speech competition will be done strictly on the basis of merit and the first position winner will be given Rs 0.1 million, second position-holder will be given Rs

80,000 and the third position winner will be given Rs 60,000. Certificates of appreciation will also be given to all students participating in the competition.

Director of Kashmir Center Rawalpindi Raja Khan Afsar Khan, Sardar Sajid Mehmood, Najeeb-ul-Ghafoor Khan, Raja Rashid Raza, Farhan Qayyum Abbasi and Engineer Nauman Abbasi were also present in the meeting.

While on behalf of the universities, Director, Students Affairs, Azad Kashmir University, Muzaffarabad, Dr Sharjeel, Deputy Director, Students Affairs, Poonch University, Bhasharat Mehmood, Shahid Hussain Mir, Lecture, Department of English, Focal Person of Literary Society University of Kotli, Taimur Akbar Chaudhry, Assistant Professor, Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) and Dr Khalid, Assistant Professor, Azad Jammu and Kashmir University, Bhimbar attended the meeting.

Gary Kirsten, Gillespie likely to be Pakistan team's head coaches

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to appoint Gary Kirsten as the head coach for white ball (ODI and T20) and Jason Gillespie as the head coach for red ball (Test). According to media reports, the PCB had issued an advertisement for appointment of coaches. It sought applications till April 15.

It stated the PCB would announce appointment of both the coaches after completion of the formalities. After completing formalities by April 15, the PCB would make a formal announcement. On the other

hand, search for the assistant coach of the Pakistan cricket team has also been started for which the cricket board has given an advertisement. The aspirants can submit applications till April 20. The assistant coach will assist the coaches of red and white balls.



GILGIT: VC Karakoram International University Attaullah Shah giving away certificate to the participant during the Husn-e-Qiraat and Natia competition at KIU.

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فیڈرل بورڈ آف ریونیو
حکومت پاکستان

اپنا کاروبار رجسٹر کروائیں سہولیات سے شمار پائیں
حکومت پاکستان کی جانب سے

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کم کم 182 کروڑ روپے
کے تحت آئی ٹی اور برآمدات

یاد رکھیں!

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25% رعایت

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Broader collaborations among public, int'l organizations key to achieve health rights: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at a webinar on World Health Day Friday demanded broader collaborations among the government, private, civil society and international organizations to achieve health rights for all.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organized a special webinar on World Health Day under the theme "My Health My Right".

In his opening remarks, Executive Director SDPI, Dr Abid Suleri said the theme for this year's serves as a clarion call reminding us of the intrinsic rights of every individual as

health and well being. He added that the challenges in health sector are clear in Pakistan that demands to broaden the discussion on health. "It takes us beyond healthcare encompassing physical, mental, social well being, right to earn livelihood and get nourished food and also encompasses our right to clean drinking water and WASH," he said.

Dr Suleri mentioned that after 18th Amendment health was a provincial matter. "Although constitution talks of people unable to earn their livelihoods due to infirmity or sickness and I would suggest that it was not all about infirmity and

sickness as health is a right and we need to start a dialogue a shared conversation between the federal and provincial governments and the civil society to make health more accessible and resilient for provision of a healthy lifestyle," he added.

Moreover, he said citizens should be proactive stewards of their health and advocating for their rights and contributing to a health conscious society.

Health Policy Advisor SDPI, Dr Razia Safdar presented a detailed presentation on the healthcare landscape and its associated bottlenecks. She said right to health is not related to

health but other human rights and a legal binding commitment of the governments globally which was also part of the international human rights declaration. She also shed light on the human rights treaties discussing health and human rights based approach towards access to health. She also presented brief audio, video display on civil society comments on World Health Day. Chief Executive Officer Punjab Health Initiative Company, Dr Ali Razaq said the Punjab government is fulfilling its commitment to achieve universal health coverage as its budgetary allocations.



ISLAMABAD: People headed to their hometown dejectedly wait for public transport in the Federal Capital. Thousands are leaving to take advantage of a four-day holiday for Eid al-Fitr festival.



ISLAMABAD: An illuminated view of Faisal Masjid decorated with colourful lights in connection with Shab-e-Qadar on 27th day of Holy fasting month of Ramzanul Mubarak.

ECP empowers ROs, POs with first-class magistrate authority for by-elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has granted Returning Officers (ROs) and Presiding Officers (POs) powers equivalent to those of first-class magistrates to ensure the seamless execution of the forthcoming by-elections on five National and 16 provincial assembly constituencies scheduled for April 21.

District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) were vested with magisterial powers as per the notification issued by the ECP, in adherence to Section 193 of the Election Act 2017.

The Presiding officers have the authority to employ these powers during the by-elections across five

national and 16 provincial assemblies in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, spanning from April 20 to 22, until the official declaration of final results for the candidates.

Returning Officers (ROs) and District Returning Officers (DROs) are empowered to take action against candidates who violate the code of conduct set forth by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

These officers have the authority equivalent to that of a Magistrate first class concerning offenses outlined in Sections 169 and 171. They can also initiate legal proceedings under Section 190 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and conduct summary trials as per Chapter XX.

29 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 29 outlaws including eight professional beggars from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of DIG Operations Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Karachi Company police team arrested two accused namely Muhammad Arbab and Gul Zaib and recovered two 30 bore pistols from their possession.

ICP ensures comprehensive security measures in high-security zone

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) ensured comprehensive security arrangements to deal with any untoward incidents during the pro-

tests of religious and political parties in the High Security Zone.

According to the details, the Islam Capital Police is constantly engaged to maintain the law and order situation in the federal capital, ensuring the safety of lives and property of the citizens.

In this regard, the officers and officials of the Islamabad Capital Police are performing their duties effectively to ensure security arrangements and deal with any untoward incidents

public and private offices and embassies located in the high security zone is of utmost importance.

Islamabad Capital Police is using all resources to maintain the law and order



during the protests of religious and political parties in the high security zone.

A public relations officer on Saturday said that the senior police officers issued instructions to the officers and personnel posted on duty and said that the protection of all

situation in the Federal Capital Islamabad. Citizens are requested to call "Pucar-15" or report via the "ICT-15 App" regarding any suspicious person or activity. Protection of life and property of citizens is among the top priorities of the Islamabad Capital Police.

Dr. Al-Issa's itinerary includes leading the Eid prayer at Faisal Mosque and spending the day with orphans, embodying the spirit of generosity and solidarity.

According to Muhammad Umar Butt, the Spokesperson of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony,

Malaysian delegation along with IMRF visits AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): An eight-member Christian delegation, consisting of four Malaysian missionaries and four Pakistanis, led by the Chairman of the Implementation Minority Rights Forum (IMRF), Samuel Payra, visited Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU).

Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi presided over the ceremony while Chairman IMRF the chief guest.

In his address, Samuel Payra stated that all the in-

stitutions of Pakistan stand with the minorities and are at the forefront of securing their rights. He emphasized that the constitution of Pakistan protects minorities and highlighted that a significant amount of work is being done to promote inter-faith harmony in Pakistan, which is unparalleled in any other country.

Additionally, there are numerous buildings in Pakistan named after minority leaders, serving as evidence of the mutual love and brotherhood within the country.

MWL secretary general to lead Eid prayer at Faisal Mosque

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Secretary General of Muslim World League (MWL), Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, is set to mark Eid-ul-Fitr in a compassionate and inclusive manner in Pakistan.

Dr. Al-Issa's itinerary includes leading the Eid prayer at Faisal Mosque and spending the day with orphans, embodying the spirit of generosity and solidarity.

According to Muhammad Umar Butt, the Spokesperson of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony,

Investigators say letters sent to LHC judges contained baseless anthrax

ISLAMABAD (INP): There was a criticism of the country's judicial system by an organization named Tehreek-e-Namoos—Pakistan in the threatening letters, which were sent to the Lahore High Court (LHC) judges.

Sources said that the investigation team heading to Islamabad had found similarities in the contents of these letters.

Sources disclosed that the letters were sent by a man named Muhammad Fazal, while the case was registered on the complaint of the LHC security in-charge.

Words, "Welcome to baseless anthrax" were written on the letters, they disclosed.

Giving further details, sources informed that the breed of anthrax as mentioned in the letters was a bacteria that originated from the soil and was usually found in animals.

They revealed that the forensic report had detected the presence of 70 milligrams of arsenic in the letters.

Sources expressed the hope that soon the law-enforcement agencies would get to Muhammad Fazal and his accomplices.

On the other hand, two teams formed to probe these incidents will meet with the registrars of the Supreme Court (SC) and the Islamabad High Court (IHC) today and inform them of the progress made in the investigation in the last four days.

Sources said that the investigators had managed to obtain videos from the CCTV cameras installed at four different places.

Furthermore, they disclosed that the investigators were also keeping an eye on the suspicious persons who were found around the post office.

Ministry withdraws Dance for Education notification for schools

ISLAMABAD (INP): Following strong opposition by children's parents, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training on Saturday withdrew the notification issued for launching dance competitions in the National Education Programme-administered government schools under the UNESCO's Dance for Education campaign.

The UNESCO had asked the government to issue the notification under which the administrations of these schools had been asked to arrange dance competitions for the students, both boys and girls,

and then upload them on social media.

However, this did not go down well with the parents of these children who termed it against the Islamic values and norms.

The campaign, coinciding with the release of the song "Education in the Air" by Goodwill Ambassador A'Salfo and Magic System, is aimed at highlighting education's transformative power and its role in shaping a more just and sustainable world.

However, social media users expressed disappointment and frustration with the ministry's endorsement of the campaign.

Dar-led privatisation committee meeting 'postponed'

ISLAMABAD (INP): The first session of the Cabinet Committee on Privatization (CCoP) led by Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has been postponed.

According to sources, the first meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Privatization (CCoP) was summoned today (Saturday). However, the crucial privatisation meeting has been postponed due to unavailability of the Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb for his busy schedule due to preparation for Saudi visit, sources added. Earlier in a separate development it was revealed that the federal government is considering selling the majority shares of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

The Privatization Commission will decide on how many shares the government will sell as it nears the conclusion of the PIA privatization process, Coordinator to Prime Minister on Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani said.

According to him, the government was considering selling around 51% to a complete 100% shares of the national flag carrier. Kayani said that the administrative control of the PIA will be handed over to the entity buying the majority of shares. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader said that work on the PIA privatization was going at a good pace, while claiming that several countries and global companies have shown interest in buying PIA.

Housing crisis grips capital city as middle class, govt employees struggle for affordable homes

ISLAMABAD (APP): A mounting housing crisis in the capital city of Islamabad has left the middle class and government employees in a desperate struggle for affordable housing, as they face an uphill battle in securing affordable housing options.

Despite various government initiatives such as the Naya Pakistan Housing Program (NPHP), Apna Ghar Scheme, and Ashiana Housing Scheme, the demand for reasonably priced residences continues to surpass the available supply, leaving numerous families in dire need of shelter.

Adding to the complexity of the issue, allottees of sector I-12 have been waiting for over three decades for possession of their plots, hindering their ability to construct homes.

A Retired professor, Khumar Gul told APP, "The allottees of sector I-12 recently met with key officials of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), including Member (Engineering) Dr. Muhammad Khalid Hafiz and Member (Finance) Tahir Naeem Akhter, to address the severity of the plot possession issue. However, there's a glimmer of hope in an otherwise bleak scenario as Dr. Khalid Hafiz showed his willingness to consider provisional possession for the allottees in sector I-12."

Kashif Iftikhar, one of the affected allottees of sector I-12, expressed cautious optimism but emphasized the urgency of the situation. "The eyes of allottees are fixed on sector I-12 for the construction of their homes. We hope that the CDA authorities will expedite the process of plot possession," he stated, reflecting the sentiments of many facing housing uncertainty.

Meanwhile, individuals like Shahid Iqbal are left dreaming and seeking for their own homes in the capital city. He highlighted the profound impact of the housing crisis on families.

"Housing is not just a structure; it's the cornerstone of family well-being, affecting every aspect of our lives," he stated, underscoring the urgent need for viable housing solutions.

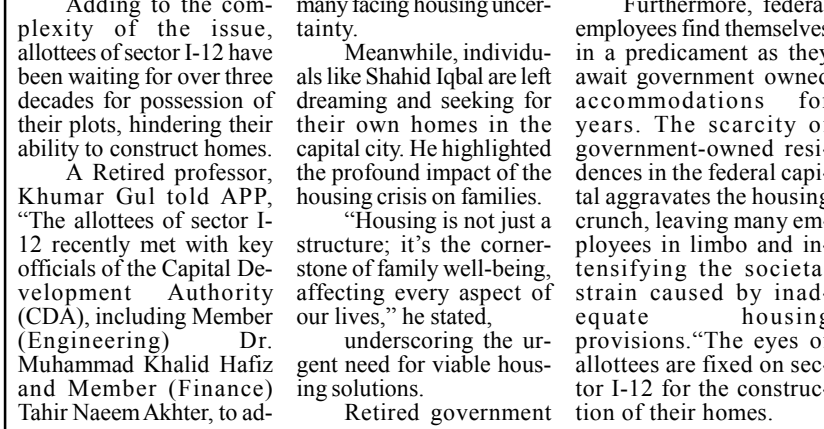
Retired government

servant Mian Amjad Ali also voiced concerns over the slow-paced development of public housing organizations like the Pakistan Housing Authority and Federal Government Employees Housing Authority.

He emphasized the dire need for the development of new residential sectors in Islamabad to accommodate the rapidly increasing population.

He urged for an urgent and decisive action to alleviate the suffering of countless families and ensure that the fundamental right to shelter is upheld for all residents.

Furthermore, federal employees find themselves in a predicament as they await government owned accommodations for years. The scarcity of government-owned residences in the federal capital aggravates the housing crunch, leaving many employees in limbo and intensifying the societal strain caused by inadequate housing provisions. "The eyes of allottees are fixed on sector I-12 for the construction of their homes."



ISLAMABAD: People busy in shopping for upcoming Eid ul Fitr festival at Aabpara.



Nilofar demands justice for Falk Noor

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson National Commission on the States of Women (NCSW) Nilofar Bakhtiar has vehemently demanded justice for Falk Noor and emphasized an urgent need for intervention from the authorities.

During a briefing on the Falk Noor case here Saturday, she also announced her visit to Gilgit-Baltistan, said a Twitter message shared by the NCSW.

About two months ago, Falk Noor, age 13 year was allegedly abducted while on her way for religious education near a community centre in Sultanabad, Gilgit. She vanished under suspicious circumstances, reportedly after marrying her neighbor.

PML-N & PPP agree on seat adjustments in Punjab by-elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have agreed on seat adjustment in Punjab during the by-elections which will be held on April 21.

According to details, the PPP has decided to field candidates on one National Assembly seat and two Punjab Assembly seats while on all other seats the PPP will support PML-N candidates.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will hold by-elections in two constituencies of the

National Assembly and 14 constituencies of the provincial assembly in Punjab on April 21. The PPP will field its candidates in NA-148, PP-266 and PP-268.

The PML-N will support PPP candidates on NA-148 seat vacated by former prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani. While PPP will support PML-N in all constituencies except NA-148, PP-266 and PP-268.

PPP's Syed Ali Qasim Gilani is contesting from NA-148, Alamdar Qureshi from PP-266 and Mumtaz Chag from PP-268.

BJP regime continues to usurp all rights including religious freedom in IIOJK: APHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has strongly condemned the occupation authorities for disallowing Jumatul Wida prayers at the historic Jamia Masjid in Srinagar, saying the Kashmiri Muslims have been deprived of all freedoms including religious freedom in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, the APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas in a statement in Srinagar said that barring Kashmiri people from offering Jumatul Wida prayers at Srinagar's historic Jamia

Masjid, imposition of enforced lockdowns on Jamia Masjid and house arrest of Mirwaiz by the BJP regime were brazen violations of religious and other basic rights of the people of the territory. The statement said curtailment of religious freedom of Kashmiri Muslims is yet another illustration of Hidnutva BJP/RSS regime's ongoing assault on religious freedoms which constitute serious violation of applicable international human rights law. He lamented that the Jamia Masjid has been subjected to regular bans & lockdowns by Indian authorities in the last over 3 decades.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors taking interest in crafts at an Eid Bazaar arranged by the Management of Serena Hotels in collaboration with Behbud Crafts celebrating Women Artisans through Economic Empowerment at Bazaar Court, of Serena Hotel at Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent
Sunday April 07, 2024

Deadly campaign

A string of mysterious killings in Pakistan over the past few years was widely believed to be the handiwork of Indian intelligence. This assumption was strengthened by the fact that most victims were linked to Kashmir-centric armed groups, while in at least two cases the assassinations were publicly linked to India by the foreign secretary.

Now, an investigative report in The Guardian lends further credence to the belief that New Delhi has been organising hits on Pakistani soil. According to the British paper, at least 20 individuals have been murdered since 2020 in this country at the behest of Indian intelligence operatives. The outlet says it has seen evidence provided by Pakistani security agencies, while the report notes that Indian officers have also confirmed the new policy of assassinating enemies and dissidents on foreign soil.

Pakistan is not the only country where those in New Delhi's bad books have paid with their lives. Canada confronted India quite sternly when Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Khalistani activist and Canadian national, was murdered outside a gurdwara in British Columbia last year. Indian spooks had also reportedly tried to kill a Sikh activist in the US. While India has denied involvement in all these cases, including murders in Pakistan, these denials lack credibility.

Pakistan must confront these considerable threats to its security and sovereignty both internally and on the external front. The Foreign Office has said those responsible for the murders need to be brought to justice, while also emphasising the need for a coordinated international response to India's brazenness. If India has evidence against individuals, it must use diplomatic channels to communicate the information to Islamabad. By no means can India or any other hostile foreign actor act unilaterally within Pakistan's frontiers, and arbitrarily take out individuals.

Our own internal lapses also need to be investigated, as the fact that 20 people were neutralised by foreign operatives on Pakistani soil should send alarm bells ringing within the intelligence and law-enforcement agencies. There are also reports, as mentioned by The Guardian and cited elsewhere earlier, that many of the operations in Pakistan were planned and orchestrated in a friendly Gulf country. Islamabad must coordinate with the security agencies of our foreign friends to ensure that their soil is not being used for anti-Pakistan activities. The evidence collected in these cases must be shared with foreign governments. Moreover, the reports of Indian involvement in assassination campaigns strengthens Pakistan's case where New Delhi's reported destabilising activities in Balochistan are concerned.

The message, through diplomatic channels, to India must be clear: this campaign of subterfuge must stop, and Pakistan's sovereignty be respected. If India refuses to stop these subversive activities, then Pakistan reserves the right to take up the issue at the highest international forums.

Shahab Usto

Historically, the country has been dogged by two intractable problems: civil-military imbalance and unfair distribution of resources between the federation and provinces. The former has bedevilled democracy, the latter, federalism. Yet, no lessons have been learnt from this odyssey of failures. With the induction of the new government, a vociferous campaign has ensued in official circles and the media to review the seventh National Finance Commission (NFC) award. It is contended that the award is 'skewed' in favour of the provinces and it has left the federal government with scarce financial resources to discharge its obligations, at home and abroad. But it is a flawed argument.

Economic logic: The entire gamut of reasoning for 'rebalancing' the award revolves around misplaced economic logic. It sees the reduction of the provinces' share from the net proceeds of taxes through the prism of the federal government's financial and economic contingencies, ignoring the fact

that the distribution of resources between the federation and provinces via the National Finance Commission, a constitutional body, is not an isolated economic exercise. It involves realising the constitutional objective of nurturing a healthy federal state.

Therefore, the overall constitutional thrust is directed towards the devolution of powers and decentralisation of authority from the federal to the provincial and local governments. Even in economic terms, the provinces are the mainstay of public, private and corporate activities, besides being saddled with the responsibilities of much of the social sector and public administration — health, education, housing, culture, climate, municipal services, and even security. And more so, after the abolition of the Concurrent Legislative List and the resulting transfer of 17 ministries and 47 'residuary' subjects to the provinces.

Constitutional imperatives: Lest it be ignored, our Constitution is essentially a federal disposition. It assigns fewer functions to the federal government, confining its role

mainly to external security, foreign relations, international trade, communication, currency, and inter-provincial regulations. Thus, the Constitution envisages a smaller federal government that (in peacetime) acts as an enabler, catalyst, facilitator and co-ordinator, in a federal setting. The government enjoys a wide range of policymaking and executive powers and authority but within its own constitutional orbit. It cannot intrude into or impose its will on the provinces, given the clear division of legislative and administrative powers between the federation and provinces.

Therefore, the Constitution provides for three key forums — the National Finance Commission, the Council of Common Interests, and National Economic Council — respectively to regulate financial distribution, resolve conflicts, and coordinate the planning and execution of socioeconomic agendas.

Fiscal federalism: It is true that the annals of financial relations between the federation and provinces reveal varying degrees of tension, depending on the

nature of the prevailing political system. But the overall thrust of history has been decisively towards strengthening fiscal federalism. Thus, even under the rudimentary form of federal governance introduced in the subcontinent under the Government of India Act, 1935, the provinces collected the entire sales tax, and also received a 50 per cent share in income tax (Niemeyer Award). After the partition, the sales tax was partially federalised, but the provinces retained a 50pc share in the net proceeds of taxes (Raisman Award). This arrangement more or less continued until the early 1970s.

Fiscal federalism, however, found its constitutional moorings in the 1973 Constitution. The first NFC award was announced in 1974. It federalised the sales tax but recompensed the provinces with an enlarged 80pc share in net proceeds, leaving the federal government with only 20pc. It was the result of weeks-long deliberations in parliament. The provinces were accommodated to strengthen federalism, in line with the spirit of the new Constitution

that promised provincial autonomy. Moreover, the makers of the award were mindful of the economic injustice and financial disparities that had led to the secession of Pakistan's eastern wing.

The first award (80:20 sharing) was applied with minor adjustments until 1996 when an unrepresentative caretaker government arbitrarily slashed the provinces' share to 37.5pc ('fifth award'). The reduction was justified on similar grounds as being pleaded now, i.e. the federal government's inability to discharge its financial and economic obligations. For the next 12 years, however, no consensus could be reached as to a fresh award, despite the fact that the Constitution mandates the formation of an NFC every five years.

The next seventh award was finally announced by the PPP-led coalition government in 2009 (effective from July 1, 2010). In many ways, the award broke new ground. It consensually enhanced the vertical share of provinces to 57.5pc, but also considerably relieved the federal government's fi-

nancial burdens by removing the Concurrent Legislative List, transferring a large number of ministries and residuary subjects to the provinces. More importantly, shunning population as the sole criterion of financial distribution among the provinces (horizontal distribution), a new set of parametric factors was introduced — population (82pc), backwardness (10pc), inverse population density (5pc), and revenue collection (2.7pc). Finally, the insertion of Article 160(3A) in the Constitution barred future governments from reducing the provincial share below that of the previous award.

Likewise, three-fourths of our revenue is consumed by defence and debt-servicing. But the government has yet to forge a peaceful and constructive foreign policy, coupled with a conducive legal and security environment, to bring an end to expensive conflicts, attract foreign investments, and create wealth and employment. So fundamentally, it is misplaced state policies and a centrist mindset — not the NFC award! -- Courtesy Dawn

It's not the NFC award

Yousuf Nazar

It is wise to remember the reasoning — associated with among others, the Indian Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen — that the question of whether democracy encourages or retards development is part of a false distinction. Democracy and institutional development are part of the development and so are not to be judged as drivers of it.

Some Pakistani intellectuals like Hamza Alvi attributed Pakistan's problems to an 'overdeveloped state' — a legacy inherited from the colonial era. However, this was true for many countries including South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore. Taiwan was literally under martial law from 1948 to 1987. Perhaps, even that theory does not offer a sufficient explanation for Pakistan's failures.

South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia followed an authoritarian route for decades after the Second World War before moving towards democra-

tization in the 1980s. China has been a one-party state but so has North Korea. India has been a vibrant — albeit occasionally chaotic — federal democracy since independence. Hence, it is difficult to argue whether democracy or authoritarianism alone can explain Asia's economic miracle.

Vietnam's GDP has grown by an average rate of 7.0 per cent annually in the past three decades, surpassing all its regional peers. The Southeast Asian country, with 100 million people, has been under authoritarian rule for decades. On March 21, Vietnam's government announced the resignation of its second president in as many years amid an anti-corruption drive. The position of president in Vietnam is largely ceremonial and ranks third in the country's political hierarchy. The most powerful position is that of Communist Party general secretary, a post held since 2011 by Nguyen Phu Trong, who is 79.

On March 22, the US food and drink maker PepsiCo committed to in-

vesting an additional \$400 million in Vietnam to build two new plants powered by renewable energy. The announcement came as delegations of more than 60 American companies, including PepsiCo, paid a three-day work visit to Vietnam.

Vietnam attracted around \$36.6 billion in foreign investment in 2023, a rise of 32.1 per cent year on year. In 2023, the foreign direct investments (FDI) to Vietnam came from 111 countries and regions, led by Singapore with over \$6.9 billion, accounting for 18.6 per cent of the total FDI inflow.

Vietnam welcomes foreigners despite having an authoritarian political system. Socially, it has a relatively open and liberal society. Facebook is the most popular social media platform in the country. Vietnam currently offers visa-free travel to citizens of (mostly Western) 25 countries.

In 2019, the tourism industry accounted for 12 per cent of the country's GDP with international tourist spending of \$12 billion. This year, Vietnam aims to welcome 18

million international tourists and generate \$33.9 billion in tourism revenue.

The lure of Vietnam for foreign investors and tourists alike is understandable. Vietnam has been a development success story. Economic reforms since the launch of Doi Moi in 1986, coupled with beneficial global trends, have helped propel Vietnam from being one of the world's poorest nations to a middle-income economy in one generation, according to the World Bank.

When the 20-year Vietnam War ended in 1975, Vietnam's economy was one of the poorest in the world, and growth under the government's subsequent five-year central plans was anaemic.

Since the late 1980s, its communist government has overseen a transition from a controlled economy to a more open and capitalist model. It sought help from the IMF only three times during its turbulent and violent history; the last time in 2001 for about \$400 million extended credit facility.

According to Oxford Economics, a think tank,

Lessons from Asia

component) with competitive labour costs, it is strategically located along important maritime routes, and its politics are relatively stable and neutral.

Vietnam has become a major beneficiary of manufacturers' efforts to 'de-risk' their exposure to China as geopolitical tensions between Beijing and the West mount. Foreign direct investment has soared. Big names including Dell, Google, Microsoft and Apple have all shifted parts of their supply chain to the country in recent years and are looking to do more as part of a 'China plus one' strategy.

Like India, Vietnam has developed economic relations with both China and the West with a relentless and single-minded focus on its economic development and trade interests. Both India and Vietnam have been among the fastest-growing countries globally for decades despite their strikingly different political systems. Pakistan can draw a few lessons from Asian success stories. -- Courtesy TheNews

Constant decline

Naseer Memon

The UNDP's Human Development Report for 2023-24 ranks Pakistan 164th out of 193 countries. Last year, Pakistan stood at 161. Its decline on the Human Development Index (HDI) did not create much of a stir in the country. Perhaps few were surprised, considering the protracted political instability, the colossal losses resulting from the 2022 floods, poor governance and staggering inflation.

Among the eight Saarc countries, only Pakistan and Afghanistan fall in the 'low human development' category. India (134), Bangladesh (129), Nepal (146), Bhutan (125) and the Maldives (87) come under the 'medium development' category, whereas Sri Lanka, while slipping to 78 from 73, because of its nightmarish economic meltdown, remains in the 'high development' category. Some of the other countries, too, have slipped, including India, Nepal and Afghanistan, whereas Bangladesh has maintained its position and Bhutan and the Maldives have been ranked higher than previously.

While most of the Saarc countries do not have an enviable presence on the human development map, Pakistan consistently remains below them with the exception of war-torn Afghanistan. It trailed Nigeria and Rwanda, while it has performed only slightly better than Sudan, Eritrea and Ghana, all chronically low performers. A closer look shows that Pakistan particularly went down in expected years of schooling for both females (from 8.1 to 7.3 years) and males (from 9.2 to 8.4 years).

The recent report also provides a look at the performance trajectory

from 2015 to 2022. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries in the Saarc region whose human development status plunged during these seven years. Afghanistan dropped by eight levels, while Pakistan descended three rungs. This should be a real cause of concern for our policymakers, i.e. it is not just a transitory decline in a single year but a continuous downside. On this scale, all other Saarc countries have performed progressively. Maldives (+13), Bhutan (+10), and Bangladesh (+12) have demonstrated impressive gains in human development. Sri Lanka, India and Nepal ascended by six, four and three steps respectively.

According to the gloomy picture etched by the World Bank's Pakistan Human Capital Review, released last year, the country's "human capital outcomes are more comparable to those in Sub-Saharan Africa, which has an average HCI [human capital index] value of 0.40". The report also exposed the glaring provincial disparity. The worst performing province, Balochistan (0.32), "is at the global bottom, at the same level as Niger. Sindh, with an HCI value of 0.36, is comparable to Nigeria and Sierra Leone (0.36). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with an HCI value of 0.39, is comparable to Burundi and Tanzania. The HCI value of the best-performing province in Pakistan — Punjab (0.42) — is comparable to Senegal (0.42) and just below South Africa (0.43). Northern Punjab has the highest HCI value (about 0.50). Rural Sindh and Balochistan are home to districts with Pakistan's lowest HCI values (about 0.25)."

While the HDI and HCI reports have revealed is corroborated by the fact that Pakistan's public in-

vestment in education is only 2.5pc of GDP and 0.9pc in health, both much lower than the global average. Pakistan spends about 0.6pc of GDP on social safety nets, compared with the global average of 1.5pc. Pakistan's annual investment in education, health and social protection has increased in absolute terms but is not commensurate with its population growth.

A country that spends 70pc of its revenue — on debt-servicing is hardly able to concentrate on human development. However, a critical policy exit-national unemployment — eils that mis-placed priorities are the real cause behind this ignominious situation. Entangled in unending border conflicts, the country spends a lot more on border security than its internal human security. Whereas border security has its own imperatives, constant compromise on human security has even graver ramifications.

Similarly, there has been huge international borrowing to pay off loans and the accruing interest, while exports, foreign investment and remittances are stagnant. This flagrant imbalance between resource inflow and outflow will keep the country in an economic quagmire.

Unless economic indicators improve, human development indicators will remain dismal. Modern economies thrive on performing human capital, embracing modern technologies and regional cooperation. Unfortunately, Pakistan has shown sluggish performance on all fronts. Border conflicts are incessant, internet communication is asphyxiated and human capital is frail due to poor investment. In brief, the tunnel is dark and endless. -- Courtesy Dawn

Made in Pakistan

Syed Raza Hussain

'Be Pakistani, buy Pakistani' is a familiar slogan in our country, but it has not been adopted in letter and spirit, despite the benefits of its implementation to our national economy.

The idea behind this slogan is to promote Pakistani products to build an economy that relies on made-in-Pakistan brands or local products, thus reducing the influx of foreign and imported brands to ease the burden of import bills and save precious foreign exchange.

In every developed economy, the role of local brands is a crucial one. Local brands reflect the presence of strong industries and SMEs, which paves the way for self-sufficient and sustainable levels of production to meet the requirements of the local market and the country's citizens. The creation of jobs, side businesses, wealth generation, income distribution, and tax revenues are the guaranteed benefits of localisation. Japan and Germany are considered model economies, but our neighbours, including China, India, and Bangladesh, are also a good example to follow.

The localisation of production also reduces dependency on global supply chains, mitigating risks associated with external shocks such as trade disputes, geopolitical tensions, or natural disasters. It also keeps inflation in check as the prices of commodities are unaffected by any variation in dollars or other foreign currencies, which is a most significant factor in mainly the food and healthcare sectors.

The campaign for the promotion of made-in-Pakistan brands has never been successful as a national cause. Yet, surprisingly, the religious

cause to support our Muslim brothers in Gaza has worked effectively. Since October last year, Israel has conducted violent and inhuman attacks on the occupied Gaza Strip, leading to the martyrdom of tens of thousands of Palestinians, including women and children. However, the only option to support the Palestinians at a public level is to donate generously and boycott the foreign companies and their brands that have connections with the Jewish state.

The trend of boycotting foreign brands has been effective in Pakistan over the last few months, thanks to awareness campaigns on social media platforms. Over recent months, a significant number of consumers have been maintaining their boycott of goods linked to Israel to show solidarity with the Palestinians. As a result, the sales of several local brands have reached record-high numbers, and their production has touched maximum capacity point. Even some companies that produce beverages and food items are set to expand their production. Various new brands are being introduced to counter the foreign products, which is improving the investment climate and generating employment at the local level. Unfortunately, the number of local brands is not enough to cater to the requirements of the local market; hence, we have to produce more alternative brands to counter Western and foreign products.

There is no doubt that Pakistanis have the potential to produce makeup for local and foreign markets. Pakistani brands are not only good enough, they also have the potential to grow their export worldwide. For instance, we produce high-

quality garments, sports items, surgical goods, and edible items and export them to different countries. Some of our companies have established well-known brands, whereas the majority of the companies produce their own goods for well-known global brands, mainly in the apparel sector.

However, the quality level of the products should be better for both the local and international markets. The use of technology, coming up with innovative ideas, and collaboration among stakeholders are key to growing faster.

The boycott movement is good for the economy, and should be supported by all stakeholders, including the government. In this regard, a long-term policy should be introduced for supporting local products, assuring support to local industrialists in terms of financing facilities and relaxation of duties on raw materials and import of machinery. At present, a number of industrial zones are wearing a deserted look, with no construction of new units, as can be seen in the Nooriabad, Dhabaji and SITE industrial areas. The government should come up with low-cost financial schemes to encourage local producers to expand their production to meet the local demand, as well as to set up plants for generating new production units. In this way, import substitution will be accomplished more effectively and quickly, which can ultimately save precious foreign exchange reserves.

The government, along with stakeholders, should develop a five-year localisation economic plan, with a roadmap for achieving self-sufficiency to transform an economy of \$375 billion. -- Courtesy Dawn

CM chairs LDA meeting to review development projects

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed to formulate a monitoring mechanism of LDA staff members along with including katchi abadis in the LDA development plan on a priority basis. The CM chaired a review meeting of LDA projects in which the programme to transform Lahore into a sustainable smart city was reviewed. A development project was approved in the meeting to bring improvements in the road structure at a cost of Rs6 billion along with provision of other

facilities. A waiting area will be allocated for walkways, specific bicycle lane, central recreation area, wheel carts and stalls. A principal approval was granted for the Pilot Development Project in LDA Avenue. The LDA restructuring plan was also reviewed in the meeting and it was decided to make LDA's Strategic Policy Unit functional as well. A principal decision was taken to amend LDA rules along with introducing one window transfer and digital transformation system. A principal decision was made to establish LDA

Uniformed Force along with setting up LDA police station. The proposal to make 20 roads in Lahore commercial was reviewed in the meeting. The CM stated that a maximum number of corruption complaints have been reported about LDA. Maryam Nawaz directed to establish vending points for wheel cart carriers and avoid snatching anyone's wheelcart. The CM was informed during the briefing that Rs20 billion income will be accrued due to commercialisation and a complete paperless system would be introduced in one

year. Encroachments will be monitored through drone cameras. The LDA would provide standard maps of small houses on its website for the facilitation of citizens. LDA's approved model construction maps will save the precious time of citizens. The CM directed LDA to launch new projects so as to increase its revenue. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, former Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Information Minister Azma Bokhari, MPA Sania Ashiq, Chief Secretary.



KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a meeting to review progress of K-4 project.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif presiding over a special meeting regarding LDA.

CM KP for quality food to prisoners; directs to increase annual budget

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has decided in principle to change the diet menu of prisoners through out the province in order to ensure provision of good quality food to prisoners, and directed the quarters concerned for necessary steps to increase the annual budget of prisons in the head of food from Rs1.5 billion to Rs 2.00 billion. He had directed that all the deputy commissioners would be responsible to carry out regular quality inspection of meal items

being served to inmates in the prisons of their respective districts. The chief minister further decided provision of free legal aid for those prisoners, who cannot afford to hire lawyer to pursue their cases, and directed the concerned authorities to get the services of competent lawyers for this purpose, and said that expenditures incurred on this, would be borne by the provincial government. He was presiding over a meeting of prisons department, held here at chief Minister's house the other day. Additional Chief Secretary Home

Muhammad Abid Majeed, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, IG prisons Muhammad Usman Mehsud and others attended the meeting. The chief minister has emphasized the need to accelerate work on priority development projects being executed in the various prisons of the province, and directed the finance department to provide funds required for this purpose. He also decided to provide Rs 1.00 billion to meet out previous liabilities under various expenditures including food items, medicines and maintenance and repair works.

Singh gives away cheques of financial assistance to Christians, Hindus

Independent Report
BAHAWALPUR: Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora participated in an event for the minority communities at Rashidia Auditorium in Bahawalpur. On behalf of the Punjab government, 110 Christians were provided financial assistance of five thousand rupees per person from the Easter fund, while 140 members of the Hindu community were given cheques of ten thousand rupees per person from the Holi fund. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Speaker of the Provincial Assembly Malik Zaheer

Iqbal Channar, Member of the Provincial Assembly Sadia Mazhar, Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa, Divisional Coordinator Babu Leela Ram, District Coordinator Doctor Jeevan, Minority Worker Sardar Tafaal Jhahout, and members of the minority community. Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, addressing the event, mentioned that as per the directive of the Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz, cheques have been distributed to the Hindu and Christian communities from the Holi and Easter funds.

83,275 households get ration under Ramadan package

Independent Report
SIALKOT (APP): A total of 83,275 households in Sialkot district were provided with ration under the Punjab government's special "Ramazan Nigebhan Program". According to a habdout, Deputy Commissioner highly appreciated the services of the teams under the vision of the Punjab Chief Minister, more than 3,89,000 deserving citizens benefited from the package. He said that under the Punjab government's Ramadan Package, rations

were provided to the deserving people in all four tehsils, each ration pack included ten kilograms of flour bag, two kilograms of ghee, two kilograms of rice, two kilograms of sugar and basion. The Deputy Commissioner highly appreciated the services of the teams under the leadership of Assistant Commissioners (ACs) and the members of the teams for verifying the beneficiaries for working hard for the distribution of the Ramadan relief package.



BAHAWALPUR: Provincial Minister Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora and Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal Chand is distributing relief checks to minority women in a ceremony organized on the occasion of Easter and Holi.

Food Minister visits Nowshera Bazar, checked quality, prices of edibles

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru made a surprise visit to the main Bazar of District Nowshera on Saturday and checked the quality and prices of edibles. During his visit, the minister inquired about the official price lists for food items, especially focusing on the prices of vegetables, meat, and other commodities from vendors. On the occasion, Member Provincial Assembly Zar Alam also accompanied the minister. The minister attentively

listened to complaints from citizens regarding inflation and breaches of official price lists. He issued a stern warning to business owners dealing with food items, emphasizing the importance of complying with government-set prices or facing severe legal consequences. Addressing officials of the District Administration and the food department, Toru instructed them to ensure the availability of food items to the public at government-approved rates without fail.



LAHORE: Baitulmal staff registering the deserving women for cheques distribution at Manawan, the provincial capital.

IGP says Police Khidmat Counters at hospitals to be made more active

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): Inspector General Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the Police Khidmat Counters, established in hospitals, will be made more active. He expressed these views during a meeting with the provincial health ministers on the occasion of a visit to the Punjab Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Office Lawrence Road here on Saturday.

He said that joint measures will be taken to solve the public health problems, faced by the transgender community in collaboration with the health department. He said that with the cooperation of the health department, facility of health screening including diagnosis of aids and other important tests will be provided to transgenders community. He said that the Punjab Police will play an active role in beautifying the wards of cancer patients.

IG Punjab said that health screening of police employees with third dose of hepatitis vaccination will be completed soon. He said that has re-conduct of health screening and psychological profiling of police employees in collaboration with the health department will be completed. IG Punjab said that the collaboration of Police Lines Welfare Hospital Qila Gujjar Singh with King Edward Medical College will continue, police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh Hospital will provide the best medical facilities to police employees and their families.



KARACHI: Women purchasing artificial jewelry ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr at Hyderi Market.

KP govt paying full attention to development of sports: Malik Liaquat

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Population Welfare Department Malik Liaquat Ali Khan Saturday said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is paying full attention to the development of sports. He expressed these views while addressing the ceremony organized on the occasion of Ramadan Sports Gala at Peshawar Press Club. A large number of journalists and media workers, including senior journalist were also present on the occasion. He underlined the efforts being taken for the development of sports in the province. He said in the

past, the government has built sports complexes at the Tehsil level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to create competitive spirit among the youth. While appreciating the organization of sports gala for journalists in Peshawar Press Club, he said that the leadership and organizers of the Press Club deserve felicitations for having organized the best entertainment program for their journalists. He said that journalists are an important part of society. He said that the Peshawar Press Club platform is aimed at improving the well-being and professional capacity of journalists.

CM Murad sets timeline for completion of much delayed K-IV project

Independent Report
KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah reviewing the progress of the ongoing K-IV project set a timeline for the completion of the WAPDA components of the intake structure and conduit intel chamber, which includes finishing two pumping stations along with civil, electrical, and mechanical works by September 2025. He said that he would

discuss the pending augmentation project, Sindh Component, with the federal government, which has been pending since March 2022 and directed the water board to start consultancy of the augmentation works for which he would arrange the funds. The meeting was held at CM House and was attended by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, PSCM Agha Wasif,

Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Local Govt, Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoti, Secretary Irrigation Zarif Khero, CEO Water Board Salahuddin. The chief minister was given a detailed briefing by Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Local Govt Khalid Hyder Shah, CEO KWSB Salahuddin and PD-K-IV WAPDA Amir Mughal.

16 dead, 1580 injured in 1457 road accidents in Punjab

Independent Report
LAHORE: At least sixteen persons were killed and 1580 injured in 1457 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 734 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 846 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 812 drivers, 55 underage drivers, 190 pedestrians, and 594 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 306 RTCs were reported in Lahore.

Limiting disqualification to 5 years is not unconstitutional: LHC

Independent Report
LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has remarked that limiting disqualification to 5 years is not unconstitutional step. LHC has issued 10-page written decision on dismissing petition filed against lifetime disqualification. According to written decision the law for 5 years disqualification is as per constitution. Clause 2 of section 232 of Election Act-2017 is not in clash with article 62 of the constitution. According to decision no one can be deprived of basic rights under article 8 of the constitution. The petitioner said a 7-member bench of Supreme Court (SC) has already interpreted article

62-F/1 of the constitution. The law of disqualification for 5 years is in line with constitution. It is pertinent to mention here the petitioner Shabbir Ismail had challenged the step of limiting life time disqualification to 5 years disqualification. The petitioner had taken plea parliament limited life time disqualification to 5 years through amendment in law. As per rules the parliament cannot make amendment in life time disqualification law through specific members. The petitioner had requested the court to nullify the law through which disqualification has been limited to 5 years.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with a delegation from Malaysia led by Chairman Implementation Minority Rights Forum (IMRF) Samuel Pyara and Advisor (IMRF) Emmanuel at Governor House.

One killed, another injured in road accident

Independent Report
FAISALABAD (APP): A motorcyclist was killed while his pillion rider sustained multiple injuries in a road accident in the area of Khurarianwala police station. A Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Saturday that a speeding truck hit a motorcycle near a u-turn on the Lahore Road near Nimra Mill Gatwala Toll Plaza.

High court issues written order to allow Pervaiz Elahi others to contest by polls

Independent Report
LAHORE (Online): High Court (LHC) has issued written order to allow former Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Pervaiz Elahi and others to contest by polls. A two member's bench issued a 9-page decision. The decision said the courts are guardian of democracy and basic rights. The decision further said the appellant could not prove objections against Pervaiz Elahi and others. The appellant could not tell correct facts on the basis of which the decision of single bench was nullified.

It was further said in the decision that courts are guardian of democracy and basic rights. In the court decision principles of democracy and duty of returning officers was told. The appellant raised objection that Pervaiz Elahi and others did not mention correct facts about properties and other things. According to written decision counsel for Pervaiz Elahi told that such objection was raised in general election as well. Supreme Court allowed Pervaiz Elahi to contest general election.

More police officials promoted

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): The process of departmental promotions are going on in the police force, and in all regions and districts of the province, meetings of promotion boards are being held under the supervision of RPOs, in which hundreds of officials are being promoted to the next rank according to merit and seniority. Punjab Police Spokesman said that 43 ASIs were promoted to sub-inspector rank.

KP Advisor tourism, culture rejects Gandhara Corridor Bill tabled in NA

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture and Archeology Zahid Chanzeb on Saturday rejected the Gandhara Corridor Bill and termed this move as an open interference in the affairs of the provincial government and attack on provincial autonomy. This bill is tabled at floor of the National

Assembly by MNA from Sindh Ramesh Kumar recently. In a statement, Zahid Chanzeb demanded that Member National Assembly Ramesh Kumar should immediately withdraw his bill that he presented in the National Assembly. The KP Advisor Tourism and Culture said that if Ramesh Kumar wants to present the bill.

FPCCI for increasing tax-to-GDP ratio by broadening of tax base

LAHORE (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Atif Ikram Sheikh here Saturday called for broadening of tax base so as to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio.

He said, "While FPCCI supports the efforts to increase tax-to-GDP ratio, it has to be achieved through broadening of tax base and simplification of the taxation system - rather than further squeezing the already filers."

The only pragmatic approach to achieve tax-to-GDP ratio of 15 percent in the next five years is to add 1.5 to 2 million new taxpayers in the tax-net, he added.

Atif Ikram Sheikh maintained that the tax and FBR reforms should not be attempted in a consultation-less manner as these kinds of efforts have

been unsuccessful multiple times in the past, and the successive governments had resorted to measures of further increasing the taxes on existing filers.

FPCCI President suggested a three-pronged strategy to broaden the tax base: (i) end-to-end digitalization of the taxation system to bring transparency and fairness (ii) FBR reforms in consultation with the business community in light of the ground realities (iii) an end to maladministration & harassment of trade & industry at the hands of taxation machinery.

FPCCI Chief stated that the business, industry and trade community understand the need for the country to enter into a new, expanded and longer-term IMF programme; which would entail, as per past practice, imposition of more taxes - however,

FPCCI wants to make it clear that last few years have been unprecedentedly difficult for trade and industry due to COVID, floods, cost of doing business, exchange rate volatility; and, incremental rounds of increase in electricity, gas and petroleum prices.

Atif Ikram Sheikh apprised that the core inflation has come down to 12.8 percent and headline inflation recorded at 20.7 percent in the month of March 2024; which is the lowest in 22 months; and, the trajectory is categorically showing a downward trend for the months to come.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to reduce the key policy rate at the earliest; and, a regionally-competitive export finance scheme (EFS) and long-term financing facility (LTF) should be offered to exporters, he added.



SIALKOT: President Chamber of Commerce Abdul Ghafoor Malik, DPO Hasan Iqbal are discussing in the meeting held regarding character screening and security in industrial establishment.

ECC's wheat procurement decision delay Finance Division dispels media misconception

ISLAMABAD (Online): Finance Division has refuted the misleading impression circulating on media that ECC has delayed the decision on wheat procurement targets.

In a press release Saturday, it said there is no truth to these assertions.

The Finance Division said ECC of the Cabinet discussed the matters related to wheat procurement in its meeting held on Thursday.

After considering the views of the relevant Federal Ministries, the members of the ECC felt that it would be advisable to include the Provincial governments in the

deliberations, as they would be responsible to implement the decisions on the ground.

The meeting was therefore reconvened yesterday and representatives of all the Provincial governments participated.

They provided updates to the Committee on the latest situation relating to procurement of wheat in their respective areas and apprised it of their requirements for bank credit for the purpose.

The Committee after detailed deliberations approved the procurement target proposed by the Ministry of Food Security and the Provinces and the

cash credit limits required for the purpose.

The relevant departments did not suggest any enhancement or reduction in targets presented by the Ministry of Food Security, neither did the ECC approve any such change.

The Government of Punjab informed the Committee that it is closely monitoring the wheat situation in the Province and had initiated procurement process. They further informed that the provincial government would continue to intervene to make sure that farmers are able to sell their produce at the support price level.

Terrorists' enemies of Pakistan, scaring investors away: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that terrorists are enemies of Pakistan and are deterring investment in Pakistan.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, he stated that without eliminating terrorists, a massive operation is necessary for the country to flourish.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that negotiations with the terrorists were a mistake that shouldn't happen again. Terrorists were following the agenda of scaring domestic and foreign investors, he added.

He said that the mistake of negotiation and a peace agreement with the terrorists should not be repeated, as it would be tantamount to surrendering.

The business leader stated that the terrorists prefer to target Chinese citizens in order for Pakistan to lose its closest friend. In these

circumstances, some so-called experts and others are repeating old demands of negotiations with terrorists, which was condemnable, he added.

National security was the most critical issue, and it was irrational to repeat failed experiments, he added.

Mian Zahid Hussain stated that the terrorists' victory in this war was impossible. Still, it was causing a lot of damage to the country, which necessitates determination to stop it.

He stated that the Afghan government's expectations in this regard were unrealistic, given the abundance of opportunities they have received. Still, they need more time to be ready to go beyond lip service.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that on the one hand, trade agreements were being negotiated with Afghanistan; on the other hand, their land was being used against Pakistan, which was unacceptable.

Chinese experts were safe in Afghanistan and unsafe in Pakistan, which was surprising.



LAHORE: Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Kashif Anwar presenting souvenir to President of Kiryana Merchants Association Lahore Tahir Saqlain during meeting.

Cultural festivals contribute to economic development of region: Maxwell Shanti

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Cultural Festival was being celebrated by one of the oldest educational institutions of the Punjab provincial capital this year too with same traditional zeal and enthusiasm at the end of the current month, which would be a blend of competitive enthusiasm and impressive learning.

Principal of the historical St. Anthony's High School, Mr. Maxwell Shanti has said that the cultural festivals contribute to the economic development of a region by creating cultural resources, promoting tourism, and generating economic value through branding and accessibility.

Maxwell Shanti, who has given the school a new look with his hard work and outstanding performance, said in a statement that the school's students will display the

vibrant colors and diverse culture of their country through stunning performances of folk songs and delivering speeches on this important matter.

The Principal, who was running the main campus on Lawrence Road as well as the Faisal Town branch of St. Anthony's School, added that the

attired in colorful costumes of their respective provinces, the young and talented students will mesmerize the audience with their performances of traditional and folk songs. The students will also set up a stall, displaying various traditional items, and offering food. Mr. Shanti observed that the Cultural Festival embodies St. Anthony's commitment to deliver an unforgettable and captivating experience, combining the thrill of competition.

SCCI urges PIA to resume Peshawar, Karachi operations

PESHAWAR (APP): The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) has expressed concern over the closure of PIA flight operation from Peshawar to Karachi and urged the authorities to consider the matter.

Vice President SSCI, Ejaz Khan Afridi said that the closure of PIA flights would affect the business community besides inflicting losses to the national carrier, said a statement issued here Saturday. He demanded the PIA authorities to start two flights from Peshawar to Karachi within a week to facilitate the business community and the people of the province. He said the resumption of flight operations from Peshawar to Karachi would also benefit travellers and help PIA to generate revenue.

PQAMC announces dividend of Rs 1.7635/ unit

KARACHI (APP): Pak-Qatar Asset Management Company Limited (PQAMC), a leading pure Islamic asset management company in Pakistan, has recently announced the monthly dividend of Pak-Qatar Monthly Income Plan (PQMIP), which is one of the plans under PQAMC's 'Shariah-Compliant Income Fund'.

As per the PQAMC website, the announced dividend is PKR 1.7635 per unit. PQAMC is rated AM2 with 'Stable Outlook' by PACRA - the internationally acclaimed rating agency. The PQMIP plan is also rated A+ with a 'Stable Outlook' by PACRA. The Chief Executive Officer of Pak-Qatar Asset Management Company Limited - Farhan Shaikat has approved the distributions of dividends for the month of March.

Cotton Crop Monitoring Committee met

BAHAWALPUR (APP): A meeting of the Cotton Crop Management Monitoring Committee was held under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa in the committee room of his office. The meeting assessed the cultivation of cotton throughout the district and reviewed the facilities provided to landowners and cultivators.

Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa stated that cotton is a lucrative crop and emphasized achieving the cultivation targets set for cotton. He highlighted the importance of agricultural scientists and officials from the

Department of Agriculture informing landowners and cultivators about the various types of cotton, modern cultivation techniques, and agricultural factors. Furthermore, he instructed Agriculture Department officials to visit the fields and educate cotton cultivators on achieving better yields and effectively managing cotton cultivation.

The Deputy Commissioner also emphasized the need for effective coordination between Assistant Commissioners at the tehsil level in the district to prevent water theft and implement.

Gold rates up by Rs 4,900 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs 4,900 and was sold at Rs 245,100 on Saturday as compared to its sale at Rs 240,200 on the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs4,200 and was sold at Rs 210,134 against the sale price of Rs205,932 and 10 gram 22 karat gold also increased to Rs192,622 from Rs 188,772, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,650 and Rs 2271.94 respectively.



LAHORE: Women selecting Artificial jewelry in connection with preparations for Eid-ul-Fitr.

Zero tolerance policy being followed against profiteers, hoarders: DC

MULTAN (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Capt (ret'd) Rizwan Qadeer said that zero tolerance policy was being followed against profiteers and hoarders to ensure availability of commodities on controlled rates to masses.

During his visit to vegetable market here on Saturday, the deputy commissioner said that district administration tightening noose around the profiteers and strict action was being taken against profiteers and hoarders. He said that prices of the vegetables were being monitored strictly and auction process was also being

supervised on daily basis. He said that the shopkeepers involved in selling commodities on high rates were not only being fined but legal action was also being taken against them.

The DC maintained that price control magistrates have been allotted police stations to discourage profiteering. He said that district officers have also been directed to ensure inspection of markets on daily basis.

Assistant Commissioner City Seemal Mushtaq gave briefing to the deputy commissioner regarding arrangements to prevent profiteering.

Five Sui gas connections disconnected, six fined

MULTAN (APP): Special Task Force of Sui Gas department Multan disconnected five connections over pilfering and imposed fine on six others over irregularities on Saturday.

In line with special directives of the Regional Manager Sui Gas, Hussain Zaffar, the task force launched a crackdown against sui gas consumers involved in pilferage and other illegal activities. The team identified eleven connections involved in illegal practices including gas pilferage, using domestic connections for commercial purposes and illegally sharing connections.

Commissioner orders check on price hike during Eid days

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Commissioner Madam Silwat Saeed had directed the deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners and price control magistrates to evolve a comprehensive strategy to control price hike during last days of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak and Eid days across the division.

During a meeting, she said that the government was committed to providing maximum relief to the masses by ensuring the provision of daily-use items at fixed rates.

She said that some greedy elements increase the prices of kitchen items including chicken meat, onion, potato, tomato, etc. at their own to mint money.

Therefore the price control magistrates should keep vigil eye on the profiteers and take strict action against overcharging.

She said that performance of price control magistrates would also be monitored and stern action would be taken against those who failed to accomplish their assignments.



MULTAN: Women in a queue to get flour bags on the subsidize rate at a utility store.

LCCI for resolving Kiryana merchants' problems on priority

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has demanded of the authorities concerned to resolve the problems of Kiryana (grocery) Merchants on priority basis.

The LCCI President Kashif Anwar made this demand after being briefed in this regard by a delegation of the Central Kiryana Association Lahore during its visit to Lahore Chamber here on Saturday.

The delegation was headed by the President of Kiryana Merchants Association Lahore Tahir Saqlain while other members included Patron-in-chief Naji Butt, chairman Rana Mansoor, Secretary General Maqsood Rehman Bhatti, Chaudhry Liaquat, Ashraf Tabani, Khalid Rasheed and Mian Shakeel.

The delegation informed the LCCI President about the issues being faced by the Kiryana Merchants, saying that no representative of Central Kiryana Merchants

Association is invited in the meetings in which the Director General Food or DC formed the rate list and related policies. They requested the LCCI President to take up this with the Punjab government.

They alleged that magistrate's private force raids on Kiryana Merchants and harasses the traders.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that Lahore Chamber raises its voice for the rights of all businessmen whether they are members of Lahore Chamber or not. If they are entrepreneurs, Lahore Chamber is with them in every way.

He apprised the delegation about the facilities for the LCCI members and assured them that Lahore Chamber would raise voice at every forum. He said that the problems of Kiryana Merchants should be solved on priority basis.

The delegation further informed the LCCI President that the civil administration and police.



LAHORE: Electricians busy assembling big size exhaust fans at their workplace.

Maryam commends farmers' diligence, inaugurates wheat harvesting

MULTAN (APP): The fertile lands of Multan Division stand ready to yield the golden wheat harvest. Commissioner of Multan Division, Maryam Khan, lauded the sweat and toil of farmers as she ventured into the field to acknowledge their efforts at Vehari on Saturday.

The Commissioner Maryam Khan personally initiated the wheat harvesting alongside farmer brethren, accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Vehari Syed Asif Hussain Shah and Additional Deputy Commissioner Taib Khan.

She announced that the Punjab government had set the procurement price of wheat at 3900 rupees per 40kg and to

facilitate procurement, an app will be introduced by PITB known as Bardana App with the initiation of request submission commencing at midnight on April 13th and closing at midnight on April 17th. She said that notification recipients will commence six bags of 100 kg for procurement, providing six bags per acre and it would be started from April 19th for farmers with eight acres or less.

Wheat procurement targets would be announced daily at procurement centres, she maintained. The Deputy Commissioner Vehari Syed Asif Hussain Shah provided a detailed briefing to the Commissioner.



KARACHI: A view of rush on bazaar as Muslim festival of Eid-Al-Fitr approaching.

UN rights body demands halt in arms sales to Israel

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The UN Human Rights Council demanded a halt in all arms sales to Israel, highlighting warnings of "genocide" in its aggression in Gaza, which has killed more than 33,000 people.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General António Guterres condemned the Israeli military campaign in Gaza, noting it has only brought "relentless death and destruction" to the besieged Palestinian enclave.

In Geneva, the 47-member UNHRC in a resolution presented by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation noted that Israel was "using starvation of civilians as a method of

warfare" in Gaza. The resolution was adopted by 28 to 6 votes and 13 abstentions. The council backed a call "to cease the sale, transfer, and diversion of arms, munitions, and other military equipment to Israel, the occupying Power...to prevent further violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights".

The resolution also underscored the need for stopping egregious human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Co-sponsors of the text included Bolivia, Cuba, and the State of Palestine, ahead of the vote which saw support from more than two dozen countries, in-

cluding Brazil, China, Luxembourg, Malaysia, and South Africa.

At a news briefing in New York, UN chief Guterres said: "Over the last six months, the Israeli military campaign has brought relentless death and destruction to Palestinians in Gaza." More than 33,000 people were reportedly killed and over 75,000 others injured — the vast majority women and children, he regretted.

He declared that "nothing can justify the collective punishment" in Gaza and urged Israel to allow "a quantum leap" in aid. "Lives are shattered. Respect for international law is in tatters," Mr Guterres told journalists at the UN Headquarters.



US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns and Governor of Guangdong province Wang Weizhong.

Yellen calls Beijing's industrial might 'threat' to global economy

Monitoring Desk
GUANGZHOU: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said that concerns are growing over the global economic fallout from China's excess manufacturing capacity, making the issue the main focus of four days of economic meetings with Chinese officials.

China is too large to export its way to rapid growth and would benefit by reducing excess industrial capacity which is pressuring other economies, Yellen said in remarks to an audience of about 40 representatives of the American

Chamber of Commerce in Guangzhou.

"Overcapacity isn't a new problem, but it has intensified, and we're seeing emerging risks in new sectors," Yellen said in China's southern export hub of Guangzhou, where she met with Vice Premier He Lifeng and Guangdong Province Governor Wang Weizhong.

Yellen and other Biden administration officials are growing increasingly concerned about China's overproduction of electric vehicles, solar panels, semiconductors and other goods that are flooding into global

markets in the face of a demand slump in China's domestic market.

She said that this is not healthy for China and is hurting producers in other countries, urging Beijing to shift away from state-driven investment and return to the market-oriented reforms that fuelled growth in past decades. While Sino-US tensions over a range of issues have been escalating, Yellen highlighted areas of mutual interest in a dialogue launched during her first visit to China last July, including fighting climate change and illicit finance.



Slovakia's presidential candidate Ivan Korcok is joined by his wife Sonja Korcokova as he casts his ballot during the country's presidential election run-off at a polling station in Senec, Slovakia.

US, Japan, Australia and Philippines to hold South China Sea exercises

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: Defence forces of the US, Japan, Australia and the Philippines will conduct "maritime cooperative activity" on April 7 to support a free and open Indo-Pacific, the countries said on Saturday, amid China's growing assertiveness in the waterway.

The one-day maritime exercises will involve communication activities and officer of the watch manoeuvres in Manila's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea, Philippines' defence ministry spokesperson Arsenio Andolong told reporters.

Littoral combat ship USS Mobile, Australian frigate HMAS Warramunga and Japanese destroyer JS Akebono will join two

Philippine warships, Andolong said.

"They will go from south going to the north encompassing the boundary of western and northern command," he said.

The activity will strengthen the interoperability of the countries' armed forces doctrines, tactics, techniques and procedures, the joint statement read.

The four nations have reaffirmed their position that the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal Award is final and legally binding.

The maritime activity takes place days before a summit between the leaders of Japan, the US and the Philippines, which will include a discussion of recent incidents in the South China Sea.

Mexico suspends relations with Ecuador after arrest of ex-VP

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: Ecuadorian authorities arrested former Vice President Jorge Glas, seizing him from the Mexican embassy and prompting Mexico to suspend bilateral relations.

Glas, convicted twice for corruption, had been holed up in the embassy in Quito since seeking political asylum in December, arguing he was being persecuted by the attorney general's office.

Police forcefully entered Mexico's embassy in Quito before making the arrest, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador posted on X. The Ecuadorian president's office said in a statement it had arrested Glas.

Six dead, 10 injured in Russian strike on Kharkiv, officials say

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: A Russian strike on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, killed six civilians and injured 10 early on Saturday, regional officials said.

Ukraine's national police said the attack was launched by drones. It published pictures of blazes that had broken out on city streets and next to buildings.

"As of this morning, there are 6 dead and 10 wounded as a result of the night strike on Shevchenkivskyi district," Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said on the Telegram messaging app.

More than 150 rescued from floods in eastern Australia

Monitoring Desk
SYDNEY: Australian authorities on Saturday said 152 people had been rescued from floodwaters in the eastern state of New South Wales after torrential rains sparked warnings for residents to move to higher ground.

Authorities said 72 rescues were carried out in state capital Sydney, Australia's largest city, where there was dangerous flooding in several low-lying suburbs. Some 15 emergency evacuation orders were in place statewide, said New South Wales State Emergency Service.

US on high alert for Iran threat in region after Israeli strike in Syria

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States is on high alert and preparing for a possible attack by Iran targeting Israeli or American assets in the region in response to Israel's strike on the Iranian consulate in Syria, a US official has said.

"We're definitely at a high state of vigilance," the official said on Friday, confirming a CNN report that said an attack could come in the next week.

Suspected Israeli warplanes bombed Iran's consulate in Damascus on Monday in a strike that killed an Iranian military commander and marked a major escalation in Israel's war with its regional opponents.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

has said that seven Iranian military advisers died in the strike, including Mohammad Reza Zahedi, a senior commander in its Quds Force, which is an elite foreign espionage and paramilitary arm.

Iran has said it reserves the right "to take a decisive response."

US President Joe Biden discussed the threat from Iran in a phone call on Thursday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"Our teams have been in regular and continuous contact since then. The United States fully supports the defence of Israel against threats from Iran," a senior Biden administration official said.

Biden urges Egypt, Qatar to press Hamas to agree on hostage deal

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden on Friday (Apr 5) wrote to the leaders of Egypt and Qatar, calling on them to press Hamas for a hostage deal with Israel, according to a senior administration official - a day after he'd called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to redouble efforts to reach a cease-fire.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private letters, said Biden's national security adviser will meet Monday with family members of some of the estimated 100 hostages who are believed to still be in Gaza.

The letters come as Biden has deployed CIA Director Bill Burns to Cairo for talks this weekend about the hostage crisis.

It's six months since Hamas invaded Israel killing at least 1200 people, and took around 250 hostages, about 130 of whom remain in Gaza. Israel responded with war in the

pursuit of Hamas operatives, which has led to the death of 30-thousand people, mostly women and children.

Israel also came under mounting pressure Friday to step up aid to Gaza with its military admitting a series of "grave mistakes" when a drone killed seven aid workers in the embattled territory.

US-based charity World Central Kitchen, whose staff were in Monday night's drone strike, demanded that an independent commission investigate the killings.

Britain, which lost three nationals in the strike, called for a "wholly independent review". Poland said it had demanded a "criminal inquiry" by Israel after what it called the "murder" of the aid workers, one of whom was Polish. Israel said Friday it had been targeting a "Hamas gunman" in the strike, with the military admitting a series of "grave mistakes" and violations of its own rules of engagement.

Russia claims to have captured village in Ukraine's Donetsk region

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian forces have captured the village of Vodiane in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, Russia's defence ministry said.

"On the Avdiivka front, units of the Centre group of forces liberated the village of Vodiane," the Russian defence ministry said in a briefing.

The claim could not be independently verified.

Ukrainian defenders in the Avdiivka region are trying to dig in amid Russian advances in the Donetsk region, but they face shortages of artillery rounds, with US aid stuck in Congress for months.

Earlier on Friday Russia's state-run RIA news agency cited an official as saying Russian troops had entered the suburbs of Chasiv Yar, further north near Bakhmut.

The Ukrainian military acknowledged the battlefield situation near Chasiv Yar was tense, but denied Russian advances in

the town. Meanwhile a Russian air attack on Ukraine's southern city of Zaporizhzhia killed three people and injured 13 others, said the regional governor.

A nine-year old boy was among the injured, Ivan Fedorov added on Telegram. It was unclear what was hit but an image posted by the governor showed a cafe with shattered windows.

A series of blasts was reported in the city of Zaporizhzhia on Friday afternoon. Ukraine's air force said it intercepted 13 Russian drones launched overnight at the southern regions of Odesa, Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk, but five missiles got through. Authorities did not report any casualties.

Russia on Friday alleged that Ukrainian military drones attacked the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant but caused no damage to its critical infrastructure.



Military officials stand outside the Flagrancy Unit, where former Ecuador Vice President Jorge Glas is believed to be detained, in Quito, Ecuador.

Congress pledges to 'protect minorities' if voted back to power

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's main opposition party Congress vowed in its manifesto released to protect religious minorities — generally seen as a reference to Muslims — and backward castes through "affirmative action", meaning reservations in jobs and admissions if voted to power after elections. Congress, which had ruled India for more than 50 years with centre-left policies, has struggled in the past decade to compete with Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which counts the country's Hindu majority as its main vote base.

The seven-phase election starts on April 19, with vote counting on June 4.

More help for so-called backward castes and the poor irrespective of caste were among Congress pledges in its election manifesto, including assured jobs for the young, guaranteed prices for farm

produce and higher health insurance payouts.

"Congress has been the most vocal and active champion of the progress of the backward and oppressed classes and castes over the last seven decades," said the manifesto released by party president Mallikarjun Kharge, who himself is from one of India's most backward castes.

"However, caste discrimination is still a reality."

Kharge listed some of the key pledges with only a feeble response from party workers at a press conference, leading him to comment: "No claps, nothing!" Many analysts say morale is low in Congress because of the BJP's dominance of the country's politics. An opinion poll released on Wednesday predicted Modi's National Democratic Alliance coalition could win 399 of the 543 seats in the lower house of parliament.

UK rail services hit by drivers' strike

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Rail services were hit by large parts of the UK, including key tourist routes, as train drivers launched a new strike amid cost-of-living pressures and decades-high inflation.

Members of the Aslef union representing train drivers are taking part in a three-day rolling strike which will also affect express services to London's Gatwick, Stansted and Heathrow airports.

Union chief Mick Whelan blamed the industrial action on the "cost of living crisis created by the economic ineptitude of the Tories (Conservatives) that have been in power for 14 years". Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is expected to call a general election later this year with current opinion polls putting his government on course for a drubbing at the hands of Keir Starmer's main opposition Labour party. Workers across the economy from doctors and nurses to lawyers, teachers and dock workers have taken strike action for pay hikes.

Biden surveys collapsed Baltimore bridge, pledges help

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden took an aerial tour of the collapsed Baltimore bridge that is blocking a key East Coast shipping lane, and he pledged federal help in rebuilding the span, an idea some Republican lawmakers resisted in the US Congress have resisted.

A cargo ship crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge on March 26, sending it splashing into the harbor and killing six people. Work to clear the wreckage and restore traffic through the Mid-Atlantic state's

shipping channel is ongoing.

Aboard his Marine One helicopter, Biden flew over the scene of the disaster to get an aerial view. He met local officials for a briefing on the economic impact to the Baltimore port, an important shipping destination for ships to offload automobiles.

Speaking with the fallen bridge behind him as an imposing backdrop, Biden vowed, "We will not rest" until the bridge is rebuilt and the area is back to normal.

New York City to pay \$17.5 mln for forcing women to remove hijabs for mug shots

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: New York City agreed to pay \$17.5 million to settle a lawsuit by two Muslim-American women who said the police violated their rights after arresting them by forcing them to remove their hijabs before being photographed.

The preliminary class action settlement covers men and women required to remove religious attire before being photographed.

Meta to start using 'Made with AI' labels next month

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Facebook owner Meta announced major changes to its policies on digitally created and altered media, ahead of US elections poised to test its ability to police deceptive content generated by new artificial intelligence technologies.

The social media giant will start applying "Made with AI" labels next month to AI-generated videos, images and audio posted on its platforms, expanding a policy that previously addressed only a narrow slice of doctored videos, Vice President of Content

Policy Monika Bickert said in a blog post.

Bickert said Meta would also apply separate and more prominent labels to digitally altered media that poses a "particularly high risk of materially deceiving the public on a matter of importance", regardless of whether the content was created using AI or other tools.

The new approach will shift the company's treatment of manipulated content. It will move from one focused on removing a limited set of posts toward one that keeps the content up while providing viewers with information about how it was made.

Indian academic gets bail after six years without trial

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: An Indian academic detained for almost six years without trial has been granted bail by the supreme court, highlighting the country's use of harsh anti-terror laws decreed by rights activists.

Shoma Sen, 66, a former professor of English at Nagpur University, was arrested in 2018.

She was one of 16 activists and academics held for allegedly inciting violence between different Indian caste groups, among them a Jesuit priest, Stan Swamy, who died in pre-trial detention three years later at the age of 84.

Afghan kids learn in makeshift schools six months after major quake

Monitoring Desk
ZINDAH JAN: Children sit shoulder to shoulder crammed in rows on the floor of a shipping container with lesson books in their laps, the remains of their school unrepaired in the six months since a major earthquake devastated their village in western Afghanistan.

Hundreds of schools are still damaged since a series of strong quakes jolted Afghanistan's Herat province in October, with many students returning to lessons in tents and containers in March, according to the Herat education department.

Girls and boys in the village of Nayeef Rafi in Zindah Jan district studied in a packed container tucked between tents and small, blue homes newly built on a barren stretch of land.

"I really want to study, to have a school, and become a teacher to teach my friends," said 11-year-old Siyah Gul.

She wants to make the most of her lessons in the makeshift classroom before she is soon excluded under Taliban government rules which bar girls and women from secondary education and universities.

The October quake killed more than 1,500 people and damaged or destroyed more than 63,000 homes, according to an assessment published in February by the United Nations, the European Union and the Asian Development Bank.

Many people are still living in tents and temporary shelters, the World Health Organization said in February. Education is the second-most affected sector, the report said, with nearly 300 public schools and other learning centres damaged and 180,000 students facing learning disruptions. In the village of Chahak, deep cracks scar the walls and ceilings of its pale blue schoolhouse.



Rescuers make their way on a flooded residential area in the city of Orsk, Russia.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people are offering prayers in the Faisal Masjid connection Mehfil-e-Shabeena with Shab-e-Qadar on 27th day of Holy fasting Month of Ramzan-ul-Mubarak.

Pakistan welcomes foreign investment, businesses: PM

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that Pakistan was rapidly moving towards economic stability and they welcomed the investors and business people across the globe. He said in this regard, they were increasing public-private partnership.

A delegation of Istanbul Grand Airport (IGA) comprising board members, chief airport operating officer and chief corporate officer called on the prime minister, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister expressed the desire to particularly enhance investment and partnership with the brotherly country Turkey.

He informed that steps were being taken to

further improve and increase facilities for passengers at Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore airports.

Under private-public partnership, outsourcing of certain commercial operations at Islamabad International airport were being made, he said, adding transparent outsourcing at all stages was among their top priorities.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Defense Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema and relevant senior officials. Turkish Counsel General in Lahore Durmus Bastug and other staff were also present. The prime minister further said that there were huge investment and partnership opportunities in the urban development sector.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori.

PTI demands Bushra Bibi's medical examination from Shaukat Khanum

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has demanded the authorities to conduct a medical examination of Bushra Bibi, wife of incarcerated party founder Imran Khan, from Shaukat Khanum Hospital.

The demand came two days after a medical report - released by Pakistan Institute of Medical Science

(Pims) - found no evidence of any poisonous substance being given to Bushra Bibi at the Bani Gala sub-jail. The medical report was released after four senior doctors performed a medical examination of Imran Khan's wife. The report said that Bushra Bibi's appetite was not normal and she is suffering from stomach pain.

Karachi police arrest CTD officers for illegal detention, torture

KARACHI (INP): The Specialized Investigation Unit (SIU) of Karachi Police raided the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) Garden and arrested four CTD officers on charges of illegally detaining and torturing a citizen and his friends.

The action follows a complaint filed by Jassim at the Tipu Sultan police station. In his complaint, Jassim alleges that he was pressured by a woman named Noor to repay a debt of 6 lakh 30 thousand rupees. After Noor became unreachable, a man named Shoaib contacted Jassim and arranged a meeting at PECHS.



QUETTA: Woman busy in eid preparation as Eid approaching.

SCO urges Afghan govt to fulfil its commitments towards combating terrorism

ISLAMABAD (INP): Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has urged the Afghan government to fulfil its commitments towards combating terrorism.

The call was made at the nineteenth annual meeting of the Security Councils of the SCO in Astana, Kazakhstan. A joint statement issued after the SCO meeting stated that the presence of international terrorist groups and other groups based in Afghanistan poses a serious threat to the member states of the SCO.

PM strongly flays terrorist attack in Lakki Marwat

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday strongly condemned a terrorist attack on police personnel in district Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The prime minister prayed for the high ranks of Shaheed DSP Gul Muhammad Khan, Naseem Gul, constable and others and expressed sympathies with the bereaved families, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister said that KP police had been acting like a bulwark against terrorism. The cowardly terrorist activities could not shake their determination, he added.

Four dead in bus-motorcycle accident

CHISHTIAN (INP): As many as four people lost their lives when a speeding bus collided with a motorcycle in a rural village of Chishtian.

The rescue officials confirmed the death of the four individuals including three family members, while the injured are being transferred to the nearest hospital for immediate medical attention.

The accident occurred due to over speeding of the bus.

Earlier to this, at least one person died, and 25 others sustained injuries after a passenger van carrying devotees to the Shah Noorani Shrine met with an accident near Hub.

The unfortunate event occurred when the bus, en route to the shrine, faced a mishap close to Weirab Naddi.

The rescue officials rushed to the accident site to swiftly transport the injured to nearby hospitals for immediate medical attention.

ASI killed in Bajaur IED blast

ISLAMABAD (APP): An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police was killed when his vehicle was targeted with an improvised explosive device (IED) in Mamund area of Bajaur district on Saturday.

According to private news channel, the police said that an improvised explosive device targeted police officials in Lwee Mamund, Bajaur injuring police sub-inspector and constable.

Later, the assistant sub-inspector, who was critically injured, succumbed to injuries at the hospital, they said.

The police collected evidence from the scene and started investigation into the incident.

Mahmood elected chairman of PTI-P

PESHAWAR (INP): Former chief minister Mahmood Khan has been elected the chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentary (PTI-P).

PTI-P's Secretary General Malik Habib Noor Orakzai issued a notification of Mahmood Khan's appointment to the chairman's seat.

The notification stated that the party would progress under the leadership of Mahmood Khan.

MPA Zarak Mandokhail says Govt utilizing resources to address problems of educational institutions

QUETTA (APP) Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Zarak Khan Mandokhail on Saturday said that the provincial government was utilizing all available resources to address the problems being faced by educational institutions. In a statement issued here, he said that schools would be shifted to solar system for uninterrupted power supply. Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N)'s leader Zarak Khan Mandokhail said that the educational institutions of Balochistan were playing an important role in the promotion of education and character building of male and female students. He said that the provincial government would ensure the provision of all resources to meet the needs of educational institutions.

Three accused involved in killing of a lad arrested by Chaman police: SP

QUETTA: Three accused allegedly involved in killing of a 11-year old boy were arrested by the police in Chaman on Saturday.

This was disclosed by the Superintendent of Police Chaman, Shahid Jamil Kakar while addressing a hurriedly called press conference on Saturday.

The SP Chaman informed that the culprits involved in the killing of 11-

year old boy were arrested and the instrument of killing was also recovered from them.

One of the arrested accused is an Afghan national. He was arrested from the Jungle PirAlizai area, he added.

The SP Shahid Jamil said that all available resources would be utilized for ensuring protection of life and property of the people.

that business confidence had increased in the country. He said it was very unfortunate that anti-state elements which could not digest the country's progress were stuck to their negative agenda. "Chinese engineers were attacked in Dasu and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Dasu and met Chinese engineers and expressed grief over the incident besides offering condolences," he added.

He said that Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource De-

velopment Chaudhry Salik Hussain went to Wuhan, China, on a special flight that carried mortal remains of five Chinese personnel, who had died in the terror attack and expressed condolences with the Chinese government and officials.

He said that the PML-N government had always given importance to Pak-China friendship. He said, "After the incident, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited the Chinese Embassy and met the Chinese Ambassador.



LAHORE: A delegation of Istanbul Grand Airport (IGA) calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Steps must be taken for promotion of agriculture sector in Balochistan: Qadir

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Standing Committee for Petroleum and Resources, Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir on Saturday said measures would be taken for development of agriculture and livestock sectors in Balochistan as its people depended on minerals, agriculture and livestock sectors so it was the largest province of Pakistan in terms of area. In statement issued here, he said that an abundant management of water for agriculture was important for the development of agriculture.

The Senator said that Balochistan province has very few big rivers, most of the agriculture was done with the water of the rivers, in both cases, there was a flood in the river or there was a shortage of water. He said that it was necessary

that the provincial and federal governments would seriously make it possible to get water at cheap rates.

In the province of Balochistan, first of all, for the small farmers, under the auspices of the government, large scale free solar energy tube wells should be installed so that the small farmers can grow grains for themselves, he said. He said that after that, the problems of the medium farmers should be solved and after that, tubewells with solar energy should be installed free of cost to the big farmers so that the problems of the farmers across the province would be solved and they could grow plenty of grain and fodder for livestock.

He said that till date no government has ever taken interest in solving the problems of the farmers of

Balochistan, for this reason, farmers across the province were always suffering from problems. In such adverse conditions, there is a fear of famine in Balochistan. By installing solar energy tube wells, the farmers will get relief from heavy electricity bills, he said. Mr. Abdul Qadir said that they would also be able to get good production of different types of commodities. If the provincial and federal governments once solve the problems of the farmers of Balochistan province, prosperity will be seen throughout the province, he noted. Chairman Standing Committee said that Balochistan province has full potential to brighten the future of Pakistan saying that ensuring the provision of affordable solar energy on a large scale in this province would significantly increase.

Committee formed to formulate Service Rules & Service Structure of paramedics

QUETTA: The Health Department, Government of Balochistan has decided to formulate Service Rules and Service Structure of the paramedics in the province. This was announced in an official notification issued here on Saturday.

According to the notification, the committee would prepare the draft of service rules and service structure of the paramedics.

The committee is due to submit its recommenda-

tions within a month period. It may be mentioned here that Secretary Health Abdullah Khan has given priority to the Allied Health Professional Development in order to fill the gap existing in the health sector while implementing the reforms agenda. The committee would be headed by the Deputy Secretary Health (PHC). Members included in the committee are: Principal Multi-Purpose School Quetta, Secretary, Balochistan Faculty Board, Director Nursing Balochistan.



KARACHI: Members of Sindh Balochistan Humanitarian Civil Society are holding protest demonstration against killing of Khaskheli community people and recovery of missing two kidnapped girls.

Pakistan, China to promote bilateral cooperation on legal affairs: Cheng Deyong

ISLAMABAD (INP): A key figure in bridging legal and academic ties between China and Pakistan, Cheng Deyong, Managing Director of Pakistan ZOO Law LLP and legal advisor to the Consulate General of China in Lahore, has been appointed as the legal advisor to the Consulate General of China in Karachi with a 2-year term.

"As strategic hubs for diplomatic activities between China and Pakistan, Chinese Consulates play a crucial role in facilitating communication, promoting cultural exchanges, and strengthening economic ties. I am honored to take on this role and look forward to making due contribution to the strengthening of legal ties between the two countries," said Cheng.

According to Gwadar Pro, Cheng actively assisted in promoting the cooperation between the Law School of Southwest Petroleum University, Chengdu, Sichuan, China and the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at National University of Sciences and

Soldier martyred, 2 injured in KKH landslide clearance operation

RAWALPINDI (INP): A soldier of Pakistan Army was martyred while two others injured during clearance operation of landslide on Karakoram Highway (KKH) in Chilas on Saturday. According to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), a landslide near Gonar Farm Chilas on April 04, had blocked KKH for all types of traffic.

Two to restore the traffic and help the stranded people, a detachment of Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) headed by Naib Subedar Khalid and two soldiers immediately reached the site and started the clearance.

During the process of clearance, another slide was triggered that critically injured the detachment.

The martyred soldier was identified as Naib Subedar Khalid who succumbed to the critical injuries and embraced shahadah, whereas Sepoy Waseem and Lance Naik Azmat were recovering from serious injuries.



QUETTA: Members of Grand Health Alliance Balochistan are holding protest demonstration against the privatization of the government hospital, held at Quetta press club.

Gohar rules out merger with Sunni Ittehad Council in case of election symbol's return

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Saturday ruled out a merger with the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) in case the former was returned its election symbol of the 'bat'.

In an interview on DawnNewsTV show 'Doosra Rukh' today, Barrister Gohar was questioned about a possible merger with the SIC in case the PTI was given its election symbol back to which he said: "If they (SIC) call for a merger then their party can do it but since it is a religious party then maybe they might not go for a merger and we are a different kind of democratic party so we will keep our own platform."

Gohar said the party and its members were waiting on the ECP to recognise and notify the recently held intraparty elections on March 3 and return the symbol of the 'bat' to the party.



GWADAR: Deputy Commissioner Aurangzeb Badini presiding over a meeting regarding education.