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PM tasks BOI to bring further EoDB for more investment, businesses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday tasked the Board of Investment with the target to bring more ease for attracting investment and pave way for more businesses in the country.

The prime minister, who chaired a high-level review meeting on Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) for investment and business activities, said the minimum impediments were a must to attract investment.

He told the meeting that during his previous tenure, he had taken priority measures to promote investment and business and that the Special Investment Facilitation Council had also played a supportive role in achieving the goals of economic revival.

He said the promotion of foreign investment and business activities in the country manifested the efforts by the government team for which they deserved an applause.

The prime minister said that the visits of business delegations from friendly countries and surge

in stock market reflected the trust of local and foreign investors in the government policies.

He instructed the BOI to formulate a mechanism on the pattern of one window operation in coordination with all the ministries and provincial governments.

He also called for the devising a strategy, in collaboration with the business community and provincial governments, to make the new investors and businessmen face minimum hurdles in their ventures.

He also instructed for engaging experts of international repute for the purpose.

Federal ministers Jam Kamal Khan, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Abdul Aleem Khan, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission, parliamentarians and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

The four provincial chief secretaries and prominent businessmen joined the meeting via video link.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level review meeting regarding Ease of Doing Business.

IMF demands pension tax on retired govt. employees

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reportedly presented new demands to Pakistan ahead of crucial negotiations set to begin today. Among these demands is the taxation of pensions for retired government employees.

According to media reports, the IMF seeks additional revenue generation of 0.5% of Pakistan's Gross National Product (GDP), translating to approximately Rs. 600 billion. This revenue is expected to come primarily from taxes levied on salaried individuals and businesses.

The IMF is emphasizing the need for Pakistan's Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to focus on increasing tax collection. Furthermore, the IMF reportedly advocates for the elimination of tax exemptions currently enjoyed by several pension schemes.

The upcoming negotiations mark the 24th IMF program for Pakistan and are touted as the most challenging to date.

CPEC the crown jewel in China, Pakistan friendship, says Ahsan Iqbal

BEIJING (APP): Calling the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) an exemplar of friendship between the two countries, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal said there has always been "spring" in the relations between Pakistan and China which are always moving on an upward trajectory.

CPEC, which was launched in 2013 and a flagship project under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, has "benefited Pakistan's economy immensely", he said in Beijing.

Pakistan looks forward to further cooperating with China to seek shared economic growth as CPEC has entered into its second phase, he added.

"The garden of friendship between Pakistan and China in every season has blossomed new and colorful flowers of cooperation and understanding between the people of Pakistan and China," the minister said.

Iqbal lauded CPEC for transforming the development landscape of, creating

jobs for and building connectivity for his country, China Daily reported.

"CPEC has helped Pakistan transform its energy and infrastructure sectors and connect several parts of the country so the fruits of development can be shared across various regions of Pakistan," Iqbal said.

"It also helped create over two million jobs and helps Pakistan's workers master new technology and get trained in projects," he added.

Iqbal slammed the so-called debt trap narrative as far from reality and expressed appreciation for China's financial support which he said has been "very attractive financing for Pakistan".

Iqbal said China outlined five corridors under CPEC last year, namely growth, livelihood, openness, inclusivity and innovation, which were well aligned with 5-E's framework, namely Export, Energy, Equity, E-Pakistan and Environment, envisioned by the government of Pakistan.



BEIJING: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal participated in a seminar organized by Belt and Road Center of National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).

Governor condemns killing of labourers in Gwadar

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has strongly condemned the incident of killing of labourers in Gwadar the other day.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Friday, the Governor said that there's an important role of labourers in developing of any civilized society. The killing of a person means killing of a bread earner of a family, he added.

The Governor directed the law enforcement agencies to arrest the elements involved in the incident and taken them to task. He expressed condolence and solidarity with the bereaved families of martyr labourers.

The minister said that the government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was fully focused on economic stability.

After the present government came to power, he said economic indicators were becoming positive, international journals were also predicting improvement in Pakistan's economy.

"The government is also taking steps to invest in infrastructure projects in Pakistan," the minister said adding these projects would not only boost the economy but also create employment opportunities.

Tarar for measures at global level to counter misuse of social media, spread of fake news

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said on Friday that there was a need for measures at the global level to counter the misuse of social media and the spread of fake news.

"The Government of Pakistan recognizes the importance of freedom of the press and freedom of expression, and it is determined to protect the rights of journalists", he said while talking to a delegation of Bangladeshi journalists visiting Pakistan who met him here.

In the meeting, various important issues were discussed including freedom of expression and economic initiatives of the government.

The minister said that the government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was fully focused on economic stability.

After the present government came to power, he said economic indicators were becoming positive, international journals were also predicting improvement in Pakistan's economy.

"The government is also taking steps to invest in infrastructure projects in Pakistan," the minister said adding these projects would not only boost the economy but also create employment opportunities.

PA speaker suspends 27 MPAs in light of SC's decision on reserved seats

Of 27 suspended MPAs, 23 belong to ruling PML-N, two to PPP and one each to IPP and PML-Q; Speaker suspends members of 24 woman, 3 minority lawmakers.

LAHORE (INP): Following the Supreme Court's ruling on reserved seats after the nullification of the Peshawar High Court's verdict, the ruling alliance faced a major blow as their 27 lawmakers in the Punjab Assembly faced suspension on Friday.

After reading out the top court's verdict in the provincial legislative assembly, Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan suspended the memberships of 27 lawmakers who had been allocated reserved seats for women and minorities.

Twenty-three out of 27 lawmakers belonged to the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) whose number of seats in the House has been re-

duced to 203. Subsequently, two lawmakers of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) faced suspension, as well as one each from the Isteqdam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q).

The speaker suspended memberships on 24 reserved seats for women and the other three for minorities.

The suspended Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) representing minorities in the Punjab Assembly include Tariq Masih Gul, Waseem Anjum and Basro Jee.

The suspended women MPAs include Maqsoodan Bibi, Robina Nazeer, Salma Zahid, Kanwal Noman, Zeba

Ghafoor, Saeda Samreen Taj, Sheher Bano, Amna Perveen, Syed Sumera Ahmed, Uzma Butt, Afshan Hussain, Shagufta Faisal, Nasreen Riaz, Sajida Naveed, Farzana Abbas, Maria Talal, Tashreen Fawad, Abida Bashir, Saadia Muzaffar, Faiza Momina, Amira Khan, Samiya Ata, Rahat Khan and Rukhsar Shafiq.

Earlier this week, the apex court suspended the PHC's verdict on the reserved seat while accepting the Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) plea against the high court's ruling.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had rejected the party's plea depriving it of reserved seats.



QUETTA: Former Chairman Senate, MPA Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, Senator Manzoor Khan Kakar, Provincial Minister Ziaullah Langoo and former Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

President summons NA session on 13th

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned the session of the National Assembly on Monday (May 13) at 04:00 pm.

The president summoned the session of National Assembly in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 54(1) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

PM condoles over demise of UAE's Sheikh Hazza bin Sultan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed grief over the demise of Sheikh Hazza bin Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a member of the royal family of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The prime minister offered condolences to the UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and members of the royal family.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to bless the departed soul with eternal peace in paradise.

According to the UAE media, late Sheikh Hazza bin Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan was the son of Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who had died in 2019.

The body of the deceased was laid to rest at the Al Bateen cemetery in Abu Dhabi.

Cabinet accords approval to remove chairman federal education board

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal cabinet has accorded approval to remove Qaisar Alam, chairman Federal Education Board from his post.

Syed Junaid Ikhlaiq has been appointed as acting chairman federal education board. Cabinet has given approval in this regard.

Syed Junaid Ikhlaiq has been given additional charge. Notification in this regard has been issued.

We can easily put our universities on path of self-sufficiency by adopting modern means: Governor

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has believed that we can easily put our universities on path of self-sufficiency by adopting modern means and mechanism instead of traditional procedures to settle their financial and administrative matters.

The Governor stressed the need to prepare a comprehensive policy to save all the public sector universities from the financial crisis in future and ensure timely payment of the salaries to their teachers and employees.

In this regard, the incumbent federal and provincial governments would also be taken into conference.

These views were expressed by the Governor while speaking to the Provincial Minister for Education, Ms Rahila Hameed

Khan Durrani, Vice Chancellors of different public sector universities of the province including Professor Dr Dost Muhammad Baloch, Dr Abdul Malik Tareen and Dr Jan Muhammad Baloch who called on him separately here on Friday.

During the course of meetings, the Governor said that it is our personal interest and conscious effort to promote healthy academic environment in all higher educational institutions of the province.

He made it clear that concrete steps would be taken for promotion of quality education in the province.

He said that the issues being confronted by the universities can easily be overcome with recommendations of concerned experts and making all responsible persons efficient at the universities level.



QUETTA: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langoo meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai

Pakistan's lunar satellite sends initial images from space

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's lunar satellite, iCUBE Qamar has sent the initial images from orbit after successfully completing three rounds of the moon.

The images were released by Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) on Friday.

The satellite, iCube Qamar has completed three lunar orbits after being launched aboard China's Chang'e-6 space-

craft from Hainan, China on May 03.

According to the Pakistan Institute of Space Technology (IST), Pakistan's lunar CubeSat iCUBE-Q was successfully deployed in orbit at 1314 hours on May 08 from Chang'E-6.

IST which is a leading high-end university of Pakistan had the distinct honor of launching a Cube Satellite iCUBE-Qamar (iCUBE-Q) in Lunar orbit onboard China's Chang'E-6 Mission.



KALAT: Deputy Commissioner Kalat Flight Lt. (Retd) Bilal Shabbir briefed Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court Mr. Justice Hashim Khan Kakar about proposed place for judicial complex.

Displeased with law & order situation: Govt endeavouring to prevent Gwadar and Kech like incidents in future: Zia

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langoo has expressed displeasure over the law and order situation in the province.

He said that the recent incidents of lawlessness and loss of human lives in them are intolerable.

In view of the situation, the Provincial Minister directed the Additional Chief Secretary Home to take steps for improving law

and order in the provin priority.

The Minister said that it is responsibility of the government to protect life and property of the people.

He asserted that the district administration, DIG of Police and DPOs should consider themselves to be under suspension if the situation of law and order was deteriorated in their areas. He warned that the officers committing negligence in their duties would not be spared at all.

PM paying attention on development of Balochistan: Syedal

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedal Khan Nasir on Friday said that the Prime Minister was paying special attention on development of Balochistan. He said that due to the positive policies of the government, investors had restored confidence in Pakistan and foreign investors were ready to invest in the country.

He expressed these views while talking to various delegations which called on him at his residence in Quetta. The Deputy Chairman Senate said that the federal and provincial governments would work together to solve the problems of the

people and youth would get employment from timely completion of mega projects which would be eliminated backwardness from respective areas of Balochistan.

Syedal Khan Nasir said that Gwadar Port was a game changer for the development of Balochistan saying that Pakistan Muslim League (N) leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Pakistan Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif had issued directives to complete Gwadar Port and other major projects in the province as soon as possible so that the people of the province could benefit from these big mega projects.



QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner, Saad Bin Asad listening the problems and demands of Zamindar Action Committee during their protest, outside Balochistan Assembly in Quetta.

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Enrolment drive

In a promising albeit familiar declaration, the prime minister has announced a four-year "education emergency" to eradicate the blight of illiteracy and bring millions of out-of-school children into the classroom fold. While many governments have come and gone and such emergencies have been declared, obstacles to access, quality and equity in education persist, underscoring the need for a renewed commitment. The PM's stated resolve to personally oversee this initiative and to collaborate across provincial and political lines enhances hope but also raises the stakes for tangible outcomes.

Pakistan's education crisis is both deep-rooted and widespread. The statistics are sobering: the country grapples with a literacy rate of only 62pc and educational spending at a mere 1.7pc of its GDP. There are an estimated 26m children out of school and 70pc of 10-year-olds are unable to comprehend basic texts. Add to this the fact that a significant proportion of schools lack basic facilities such as potable water and toilets.

The disparity in educational access between urban and rural areas, and between boys and girls, further complicates matters. The authorities must prepare a solid plan of action if they truly aim to tackle this beast. First, increasing the allocation of GDP to education by the provinces and the centre is non-negotiable. This increase must be used judiciously to improve school infrastructure and ensure all children have access to basic educational facilities. Furthermore, teacher recruitment, training, and retention strategies must be overhauled to address the gap of 200,000 vacant teaching positions nationwide, as highlighted by Malala Yousafzai.

Additionally, the authorities should implement targeted interventions to bring out-of-school children, especially girls, into the educational system. Initiatives like the school meal programmes, as suggested by the World Food Programme, can be effective in increasing school attendance, while addressing nutritional deficiencies that affect learning.

The curriculum needs to be revamped to focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. Integrating technology can help bridge the gap between different regions and provide remote learning opportunities. Moreover, collaborative efforts with international partners and NGOs should be harnessed to bring best practices and funding to the fore. International organisations are poised to support, but they require a dispensation that is transparent and committed in its approach. Lastly, the commitment to establish the 'Pakistan Skill Company' and the 'Pakistan Skill Development Fund' is a step in the right direction. It acknowledges the broader spectrum of education beyond primary schooling, which is crucial for economic independence and growth. With a strategic, well-funded, and inclusive approach, it is possible to transform the educational landscape of Pakistan. It is hoped that the education authorities deliver an actionable plan that will stand the test of time and political change. For once, let this not be a missed opportunity.

Crisis of empathy

Jan-e-Alam Khaki

There are many concepts that are shared by all human beings across the globe. One of them is empathy. Through many of my previous articles in these columns, I have focused on universal values, attitudes and beliefs that connect us to the core values of who we are as human beings, highlighting our humanness to promote universal brotherhood and sisterhood. In this, my 50th article for Dawn, I wish to dedicate this piece to a very cherished human concept — empathy.

'Empathy' is part of a family of words that denote a moral concept which goes beyond ordinary ethics, such as sympathy, affection, sharing feelings as if one feels the other person's pain. Empathy is generally described as the ability to take on another's perspective, to understand, and possibly share and respond to their experience.

Empathy can also refer to a sense of harmony between people with the same taste, disposition, or opinion. When a person feels empathy towards a cause or an organisation, they have feelings of approval, loyalty, or support. Sympathy, compassion and care are acts that belong to the family of empathy.

Meanwhile, the polar opposite of empathy are concepts like being unconcerned, remaining indifferent, apathy, or worse still, justifying the suffering of others. When a section of humanity — such as a person, a locality, a community, a nation or a state — falls prey to human or natural disasters, some who do not see them favourably feel that it is 'God's punishment', and that they deserved it. These kinds of

people, when they hear of or observe the suffering of others, are not disturbed.

On the other hand, there are others who, upon hearing or seeing the pain of others, 'feel' their suffering. If they can do something, they go forward and support them. If, on the other hand, they cannot do anything, they at least pray for the relief of their pain. Each one of us can have an introspective reflection to see which category we belong to.

Describing the value of empathy, the Aga Khan, a great humanitarian of our times, in an interview called it an "extraordinary ability", describing it as "... the ability to step away from ... [one's] own value system and put themselves in another person's shoes in order to better understand and help that person." Concluding his admiration for the quality of empathy, he said, "I deeply admire it as an irreplaceable talent that is unfortunately all too rare."

In order to develop this attitude, we need to encourage such attitudes in our children, family, in fact, within the larger community.

Today (not that it was less in the past), in our societies, where we tend to see too much brutality and savagery, we need to revisit our humanity and rethink what we have become.

It is not a communal or party or tribal quality; it depends on each person. It is an individual trait. Not all members in a family may feel the same way when they see human suffering; some feel more, others less. Educationist Farid Punjwani thinks there is an "empathy crisis" and argues that "without empathy, the edifice of ethics and human relations as a whole is inconceivable. And yet, we seem to suffer from a crisis of empathy at the collective level". Interestingly enough, probably all religions, communities and tribes value these feelings, but their adherents vary in actually adopting them in their daily lives. Some people are so conscious of the sufferings of others and feel so strongly about them that they establish institutions that help mitigate these travails to an extent. Many such inspired people do global humanitarian work regardless of colour, creed and ideology. They have saved millions across the globe. They live amongst us and deserve support from us.

A great woman served a literally untouchable community in a particular country for over 40 years, leaving her luxurious life in her own country. This is empathy personified. Is it really that impossible for each one of us to adopt this great quality no matter how small a measure? Let us practise it in our daily life, demonstrate the same to our children, include it in our textbooks, and make it a part of the discourse in places of worship.

It is not just a job of teaching or preaching about human acts of empathy, but every-one becoming conscious about the sufferings of fellow humans. As Sheikh Sa'adi rightly says: if you are unconcerned about the sufferings of others, you do not deserve to be called a 'human'. Indeed, being human means feeling the pain of others, and supporting them in whatever way possible. — Courtesy Dawn

Farmers' march

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

It has been 20 years since the iconic peasant movement on the Okara military farms reached its zenith. Having been intimately involved with the struggle of tenant-farmers to secure their historic claims to 17,000 acres of prime agricultural land in the heart of Punjab, I can testify to the conscious effort made by the movement to remind society that peasants remain a political force in the 21st century, whilst also challenging taboos about the military's corporate interests.

Today, farmers are once again on the roads. Under the aegis of the Kissan Ittehad, thousands of landowning farmers are protesting the inexplicable decision to import millions of tonnes of wheat in the face of a bumper harvest at home. The refusal of the government to purchase home-grown produce at a reasonable price has resulted in a glut and major losses for many wheat farmers.

While centred in Punjab, the Kissan Ittehad mobilisation is far more geographically diverse than the peasant movement of two decades ago, which was based largely in Okara and revolved around the fate of tenant-farmers on state-owned land. It is also notable that the Okara protagonists were landless peasants demanding proprietary rights, whereas the present movement features owner-proprietors that are contesting agrarian policies.

This is not the first time that relatively prosperous middling farmers have taken to the roads. The Kissan Ittehad has been mobilising for some years now, taking up issues such as electricity costs (tube well use), seed, fertiliser and pesticide prices, as well as the erosion of agricultural support measures like guaranteed prices for

staple crops.

The poorest peasants — landless or owning a modicum of land — are, of course, also impacted by agrarian market logics, but the fact that even more comfortable farming segments are protesting underlines the changing contours of peasant politics.

While the struggles of small and middling farmers is in part due to the profiteering of middlemen — known as arthis and beoparis — agribusiness firms have come to play a dominant role in Pakistan's agrarian markets. These are companies — domestic and multinational — that try and exercise monopoly control in the supply (including patenting) of inputs and machinery, transportation and storage of produce, and the circulation of commodities.

Agribusiness garners astonishing annual government subsidies in North America and Western Europe. Its takeover of agriculture in countries like Pakistan has been less conspicuous, in part because, as is the case with the manufacturing sector, at least some multinationals subcontract to local firms.

Meanwhile the state has completely reneged on support for peasant farmers, particularly smallholders. Autonomous government entities like the National Fertiliser Corporation and Punjab Seed Corporation have become largely toothless in the face of big private companies, as well as the policy dictates of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank and other donors that sing the praises of the 'free market' by eliminating support prices and facilitating agribusiness.

Of course, state functionaries engage in brazen pursuit of profit of their own accord when they feel like it.

The current wheat import scandal is a classic example, dictated by the (caretaker) federal government despite some opposition by the provinces. Former caretaker prime minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar claimed that the decision was good for consumers, conveniently neglecting mention of the private sector businessmen who were given licences to bring in the imp-or-ted stocks and earn windfall profits.

The rhetoric also confirms that government officials cl---early prioritise ur---b---an 'consumers' over peasant-farmers. A meaningful policy matrix would not be based on such a zero sum game between rural and urban; it is possible to ensure both that peasant-farmers are supported and urban consumers also catered to.

Last but not least, big landowners and rich farmers are not on the roads, in part because they operate like capitalist businessmen. They earn money through a host of diversified assets and then declare it as agricultural income, which is not taxed. That needs to change, as does the lack of regulation of agribusiness and middlemen.

More generally, the state must acknowledge its responsibilities towards small and landless farmers. Land reform, if undertaken in both agricultural and peri-urban areas where agriculture is being swallowed up by real estate mafias, could change the fate of almost 30 million peasants who are now landless, as well as pastoralists who have been almost completely invisibilised as common lands are grabbed by state and capital alike.

Those who decide our fate will never take such steps on their own, so farmers will have to keep marching to force their hand. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM for trade policies to facilitate businesses and enhance export

Calls for strategy to evaluate performance of TIO in Pakistan embassies in other countries

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the authorities concerned to formulate the trade policies with a core objective of facilitating the business sector, calling for urgent measures to enhance the competitiveness of the country's exports.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting on the trade sector, called for steps to promote exports of non-traditional goods and instructed for immediate payment of the certified duty drawback of the exporters.

Highlighting the significance of the private

sector, he instructed to ensure consultation with them during the policy-making and implement the deletion policy to uplift the auto sector. Prime Minister Shehbaz directed the relevant ministry to devise a comprehensive strategy to scrutinize the performance of trade and investment officers posted in Pakistan's missions abroad, by rewarding the good performers and removing the incompetent ones.

The prime minister told the meeting that he would personally carry out the fortnightly review of the export sectors.

In the meeting, the prime minister was told that the discussion on the Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and the Gulf states was in the final stage and transit trade agreements with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan had already been materialized. It was told that during the recent Pak-Saudi Business Conference, around 450 business-to-business meetings were held and that the volume of e-commerce trade was witnessing a constant increase with the enlisting of over 3,000 firms on the Pakistan Trade Portal.

Rupee gains 08 paise against US dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday gained 08 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.12 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.20.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, stood at Rs 277.10 and Rs 279.60 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.31 to Rs.299.93 from Rs 298.62, according to the latest economic data of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained constant at Rs 1.78 whereas an increase of Rs1.48 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 348.59 compared to the last closing of Rs 347.11.

The Emirates Dirham decreased by 03 paise whereas Saudi Riyal went down by 2 paise and were traded at Rs 75.72 and Rs 74.15 respectively.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Sajid Manzoor Asadi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, and Mr. Bonhyun Koo, Director of the Asia Team, EDCF Mission signs an Aide-Memoire to chart a mid-term plan for implementation of development projects between 2024-2026. The signing was witnessed by Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and other officials from the MoEA and EDCF.

Pakistan committed to promote green investment: Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (APP): Highlighting Pakistan's vulnerability to the diverse effects of climate change, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb here on Friday emphasized his country's commitment to addressing climate change and promoting green investment opportunities.

He was delivering a keynote speech via online platform at the UK-Pakistan Green Investment Forum, organized by the

British High Commission in Pakistan, said a press release issued by the finance ministry. He shed light on Pakistan's disproportionate vulnerability to the devastating impacts of climate change, despite its minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions.

He cited a recent World Bank study, estimating potential annual GDP losses of up to 1% due to climate-related risks.

SBP provides practicable foundation for elimination of Riba: Chief Manager

FAISALABAD (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has provided a solid and practicable foundation for elimination of Riba by December 31, 2027, though still the share of Islamic banking is only 20pc in the overall banking sector. This was stated by Waqas Kashif Bajawa, Chief Manager SBP, while addressing an awareness session about Islamic export refinance scheme (IERS) at Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). He said regulation had been provided

for the Islamic banking in addition to finalising procedures to issue licences for Islamic banks. "Similarly, steps are also being taken for transformation of conventional banks into Islamic banks," he said and added that on the demand side, a comprehensive awareness campaign had been launched. "During these events, Sharia scholars try to remove the reservations and apprehensions of the people about the Islamic banking".

PSX stays bullish, gains 427 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Friday, gaining 427.45 points, a positive change of 0.59 percent, closing at 73,085.50 points against 72,658.05 points the previous trading day.

A total of 741,196,400 shares valuing Rs 25,268 billion were traded during the day as compared to 674,981,699 shares valuing Rs 24,053 billion the last day.

Gold rates increase by Rs.4,600

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs.4,600 and was traded at Rs.243,800 on Friday against its sale at Rs. 239,200 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 3,944 to Rs 209,019 from Rs 205,075 whereas as the prices of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs 191,601 from Rs 187,986, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.30 to Rs2,650 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.25.72 to Rs2,271.94.

Pak, Korea sign Aide-Memoire for Enhanced Development Cooperation 2024-2026

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MoEA) here on Friday signed an Aide-Memoire to chart a mid-term plan for implementation of development projects between 2024-2026. The Aide-Memoire, which was signed at the conclusion of visit by EDCF Country Programme Mission from the Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM), represents a key milestone in deepening economic ties between Pakistan and the

Republic of Korea. According to MoEA press release, the Aide-Memoire was signed by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Sajid Manzoor Asadi and Director of the Asia Team, EDCF Mission, Bonhyun Koo. The signing was witnessed by Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr Kazim Niaz and other officials from the MoEA and EDCF. Additionally, a project concept for the construction of a Pediatric Hospital in Jamsoro was signed, with EDCF committing USD 60 million.

Atif Ikram says: Korea should benefit by investing in SEZs to increase regional ties

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Office Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Karim Aziz Malik meeting with Ambassador of South Korea Park Kajeon at the Federation Office. President FPCCI Atif Ikram said in his message regarding the meeting that Korea has benefited by

Pakistan is an important country in terms of investment for the world. Pakistan has important sectors like agriculture, gems and jewellery, mines and minerals, marble and granite, entertainment in which Korean investors can invest. Pakistan-Korea Joint Business Council will be formed soon. Chairman Capital



investing in CPEC projects and special economic zones to increase regional connectivity and free trade agreement for the promotion of trade has proved to be beneficial for both countries.

Pakistan, with a population of 240 million, is connected to Afghanistan and Central Asian countries, due to which

Office Karim Aziz Malik said that bilateral trade between the two countries is one and a half billion dollars, which requires joint efforts to increase.

Federation of Chambers of Pakistan, Trade Development Authority is organizing Gems and Jewellery Exhibition in September this year.



Kick off meeting between Karandaaz Pakistan, FBR and Ministry of Finance on Digitalization of tax system took place at FBR Headquarters in Islamabad.

Short-term inflation eases by 1.39 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 1.39 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on May 09, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 312.56 points as compared to 316.95 points during the past week. As compared to

the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 22.32 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, decreased by 0.99 per cent and went down to 303.24 points from last week's 306.26 points.

Province's development link with maintenance of law & order: KP Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): In a separate meeting, Chief Engineer PESCO, Akhtar Hamid Khan, also discussed electricity supply and load shedding with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor's House. The Governor directed the PESCO chief to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply and minimize load shedding.

The Governor praised the role of the Frontier Constabulary in security and law and order, emphasizing that development and prosperity rely on peace. He acknowledged the sacrifices of security forces, FC, and police in the fight against terrorism.

Najamuddin Khan, along with other political and social delegations, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

The visitors congratulated the Governor and expressed good wishes. During the meetings, the Governor expressed determination to solve the province's problems and improve relations between the province and the federation for the welfare and prosperity of the people.

He assured that he would fulfill his constitutional duties to provide basic necessities and facilities to the people.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain bidding farewell to pilgrims at Allama Iqbal International Airport.

KP assembly passes over Rs1360.37bln surplus budget for eight months of FY 2023-24

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly on Friday passed a surplus budget of Rs1,360.37 billion for 11 months of the fiscal year (FY) 2023-24 including the last eight months of the interim government and the last two months of the current elected government.

The budget included Rs 1,059.276 billion in ongoing expenses and Rs 301.094 billion in development expenses. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Minister Aftab Alam Afridi presented the budget in the assembly session chaired by Speaker Babar Saleem Swati. He said in his speech that the current financial and economic difficulties have made this budget more difficult because, on the one hand, most of the infrastructure of the province was destroyed due to the disastrous floods of 2022 and on the other hand terrorism.

He said successive incidents have also adversely affected the

provincial economy, adding that under Article 126 of the Constitution, the caretaker government approved the expenditure for four months from July 1, 2023, to October 31, 2023 after that, the interim government, in consultation with the law department, also approved the expenditure for another four months, from November 1, 2023 to February 29, 2024.

Meanwhile, general elections were held on February 8, 2024.

KP CM outlines measures for province development, prosperity

Independent Report DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Friday said the government was committed to improving law and order situation and overcoming the energy crisis.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that the provincial government was going to present a budget soon and the allocations of funds would be made according to priorities.

He said the government's first priority was related to the

improvement of the law and order situation in the province.

In this regard, he said work had already been started and there were specific districts with poor law and order situation which needed to be improved.

He said the health sector was being improved and health care facility had been restored.

He said that efforts were being made to improve the condition of government-run hospitals where people could get facilities under the health card system.



PESHAWAR: Police personnel's showing recovered artifacts to a media here at Police Line.

16 dead, 1,549 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 16 people were killed and 1,549 others injured in 1,434 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 655 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 894 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

All Pakistan University Libraries Convention held at Bahria University

KARACHI (APP): The librarians of universities of the country in their 1st All Pakistan University Libraries Convention, have emphasized on development and upgradation of libraries according to the needs of the digital age.

They also highlighted the role of university libraries for enlightening young generations by providing conducive atmosphere and latest literature. The convention was held in the Bahria University, Karachi in collaboration with all the professional associations of librarians including Pakistan Federation of Library

Four killed in Bahawalpur road accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): Four people, including three children were killed in a road accident on the Sutlej River bridge in Bahawalpur on Friday. According to rescue officials, the incident occurred after a speeding trailer hit a motorcycle. As a result, four people, including three children, got injured in the same accident. The rescue officials promptly responded to the accident, and the bodies of the deceased and injured have been transferred to the hospital.

Inflation in Punjab reduces from 37 to 17 percent: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Maryam Nawaz said that inflation in Punjab had reduced from 37 to 17 percent. Addressing a press conference here she said that during two months the price of 20 kg flour bag had reduced by Rs 1,000.

She said that it had been a big challenge for the Punjab government to control price hike during the holy month of Ramadan but sincere effort was made to control it through 'Ramazan Nigheban Package'.

She said today she

was very happy to tell that the Punjab government succeeded in controlling inflation.

Azma Bukhari said that the common man was more concerned about bread not regarding the rate of dollar or GDP.

She further said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had taken landmark initiatives for the welfare of people during a short span of nine weeks.

She said that prices of various essential items including 'Roti', chicken, onion, tomato, potato and flour had reduced.

Opposition decries hurriedly called session of KP Assembly

PESHAWAR (APP): The opposition members in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly here Friday criticized government and protested the hurriedly called session of the assembly. The session was chaired by Speaker KP Assembly, Babar Salim Swati.

Criticizing government for ignoring the rules and procedures to call the session, they termed the holding of session unconstitutional. They said that it is impossible for members of remote areas to attend the session that was summoned hurriedly and contravening existing rules.



Commandant Frontier Constabulary Moazzam Jah Ansari calls on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor's House Peshawar.

Secretary Human Rights Dept calls for setting up district level offices

HYDERABAD (APP): Secretary Sindh Human Rights Department Tehseen Fatima has said the role of police and district administration is pivotal for implementing human rights and creating awareness among the people about such rights. She said this while chairing a meeting at Shabbaz Hall of Shabbaz Building here on Friday. She said that the meeting discussed the rights issues, the procedure for registering complaints and the plan of setting up the department's offices at the district level.

The Secretary underlined the need to curb child

labour in addition to harassment of women and rape cases to protect the rights of the citizens and to improve the country's global image. The Commissioner Hyderabad Division Ahsan Ali Qureshi directed all the Deputy Commissioners to set up district-based offices and take steps to address the issues about human rights violations. During the meeting, all the DCs of 9 districts of the Hyderabad division were briefed about the state of human rights in their respective districts and assured that the department's district chapters would be established soon.

International News

Israel strikes Rafah as talks yield no breakthrough

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: Israeli tanks and warplanes bombarded areas of Rafah on Thursday, Palestinian residents said, after President Joe Biden said the United States would withhold weapons from Israel if its forces mount a major invasion of the southern Gaza city.

A senior Israeli official said that the latest round of indirect negotiations in Cairo to halt hostilities had ended and Israel would proceed with its operation in Rafah and other parts of the Gaza Strip as planned.

Israel has submitted to mediators its reservations about a Hamas proposal for a prisoners' release deal and the Israeli delegation was returning from the Egyptian capital, the official added.

In Gaza, Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic

Jihad said their fighters fired anti-tank rockets and mortars at Israeli tanks massed on the eastern outskirts of the city.

Residents and medics in Rafah said an Israeli attack by a mosque killed at least three people and wounded others in the eastern Brazilian neighbourhood.

On the city's eastern edge, residents said a helicopter opened fire, while drones hovered above houses in several areas, some close to rooftops.

Israel claims Hamas fighters are hiding in Rafah, where the population has been swelled by hundreds of thousands of Gazans seeking refuge from bombardments elsewhere in the coastal enclave, and it needs to eliminate them for its own security.

One of the displaced, Mohammad Abder-



Smoke billows from a building which caught fire after fresh Israeli attacks in the Zaytoun neighbourhood of Gaza City.

UN to vote on resolution that would grant Palestine new rights and revive its UN membership bid

Monitoring Desk UNITED NATIONS: The U.N. General Assembly is expected to vote Friday on a resolution that would grant new "rights and privileges" to Palestine and call on the Security Council to favorably reconsider its request to become the 194th member of the United Nations. The United States vetoed a widely backed council resolution on April 18 that would have paved the way for full United Nations membership for Palestine, a goal the Palestinians have long sought and Israel has worked to prevent, and U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood made clear Thursday the Biden administration is opposed to the assembly resolution.

Under the U.N. Charter, prospective members of the United Nations must be "peace-loving," and the Security Council must recommend their admission to the General Assembly for final approval. Palestine became a U.N. non-member observer state in 2012.

"We've been very clear from the beginning there is a process for obtaining full membership in the United Nations, and this effort by some of the Arab countries and the Palestinians is to try to go around that," Wood said Thursday. "We have said from the beginning the best way to ensure Palestinian full membership in the U.N. is to do that through negotiations with Israel. That remains our position." But unlike the Security Council, there are no vetoes in the 193-member General Assembly and the resolution is expected to be approved by a large majority, according to three Western diplomats.



Protesters carry a Palestinian flag during the Stop Israel demonstration against Israel's participation in the 68th edition of the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC), amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Malmo, Sweden.

India's top court releases jailed Modi opponent

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: India's top court on Friday ordered a jailed opponent of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be released on bail, allowing him to campaign in an ongoing national election.

Arvind Kejriwal, chief minister of the capital Delhi and a key leader in an opposition alliance formed to compete against Modi in the polls, was detained in March over a long-running corruption probe.

He is among several leaders of the bloc under criminal investigation, with one of his colleagues describing his arrest the month before the election as a "political conspiracy" orchestrated by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Supreme court Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said Kejriwal could leave custody until June 1, the last day of voting in the six-week election.

Putin reappoints his prime minister, a technocrat who has kept a low political profile

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin reappointed Mikhail Mishustin as the country's prime minister on Friday, a widely anticipated move to keep on a technocrat who has maintained a low political profile. Mishustin and other technocrats in the Cabinet have been credited with maintaining a relatively stable economic performance despite bruising Western sanctions for Russia's role in Ukraine. Most other Cabinet members are expected to keep their jobs, though the fate of Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu appeared uncertain.

In line with Russian law, Mishustin, 58, who held the job for the past four years, submitted his Cabinet's resignation on Tuesday when Putin began his fifth presidential term at a glittering Kremlin inauguration. Mishustin, the former head of Russia's tax service, steered clear of political statements and avoided media interviews during his previous tenure.

Several dead in protests in Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk KABUL: Several people were killed when a demonstration broke out in eastern Afghanistan on Thursday after Taliban authorities ordered houses cleared to make way for a building construction, a provincial official said.

The Taliban authorities had ordered residents to vacate the land on the road between provincial capital Jalalabad and the border with Pakistan to make way for a new customs building, said Arafat Mohajer, the head of the information and culture department for the Torkham border point.

Ireland and Spain could recognise Palestinian state this month

Monitoring Desk DUBLIN/LJUBLJANA: Ireland and Spain alongside various European Union member states, are considering 'recognising' a Palestinian state on the 21 of May, according to a report published by Ireland's national broadcaster.

RTE News' stated on Wednesday evening that contacts between Dublin and Madrid and between Slovenia and Malta, had "intensified with a view to the countries jointly recognising" Palestinian statehood.

Maldives moves to mend ties with India

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: The Maldives pledged "enduring friendship" with India on Thursday ahead of a deadline for New Delhi to withdraw a troop garrison from the luxury tourist destination that has strained ties between the neighbours. Pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu won office last year while campaigning on a promise to downgrade ties with India, and has since reoriented the strategically placed archipelago nation towards Beijing.

Philippines calls for expelling Chinese diplomats as South China Sea row escalates

Monitoring Desk MANILA: The Philippines' national security adviser called on Friday for Chinese diplomats to be expelled over an alleged leak of a phone conversation with a Filipino admiral in a significant escalation of a bitter row over the South China Sea. China's embassy in Manila had orchestrated "repeated acts of engaging and dissemination of disinformation, misinformation and malinformation", with the objective of sowing discord, division and disunity, Eduardo Ano said in a statement. Those actions "should not be allowed to pass unaddressed without serious penalty", he said.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian called the comments provocative and said Chinese diplomats in the Philippines had to be allowed to do their job. "China solemnly requests the Philippine side to effectively safeguard the normal performance of duties by Chinese diplomatic personnel, stop infringing and provoking, and refrain from denying the facts," Lin said at a regular press briefing in Beijing.

The office of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr and the foreign ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The two countries have been embroiled in a series of heated standoffs this past year in disputed areas of the South China Sea as the Philippines, emboldened by support from the United States and other allies, steps up activities in waters occupied by China's vast coast guard.

China has accused the Philippines of trespassing and of treachery, while Manila has scolded Beijing for what it says is a policy of aggression and dangerous manoeuvring inside.

Azeri minister calls on PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Ecology & Natural Resources of Azerbaijan Mukhtar Babayev Friday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the PM House and handed over an invitation letter to him from President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to participate in the COP-29 meeting to be held in Baku in November 2024.

The prime minister thanked the President of Azerbaijan for the invitation, and congratulated him and the Azeri people on Baku's selection for hosting COP-29, the most important gathering of world leaders this year to deliberate upon the challenges posed by climate change.

He said that Pakistan was one of the most vulnerable countries that had borne the adverse impact of climate change in recent years, including the catastrophic floods of 2022.

He stressed the need for urgent action to enhance climate resilience. In this regard, he assured Azerbaijan of Pakistan's full support and cooperation in ensuring the success of COP-29.

While accepting the invitation, the prime minister said he looked forward to participating in COP-29 where he would also have the opportunity to have detailed discussion with President Ilham Aliyev on the bilateral relationship, particularly to enhance bilateral trade and investment.

PM Shehbaz also reiterated his invitation to President Aliyev to undertake an official visit to Pakistan. The Azeri minister thanked the prime minister for receiving him and offering Pakistan's support for the successful organization of the COP-29. He said the Azeri side would work closely with Pakistan to set an agenda that suitably reflects the needs of climate vulnerable countries.



ISLAMABAD: The Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan, Mr. Mukhtar Babayev, along with his delegation, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Cabinet committee principally approves 24 entities for Privatisation Programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Cabinet Committee on Privatisation (CCOP), principally and for the time being, on Friday approved 24 State Owned Enterprises for the Privatisation Programme, directing the Privatisation Ministry to deliberate the phasing of each entity in consultation with the respective ministries. The committee, which met here under the chair of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, was presented with a phased Privatisation Programme (2024-29) by the Ministry of Privatisation, based on the recommendations of PC Board, said a press release.

The meeting was also attended by other committee members including the finance minister, minister for commerce, minister for privatisation, minister for industries and production, governor State Bank of Pakistan, chairman SECP besides federal secretaries of various ministries and division.

The CCOP recommended that priority shall be accorded to privatisation of loss-making entities while the federal footprint shall be limited only to the Strategic and Essential SOEs under the federal government's domain.

The CCOP emphasized that even the SOE

making profits shall be considered for privatisation.

After deliberating on the privatisation policy guidelines, the CCOP considered 84 SOEs in detail in light of SOE Act and Policy.

Following the deliberations, the committee recommended that 40 SOEs, categorized as Strategic or Essential, shall be placed by respective ministries before the Cabinet Committee on State Owned Enterprises (CCSOE) for their categorization as Strategic or Essential.

Those SOEs which would not be categorized as Strategic or Essential shall be included in the Privatisation Programme.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mukhtar Babayev calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Dar visit to China vital part of institutional exchanges: Lin Jian

BEIJING (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Muhammad Ishaq Dar's first official visit to China from May 13-16 is an important part of the institutional exchanges between the foreign ministries of Pakistan and China, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Lin Jian said on Friday.

Ishaq Dar will pay an official visit to China and hold the fifth round of the Foreign Minister-Level China-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue from May 13 to 16, he announced during his regular briefing held here.

Dar was invited by Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese foreign minister, Lin said.

Evaluating the current China-Pakistan relations, the spokesperson said, the visit is Dar's first official visit to China after he assumed the post of deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Pakistan, and is also an important part of the institutional exchanges between the two foreign ministries.

He said, China is willing to work with the Paki-

stani side to take this visit as an opportunity to further implement the important consensus of the leaders of the two countries.

Termining China and Pakistan as all-weather strategic partners and ironclad friends, he said, in recent years, the two countries have maintained close high-level exchanges and changes at all levels, joined hands to cope with changes in the international and regional situation, deepened mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation, and pushed forward the China-Pakistan friendship, which has become stronger over the years.

After the completion of the elections in Pakistan this year, President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and Chairman Zhao Leji sent congratulatory messages to the Pakistani leaders at the first opportunity, expressing China's sincere congratulations and good wishes, he added.

The spokesperson said, the Chinese side is willing to carry forward the traditional friendship between China and Pakistan, strengthen strategic communication and coordination, deepen practical cooperation in various fields.

stani side to take this visit as an opportunity to further implement the important consensus of the leaders of the two countries.



QUETTA: Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

25k cattle vaccinated during free mobile vet camps organized in remote parts

Rafullah Mandokhail ZHOB: "The livestock sector plays an important role in the rural economy in poverty-hit Balochistan. The livestock rearing is the primary source of livelihood as the rural economy is heavily reliant on livestock," said District Livestock Officer at Livestock and Dairy Development Zhub Dr Naseebullah Kakar.

He said, keeping in mind the crucial role of livestock sector in the rural economy, on the special directives of provincial minister Livestock and Dairy Development, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Secretary Muhammad Tayyab Lehri and Director General Dr Farooq Tareen, free mobile veterinary camps have been organized in different villages of Dana Abdullah Zai - a remote and mountainous part of the district and Qamar Din Karez - close to Pak-Afghan border.

"Under the supervi-

sion of District Livestock Officer Dr Naseebullah Kakar, over 25,000 cattle have been vaccinated and free medicines have been provided to the cattle owners," he told journalist Rafiullah Mandokhail.

The people of the area have thanked the provincial minister and the livestock officer for organizing free vet camps and said that Dana Abdullah Zai and Qamar Din Karez are far-off hilly areas, where the only source of livelihood is livestock. By organizing free veterinary camps, various animal diseases have been prevented through vaccination.

Dr. Naseebullah Kakar has said that the livestock sector has potential to support the livelihood of the rural population as it is a key source of employment for a large population of Balochistan. Sheep, goats, cows and camels are reared extensively in Balochistan.

PR decides to operate Chaman passenger train from Quetta on daily basis

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Railways has decided to operate the Chaman Passenger train from Quetta to Chaman from May 13, 2024 on daily basis.

According to the PR sources, the Chaman Passenger would be operated from Quetta to Chaman on daily basis from May 13 onward.

The train would depart from Quetta to Chaman at 08:00 AM daily and reach Chaman at 12:30 PM.

The same train (Passenger) would leave Chaman for Quetta at 01:45 PM and would reach Quetta at 05:45 PM the same day.

It may be mentioned here that the Passenger train used to run from Quetta to Chaman thrice a week.

PTA urges to block all social media accounts of Adil Raja

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Society (PESS) has registered a complaint with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to close the social media accounts of anti-Pakistan propagandist fugitive Adil Raja.

The PESS sent a letter to the PTA and made it clear that the Society has nothing to do with what Adil Raja posts on social media. It has been said in the letter that Adil Raja, who is spreading negative propaganda against the country, started misusing the PESS platform after fleeing abroad in 2022.

The letter said Adil Raja was the media coordinator of the PESS till 2018. While escaping, Adil Raja took with him the passwords of social media platforms of the Society including X (Twitter accounts).

SC fixes govt's plea against verdict in NAB amend. case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday fixed govt's plea challenging the verdict in the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) amendments case for hearing.

On September 15, 2023, the Supreme Court of Pakistan struck down amendments made to National Accountability Bureau laws as it announced its reserved verdict on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder's plea.

A five-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa will take up the plea on May 14.

Pakistan, Italy agree to enhance cooperation to combat human trafficking

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met Italian Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mirelena Armellini at the Ministry of Interior here Friday. During the meeting, bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest were discussed.

The interior minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to combat human trafficking, stating that a zero-tolerance policy has been adopted against human smuggling mafias.

He emphasized that those involved in human trafficking would not only face imprisonment but also financial penalties. He further stated that skilled Pakistani workers would be sent to Italy through legal channels, who will contribute to the remittances.

During the meeting, it was also agreed to sign an agreement to prevent illegal entry of Pakistanis into Italy and to enhance mutual cooperation in this regard.

The minister directed the concerned authorities to finalize the agreement at the earliest.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Ambassador of Italy H.E. Marilina Armellini.

'Route to Makkah' project inaugurated for enhanced services for pilgrims at IIA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Religious Affairs, Zulfikar Haider, alongside Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, formally inaugurated the 'Route to Makkah' project at Islamabad International Airport (IIA) on Friday.

In attendance were senior officials from Religious Affairs, Civil Aviation Authority, Anti-Narcotics, Airport Security Force,

Madinah: 3,485 Pakistani Hujjaj arrive in seamless flight operation

MADINAH (APP): A month-long pre-Hajj flight operation, which started on May 9, is taking momentum with each passing day as different airlines operated 15 flights in two days to transport around 3,485 Pakistani Hujjaj to Madinah Al Munawwarah in first leg of their spiritual journey to perform Hajj.

Out of these, seven flights have been operated from Islamabad and Karachi under the Road to Makkah project, an initiative of the Saudi government to streamline the immigration process for pilgrims to Makkah.

The initiative, launched in 2019, has so far been implemented in five countries including Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Morocco and Bangladesh.



QUETTA: Activists of Tehreek-e-Labbaik (TLP) are holding protest demonstration against desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden, at Quetta press club.

President for global efforts to address climate change

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Asif Ali Zardari has underlined the need for global efforts to address the challenge of climate change by adopting environment-friendly technology, promoting afforestation, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. He highlighted that global warming and climate change were affecting the glaciers as well as causing water scarcity and tackling these challenges required global support to mitigate their adverse impacts.

The President expressed these views while talking to the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan/COP 29 President-designate, Mr. Mukhtar Babayev, who along with his delegation called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Azerbaijan is going to host the 29th Conference of Parties to the

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 29) in Baku in November 2024 and in his capacity as the President-designate of COP 29, is here to invite the President to the Conference.

Welcoming the Minister, the President congratulated Azerbaijan on winning the bid to host COP 29 and expressed the hope that COP 29 would result in setting the New Collective Quantified Goal on Finance that would help developing countries fulfil their climate finance needs. He highlighted that Pakistan had planted mangrove forests over hundreds of thousands of hectares that would help protect the environment, besides earning carbon credits for Pakistan.

The President said that Pakistan highly valued its relations with

Azerbaijan and wanted to further expand bilateral cooperation in the areas of common interest. He called for promoting more interactions, bilateral exchanges and people-to-people contacts to further cement relations between the two brotherly countries.

Mr. Mukhtar Babayev underlined the need for further enhancing bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, particularly in the area of tourism and culture. He also delivered the invitation to the President to participate in COP 29 in Baku in November 2024. The President conveyed his best wishes for the successful hosting of COP 29 and expressed the hope that Azerbaijan would play its role to secure the interest of developing countries in meeting their financing needs for climate adaptation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Religious Affairs Zulfikar Haider along with Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan seeing off Hajj Pilgrims.

Ahsan Iqbal meets Vice Chairman, NDRC in Beijing

BEIJING (APP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal held a meeting with Vice Chairman, of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) Zhao Chenxin at the NDRC headquarters here on Friday.

The Minister was accompanied by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi, Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Khalil Hashmi, and other senior officials of the Embassy.

Recalling the launch of CPEC a decade ago, the Minister said, the decade of CPEC has been a remarkable journey, since 2013, the relevant institutions from

the two sides have worked as one team and successfully implemented key energy and physical infrastructure projects, laying a strong foundation for the next phase of CPEC.

Zhao Chenxin appreciated the role and leadership of the Minister of Planning & Development in making CPEC a success. He said you are greatly respected for your valuable contribution towards CPEC.

While reviewing progress during the first phase of CPEC, both sides expressed their resolve to accelerate the progress on the high-quality development of the Project, as it transitions to its next

phase. Recalling the five Corridors, announced by Vice Premier He Lifeng during his visit to Pakistan last year, the Minister for Planning renewed the commitment of the Government of Pakistan to even further enhance the socio-economic benefits of CPEC, with significant improvement to the lives and livelihoods of the people. Emphasizing the importance of deepening bilateral energy cooperation, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal conveyed to the Chinese side the interest of the Government of Pakistan to diversify the country's energy mix through the transition towards clean and renewable energy.

Suo motu notice against VCs appointment in government universities fixed for hearing

ISLAMABAD (Online): Suo motu notice on appointment of vice chancellors in government universities has been fixed for hearing.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by the Chief Justice (CJ) of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa will hear the case on May 15.

SC had sought report from federal and provincial governments in connection with appointment of vice chancellors during previous hearing.

Iran decides to repatriate illegal Afghans in view of terror threat

TEHRAN (Online): Iran has decided to repatriate illegal Afghans in view of the terror threat.

According to the Iranian Interior Minister, more than 1.3 million illegal immigrants were sent back from Iran so far.

The Iranian Interior Minister also indicated to take strict measures to prevent the return of illegal Afghan citizens to Iran in the future.

Bodies of 7 labourers of Gawadar incident shifted to Khanewal

KHANEWAL (APP): The bodies of seven labourers who killed in the Gwadar tragedy have shifted to Khanewal.

The relatives received the bodies of their loved ones from the Shamkot Motorway Interchange.

On this occasion senior officers of the district administration and police, public personalities were present.

ICUBE-Q's initial images from space a historic day: Ambassador Hashmi

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi on Friday termed initial images by Pakistan's lunar satellite from orbit a historic day and said Pakistan's involvement in the ICUBE-Q aboard the Change-6 probe is a testament to the nation's growing prowess in space exploration and technology.

"This marks Pakistan's first lunar orbital mission and showcases our advanced knowledge, design capabilities, and multidisciplinary expertise," he said while speaking at the inaugural data delivery ceremony.

Zhang Kejian, head of the China National Space Administration handed the data carrier over to Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi at a ceremony held here.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Environment Naseemur Rehman meeting with Provincial Minister for Women Development Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi.

Arrears against defaulters reach Rs. 633b: QESCO initiates operation for recovery of arrears from defaulters

Independent Report QUETTA: The Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) has launched operation for recovery of arrears of the electricity from defaulters in the province.

According to the spokesman of QESCO, the operation has been launched for recovery of the arrears from the government and private institutions, which run in billions of rupees.

He mentioned that the arrears of QESCO against the defaulters have reached Rs. 633 billion in the province.

Out of the total arrears, the amount of Rs. 483.56 billion are outstanding against the agriculture consumers of the province.

Besides, the government of Balochistan has to

pay Rs. 51.48 billion on account of the subsidy on agriculture, the spokesman of QESCO informed.

Similarly, the federal government has to pay Rs. 22.55 billion on account of the agricultural subsidy.

Besides, the arrears of Rs. 37.79 billion are outstanding against the provincial government and its subordinate departments while the arrears of Rs. 2.48 billion are payable against the federal government and its subordinate departments in Balochistan.

Moreover, the dues of Rs. 35.15 billion are outstanding against the domestic, commercial and other consumers in the province.

The QESCO spokesman said that the notices are being issued to the defaulters for payment of arrears.