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dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Hub

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Pakistan will continue extending support to Kashmiris So-called legislation, court decisions cant' absolve India of its int'l obligations on Kashmir: PM

Assures implementation of understanding with AJK; stresses permanent solution to people's issues; Directs to constitute committee on Neelum-Jhelum project

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that no so-called legislation or court verdicts could absolve India of its obligations on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, under international laws. The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of Hurriyat leaders of Jammu and Kashmir during his daylong visit here, said that Pakistan categorically rejected the Indian unilateral and illegal actions in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) regarding the revocation of its special status. He said Kashmir was an internationally recognised dispute that remained on the UN Security Council's agenda for the last seven decades and awaited settlement as per the UNSC's resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The Hurriyat leaders appreciated the prime minister's role in handling the recent situation in the AJK and also thanked Pakistan for its steadfast stance in condemning

Indian unilateral actions and solidarity with the Kashmiri people. Prime Minister Shehbaz assured the delegation that Pakistan would continue extending its moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people and cited the recently held OIC summit in Gambia where Pakistan effectively raised the Kashmir issue. He assured that the Foreign Ministry as well as Pakistan's diplomatic missions would play their role to highlight the Kashmir cause at international forums more effectively. He also urged the Pakistani media to create global awareness of Indian atrocities in the IIOJK. The prime minister instructed the Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam to improve his coordination with the Hurriyat leaders. The delegation comprised Mehmood Ahmed Sagar, Ghulam Muhammad Sufi, Syed Faiz Ahmed Naqshbandi, Altaf Ahmed Bhat, Shehzad Wani, Ejaz Rehmani, Zahid Ashraf and Altaf Hussain Wani.



MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the meeting of the Cabinet of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Development, prosperity of Balochistan's people Govt top priority: Syedaal Khan

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar Thursday said the development and prosperity of the people of Balochistan is the key priority of the government. He said that senators from Balochistan are given the opportunity to represent the people of the province in the upper house. He expressed these views in a meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti to discuss the overall political and economic situation of the

province, development projects. They expressed pledge to work together for the development of the province and the welfare of its people. Syedaal Khan said that the Upper House is determined to resolve the problems faced by the provinces and provide opportunities for development and prosperity to its citizens. He said the development and prosperity of Balochistan will ensure the economic stability of the country.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Hamid Abbas Lafta, Ambassador of Iraq called on Minister for Defence & Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

Qaiser chairs meeting to boost economic activity in Gwadar area

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh presided over a meeting aimed at boosting economic activities in Gwadar Port area, emphasizing the government's commitment to accelerate growth and regional development in Balochistan region on Thursday. Federal Secretary Maritime Affairs, representatives from ministry of finance, industries & production, fisheries department, ministry of commerce attended the meeting, a news release said issued here. The federal minister stressed the strategic importance of Gwadar Port

as a key player of Pakistan's economic prosperity and emphasized the need for concerted efforts to enhance import operation and business activity. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to this cause, citing directives from the prime minister to take decisive measures to enhance import of government goods through Gwadar Port. Furthermore, the federal minister emphasized the significance of previous decisions made by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and the directives of the prime minister in 2008 and 2022, respectively.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh chairs a meeting regarding the enhancement of Import at Gwadar Port.

KP Governor Kundi calls on President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday called on President Asif Ali Zardari here. The president congratulated the governor on assuming the office, according to a President House press release. Faisal Karim Kundi thanked the president for reposing trust in him and appointing him as the governor. President Zardari instructed Governor Kundi to work for the betterment of the people and expressed good wishes for him.

Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Iraq: Asif

ISLAMABAD (Online): Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has emphasized that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Iraq and wishes to expand cooperation in all fields of mutual interests especially defence. He expressed these views while talking to Iraqi Ambassador Hamid Abbas Lafta, who called on him in Islamabad Thursday. The Defence Minister said both Pakistan and Iraq should work closely to share their experiences and build capacities of their Armed Forces. He said Pakistan strongly supports the sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. Khawaja Asif said Pakistan has developed the best training facilities and infrastructure for its Armed Forces and numerous foreign countries are availing these facilities, especially the training related, to counter terrorism. He encouraged the visiting dignitary to avail more training facilities in Pakistan.

PTI founder appears before SC via video link in NAB amendments case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder on Thursday appeared before the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan larger bench to present his arguments in the National Accountability (NAB) Ordinance 1999 amendment case. A five-member SC bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice

Athar Minallah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, is hearing the case. Arrangements to ensure the PTI founder's appearance before the Supreme Court bench via video link were finalised in light of the apex court's order. The case is not being live-streamed but images of the PTI founder go viral on social media. At the outset of the hearing, Advocate Khwaja Haris came to the rostrum. The chief justice said he (Haris) was a counsel in the original case and his appearance was strange. The

Well without learning modern skills Our youth can't benefit from modern science & technology : Governor

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the importance of skills is equally increasing along with education in the ever changing world. Our youth can't benefit from the modern science and technology well without learning modern skills. The Governor said that unemployment can be brought down by making the technical and vocational institutions functional at the provincial level. The Governor was speaking to different delegations and personalities who called on him here at



QUETTA: Deputy Chairman Senate Saydal Khan Nassar meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Session on higher education in Literary Festival: Brain drain emerging major issue as experts, scholars, doctors & teachers are leaving country: Rahila Durrani

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Education, Miss Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani has regretfully pointed out that the brain drain is emerging a major issue in the country including Balochistan as many of our experts, scholars, doctors and teachers are leaving the country or want to leave. She said that there's a gap in our system that there is a brain drain of our people from the country.

This gap has to be filled in order to put an end to the trend of brain drain. The Minister Education said that our education system needs a lot of improvement. We need to improve the standard of our teachers and enhance their capacities. We would also be needing a big team for bringing improvement in education sector. Miss Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani was speaking at the special session on

Two-day Pakistan Literary Festival concludes: State wants reconciliation and talks with those displeased with Government: CM Bugti

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has categorically stated that the State of Pakistan wants to hold dialogue and reconciliation with those who are displeased with the government. "I am ready to embrace the youth and would do his best to resolve their issues." But talks would not be held with those who want to dismantle the country or involved in the insurgency. He mentioned that the State of Pakistan has also engaged in the reconciliation with the people in past, and still it wants to engage the people, but with whom talks be done? He regretfully pointed out that the organized conspiracy had been hatched

against the State of Pakistan in the past. The first insurgent of Balochistan was given shelter in Afghanistan. The real facts should be made public about the history. The Chief Minister was addressing the closing ceremony of two-day Pakistan Literary Festival concluded at the Balochistan Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS) here on Thursday. The provincial high ups and other celebrities from art, literature, media and other segments of the society from all over the country including Balochistan participated in the ceremony. The Chief Minister maintained that we have certain plans for our youth

to work on and implement in future. He said that we have plan to send our talented youth to abroad for doing Ph.Ds and other higher education so that they are able to shoulder their future responsibilities after coming back to their country and province. He said that we would also be sending our youth to abroad after learning their different skills. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that we destroyed our education system at our own by killing the teachers and professors, and so the governance in the province, no one came from Punjab or other areas to destroy the system. Now we have to mend our way and correct the affairs at our own, adding Chief Minister stressed.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing participants of concluding ceremony of Pakistan Literary Festival at BUIITEMS

IHC bans entry of intelligence agencies personnel to court room

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to the concerned authorities to formulate Balochistan Youth Policy 2024 in accordance with the needs of youth of the province. He directed to the concerned quarters to present the draft of Youth Policy based on comprehensive recommendations within 10 days. He said that the Balochistan Youth Policy would reflect the effective representative of youth of the province. The Chief Minister was chairing a high level meeting on the Balochistan Youth Policy 2024 here on Thursday. The Member National Assembly, Mir Jamal Khan Raisani, Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Secretary Youth Affairs, Javaid Anwar Shahwani, Chairperson of

Youth Facilitation Centers to be made functional: CM directs to formulate Balochistan Youth Policy as per needs of youth

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to the concerned authorities to formulate Balochistan Youth Policy 2024 in accordance with the needs of youth of the province. He directed to the concerned quarters to present the draft of Youth Policy based on comprehensive recommendations within 10 days. He said that the Balochistan Youth Policy would reflect the effective representative of youth of the province. The Chief Minister was chairing a high level meeting on the Balochistan Youth Policy 2024 here on Thursday. The Member National Assembly, Mir Jamal Khan Raisani, Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Secretary Youth Affairs, Javaid Anwar Shahwani, Chairperson of

Balochistan Commission on Status of Women, Ms. Fauzia Shaheen and other concerned were present. The meeting was briefed about the Balochistan Youth Policy 2024 by the Youth Affairs Department. The meeting decided to make Youth Facilitation Centers functional in the province. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that guidance of youth in right direction is very necessary. He stressed the need to keep in mind the gender equality in the Youth Policy of the province. He also stressed that the provision of opportunities should be made part of Youth Policy for utilizing capabilities of the youngsters. In this regard, consultation of all stakeholders should be ensured in the Youth Policy, adding the Chief Minister directed further.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Communication & Works Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa meeting with Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Dubai properties

Dubai, with all its glitter and glamour, has long been a destination of choice for wealthy individuals looking to expand their property portfolio abroad. As a high-income developing market economy, as well as a 'brotherly' Muslim state, many Pakistanis see it as an attractive destination to live and put down some roots in. At the same time, however, the emirate seems to have become a haven for those looking to hide their wealth — whether lawfully or unlawfully acquired — away from the taxman's watchful eyes. This concern has long been held by Pakistani authorities, who, insiders confirm, have tried on multiple occasions to get information on properties owned by Pakistani nationals in the emirate but have been turned down each time. Now, a trove of leaked data, reported on for the first time by Dawn and 74 other media outlets in 58 different countries, shines an unprecedented light on who owns what in a place often referred to as a playground for the rich.

The 'Dubai Unlocked' data, a consolidation of property ownership information till 2022, was recently made the subject of an international investigation. According to data seen by Pakistani journalists, their compatriots came second in terms of the combined number and value of properties held by foreign nationals in the state. For a country that can barely keep its head above water, this is a startling fact. Many individuals who have been part of present or past governments, individuals known to be associated with them, as well as several military generals were found to be in ownership of properties worth millions in Dubai — a revelation that is unlikely to sit well with the struggling masses, who generally view power with suspicion. In a country where mega-corruption scandals are all too familiar, questions will follow.

Of course, many of the properties owned by Pakistanis may have been acquired lawfully, and the state must not harass ordinary citizens about where they want to spend their money. At the same time, the authorities have a responsibility to approach the C4ADS and OCCRP, which are in possession of the Dubai data, and ask for it to be shared so that they may determine if any criminals, politically exposed or sanctioned persons are on the Dubai property register. The FBR chairman has told Dawn that the authority will, once it gets access to this data, ensure that all tax evaders are caught. It is hoped that any investigation that is conducted will be fair and that no wrongdoing will be excused, regardless of how much favour any of the culprits enjoy in the current political configuration. An opportunity has been provided to close the net around powerful elements. It must be seized.

Red-light areas

F.S.Aijazuddin

Narendra Modi and Sanjay Leela Bhansali have something in common: they both view Pakistan through warped lenses. Modi's perception is of a country overrun by terrorists on the lookout for Indian soft spots to attack. Bhansali uses his camera lens to create spectacular falsities. His latest is an eight-part Netflix series on Lahore's red-light area Heera Mandi. (It derived its name from Raja Hira Singh, a favourite of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.)

Bhansali — a talented filmmaker, producer, writer, and composer — is the despair of his critics. He challenged them with films such as a saccharine adaptation of Shakespeare's romance Romeo and Juliet, titled Ramlila. It invoked the ire of some orthodox Ram bhakts. He was forced to change its name, elongating it to Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela.

His detractors made him run the gauntlet of the Delhi High Court, and then the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court, which, a week after the film's release, banned the movie's showing in Uttar Pradesh. Despite these obstacles, GKRRLL became the fifth highest-grossing film of 2013.

Bhansali's next project Bajirao Mastani (2015) extolled the love between the Maratha hero Peshwa Bajirao I and his second wife Mastani. The descendants of Bajirao and Mastani disowned the film, claiming that "excessive creative liberty by Bhansali caused wrongful portrayal of their ancestors." The Bombay High Court, when approached for a stay, tactfully refused. Again, Bhansali answered his critics: this film became one of the highest-grossing Indian films of all time. Bhansali's Padmaavat (2018) pulled

out of oblivion the 13th-century Rajput ruler Rawal Ratan Singh of Mewar and the Delhi Sultanate's ruler Alauddin Khilji. Both vied for the beautiful Rani Padmini (aka Padmaavat). In a fiery finale, Bhansali had Padmini lead a horde of Rajput women, trapped within Chittorgarh fort, to commit a collective jauhar (self-immolation).

Extremists did not wait for Bhansali to finish his film. During its shooting in Jaipur in 2017, stalwarts from the Shri Rajput Karni Sena assaulted Bhansali, his crew and damaged the sets. Later, another group burnt a studio and the period costumes. Bhansali avenged himself when Padmaavat became the highest-grossing film of the year.

Bhansali's latest production Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar is his personal branchchild. He gestated the idea for 14 years, then directed it, co-authored the script, composed its music, and produced it as a mini-series for TV. The story is set in Lahore's Heera Mandi during the late 1940s. It deals with the travails of the tawaifs (dancing girls), struggling first for social, and then political, acceptance. In a belated burst of patriotism, they march through the streets, their ghungroos (ankle bells) jingling, demanding freedom (azadi) and independence from their erstwhile British clients.

Apparently, Bhansali wanted Pakistani actors to perform in the film. Politics intervened. Not that Pakistani actors could have provided a shield against the first charge hurled by Bhansali's critics — its lack of historical authenticity. Many Lahoris and those outsiders who love it will not recognise the social-topography of Bhansali's Heeramandi. Even in a pre-1947 era, Lahore was

not a poor cousin (as Bhansali would have his audiences believe) of Lucknow's cloying culture and fawning finesse. His multilingual cast parrot their Urdu dialogues passably well but ignore the niceties of proper pronunciation. His heroines are gorgeously dressed; his muscular male actors often underdressed; and only the lower orders — the maids and a Sikh lovesick swain — speak Punjabi. His dancers swirl like dizzying dervi-sh-es, imitating their ol-der sisters in earlier Muslim social dram-as, particularly Mughal-i-Azam and Pakeezah. His men inexcipably wear furry caps once popularised by the late actor/ chief minister of Tamil Nadu M.G. Ramachandran.

Over the years, Lahore's Heera Mandi, like its denizens, began to lose its allure. Trade shifted from the old city to newer locations, giving way to Lahore's Food Street. The kothas that once resonated with the sound of ankle-bells are now pricey restaurants. London's Soho, after the 1970s, underwent a similar transformation — from steamy fleshpots to steaming cooking pots.

Some may recall that in 1959, the UK promulgated the Street Offences Act. It made loitering and solicitation in a public place an offence. Its aim was to clean British cities of importuning streetwalkers. Comedian Peter Ustinov questioned its utility, suggesting that cleaning the streets was rather like clearing the table after a meal: "One has to put the crockery somewhere." Over the years, the crockery from Lahore's Heera Mandi has moved to richer suburbia. If that Heera Mandi exists at all, it is as a fictional red-light suburb of Bhansali's technicolour mind. — Courtesy Dawn

Breathing space

Khaqan Hassan Najeeb

Literature, including several cross-country empirical studies, highlights three broad macroeconomic outcomes of a country's programme engagement with the IMF. Programmes lead to an improvement in the current account deficit, a build-up in foreign exchange reserves, and a fall in inflation albeit at a slower pace. This can broadly be defined as macroeconomic stabilisation. The consequent effect of adjustment policies used to achieve some level of economic growth, at least in the short run.

Since embracing the Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF in July 2023, Pakistan's economy is behaving according to the book. The current account deficit has been restricted to \$0.5 billion during July-March (FY24) compared to \$4.1bn in the same period last year. Foreign exchange reserves with the State Bank rose from a meagre \$3.9 billion in June 2023 to \$9.1bn on May 3, 2024. Inflation tapered off from a high of 38 per cent year on year in May 2023 to 17.3pc in April 2024. Growth is estimated to remain subdued at nearly 2pc for FY24. Pakistan's economy has reacted in the way economies are expected to respond when they enter into an engagement with the IMF.

Also, the SBA helped avert debt default in July 2023, stabilised the rupee's free fall, and ensured that other lenders (bilateral, multilateral, and friendly countries) come on board to plug Pakistan's external gross financing gap, at least for FY24. Unfortunately, new commercial funding and international bond issuance remain out of reach. Engagement with the

IMF has enabled Pakistan's access to new debt to pay off the earlier one, fund the current account deficit, and thus stay afloat. Hence, Pakistan's external public debt rose from \$94.8bn in June 2023 to \$98.1bn in September 2023 and to \$99.7bn in December 2023.

The adjustment policies under the SBA helped stem the alarming slide of the economy. These policies included a tighter monetary and fiscal stance and a flexible exchange rate regime to curb imports and push exports. In Pakistan, energy sector price pass-throughs are an additional conditionality as we delay adhering to regulators' price determinations. The nine-month SBA gave policymakers the necessary breathing space to embark on a reform mission to remove the distortions in the economy.

So where do we go from here? We know that macrostabilisation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for sustainable growth and prosperity. Deep reforms are the only way to repair and meaningfully alter the economy's fundamentals. A growth framework based on unleashing a competitive domestic private sector, redesigning Pakistan's crumbling energy sector away from the public sector-led constellation, and repairing the fiscal framework are akin to survival.

Severe weaknesses in these areas have put the country in a perennial liquidity crunch in the external, energy, and fiscal sectors. Due to the shortfall of both dollars and rupees, the state has limited resources to materially improve the lives of the millions living an impoverished existence. They are debilitated by the poor quality of healthcare and education in a country which has weak opportunities

and rising inequality. It is of little surprise that with each passing day, the citizenry becomes more dissatisfied with the functioning of a lethargic state and feeble democracy.

A successful attempt to reform the economy demands a few prerequisites. First, those at the helm should alter their perception of government functioning. They have to see the government as an enabler, not a deliverer.

Second, some serious islands of competence and expertise are needed within the public sector. Undertaking reform surgeries and executing the next Extended Fund Facility (EFF) will be difficult with a weak professional team.

Third, when we look at Pakistan's medium-term macro framework, we realise that the numbers on investment, productivity, exports, and debt will improve only marginally without a home-grown Herculean effort. That leads us to the fourth and last of the prerequisites — the realisation that whereas another programme supported by the IMF is a necessity, reconfiguring the economy on a productive footing goes much beyond the purview of a three-year EFF facility.

Never-ending technical assistance and foreign-funded projects have had little impact on a dysfunctional tax system. This should be an eye-opener to take matters into our own hands. The nation waits for the government to redefine its functioning based on the ideas highlighted by the aforementioned four prerequisites. The nation must hold the policymakers' feet to the fire on all these counts to ensure accountability. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM orders urgent inquiry into Neelum-Jhelum project's technical fault

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed for an urgent probe, within days, into reasons for the technical fault in the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) that led to suspension of power generation. The prime minister issued the directives at the project site during his day-long visit to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) where he was briefed by the officials of NJHP Company about the recent technical fault during the last month. The 969 megawatts project first faced suspension of power generation in 2022 due to the fault in head race tunnel and was later restored

fixed. No more delay will be acceptable," he added. PM Shehbaz said it was a project of national significance in the power sector after Tarbela and Mangla dams with a huge cost and must remain functional for decades. He directed that the inquiry should be carried out by third party experts and not by the designer or contractor of the project. He also directed the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and NJHP Company to complete the repair work of the tunnel at the earliest and resume power generation. The prime minister appreciated the WAPDA chairman and his team for their efforts to repair the fault in the tunnel and resumption of generation last year.



MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses a meeting at Neelum-Jhelum Hydro Power Project.

Commerce minister chairs high-level Committee on export facilitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday chaired a high level meeting to address pressing issues in Pakistan's export and business sectors. On the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a high-level committee was notified to address issues and challenges faced by the business sector, said a press release issued here. Attendees included top exporters, business leaders, the Director General of the Special

Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Maj. Gen. Tabassum Habib and various ministry representatives from the FBR, finance, industry, maritime and information technology sectors. The meeting focused on creating actionable solutions by directly engaging with stakeholders and relevant government bodies on matters periodically communicated by chambers of commerce, the Pakistan Business Council (PBC), the business community, and the Trade Development

Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) to the ministry. Minister Jam Kamal Khan stressed the need for high-ranking officials to ensure effective decision-making. He expressed concern over the absence of the FBR Chairman, SBP Governor, and Secretary of Finance, emphasizing their importance in future meetings. Exporters and business representatives voiced concerns, which were directed to pertinent departments for an immediate response, with feedback required within 24 hours.

Integrated system to be evolved to promote trade, investment: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan Thursday said that a coordinated and integrated system in collaboration with the provinces would be evolved to promote trade and investment, besides ensuring the investors protection. While presiding over a high level meeting on "Ease of Doing Business", organized by the Board of Investment, the minister said that the consultation with the provinces would be done for legislation to be enacted at provincial level so that the investors can get a more satisfactory environment.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Advisor to Prime Minister Rana Ehsan Afzal attended the meeting, where as federal secretaries and Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan were also present in the meeting, said a press release. Aleem Khan said that all the four provinces and their chief ministers would also be taken into confidence in this regard, adding that ease of doing business would provide a clear road map for the promotion of business in the country while its related proposals, legislation and other important issues would be finalized soon.

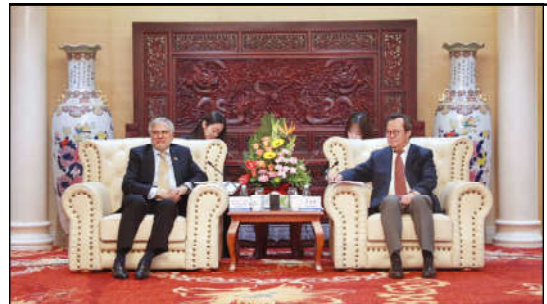


ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja addresses the inaugural ceremony of Pak-Qatar IT Tower.

Aurangzeb says: No new legislation under consideration to extend tax, for erstwhile FATA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb Thursday informed the National Assembly that there is no new legislation under consideration to extend tax and duty exemptions for the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) regions. In response to a calling

attention notice regarding the proposal to withdraw tax and duty exemptions for these regions, the minister explained that these exemptions had been in place for six years and are now set to expire on June 30 of this year. The minister said that the business community, during interactions on the budget, has been advocating for a level playing field for all industries.



BELJING: Chairman of EXIM Bank of China Wu Fulin calls on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

IT sector's uplift key priority: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Thursday said that the development of IT sector was the first priority and the government welcomed this investment by Pak-Qatar Group in Pakistan's IT infrastructure uplift. While addressing the inaugural ceremony of Pak-Qatar IT Tower, she said there were number of opportunities for our youth in this era of

technology. She said the government is going to digitize economy, governance and society under National Digitalization Plan, adding that digitalization would ensure transparency in the system and facilitation for the masses. Shaza Fatima said that steps were underway for better IT and Telecommunication infrastructure and connectivity in the country.

PSX stays bullish, gains 266.72 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 266.72 points, a positive change of 0.36 per cent, closing at 74,930.70 points against 74,663.98 points the previous trading day. A total of 407,625,139 shares valuing Rs 16,978 billion were traded during the day as compared to 572,420,772 shares valuing Rs 25,947 billion on the last day.

Some 377 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 161 of them recorded gains and 194 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 22 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were P.I.A.C (A) with 34,846,148 shares at Rs26.20 per share, Pak-Electric with 28,542,422 shares at Rs 26.47 per share and World Call Telecom with 24,078,585 shares at Rs 1.38 per share.

Deputy PM lauds EXIM Bank's robust support for development projects in Pak

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman of EXIM Bank of China, Wu Fulin called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Beijing Thursday. The Foreign Minister and Chairman EXIM Bank discussed the EXIM Bank's long-standing cooperation with Pakistan and its interest in future investments in Pakistan. He outlined

Pakistan's efforts for financial and economic stability and business friendly policies. Ishaq Dar particularly noted the stellar performance of Pakistan Stock Exchange and renewed confidence of international investors in Pakistan's economy. The Foreign Minister appreciated EXIM Bank's robust support for important development projects in Pakistan.

Gold rates up by Rs 1,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 1,600 and was sold at Rs 245,600 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs 244,000 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 1,371 to Rs 210,562 from Rs 209,191 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 193,016 from Rs 191,758, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Assembly passes budget as opposition withdraw cut motions

PESHAWAR (APP): The session of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly chaired by Speaker Babar Salim Swati here Thursday passed eleven months excessive budget of Rs 1456 billion for 2023-24 after approving all demands for grants.

The ministers tabled demands for grants of their respective departments while opposition withdrew their cut motions on the request of treasury benches. Afterwards, the budget was passed when Speaker approved all 66

demands for grants. At the outset of session, treasury member, Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani, opposition members including Sobia Shahid of PML-N, Ejaz Muhammad and Rehana Ismail of JUI presented their cut motion when law minister tabled demands for grants of Rs 5.84166 billion that was being spent by caretaker setup. Sobia Shahid demanded action against culprits of May 9 vandalism and said that monuments of martyred were damaged and building

of Radio Pakistan was set ablaze on that day. She said that people might start protest again if perpetrators were not punished. Mushtaq Ghani also demanded judicial inquiry on May 9 incident to sift fiction from reality. He withdrew cut motion later when Speaker placated him and said that budget would be revised if cut motions were accepted. All the members withdrew cut motion after assurance of law minister to accept demands of opposition members.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Gulbar Khan presiding over the meeting of Power Steering Committee at CM Secretariat.

Qasim takes important initiative to prevent Leishmania epidemic

Independent Report PESHAWAR: The Health Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Qasim Ali Shah has taken important initiative to prevent Leishmania epidemic wherein he handed over the first batch of injections for the treatment of Leishmania to the DHOs of Mohmand, and Khyber district. It is necessary to take timely measures to prevent the epidemic, Syed Qasim Ali Shah told media men during distribution of injections to prevent Leishmania in both Mohmand and Khyber Districts. Glucantime injections have been provided with the support of MSF, Syed Qasim Ali Shah said, adding, Glucantime injections have been sold through UNICEF for the treatment of Leishmania.

Deputy Speaker SA calls on Governor KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Anthony Naveed called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House here on Thursday. Bishop of Pakistan Humphrey Sarfaraz Peter was also present at the meeting. Deputy Speaker and Bishop Sarfaraz Peter congratulated Faisal Karim Kundi on assuming the post of Governor and presented him with a bouquet. The Governor thanked Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Anthony Naveed and Bishop Sarfaraz Peter for coming to congratulate him. Ensuring cooperation and playing a role on a priority basis in solving the problems faced by the minorities in the province, the Governor assured them. Governor KP appreciated the role of the minority community in the development. The services of all the minorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially the Christian community, in all sectors including the education sector, are commendable, Faisal Karim Kundi said.

Meeting discusses matters relating to provision of funds to KPHA

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Provincial Finance Advisor, Muzamil Aslam Thursday chaired a meeting to discuss provision of funds to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Highways Authority (KPHA) for land purchase. The meeting discussed provision of funds to KPHA for continuation of ongoing projects and to purchase land for future projects. Participants concurred to invite suggestions from Accountant General Office about payments of outstanding dues. The advisor said that government is utilizing resources to complete public welfare projects and strategy was being prepared to pay the outstanding amount. He also directed participants to present their proposals and suggestions relating to matter in next meeting. Provincial Minister for Communication and Works, Shakil Ahmad, Secretary Works, Dr. Asad Ali, Secretary Law, Akhtar Saeed Managing Director KPHA, Asad Ali and concerned officials also attended the meeting.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education Mashal Yousafzai addressing during the closing ceremony of Child Protection Case Management Foundation Training for District Child Protection Units.

AG KP agrees to ensure withholding of sales tax on service

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Director General (DG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRRA) held a meeting with the Accountant General (AG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Thursday to discuss issues relating to withholding of Sales Tax on Services from bills processed through the AG office. The Accountant General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Naseer Uddin Sarwar welcomed DG KPRRA Fouzia Iqbal at his office for the meeting. Advisor to KPRRA on Tax Enforcement Fazal Amin Shah and Assistant Collector (Withholding) Hizbullah Khan also accompanied the DG KPRRA. The DG KPRRA and her team presented the agenda for the meeting and briefed AG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and his team that the exemption to erstwhile Federal Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and Provincial Administered Tribal Area (PATA) has expired on October 31, 2023 and the sales tax on services is extended to the regions so AG Office.



LAHORE: Activists of Young Doctors Association holding a press conference for their demands in the Provincial Capital.

MUST, DHQ signs MOU to modernize healthcare services in Mirpur

MIRPUR-AJK (APP): Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) and Mirpur Divisional Headquarters (DHQ) Teaching Hospital have teamed up to transform healthcare services in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), signing a landmark agreement to develop a cutting-edge Hospital Management System. According to APP Correspondent, Mirpur University and DHQ Hospital have taken a significant step towards modernizing healthcare services in the region. The two institutions have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance and develop the Hospital Management System (HMS), revolutionizing the hospital's digital infrastructure. The partnership will see the university's Network and Telecommunication Centre (NTC) providing expertise and resources to improve patient care, streamline operations, and increase efficiency. This collaboration will strengthen the bond between MUST and DHQ Hospital, advancing healthcare services and education in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Online open court at Tax House Peshawar on May 21

PESHAWAR (APP): An online open court will be held at Tax House Peshawar to address the genuine problems of the taxpayers from 12:00 P.M to 1:00 P.M on May 21, 2024. Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue Regional Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar, Zafar Iqbal Khan will participate in the proceedings while Commissioner Withholding Syed Khalid Shah, Commissioner Peshawar Zone Dr Farooq Jameel, Commissioner Corporate Zone Fazal Malik, Additional Commissioner Headquarters Bahadar Sher Afridi, Deputy Commissioner Headquarters Riaz Ahmad Khan and Assistant Commissioner/Focal Person Sheraz Ahmad Khan will be present for the assistance of the Chief Commissioner. Trading community and other taxpayers have been invited for participation in the online open court to redress their problems through website www.facebook.com.

9 community NGOs pledge cooperation to end polio

LAHORE (APP): Heads of nine key community organisations in Punjab have pledged their full support to eradicate polio from the province, extending their cooperation from major cities to all districts. The commitment was made at a jirga, organised at the office of the Director General Health Punjab here on Thursday, attended by over 30 representatives from significant community organisations including Pakhtun Falahi Tanzeem, Mohmand Loya Jirga, Afghan Refugees Aman Committee, Khattak Welfare Association, Marwat Welfare Association, Bajaur Ittehad, Hazara Welfare Organisation, Mizal Welfare Organisation, and Pakhtun Qabail Movement. The session was chaired by Khizer Afzaal, the head of the polio programme in Punjab and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Coordinator. During the jirga, the organisations reviewed past initiatives aimed at eradicating polio in Punjab, such as awareness campaigns.

International News

China and Russia reaffirm their close ties as Moscow presses its offensive in Ukraine

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday reaffirmed their "no-limits" partnership that has deepened as both countries face rising tensions with the West, and they criticized U.S. military alliances in Asia and the Pacific region. At their summit in Beijing, Putin thanked China's proposals for ending the war in Ukraine, which have been rejected by Ukraine and its Western supporters as largely following the Kremlin's line. China claims to take a neutral position in the conflict, but it has backed the Kremlin's contentions that Russia was provoked into attacking Ukraine by the West, and it continues to supply key components needed by Moscow for weapons production. China, which has not criticized the invasion, proposed a broadly worded peace plan in 2023, calling for a cease-fire and for direct talks between Moscow and Kyiv. The plan was rejected by both Ukraine and the West for failing to call for Russia to leave occupied parts of Ukraine. China also gave a rhetorical nod to Russia's narrative about Nazism in Ukraine, with a joint statement Thursday that said Moscow and Beijing should defend the post-World War II order and "severely condemn the glorification of or even attempts to revive Nazism and militarism."



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend an official welcoming ceremony in Beijing, China.

US questions China's no-first-use nuclear call given buildup

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: China has not responded to US nuclear-weapons risk-reduction proposals and Washington has questions about Beijing's call for no-first-use talks while China continues to build up its arsenal, the top US arms control official said on Wednesday. Under Secretary of State Bonnie Jenkins told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the US estimates China currently has 500 operational nuclear warheads and will probably have more than 1,000 by 2030. She said US officials met with Chinese counterparts last November, opens new tab to discuss arms control and proliferation, their first such talks in nearly five years. "The meeting enabled a preliminary discussion on potential measures for managing and reducing risks," she said. "Unfortunately... the PRC has declined a follow-on meeting and has not provided (a) substantive response to risk-reduction suggestions we put forward," she said.

Slovak PM 'able to speak' after shooting: president-elect

Monitoring Desk HANDLOVA: Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico on Thursday was speaking but tired and still in a "really difficult condition" a day after being shot multiple times, the president-elect said after visiting his ally. "He is able to speak but only a few sentences and then he is really, really tired... The situation is very critical," President-elect Peter Pellegrini told reporters outside the hospital.

Four killed in New Caledonia riots; France declares state of emergency

Monitoring Desk SYDNEY: France declared a state of emergency on the Pacific island of New Caledonia on Wednesday after three young indigenous Kanak and a police officer were killed in riots over electoral reform. The state of emergency will give authorities additional powers to ban gatherings and forbid people from moving around the French-ruled island. Police reinforcements have been sent — and more are on the way — after rioters torched vehicles and businesses and looted stores. Schools have been shut and there is already a curfew in the capital. Rioting broke out over a new bill, adopted by lawmakers in Paris on Tuesday, that will allow French residents who have lived in New Caledonia for 10 years to vote in provincial elections — a move some local leaders fear will dilute the Kanak vote. "Since the start of the week, New Caledonia has been hit by violence of a rare intensity."

Turkey says it killed PKK members in northern Iraq strikes

Monitoring Desk ANKARA: Turkey hit northern Iraq with air strikes on Wednesday and claimed to have killed 12 members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) sheltering there. The Turkish defence ministry said the PKK militants had been "neutralised" in the Gara and Hakurk regions of northern Iraq. The ministry's use of the term "neutralised" commonly means killed.

UN's top court opens hearings on the Israeli military's incursion into Rafah

Monitoring Desk THE HAGUE: The United Nations' top court on Thursday opened two days of hearings into a request from South Africa to press Israel to halt its military operation in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's population has sought shelter. It is the fourth time South Africa has asked the International Court of Justice for emergency measures since the nation launched proceedings alleging that Israel's military action in its war with Hamas in Gaza amounts to genocide. According to the latest request, the previous preliminary orders by The Hague-based court were not sufficient to address "a brutal military attack on the sole remaining refuge for the people of Gaza."

Ukraine says it has checked Russia's offensive in a key town, but Moscow says it will keep pushing

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Ukrainian units locked in street battles with the Kremlin's forces in a key northeastern Ukraine town have halted the Russian advance, military officials in Kyiv claimed Thursday, though a senior Moscow official said the frontline push had enough resources to keep going. Russian attempts to establish a foothold in the town of Vovchansk, which is among the largest towns in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region with a prewar population of 17,000, "have been foiled," Ukraine's general staff said in a midday report. It was not possible to independently verify the claim. Six people were injured Thursday in one Russian daylight attack on Vovchansk using cluster munitions, local officials said, as emergency workers and volunteers were rescuing people affected by shelling. Among the injured were two medics, he said. Ukrainian authorities have evacuated some 8,000 civilians from the town. The Russian army's usual tactic is to reduce towns and villages to ruins with aerial strikes before its units move in. Vovchansk, located just 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the Russian border, has been a hotspot in the fighting in recent days. Russia launched an offensive in the Kharkiv area late last week, significantly adding to the pressure on Ukraine's outnumbered and outgunned forces which are waiting for delayed deliveries of crucial weapons and ammunition from Western partners. Ukraine has repeatedly tried to strike behind Russian lines, often using drones though Russia's response to the new technology used in unmanned vehicles has improved in recent months.



Congolese people react during the funeral of the nine victims, including seven children who were killed in a strike earlier this month at the Bulengo displaced persons camp (IDP), in Goma, North Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

More than half of Zimbabwean population will need food aid, cabinet says

Monitoring Desk HARARE: More than half of Zimbabwe's population will need food aid this year following a devastating drought that led to widespread crop failure as humanitarian organisations seek funding to save many from hunger, the country's cabinet heard late on Tuesday. About 6 million people in rural areas and 1.7 million in urban areas will require assistance, according to the Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZIMLAC). Zimbabwe is among the worst hit countries by the El Nino induced drought in Southern Africa, with Zambia and Malawi also facing food shortages this year. This is Zimbabwe's worst drought in 40 years, according to the government.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti presiding over a meeting regarding Balochistan Youth Policy 2024

Chinese Finance Minister reaffirms continued support for Pak financial stability

BEIJING (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday met with Chinese Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an and underlined the Government of Pakistan's reform agenda with a focus on governance, revenue, and ease of doing business to attract Foreign Direct Investment.

The deputy prime minister, who is on a four-day visit to China, also emphasized Pakistan's high priority to investments from China, and shared an overview of the priority sectors identified for this purpose, including agriculture, IT, mines and minerals and renewable energy.

Deputy Prime Minister Dar and Minister Lan expressed profound appreciation for Pakistan-China financial and banking cooperation calling it a manifestation of the 'All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' between the two countries.

They discussed ideas to further enhance financial cooperation, especially in view of growing business-to-business (B2B) linkages between Pakistan and China.

Taking note of the positive trajectory of Pakistan's economy, the Chinese finance minister commended Pakistan's economic agenda and reiterated China's continued support to Pakistan in the efforts to strengthen financial stability.

National Assembly told Pakistan witnessed 1,514 terror incidents in 2023

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan witnessed 1,514 terror incidents in 2023, the interior ministry told National Assembly (NA) on Thursday. According to details, the interior ministry submitted a written in the National Assembly regarding law and order situation of Pakistan.

The report stated that 572 security personnel were martyred and 1292 were injured in the terror incidents in 2023, while 358 citizens lost their lives and 700 sustained wounds. The report highlighted the worsening law and order situation in the country specially in KP, where 858 terror attacks were reported that claimed lives of 402 security personnel and 178 civilians. As many as 148 security personnel were martyred and 198 were injured in 626 terror attacks in Balochistan during the past year.



QUETTA: A representative delegation of Balochistan Veterinary Doctors Association meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti. Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan are also present

Salik expresses satisfaction over arrangements for Pakistani Hujjaj

MADINAH al-MUNAWWARAH (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Thursday expressed satisfaction over the arrangements made for extending maximum facilities to Pakistani Hajj pilgrims by the country's Hajj Mission and supporting team. "All the team present is working with full dedication. So far, by the grace of Allah Almighty, there is not even a single complaint which the ministry had been receiving in the past," he said.

The minister was talking to media after visiting different sections of the Pakistan Hajj Mission's Main Control Office (MCO), working round-the-clock for facilitation of the guests of Allah Almighty, and getting a briefing from Director Hajj Madina Zia-ur-Rehman.

He said providing accommodation to 100% Pakistani Hujjaj in the Markazia, from where Masjid Nabvi and Roza-



QUETTA: Members of Pakistan Citizen Liberation Forum are holding protest demonstration against price hike of essential commodities and inflation, at Quetta press club.

Interest free loan to be provided to veterinary doctors: CM directs to advertise 92 vacant posts of veterinary doctors in Livestock dept. at earliest

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to the concerned high ups to advertise 92 vacant posts of the veterinary doctors in Livestock department at the earliest.

The Chief Minister announced to provide interest free loans to the unemployed veterinary doctors under the Soft Loan Programme.

The Chief Minister was speaking to a representative delegation of the Balochistan Veterinary Doctors Association here on Thursday.

15 injured in Lasbela coach accident

LASBELLA (APP): At least fifteen people sustained injuries when a passenger coach traveling from Karachi to Awaran met with a fatal accident near Lasbela district of Balochistan on Thursday. According to the details, the ill-fated passenger coach was heading towards Awaran when it turned turtle due to over-speeding near the Land pull area of Lasbela, injuring 15 persons, a privater news channel reported.

Soon after the incident, rescue teams reached the spot after getting information and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital.

They would also be able to start their earning and livelihood in a dignified manner by providing professional services and facilities to the livestock breeders. He said that at the time when world is heading towards the corporate farming, then we would also have to pay attention on the corporate farming.

The Chief Minister assured the members of delegation to provide suitable opportunities to the youngsters for provision of other veterinary services by formulating effective policies in the province.



MUZZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Pakistan and the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir with regard to 960 MW Dudhnaal Hydropower Project.

Revolutionary changes to be brought in agri sector, pledges Jatak

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Mir Ali Madad Jatak has stated that revolutionary changes would be brought in the agriculture sector of the province.

He said that at present the major issue being faced by the zamindars is electricity supply. He assured that every possible steps would be taken to provide relief to the zamindars resolving their issues.

The provincial government has prepared strategy for converting the agricultural tube wells of the province on solar energy in collaboration with the federal government.

The Provincial Minister for Agriculture was speaking on occasion of the visit to Directorate General of Water Management here on Thursday.

The Director General Water Management Maqsood Ahmed briefed the Minister about the overall functioning of the institution.

Also present on the occasion were the senior officers of Water Management from all districts.

Ali Madad Jatak said that water management is very important section of the Agriculture department. On one hand zamindars benefit from the water management but it also plays important role for stopping wastage of water, he added.

The Minister said that every possible effort would be made to remove hurdles for bringing improvement in the water management sector and release funds for it.



USTAMUHAMMAD: Provincial Minister for Irrigation Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani talking with media

LHC dismissed petition against appointment of Dar as DPM

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has dismissed the petition against appointment of Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar as Deputy Prime Minister (DPM).

Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan of LHC had earlier reserved judgment.

The court while announcing judgment dismissed the petition declaring it non maintainable.

The petitioner took the plea senator Ishaq Dar is already appointed as foreign minister and he has been appointed as DPM too to favor him further. There is no post of DPM in the constitution.

Therefore, the court should nullify the appointment of Ishaq Dar as DPM.

China's high quality development model offers new opportunities for Pakistan: Jiang Zaidong

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chinese Ambassador, Jiang Zaidong at a well-attended symposium on the Transformation of China's Economy to High-Quality Development Model organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) said the keenness on Pakistan's side to greatly enhance the ongoing commercial cooperation was welcoming as it would inject new impetus into China-Pakistan cooperation as China enters a new development phase.

Dispelling the impression of an overcapacity problem being faced by

China, Ambassador Zaidong said that China did not have a problem of "overcapacity" as China was exporting to the whole world and had a matching production capacity. "China is ready to work with Pakistan to implement the important consensus reached by leaders of the two countries," he said in a news release.

Ambassador Zaidong explained that to promote an in-depth integration of China's new development of 5Cs with 5Es (5 Corridors: growth corridor, livelihood-enhancing corridor, innovation corridor, green

Pakistan to be among world's top 10 economies by 2047: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Ahsan Iqbal Thursday said that by 2047, Pakistan would be included amongst top 10 economies in the world.

"By working hard, we can bring Pakistan to the top 10 economies of the world by 2047 and for this we have to silence negative voices," he said.

Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal's address at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Conference was held in the Ministry of Planning regarding the national development agenda.

The minister said that development is possible only through implementation of SDGs.

"It is also to be taken into consideration that Pakistan's budget would be compatible with the SDGs," he said.

Ahsan said that natural resources were misused in industrial revolution. He said that "We want to retain a better country for future generations".

The minister said that sustainable development goals are included in

Pakistan's 2025 agenda. He said that Pakistan is among top ten countries affected by climate change.

The minister said that parliamentarians have a very important role regarding sustainable development goals and the work of distribution of resources is done by the Parliament.

He said the private sector has an important role to play in achieving the SDGs and media should help spread awareness of SDGs to the public.

The Sustainable Development Goals, when

formulated, were intended to develop and it is our responsibility to establish safe and sustainable development for future generations, he said.

He said that "We want to retain a better country for future generations".

The minister said that sustainable development goals are included in Pakistan's 2025 agenda.

Today, all the stakeholders, civil society and private sector can also play a role in achieving sustainable development goals, he stressed.



BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meets with the Minister of Finance of the People's Republic of China Lan Fo'an.

War against terrorism vital for survival of next generations: Decisions of political & military leadership guarantees prosperity of Pakistan, Speaker BA

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai has stated that today's decisions of the political and military leadership are guarantor of the prosperity of Pakistan.

He said that the war of Pak Army against recent terrorism and extremism is vital for survival of our future generations.

He said that it is because of the Pak Army that nation is united and the trust of world is increasing on Pakistan because of the patriotism and sacrifices of our jawans.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, the Speaker said that the war that was started against Pakistan after 9/11 is still

continued. The world knows that Pak Army defeated all such elements who had attacked the sovereignty of the country.

He said that Pakistan should be our priority whether these are the decisions about legislation making or judgments of the higher judiciary. This is because of the establishment otherwise the political and constitutional institutions had brought the country at this juncture from where the

return was impossible towards success. He condemned the criticism being made against the Pak Army under the garb of following the constitution.

He said that it is not only condemnable but also hateful. This process should be stopped, adding he stressed.

The Speaker said that we have to make right decisions for our country and take care.

Ghazala Gola lauds efforts of CM Bugti regarding farmers

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Speaker Balochistan Provincial Assembly Ghazala Gola on Thursday lauded the role of the Balochistan Chief Minister (CM) regarding the best policy of the province farmers.

In a statement issued here, she said that Balochistan CM Mir Sarfaraz Bugti set an example for the farmers by talking to the prime minister in the best way. The deputy speaker further said that by providing basic facilities to the farmers, its fruits would reach the common people saying that the current policies of the Balochistan government have won the hearts of the people.

She said that the CM fought for the farmers sitting on a peaceful protest for seven days sent a message to the citizens of Balochistan that the government of Balochistan would provide good amenities to its citizens by planning the best, she said.

The deputy speaker said that the farmers also set a good example by protesting peacefully.

Pakistan accepts IMF's condition to abolish subsidy to energy sector

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has accepted to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) condition to abolish subsidy on the energy sector on Thursday.

Quoting its sources, the channel reported that the IMF had also set the condition of timely issuance of the notification of annual tariff adjustment.

Sources disclosed that both sides also agreed on speeding up the collection of electricity bills.

Besides that, they revealed, Pakistan and the Fund had agreed on presenting a plan for abolishing the subsidy the government had offered on tube wells.

The international money lending organization, they elaborated, had also demanded the government to eliminate circular debt in the gas sector.

Sources further said that the IMF had also de-

manded the issuance of a notification for an increase in gas prices on June 1 besides stopping gas supply to captive power plants at cheaper rates during the ongoing year.

The Fund, they elaborated, had not only urged the government to supply gas to all fertilizer plants in the country at the same rate but also to other industries across the country.

The negotiations between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the 24th 'longer and larger' bailout programme had kicked off on Monday.

Pakistani side, led by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, comprised Governor State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmed, Federal Board of Revenue Chair-man Amjed Zubair Tiwana and their respective teams.



QUETTA: Former MPAs Akhtar Hussain Lango and Ahmed Nawaz Baloch meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Pakistan, UK vow to enhance coordination on multilateral fora

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and the United Kingdom have expressed their commitment to further enhance coordination on multilateral fora on matters relating to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The commitment was expressed during the 6th Round of Pakistan-UK Dialogue on Arms Control & Non-Proliferation here on Wednesday, a Foreign Office press release said on Thursday.

Additional Foreign Secretary (Arms Control & Disarmament) Ambassador Mohammad Kamran Akhtar, and Director Defence and International Security at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom, Ambassador Stephen Lillie, led their respective delegations.

A broad spectrum of topics relating to arms con-

trol, disarmament and non-proliferation came under discussion during the dialogue.

Both sides also shared their perspectives on issues concerning global and regional security, new and emerging technologies, including the military use of artificial intelligence and the peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

The discussions encompassed matters pertaining to the agenda of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). While reiterating the need to ensure continuity in the conduct of the dialogue, the two sides agreed to hold the 7th Round of Consultations next year in London.