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dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

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Unless parliament is strong, others will become powerful: CJP Faez Isa

Says solution to this matter will start from legislation; Any party pushing the judiciary towards a certain path is also akin to interference

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Tuesday said they would not interfere in the matters related to the high court as the practice in the past didn't produce good consequences. "Can a chief justice phone a subordinate judge to order that the verdict should be passed in such a manner?" he asked during the hearing of a suo moto case related to a letter written by the six justices of Islamabad High Court (IHC). The IHC judges' letter case is being heard by a six-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Isa and comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Musarrat Hilali and

Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan. After the culmination of Tuesday's proceedings, the six-member bench adjourned the hearing till May 7 and asked the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and others to submit their replies containing suggestions on the subject. "We appoint a 'monitoring judge'. It is also interference," the chief justice remarked during the hearing - a reference to Justice Ijazul Ahsan who severed in the same capacity in the Panama Papers cases filed against then prime minister Nawaz Sharif. It seemed that [some] people wanted to promote their thinking instead of independence of judiciary, the chief justice observed as Attorney General

Usman Mansoor Awan presented his arguments while representing the government being the country's chief law officer. The chief justice also recalled that he was the first individual to name someone for interference by mentioning Lt-Gen (ret'd) Faiz Hameed in the Faizabad sit-in case. One the other hand, Justice Shah observed that one had to determine what action was to be taken against the one interfering in the court affairs. Calling for erecting a firewall to stop the practice, Justice Shah said they had to sit together for finding a solution. During the hearing, the attorney general was of the view that the IHC judges had all the powers required

to check the alleged interference, including contempt of court. Justice Hilali, meanwhile, wondered why the judges from lower courts were seeking permission from the Supreme Court. The chief justice on Tuesday again stressed the need for making the Parliament supreme and observed that there was no civilian supremacy - the remarks in the context of debate on how to develop a mechanism to deal with the issue. "I can annul a law, but cannot make a new one," said the chief justice who noted that pressure was found everywhere, while citing how bureaucracy is compelled to follow certain orders. According to the chief

justice, the bureaucracy is very weak and has very limited room or choices to deal with interference. However, it isn't the case with judiciary which enjoys all the necessary powers and the tools to exercise the same. Other powers will grow stronger, if the parliament isn't made powerful, the chief justice warned and mentioned that it was a natural consequence of forming JITs (joint investigation teams) and appointment of monitoring judges. The country's top judge during the hearing also stopped the attorney general from mentioning the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), saying the Supreme Court and the SJC were two different entities.



RIYADH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif departs for Pakistan after participating in a special meeting of the World Economic Forum.

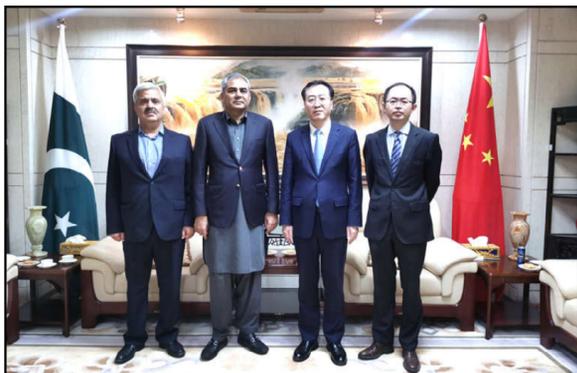
Govt to block mobile phone SIMs of over 500,000 non-filers

Tax watchdog makes public the names of 506,671 non-filers; Cellphone SIMs of these individuals can be blocked at any time

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In a robust action against non-filers amid the prevailing financial crisis being faced by the cash-strapped country, the government on Tuesday directed the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the telecom companies to block mobile phone SIMs of over 500,000 non-filers. In a statement, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) said: "In exercise of the powers conferred under section 114B of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001, the FBR is pleased to issue this Income Tax General Order (ITGO) to disable the mobile phone SIMs in respect of following persons who are not appearing on active taxpayer list but are liable to file the Income Tax Return for Tax Year 2023 un-

der the provisions of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001. The development came a day after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hinted at undertaking "massive economic reforms" at the special meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Speaking at the closing plenary of a special meeting of the WEF, the premier vowed to introduce deep-rooted reforms and adopt meaningful austerity to steer the country out of the economic crisis. The FBR asked the PTA and all telecom operators to ensure compliance with the Income Tax General Order (ITGO) with immediate effect.

respect of the above-mentioned individuals will remain blocked until restored by FBR or the Commissioner Inland Revenue having jurisdiction of the person." The tax collection body further said: "The compliance report in this regard is to be furnished to the FBR on May 15." The FBR made public the names of 506,671 non-filers and said that these individuals were not filing income tax returns despite having taxable income. The mobile SIMs of these individuals could be blocked at any time, the FBR added. These individuals are not included in the list of active taxpayers list, read the statement.



KARACHI: Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi in a group photo with Yang Yundong, Consul General, Zhang Hao, Deputy Consul General of the People's Republic of China, during his visit to Chinese Consulate Karachi.

CM Punjab orders strict compliance of one-dish rule in weddings

Approves the launch of the Nawaz Sharif Farmer Card

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered strict implementation of the one-dish rule in wedding events across Punjab while chairing the 6th meeting of the provincial cabinet, here on Tuesday. The cabinet approved the provision of free medicines to cancer patients and it was further decided to include more patients in the free cancer medication project. The cabinet in principle approved the launch of the Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Farmer Card and reviewed a proposal to provide direct cash subsidy to small wheat growers.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif stated, "All resources of Punjab are available for farmers. Middlemen and 'arthi' cannot be allowed to exploit farmers. I intend to make bread cheaper for the people." It was agreed to link the approval of water supply and sanitation projects to the permission of the Local Government department in the province. A consensus was reached to release Rs.10 billion in seed money to the CBD Authority for Nawaz Sharif IT City. The CEO of CBD was praised for convincing Chinese companies to establish campuses in Nawaz

Sharif IT City Lahore. It was briefed that Saudi Academy Riyadh is ready to open a campus in Lahore's Nawaz Sharif IT City. Ten towers will be built in the IT City, with twin towers being built immediately. The launch of Nawaz Sharif IT City will take place in May. The CM ordered the chief secretary to devise a pool of competent professionals from various fields, adding that the program for the provision of free medicines at the doorstep will start in May. The cabinet approved empowering deputy commissioners to enforce Section 144 in Punjab.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the 6th Punjab Cabinet meeting.

PM satisfied as \$1.1 bln final IMF tranche to bring in economic stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday, expressing satisfaction over the disbursement of \$1.1 billion final tranche by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), hoped that it would help bring economic stability to the country. On Monday, the IMF Executive Board completed the second review under the Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) for Pakistan, allowing for an immediate disbursement of around \$1.1 billion, bringing total disbursements under the arrangement to around \$3 billion. The IMF and Pakistan had reached the Staff Level Agreement on the second and final review on March 20, 2024 for the remaining \$1.1.

The prime minister, in a statement, said that in 2016, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Nawaz Sharif had completed the IMF program in his tenure, and the current one was the second SBA nearing completion. Highlighting the significance of the IMF program to save Pakistan from economic default, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the bitter and tough decisions were coming to fruition in the form of economic stability. "Allah has given us the opportunity to improve the economy. We will make all possible efforts to bring in the economic stability. The real success is not to get loans but to get rid of them," he remarked.

Pakistan, Qatar agree to further solidify parliamentary relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday emphasized the need to further solidify existing fraternal bond between Pakistan and Qatar through expanding parliamentary cooperation, besides deepening ties in other socio-economic sectors. He expressed these views in his meeting with Ambassador of Qatar Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater who called on him at Parliament House. Talking to the Ambassador, the speaker remarked, "Pakistan cher-

ishes its historic brotherly relations with Qatar and desires them to take up to new heights through bolstering parliamentary cooperation, expanding economic ties, and furthering people-to-people contacts between the legislatures of both the countries." Referring to the parliamentary collaboration between the parliaments of both countries, the speaker noted, "Parliamentary diplomacy is quintessential in bringing two nations closer which are already tied in eternal religious and historic bonds".



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq meeting with Ambassador of Qatar Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal chairs a meeting with Chinese enterprises working in Pakistan to discuss their challenges and recommendations for CPEC Phase II projects.

President approves Rana Sanaullah's appointment as Adviser to PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has accorded his approval to appointment of Rana Sanaullah as Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs. The president approved the appointment on the advice of Prime Minister under Article 93 (1) of

Ahsan Iqbal directs study of successful regional export processing zones

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, chairing the maiden meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Chinese Investment Projects on Tuesday, directed to conduct a research study of export processing zones successfully operating in regional countries. The Cabinet Committee on Chinese Investment Projects, which comprises nine federal ministers, would be overseeing the progress of Chinese investment projects, expediting the pace of projects being executed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) besides ensuring the security of Chinese citizens. Emphasized the need for effective measures to ensure the supply of cheap electricity to special economic zones, the minister directed the Board of Investment (BOI) to conduct a research- study on the export processing zones operating in Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand, a news release said.



the Constitution of Pakistan. President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release, on Tuesday. Rana Sanaullah, in his capacity as Adviser to the PM, would have the status of a federal minister.

Ambassador Blome hosts Pakistan Team ahead of T20 World Cup in US

ISLAMABAD (APP): US Ambassador Donald Blome, in a display of support for Pakistan ahead of the highly anticipated T20 Cricket World Cup 2024, hosted the Pakistan National Cricket Team for a meet-and-greet. The ambassador welcomed the national team players accompanying Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi at his residence and extended his best wishes to the players for the upcoming T20 Cricket World Cup matches in the United States.



Ambassador Blome presented the team members with a commemorative embassy cricket ball and autographed softball bat. The Pakistani team reciprocated by presenting the ambassador with a signed cricket bat and team jersey. The ambassador then participated in an impromptu cricket demonstration with members of the National Team.

PM terms his three-day visit to Saudi Arabia as historic

Says Pak-Saudi bilateral ties, economic partnership getting stronger

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the bilateral relations as well as the economic partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were getting stronger. The prime minister, in a statement issued at the conclusion of his visit to the Kingdom mainly to attend the Special Meeting of World Economic Forum, said a delegation of Saudi businessmen was about to visit Pakistan in the coming days. The visit would help accelerate the pace of economic partnership between the two countries, he added. The prime minister reiter-



ated the resolve to make all-out efforts to materialise the understanding reached between the two leaderships. With the Pak-Saudi economic partnership, a new era of bilateral ties had begun, he remarked. He recalled that a record exchange of high-level delegations took place between the two countries during the last couple of months. Highlighting the significance of his three-day

visit to the Kingdom marking the very fruitful discussions, the prime minister also mentioned his interactions with the world leaders which led to positive developments in multifaceted cooperation in trade and invest-

ment. Referring to his address at the World Economic Forum, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that he had categorically made it clear that there could be no peace in the world without establishing peace in Gaza. He thanked Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman for warm hospitality during the visit, and also for his directives to his ministers regarding Pakistan. He also expressed gratitude to the Saudi ministers for their efforts and full preparations to help reach understanding between the leaderships of two countries.

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Daily Voice of Masses Independent

All this talk

It is still early days, but there have been several small developments over the past week that, it is hoped, may add up to something bigger in the coming future.

The ice between the government and opposition benches, which began to show signs of a thaw last week, seems to have melted some more over the weekend, and the two factions are apparently in agreement that negotiations can help break the current deadlock. However, it is also becoming clear that there will be some major stumbling blocks.

For one, the PTI clearly does not know what it wants. Over the weekend, its leaders issued conflicting statements regarding whom they want to parley with and what their preconditions are for the talks. It would appear that the party is still seeking a settlement with the establishment, while some of the conditions it has set for the dialogue seem like a very long shot.

There will be progress only when the two factions can differentiate between dialogue and surrender. For example, the PTI may feel it has a moral right to demand its 'stolen' seats back from the government, but it cannot expect the latter to simply hand over its leverage in such a manner. The party ought to realise that any talks will only take place within the existing power configuration, even if its legitimacy is up for debate. Its other demand — the release of imprisoned leaders, including Imran Khan — is reasonable and, in fact, the government should consider facilitating this at the earliest.

The inaccessibility of key central leaders is contributing to the confusion within the PTI's ranks, which will continue to make any talks with it next to impossible. Any negotiation needs to be publicly sanctioned by the PTI founder, even if he does not participate in it himself. Otherwise, it would mean nothing in the eyes of the party's zealots.

Lastly and most importantly, it would be most disappointing if the PTI repeats the mistake of turning to the establishment instead of negotiating directly with its rivals — something which it is shockingly still not averse to. It is an unfortunate reality of Pakistan's power politics that every party wants to engage directly with the security establishment.

However, there is an opportunity right now for democratic forces to retake the legislative domain as long as they agree to respect each other. Regardless of how many seats it believes it won, the PTI does not represent every citizen of Pakistan.

The other parties are equally legitimate stakeholders in the country's political future, and it must give them due consideration. The PTI need only look at how the PDM fared in the Feb 8 elections to realise how sour non-political 'solutions' to political problems can become.

Ending conflicts

Dr Niaz Murtaza

Business gurus, often deemed unwise, gave very wise advice to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Karachi: end conflicts with the PTI and India. These tiffs are the biggest internal and external drains on national energy, curbing our progress. The one with the PTI has polarised society and major institutions and impeded their work. The one with India has contributed to our isolation and wasted scarce resources on defence. There are also the Baloch and Taliban conflicts. Arguably, the shadow of the establishment hovers over all. Three of the issues need a peaceful end; the Taliban a forceful one.

But can they be ended? The PTI, PML-N, PPP and the powers that be must first gather in a room for truth and reconciliation and admit their roles in fanning political instability that causes all our social, economic, security and external issues. The elephant in the room must fulfil its earlier promises to eschew politics.

The PTI, PML-N and PPP must then sign charters of democracy and governance. In the charter of democracy, they must accept that the 2018 and 2024 polls were rigged; agree never to seek the establishment's aid again; see each other as rivals and not enemies; accept each other's mandate; eschew political victimisation via fake cases against rivals; and make institutions independent.

They must also agree on a time frame for early polls, and come to an agreement on legal changes before they are held to make them credible and agree on a power-sharing formula under which all three

get a piece of the pie to compensate for both the 2018 and 2024 alleged rigging. An example of this could be an agreement for two of them to form a federal coalition after the polls to ensure political stability, with the third one leading or being in the Punjab set-up, depending on their numbers.

The charter of governance must commit to ending misrule, especially of the economic variety. All three parties must publicly accept their own input in the economic mess and admit that the cited six per cent growth under the PML-N and PTI was not accurate. Most critically, they must accept that their top leaders are not the best ones to rule at the moment, given how bad our economic status is. They must agree to appoint competent cabinets with experts in key posts for the next five to 10 years, while the top leaders run their parties, like the Gandhi family has since Rajiv Gandhi's death.

While this charter will cover all areas, I focus on the three other conflicts. On the Taliban, all three, especially the PTI, must agree that talks are futile, use China's influence to wean Kabul away from the TTP, and deploy force if the latter still don't end terrorism. On Balochistan, they should agree to give nationalists their due share, end disappearances, ensure development and hold talks with the insurgents to put down their arms. On India, the three must agree on trade and peace, recognising that it holds the aces. Our only small leverage is that the world still doesn't accept India's claims on occupied Kashmir with a pact with Pakistan and the

Kashmiris.

Will the four forces accept this plan broadly? The PTI, lacking other viable paths, may do so as the dubious case against it might then end and it may lead the centre and/ or Punjab set-up. But it too must eschew populism; end its polarising politics of calling the PPP and PML-N chors, while filling its own ranks with some dubious elements; and agree to work with the parties. Perhaps one can conjecture that in such a scenario, the PPP may agree as it won't lose Sindh and may be in coalition in the centre too. But the PML-N may be unwilling to lose power. However, if the others agree, it may not have an option. A piece of the pie may mollify it further.

Finally, what will it take to reduce the establishment's shadow? This is the biggest hurdle. A concerted pushback from political parties, internal ranks, media, civil society, allied states and businesses will help, as would an end to internal and external tensions, political parties working together for progress, and greater military professionalism.

Asif Zardari who pushed reconciliation in his National Assembly speech can nudge all parties to talk as president, while using his vaunted reconciliation skills.

All four must see that conflicts and political illegitimacy are pushing us fast towards doom.

Nevertheless, all this is a short-term remedy. Ultimately, new non-elitist parties must emerge. But the path to electoral democracy first may lead later to that end. -- Courtesy Dawn

Tectonic shifts

Bina Shah

When I was a teenager, the world was divided between the First World and Third World, terms first defined by the French anthropologist Alfred Sauvy in 1952. The First World was the affluent developed world, the industrialised nations of North America, Europe and Australia: stable and democratic, life held infinite satisfaction for its citizens.

On the other hand, the Third World, where I lived, was characterised as poor, illiterate, underdeveloped, violent and insecure. The Second World was made up of the Soviet Union and the countries aligned with it, but it was more familiarly known either as 'the enemy' or 'those Communists'. We paid little attention to it even when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, bringing the Second World right to the doorstep of the Third.

We were told that the First/ Third World had more to do with economics than politics, but the two seemed inseparable when it came to the power the First World wielded over the Third. First World countries used a lot of influence and money to keep them away from the clutches of the Soviet Union. Building on the foundations that colonialism and imperialism had laid for them in the previous two centuries, the First World gained free access to the Third World's economic markets, influence on their education systems and a cultural dominance that warped young people's self-esteem and pride in their own identity.

The First World rewarded those Third World countries for their loyalty with generous foreign aid, favourable trade deals, and unending support for their

governments, no matter how corrupt or undemocratic. Indeed, the First World coined the term 'banana republic' to describe some of these Third World countries, even as they propped up their autocrats and encouraged them to function as the polar opposite of Western liberalism for half a century.

By the 1990s, the world had benefited from 20 to 30 years of decolonial studies and Marxist economics, Edward Said's powerful work on Orientalism and Gayatri Spivak's on subalternity, the liberation theologues of South America and the anti-apartheid movement of South Africa. The term 'Third World' began to give way to the 'Global South', somewhat due to political correctness but mostly out of their own loathing for an appellation that symbolised dysfunction and underdevelopment.

The Global South is made up of Latin America, Africa and Asia. Yet some countries in it began to achieve economic industrialisation: India, China, Brazil. Today, the inclusion of very rich countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia as well as tiny Costa Rica and prosperous Malaysia raises the question of whether the 'Global South' term is now stretched beyond usefulness, too racialised, or even simply obsolete?

Not so, according to political researchers Nour Dados and Raewyn Connell. In their eyes, "the use of the phrase Global South marks a shift from a central focus on development or cultural difference toward an emphasis on geopolitical relations of power". Former colonies aligned as countries whose interests clashed with industrialised powers in the West and the Communist bloc, thus

ignoring Cold War divisions of the '50s and '60s. Today, the Global South is more than just "a metaphor for underdevelopment". Instead, it references "an entire history of colonialism, neoimperialism, and differential economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy and access to resources are maintained".

But as we transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world, political scientist John Ikenberry envisions a Global North, a Global South, and a Global East, led by China and Russia. The Global South, in this scenario, is more passive and lacks leadership, and both the Global North and Global East compete for its loyalty and cooperation.

Still, when South Africa took Israel to the International Court of Justice on charges of genocide in Gaza, many Global South countries rallied behind the cause of ending the conflict in Gaza and getting Israel to face international law for its alleged war crimes. South Africa's historic defeat of apartheid gave the accusers' case moral as well as legal weight. Instead of just backing Palestine in places like the ICJ and the UN, the Global South was now taking direct action against Israel in those very forums. This marks a powerful change in the way these countries align and negotiate global conflicts. In politics, sometimes language reflects these changes and sometimes it is a precursor or even an instigator of change. Like the movement of tectonic plates that creates earthquakes on the higher ends of the Richter scale, the deliberate use of the term 'Global South' will instigate a major shift towards a world where global justice must prevail. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Pak-UK agree to enhance cooperation in key socio-economic areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Development Director of the British High Commission in Pakistan Ms. Jo Moir on Tuesday agreed for enhancing the cooperation between Pakistan and Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) in key areas for the socio-economic development.

In a meeting with Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, she also assured her full support in exploring innovative green financing instruments to address climate change and support social sector initiatives in collaboration

with the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

The team leader of the FCDO Rizwan Azam and senior officials from the Ministry of Economic Affairs also attended the meeting, said a press release.

Ms. Jo Moir also outlined areas where the UK's expertise in public administration could be utilized for strengthening the capacity of Pakistan's bureaucratic system.

The Development Director thanked the minister for the strong partnership and collaborative efforts addressing issues such as

poverty reduction, climate change, financing instruments and the strengthening of financial management and accountability.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Economic Affairs reiterated the commitment of the government to ongoing cooperation with the FCDO for the socio-economic development of the country.

He expressed his gratitude to the Development Director of the British High Commission in Pakistan for the continued support and assistance provided to the people of Pakistan.



FAISALABAD: Farmer busy in cutting wheat crop with the help of tractor in his field.

Envoy encourages RAK businessmen to explore Pak investment opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi on Tuesday said that Pakistan was situated at the crossroads of South and Central Asia offering multiple connectivity and investment opportunities.

The ambassador, in a meeting with Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi at Al Dhait Palace, encouraged the RAK's business community in to explore these opportunities, said a press release received here. On

behalf of Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Ambassador Tirmizi conveyed warm regards and best wishes to the RAK Ruler.

He applauded the visionary leadership of the Ruler for the amazing development taking place in RAK. Tirmizi underlined the importance of historic linkages existing between Pakistan and the Emirates. Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi said that Pakistan was very close to his heart and that the country had a great future.

Rupee gains 08 paise against US dollar

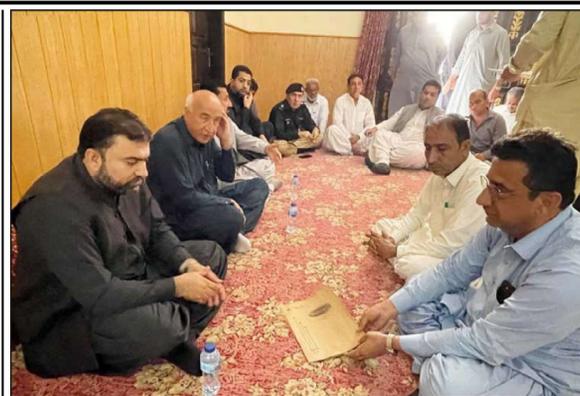
ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday gained 08 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.31 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.39.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.35 and Rs 280 respectively.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 592 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, shedding 592.49 points, negative change of 0.83 percent, closing at 71,102.55 points against 71,695.03 points the previous trading day.

A total of 560,552,783 shares valuing Rs 25,730 billion were traded during the day as compared to 613,314,754 shares valuing Rs 26,314 billion the last day.



TURBAT: A delegation of Anjuman-e-Tajir District Kech meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

Pakistan, Malaysia resolve to harness economic potential, take bilateral ties to new heights

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Malaysia on Tuesday reiterated their commitment to strengthen bilateral ties and strategic partnership through enhanced cooperation in trade, defense, tourism and other sectors.

Following their meeting on the sidelines of the Special Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Riyadh, both Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim

engaged in a conversation on social media platform X, with both agreeing to build on their discussion.

"As we agreed during our meeting, there is a huge untapped potential to scale up the cooperation in the different sectors of the economy. Our current level of bilateral trade relations doesn't match the excellent ties between our two brotherly countries," Prime Minister Shehbaz wrote in

response to his Malaysian counterpart's post.

Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim said that in their meeting, they had expressed their commitment to strengthen bilateral cooperation and strategic partnership, including enhancing trade relations which currently stood at US\$1.4 billion. Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed his pleasure as both sides committed to unpacking the true potential and taking the Pakistan.

Industries Minister directs to withdraw recent urea price hike

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a move to protect the interests of farmers, Federal Minister for Industry and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain here on Tuesday directed the fertilizer companies to immediately reverse the recent increase in urea prices.

He said while chairing an emergency meeting with representatives of fertilizer companies, including Fauji Fertilizer Company, Engro Fertilizer Private Limited, and Fatima Fertilizer Company, to discuss the sudden price hike.

Secretary Industry and Production Wasim Ajmal Chaudhry also

attended the meeting, according to a news release issued here.

The minister has rejected the fertilizer companies' justification for the price increase, citing no change in production costs.

He emphasized that the government's top priority is to protect farmers' interests and ensure the uninterrupted supply of urea during the upcoming Kharif season.

The minister highlighted that the government has decided to import 200,000 metric tons of urea. He directed all provinces to stop hoarding and illegal profiteering of urea fertilizer.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Jo Moir, Development Director, British High Commission, Pakistan calls on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Khan Cheema.

Experts demand moderation in tax system

ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts at the pre-budget stakeholder consultation on Tuesday demanded the government to ensure moderation in tax system and cumbersome regulatory steps for macroeconomic stability in Pakistan.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) with the support of the Revenue Mobilisation, Investment and Trade (REMIT) programme funded by Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office organised the stakeholder pre-budget consultation titled "Optimizing Revenue and Public

Spending for Inclusive Growth Pre-Budget Consultative workshop" at a local hotel in Lahore.

In her welcome remarks, Naghameh Tehniet Jerral, Governance Adviser and Tax Lead - REMIT said that UK is a close partner of Pakistan in its development journey with key ambition to make the latter achieve its economic potential.

Pakistan has the beneficial youth population, ideal location at the heart of fastest growing markets, six million diaspora and women potential to play a substantial growth in the economic growth, she

added. She mentioned that World Bank in its report indicated that Pakistan economy could go beyond \$5 trillion by 2057 with correct interventions and reforms in its economic system.

Ms. Jerral said in global race for trade and investment, Pakistan is lagging behind since past three decades, whereas revenue mobilization is also one of the challenges faced by the country amid small tax revenue being collected which was half of the total potential.

She claimed that tax collection was insufficient as compared to the

population of Pakistan. Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh, Team Lead - REMIT briefed the participants on REMIT which was an FCDO-funded programme based on reforms in the economy of Pakistan with the objective to bring macroeconomic stability.

The main areas of focus of the programme included revenue, investment, improving and enhancing trade of Pakistan, he added. "The purpose of the dialogue is to come up with recommendations and solutions to provide guideline to the government for corrective

measures. REMIT has the edge that it can lead the policy recommendations to the highest level forum," he said.

Dr. Wasif Ali Memon, Chairman, Sindh Revenue Board said that political will was very important to implement reforms and taxation measures then no change can happen in the system. He added that the country needed to do retrospective of its conduct during the process of seeking International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s program as it had availed some 25th so far.

"With a tax-to-GDP ratio below double figures,

Kyrgyz Honorary Consul calls on Punjab Governor

Independent Report
LAHORE: Honorary Consul Kyrgyzstan Mehr Kashif Younis called on Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman here at Governor House on Tuesday.

In the meeting, issues of mutual interest and promotion of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan were discussed. Kyrgyzstan Consul's Advisor Dr Waqar Ullah Chaudhry was also present.

The Governor congratulated Mehr Kashif Younis on his appointment as Honorary Consul of Kyrgyzstan and hoped that he would play an active role in promoting relations

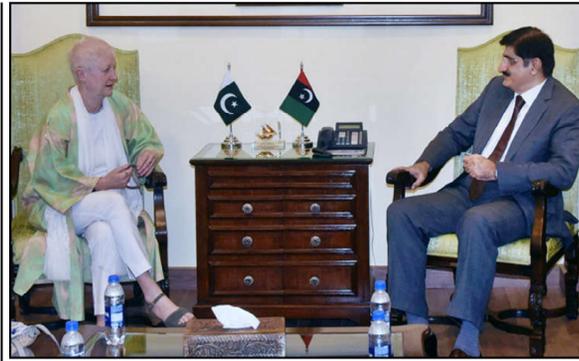
between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan in trade, education and other fields. He said his appointment signifies a milestone in diplomatic relations which underscores the importance of fostering closer ties and cooperation particularly in the realm of trade and commerce.

He said that Pakistan attaches great importance to the relations with Kyrgyzstan, and emphasized the importance of enhancing trade relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan, highlighting the untapped potential that exists. He said that people-to-people contact is very important in promoting bilateral

cooperation.

The Governor said that there are vast opportunities for cooperation between the two countries in the fields of education, agriculture and technology. He said that there should be exchanges of delegations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan in the field of higher education.

Mehr Kashif Younis expressed his commitment to leveraging his new role to bolster bilateral trade and economic ties. He said that the Pak-Kyrgyzstan Investment Conference is scheduled to be held in Lahore next month to promote trade between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah meets with Ambassador of European Union, Dr. Riina Kionka at CM House.

Minister ensures transparency in SSC examinations

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Faisal Khan Tarakai on Tuesday asserted that transparency will be ensured at all costs in the ongoing matric examinations, with stringent action against those attempting to compromise the examination system.

Addressing Press Conference at Ittla Cell

Information Department over concerns raised on social media regarding paper leaks in the matric exams, Faisal Tarakai said that prompt action has been taken against individuals involved, resulting in the suspension of 12 individuals for leaking papers.

He said that strict measures will be imposed on examination halls where complaints are received.

ANF recovers 76 kg drugs in 11 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 76 kg drugs, 580 liters liquor and arrested 15 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that 1.4 kg Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Doha at Lahore Airport.

PHC suspends ECP's summons notice issued to KP CM in assets' case

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court comprising Justice SM Attiq Shah and Justice Shakeel Ahmed on Tuesday suspended the suo moto notice of the Election Commission of Pakistan related to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur's assets case.

The court issued a notice to ECP seeking a reply for issuing a summons notice to Ali Amin for an explanation of his previous years' statements related to assets.

The petitioner's counsel contended that it was no longer the authority of ECP to ask for the previous year's assets' details.

Minister to Launch NourishMaa Program

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: The launch was decided in a meeting chaired by Minister Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah on Tuesday. The NourishMaa campaign will be launched at KP in mid-May to disseminate the efforts in the province. A delegation of Nutrition International, led by Dr Irfan Deputy country director and Imtiaz Ali Shah program Manager Kp met minister health in his office.

Dr Irfan while briefing the minister told that the Maternal Nutrition Campaign (NourishMaa), aligned with the Pakistan Maternal Nutrition Strategy 2022, is a collaborative effort between Nutrition International, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination (MoNHSR&C), Provincial Departments of Health (DoH), and key Stakeholders such as the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) and the Society of Obstetrics and Gynecologists Pakistan (SOGP). The NourishMaa Campaign aims to "improve the knowledge and capacity of Health Care Providers (HCPs) and Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) to advance maternal Nutrition interventions in Pakistan".



LAHORE: Honorary Consul of Kyrgyzstan, Mehr Kashif Younis, called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

UAJKVC condemns India's demographic engineering in Occupied Kashmir

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): In a stern denunciation of India's actions in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir, Vice Chancellor of the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK), Prof. Dr Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, has highlighted India's employment of tactics akin to those of Israel to alter the demographic composition of Muslim majority areas.

Speaking at the 5th Inter-University English Debate Competition, Prof. Abbasi emphasized the grave implications of India's actions, labelling them as violations of international law and an assault on the right to self-determination.

Addressing participants of the debate competition jointly organized by UAJK and Jammu Kashmir Liberation Commission (JKLC), Prof. Abbasi stressed the parallels between India and Israel's attempts to manipulate population ratios in disputed territories to sway the outcome of future plebiscites.

He underscored the competition's role in raising awareness among the youth about the Kashmir issue, emphasizing the importance of understanding it from its true perspective.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora addressing a ceremony organized in connection with International Labour Day.

Murtaza Abbasi visits residence of martyr's family, offers condolence

HARIPUR (APP): Following the instruction of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, former federal minister and provincial general secretary of the Pakistan Muslim League-N, Murtaza Javid Abbasi on Tuesday visited the residence of martyr's family of Customs Constable Ziad Jadoon on Tuesday, and offered condolence.

During the visit, Murtaza Abbasi conveyed his condolence and extended all forms of support to the members of bereaved family.

He also offered prayers at the martyr's

grave and laid a floral wreath in honor of his sacrifices. On behalf of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Murtaza Abbasi delivered a message expressing solidarity and support to the family in their time of loss.

Assuring cooperation from the federal government, Abbasi pledged to provide a martyr's package to the heirs of the constable including educational support for his children.

He emphasized that every Pakistani acknowledges and respects the sacrifices made by the martyrs.

UAF arranges Besakhi Mela

FAISALABAD (APP): University of Agriculture Faisalabad arranged Besakhi Mela "Wheat Harvesting Festival" to highlight the culture of wheat harvesting and apprising the farming community with latest trends of harvesting.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan inaugurated the Mela sponsored by Senior Tutor Office and Directorate of Farms, University of Agriculture Faisalabad.

Speaking on the inaugural ceremony, Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that adaptation of modern trends was prerequisite to make agriculture a profitable business. He said that use of latest technologies would help in improving economic condition of the farming community as well as meet the wheat requirement for the growing population.

He said that last year, 35,000 UAF students in collaboration with Agriculture Department Punjab visited various villages across the province to make the farmers aware of modern trends in wheat sowing. He said that the UAF in collaboration with Washington State University was also working on high-yielding

Labours play vital role in national economy: Swati

PESHAWAR (APP): Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Salim Swati on the eve of Labour Day said that labours play vital role in the national economy.

He said that observing International Labour Day acknowledges their contribution to the nation's progress and prosperity.

Speaker Swati emphasized that the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) has mandated that labour dues be paid before his sweat dries, thus underscoring the recognition of laborers' status and economic rights in Islam.

He stated that

workers, regardless of literacy, are pivotal to the advancement of any society or nation, playing a key role in its development.

Highlighting the efforts of the past Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government towards the welfare and prosperity of laborers, Swati assured that the current government will continue this legacy.

He reiterated the government's commitment to safeguarding the rights of workers and providing maximum relief to the labour class amid the prevailing challenging circumstances.

International News

Top UN court rejects Nicaragua's request for Germany to halt aid to Israel

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: The top U.N. court rejected on Tuesday a request by Nicaragua to order Germany to halt military and other aid to Israel and renew funding to the U.N. aid agency in Gaza.

The International Court of Justice said that legal conditions for making such an order weren't met and ruled against the request in a 15-1 vote, effectively siding with Germany, which told judges that it's barely exporting any arms to Israel.

"Based on the factual information and legal arguments presented by the parties, the court concludes that, as present, the circumstances are not such as to require the exercise of its

power ... to indicate provisional measures," said Nawaf Salam, the court's president.

However, the 16-judge panel declined to throw out the case altogether, as Germany had requested.

The court will still hear arguments from both sides on the merits of Nicaragua's case, which alleges that, by giving support to Israel, Germany failed to prevent genocide in Gaza. The case will likely take months or years.

Salam said that the court, which earlier this year ordered Israel to allow more humanitarian supplies into Gaza, "remains deeply concerned about the catastrophic living conditions of the Palestinians in the

Gaza Strip, in particular in view of the prolonged and widespread deprivation of food and other basic necessities to which they have been subjected."

He added that the court "considers it particularly important to remind all states of their international obligations relating to the transfer of arms to parties to an armed conflict, in order to avoid the risk that such arms might be used" to violate international law.

The reading of the decision lasted less than 20 minutes.

The German Foreign Office welcomed the ruling in a post on X.

"Germany is not a party to the conflict in the Middle East — on the con-

trary: we are working day and night for a two-state solution," the ministry said. "We are the largest donor of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians.

We are working to ensure that aid reaches the people in Gaza."

But it added that Israel has the right to defend itself and said more than 100 hostages are still being held by Hamas, "which is abusing the people of Gaza as shields."

The court noted that Germany had granted only four export licenses to Israel for weapons of war since the start of the conflict, two for training ammunition and one for test purposes, as well as one consignment of "3,000 portable anti-tank weapons."



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with Jordan's King Abdullah II and Jordan's Crown Prince Hussein in Amman, Jordan, in this handout image released by Royal Hashemite Court (RHC).



Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla meet with patient Jo Irons during a visit to the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre in London, Britain.

King Charles III resumes public duties as he fights cancer

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: King Charles III on Tuesday reportedly told fellow cancer patients "I'm well", as he carried out his first official public engagement since being diagnosed with the condition.

The British head of state appeared relaxed as he and his wife Queen Camilla met patients and staff at the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre in central London.

He talked to patients receiving chemotherapy at a day unit, including 60-year-old Asha Millen, who has bone marrow cancer.

"I said, 'How are you?' and he said, 'I'm well,'" she told reporters afterwards.

Another patient, Lesley Woodbridge, 63, said the king sympathised with her and added: "I've got to have my treatment this afternoon as well."

US, Mexico to clamp down on illegal immigration, leaders say

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States and Mexico plan to clamp down on illegal immigration at their shared border, leaders from both countries said on Monday, vowing to disrupt irregular crossings that have reached record levels in recent years. In a phone conversation on Sunday, U.S. President Joe Biden and Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said their administrations

would soon take steps to decrease illegal crossings while also addressing the economic and security problems that cause people to migrate.

In the short term, the two leaders ordered their national security teams to work together to immediately implement concrete measures to significantly reduce irregular border crossings while protecting human rights," the leaders said in a joint statement. Biden, a

Democrat seeking another four-year term in the Nov. 5 election, has toughened his approach to border security in recent months as immigration has emerged as a top concern among voting-age Americans.

Republicans, including Biden's opponent, former President Donald Trump, have criticized the president for rolling back restrictive Trump-era border policies and failing to stem higher levels of illegal crossings.

Most of Asia swelters in extreme heatwave

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: South and Southeast Asia braced for more extreme heat on Sunday, as authorities across the region issued health warnings and residents fled to parks and air-conditioned malls for relief. A wave of exceptionally hot weather has blasted the region over the past week, sending the mercury as high as 45 degrees Celsius and forcing thousands of schools to tell students to stay home.

The Philippines announced on Sunday the suspension of in-person classes at all public schools for two days after a record-shattering day of heat in the capital Manila.

In Thailand, where at least 30 people have died of heatstroke so far this year, the meteorological department warned of "severe conditions" after temperatures in a northern province exceeded 44.1C (111.4F) on Saturday.

And in Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, India and Bangladesh, forecasters warned that temperatures could exceed 40C in the coming days as people endured searing heat and stifling humidity.

Gunman kills 6 in attack on Afghan mosque

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: A gunman stormed a mosque in western Afghanistan and killed six people, a government spokesman said on Tuesday, with local residents claiming the Shia community had been targeted.

Interior ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani said that "an unknown armed person shot at civilian worshippers in a mosque" in Herat province's Guzara district

on Monday at around 9pm (4:30pm GMT). "Six civilians were martyred and one civilian was injured," he wrote on social media platform X early Tuesday morning. Locals said the mosque served the minority Shia community in a district just south of the provincial capital of Herat city, and the imam and a three-year-old child were among those killed. They also said a team of three gunmen staged the attack.

UAE firm stops work in Iraq after deadly strike

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: An Emirati-owned firm suspended operations at a gas complex in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region on Monday after a drone strike that killed four people last week.

The Khor Mor complex, owned by Dana Gas, was hit several times in recent years, but Friday's attack was the first deadly incident.

French charity boycotts Olympic torch relay over Coca-Cola

Monitoring Desk
MARSEILLE: A French environmental charity said it had turned down the chance to take part in the torch relay ahead of the Paris Olympics over the role of Coca-Cola as a major sponsor. "Clean My Calanques", an NGO in Marseille which specialises in beach cleaning, received funding from the 2024 Paris Olympics organising committee for its work educating school children. But it announced

on Monday that it would not take part in the torch relay which will begin in Marseille on May 8, thanks in part to financing from premium Olympics sponsor Coca-Cola.

"We are not going to carry a flame which is paid for by the same people who make us bend over," the founder of Clean My Calanques, Eric Akopian, told AFP. Set up in 2017,

Munir Akram says Occupiers using fake news to de-legitimize freedom struggles, including in Kashmir, Palestine

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Citing Kashmir and Palestine, Pakistan has told a key UN committee that States were resorting to fake news and disinformation in situations of foreign occupation to subdue the voices of people being denied their fundamental freedoms, including the right to self-determination.

"We are witnessing this today in the Gaza war and have witnessed this consistently in the case of occupied Jammu and Kashmir," Ambassador Munir Akram told the Committee on Information on Monday.

The committee oversees the work of the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC) and provides the department with guidance on its policies, programmes and activities.

The Deputy Perma-

nent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, is presiding over the current session of the committee, its 46th.

At the outset of his remarks, Ambassador Akram greeted his colleague, saying, "Your chairing the 46th session of the Committee on Information symbolizes Pakistan's commitment to multilateralism and the UN's information agenda."

"As a democratic and pluralistic nation-state," he said, "Pakistan reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the UN Charter and international human rights law, including freedom of expression and access to information; to combating disinformation in all its manifestations; and to upholding the principles of independence and diversity of the media."

In this regard, Ambassador Akram voiced regret that the use of digital media is turbocharging the spread of fake information and disinformation to promote Islamophobia to justify foreign occupation and aggression to turn victims of aggression into the culprits.

This led Pakistan to initiate the resolution on disinformation, unanimously adopted last year, the Pakistani envoy said, adding that consultations would soon take place to advance its objectives.

Pakistan, he said, would welcome the development of an intergovernmentally formulated code of conduct for information integrity on digital platforms; it must address the increasing use of AI tools for spreading false information and conducting digital surveillance.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui being briefed about departments at NUTECH University.

Practical education vital to thrive in competitive global environment: Khalid Maqbool

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Science and Technology, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui here on Tuesday highlighted the significance of practical education in enabling students to thrive in a competitive global environment.

He was speaking during a visit to the esteemed National University of Technology (NUTECH).

The minister was warmly welcomed by Rector NUTECH Lt Gen @ Moazzam Ejaz, HI(M), then Registrar Nutech Brigadier Adnan Qasim presented a comprehensive briefing on the university's

operations and its upcoming Karachi campus.

Siddiqui expressed appreciation for the efforts made by NUTECH in expanding its reach and promoting quality education.

He visited the NUTECH labs and Skills Department, where he had the opportunity to witness practical skills being imparted to the students.

The minister acknowledged the importance of such practical education in today's rapidly evolving world, emphasizing that this type of education was need of the hour.

During a media talk held at the university pre-

UNICEF unveils new vision to empower adolescent girls in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan launched its National Gender Strategy (2024-2027) here on Tuesday to deliver lasting, transformative change for millions of girls between 10-19 years.

If the strategy is implemented effectively from urban to rural areas, it can drive change, address inequalities and improve the lives of all girls and women, including those living with disability.

"Striving for equal opportunities for all, especially girls, is fundamental to Pakistan's progress. Investing in girls is a win-win for everyone," said Nilofar Bakhtiar, Chairperson, National Commission on the Status of Women. "It can lead to higher incomes and increased productivity, benefiting not only girls, but also the nation. By investing in girls' leadership, we unlock their full potential and pave the way for their brighter future." Today, adolescent girls in Pakistan

face stark challenges in their education, health, nutrition and well-being. For example, Pakistan is home to nearly 19 million child brides.

In addition, more than half of adolescent girls, or 54 per cent, are pregnant before their 18th birthday which can be life-threatening for the mother and the child. A staggering 88 per cent of adolescent girls live in poverty which hampers the country's progress.

"Millions of children, most of whom are girls, face devastating challenges in their daily lives. Often, they cannot use even basic social services like health care. They are forced to drop out of school due to early marriage, poverty, and deep-rooted social norms," said Inoussa Kabore, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Pakistan. "If all girls and women were to have the opportunities that are their right, such as studying, working, they would contribute.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Implementation Minority Rights Forum (IMRF) and the Christian Lawyers Association Pakistan (CLA) had a meeting with Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

Ghazanfar steps down as CEO of Mobilink Bank after distinguished 12-year tenure

ISLAMABAD: Ghazanfar Azzam has decided to step down as the President and CEO of Mobilink Bank after 12 years of service. Under his leadership, Mobilink Bank has experienced remarkable growth and solidified its position as a leader in the Microfinance sector. He helped the Bank undergo rapid digital transformation to strengthen its financial stability, business resilience, and future readiness.

The Board of Directors (BoD) has appointed

Chief Operating Officer (COO), Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, as the Interim CEO, effective April 29, 2024. This appointment is subject to approval from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Board has commenced the search for the upcoming CEO who will continue to drive the Bank's mission forward and ensure long-term success. Chairman BoD, Mobilink Bank and CEO Jazz, Aamir Ibrahim stated, "We thank Ghazanfar for his valuable service over the years and wish him luck."

Christian lawyers' delegation calls on Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the Implementation Minority Rights Forum (IMRF) and the Christian Lawyers Association Pakistan (CLA) on Tuesday called on Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

The delegation was led by MRIF Chairman Samuel Payara and CLA President Advocate Adnan Shamim Bhatti.

The delegation focused on critical issues concerning the implementation of minority rights and enhancing the role of National Commission for Minorities.

IIUI students delegation visits the Central Police Office; meets IGP

ISLAMABAD: The student delegation of the Department of International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) Islamabad visited the Central Police Office Islamabad and met with Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, a public relations officer said.

He said that, a large number of students, senior officers of Islamabad Police were present on this occasion.

During the visit, the IGP Islamabad delivered an

awareness lecture to the students regarding the consequences of drug use and its prevention.

He emphasized that the use of drugs among youth and especially in students is destructive to both their health and future.

Therefore, the students should refrain from drugs themselves and to play their role in protecting their peers and community from the curse of drugs.

He urged the educational institutions administration to cooperate with Islamabad Police in the ongoing "Nasha Ab Nahi" tehrrek by organizing seminars to protect the young-



ISLAMABAD: Andrei Metelitsa, Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to Pakistan calls on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema.

Need to combat plastic pollution for well-being of humanity stressed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The participants of an event titled "Pakistan's Roadmap for Plastic Action" held here Tuesday emphasized the critical need to combat plastic pollution for the well-being of both humanity and the environment. The event was organized by the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC), to mark Earth Day 2024.

The event, held at the COMSATS Secretariat at Islamabad, featured the introduction of the Pakistan National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP), a government initiative implemented as part of the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) under the auspices of the World Economic Forum. Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Climate Change and Environmental Conservation (CC&EC), Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam

graced the occasion as the chief guest. Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and Diplomats from COMSATS member states and other countries in Islamabad also attended the event. Ms. Romina emphasized Pakistan's pressing issue with plastic pollution, especially in urban areas. Owing to these daunting challenges, Pakistan has taken proactive steps, such as banning single-use plastics and polythene bags in 2019, to mitigate plastic waste generation. She stressed the importance of global cooperation in combating plastic pollution, citing initiatives like the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) led by the World Economic Forum and UNEP. She highlighted the government commitment to climate change adaptation and mitigation through policies like the National Adaptation Plan and initiatives such as the Living Indus Initiative, Recharge Pakistan, and GLOP-II, which aim to enhance climate resilience and protect vulnerable sectors.

Anti-polio drive continues in ICT: 23% target achieved on 1st day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner East Usman Ashraf on Tuesday visited several polio vaccination points in the Federal Capital to monitor progress and motivate the teams.

Talking to APP, Islamabad Capital Territory Administration Spokesman, Dr Abdullah Tabassum said that the city's polio vaccination drive entered its second day

with a successful start, reaching 23 percent of its target on day one. As health teams move across the district, local officials were working to ensure that every child was vaccinated.

Additional Deputy Commissioner East Usman Ashraf has encouraged the workers to spread the word about the importance of polio vaccinations and to ensure that no household was left behind.

CDA urges citizens to use water carefully

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) urged the citizens to use the water carefully and avoid wastage of it so that maximum water can be used.

The Water Supply Department of the CDA made this request during an e-Kachari which is organised on the special instructions of the prime minister, said a news release on Tuesday.

The CDA is conducting step wise E-Kachari's in which the online complaints of the citizens were received and resolved it on priority.

The concerned officers including DG Water Management of CDA answered the questions of the citizens during the E-Kachari.

The online complaints were also received from all sectors and areas of Islamabad which would be resolved within twenty-four hours.



ISLAMABAD: A group of people gathered for an awareness lecture to the students regarding the consequences of drug use and its prevention.

ICT arranges medical camps, scholarships to mark 'Labour Day'

ISLAMABAD (APP): To celebrate the International Labour Day, the Labour Welfare Department of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Administration on Tuesday organized an event with a focus on worker's welfare.

Spokesman of the Chief Commissioner Office, Nouman Nazir told this news agency that the event brought together the leaders of various labour unions, medical professionals, and workers from across the federal capital.

Those attended the event include Director General ICT, Asim Ayub Country Director for the International Labour Organization, and representatives from major labour groups like ICT Employees Welfare Association, CDA Mazdoor Union, and Pakistan Workers Federation.

A key feature of the event was the provision of free medical camps, set up by Premium Diagnostic, Al-Safa Eye Trust, and Dr Akbar Niazi Teaching Hos-

pital.

Workers received eye test facility, besides dental check-up, and screening for cancer and other diseases.

In addition, Premier Diagnostics offered a 40% discount on medical services to more than 10,000 workers, and Dr Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital also announced discounts of up to 50% on various treatments.

To further support the well-being of workers, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Labour Welfare Department and Hashoo Foundation to combat child labour. Another positive development was the Nirma-e-Millat Foundation's announcement of scholarships for 50 children of deserving workers with the help of Labour Department. Women were also the focus at the event, with Mustafa Eye Trust distributing 100 sewing machines to working women, providing them an opportunity for financial independence.

KSrelief delivers shelter to flood-affected communities in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) distributed 733 shelter bags to people affected by floods in the Lower Chitral district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This assistance constitutes the third phase of KSrelief's project entailing delivering shelter materials and bags to the region's people, SPA reported.

It provides critical aid to 5,131 individuals from the most vulnerable and needy communities impacted by floods.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers sitting along with tools waiting for their daily job as International Labour Day is celebrated on May 1 every year. It's a day to honour and appreciate the contributions of workers all around the world.

PFA stops production of mayonnaise in Lahore

ISLAMABAD (APP): An enforcement team of the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) raided a sauces production unit on Band Road and stopped its production till further order on account of adulteration.

The authority also lodged an FIR against a Food Business Operator (FBO) in the nearest police station after imposing an emergency prohibition order (EPO) and discharging 6,000kg of mayonnaise.

This was informed by PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javid on Wednesday. He said that the authority took action against the FBO after finding food sample results not up to the mark during the screening test on the spot. He said that the raiding team found the contamination of loose colours, starch, chemi-

cals and artificial flavours in the mayonnaise.

Further, he said that ketchup and sauces were preserved in the non-food grade drums while this practice is strictly prohibited in the food industry as per the law. The raiding team also witnessed unapproved labelling and wrong address on the packing of the product, he added.

The director general further said that adulterated and fabricated mayonnaise was to be supplied to the local hotels and shops. He has vowed to root out the business of counterfeiting elements in the preparation of food items from Punjab.

He has requested the public to report on PFA helpline 1223, website, or social media accounts against the enemies of public health or in case of and food-related complaints.

Govt introducing tech in curricula to align new generations with market demand: Fed Secretary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary of Ministry of Education and Professional Training, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani Tuesday said that the government was introducing technology in the curriculum to align the new generation with the demands of present era.

He was addressing the "STEM Mela 2024" organized under the project "STEM Pakistan Policy Unit" to provide access to science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics to secondary school girls under the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training.

"We are bringing technology into our curriculum so that our new generation can also understand technology in time and be in line with the modern requirements of the present," he

said.

The federal secretary said that the government was making every effort to bring out-of-school children into schools, adding "We want every child to get education and contribute to the development of the country."

New Tell Pakistan CEO Wahaj Siraj advised the students to make their hobby their profession, maintain their character, be a problem solver, and ask questions to clarify matters.

Thousands of female students from the federal capital participated in the Mela on the day when Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif declared an educational emergency to promote education in the country and learned how their education should be.

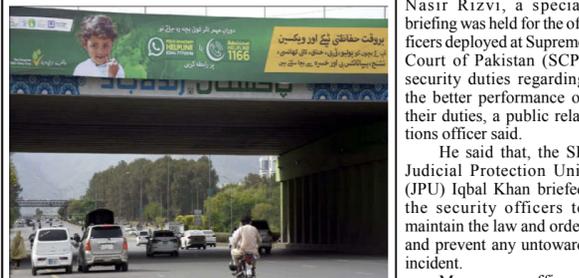
One of the objectives of this fair was also to appreciate the schools, school heads, teachers and students who had actively participated in the STEM Pakistan program in the previous academic year.

The STEM Pakistan program has now expanded to over 4,000 public schools across the country, with over 3500,000 students enrolled.

The program aims to engage students in hands-on activities in classrooms and provide them with a better learning environment.

The program is also being implemented in over 200 middle and high schools of the Federal Directorate of Education.

More than 1200 children and 250 teachers participated in the fair.



ISLAMABAD: A view of a board fixed on Zero Point Bridge in connection with polio vaccination campaign 2024, in the Federal Capital.