

Independent

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President, PM felicitate nation, scientists Pakistan launches first lunar orbit mission ICUBE-Q

WENCHANG, (China) (APP): Pakistan's historic lunar mission (ICUBE-Q) was launched on board China's Chang'e 6 from Hainan, China.

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, Prof. Qamar Ul Islam of Institute of Space Technology (IST) and other senior officials witnessed the launch.

While congratulating nation on this historic achievement, Ambassador Hashmi said that the launch signifies yet another milestone and a good example of Pakistan-China bilateral cooperation in space exploration and research.

Prof Qamar Ul Islam informed that the satellite ICUBE-Q has been designed and developed by IST in collaboration with China's Shanghai University SJTU and Pakistan's national space agency SUPARCO.

ICUBE-Q orbiter carries two optical cameras to image the lunar surface. Following successful qualification and testing, ICUBE-Q was integrated with the Chang'e 6 mission. Chang'e 6 is the sixth in a series of China's lunar exploration missions, he added.

Chang'e 6, China's Lunar Mission will touch down on the Moon's far side to collect samples from the surface and return to Earth for research.

The mission holds significance for Pakistan as it also took a Pakistan CubeSat Satellite iCube-Q, developed by IST.

According to IST, CubeSats are miniature satellites typically characterized by their small size and standardized design. They are constructed in a cubic shape, consisting of modular components that adhere to specific size constraints. These satellites often weigh no more than a few kilograms and are deployed in space for various purposes.

The primary purpose of cubesats is to facilitate scientific research, technology development, and educational initiatives in space exploration.

Online adds: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have felicitated the entire nation on the successful launch of first lunar orbit mission.

In a statement today, Asif Ali Zardari congratulated the Institute of Space Technology, SUPARCO and the China National Space Administration on this achievement.



ISLAMABAD: In a historic moment for Pakistan, iCube Qamar, the country's first satellite mission to the moon has been launched into the space



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party and MNA Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

CM Maryam meets WHO regional director, pledges cooperation in healthcare

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz held a meeting with the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dr. Hanan Balkhy.

During the meeting, Dr. Hanan congratulated Maryam Nawaz on her historic achievement as the first female CM of Punjab. Maryam Nawaz also extended her congratulations to Dr. Hanan Balkhy for assuming the role of WHO Regional Director.



The Punjab CM praised Dr. Hanan's contributions to the health sector and her efforts in public infection control.

Maryam Nawaz emphasized the importance of cooperation and collaboration with the WHO for disease control and treatment initiatives.

Highlighting the significance of the health sector, Maryam Nawaz announced the activation of 32 field hospitals to cater to rural residents.

She also pledged to establish state-of-the-art hospitals in every district within five years.

President approves Justice Siddiqui's retirement

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari, in light of the Supreme Court's March 22, 2024 judgement, on Friday approved the issuance of retirement notification of Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui, on attaining the age of superannuation, i.e., with effect from June 30, 2021.

The president approved the issuance of retirement notification under Article 195 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

He also approved the withdrawal of the Law and Justice Division's notification, dated October 11, 2018, regarding Justice Siddiqui's removal as Judge, Islamabad High Court.

Earlier, Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui had been removed as IHC Judge, vide notification dated 11.10.2018, upon the recommendations of the Supreme Judicial Council of Pakistan, under Article 209(6) of the Constitution.

Expresses dissatisfaction over committee report PM constitutes another 4-member committee to probe into imported wheat scandal

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has expressed dissatisfaction over the report of the committee constituted to probe into imported wheat scandal and non fixation of responsibility has set up another 4-member new committee under federal secretary cabinet which will present its report within four days. The new inquiry committee will also decide who had given permission to import over 6 lac tones wheat within a month. Committee will fix responsibility and present its report to PM.

PM has made it clear those behind importing wheat will be brought to fore and this matter will be brought to logic end.

PM has expressed resentment over non fixation of responsibility clearly therefore, he has constituted another four members committee to review the report of the committee already constituted to investigate the matter. The new committee will be headed by secretary cabinet division Kamran Ali Afzal.

Imran accuses CJP of being 'biased' against PTI

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Friday urged the courts to expedite hearings of his cases, accusing Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa of being "biased" against his party.

"I urge all judges presiding over my cases to expedite the hearings and refrain from unjustified delays," he said in a message from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail. Saying that delaying the decisions was unjust, he said that all cases against him were false, baseless, and concocted. Khan referred to CJP Isa's statement, saying, "He stated that there is no pressure on him, but pressure comes to those who refuse to indulge in wrongdoing. You are behaving like [government's] B-team against PTI."

"You snatched electoral symbol from PTI, denied a level playing field, and violated our fundamental human rights in the guise of the May 9 incidents, on which our petition has been pending since May 25, 2023, without a hearing till today."

CNS visits headquarters of China's People's Liberation Army Navy in Qingdao

RAWALPINDI (Online): Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited headquarters of China's People's Liberation Army Navy at Qingdao, China.

The Naval Chief met Chinese Navy Commander Admiral Hu Zhongming to discuss bilateral naval cooperation and regional maritime security issues.

He highlighted the role of Pakistan Navy for regional maritime peace and stability through Maritime Security Patrol.

The Commander People's Liberation Army Navy appreciated the role of Pakistan Navy in joint maritime security in the region and emphasized the importance of strong bilateral maritime cooperation.

The visit of the Naval Chief will further expand the defence relations between the two countries in general and between the armed forces in particular.

At OIC CFM Pakistan calls for immediate Gaza ceasefire, humanitarian corridor, Israel's accountability

BANJUL (Gambia), (APP): As the foreign ministers of the OIC countries gathered ahead of the Islamic Summit here, Pakistan called for the declaration of an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza, the lifting of the inhuman siege, and the opening of a humanitarian corridor, besides urging the international community to hold Israel accountable for its war crimes in Gaza.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, in his address at the Preparatory Meeting of the 15th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held here on Thursday, also called for an end to the indiscriminate use of



force and the return of the displaced people.

Ishaq Dar, who arrived in the Gambian capital city of Banjul on Wednesday for the OIC Islamic Summit, also emphasized the UN Security Council's role in implementing its resolution 2728 for cessation of hostilities, asking Israel to halt all settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and relinquish all usurped Palestinian properties.

The theme of this year's summit is "Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development." During the meeting, Pakistan was unanimously elected as the Vice-Chair of the Bureau of Foreign Ministers' Preparatory Meeting for the 15th Islamic Summit of the OIC.



GWADAR: Chairman Gwadar Port Padand Khan briefing Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, about Gwadar port.

Constitution is not just a piece of paper; it is a social contract, says Achakzai

LAHORE (INP) - The chairman of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) and chief of opposition alliance Mahmood Khan Achakzai said that the extension shouldn't be given to a person who reaches the age of 60.

"The extension is the way of destruction," Achakzai said while speaking in media in Lahore on Friday.

The veteran politician said that all other alliances were earlier formed to make or break the government but this is the only alliance made for the supremacy of the constitution.

"The constitution is not just a piece of paper; it is a social contract," Achakzai said.

The senior politician said that the gas was extracted at the site of Sui in 1960s and spread across Pakistan but still the people of our area use the firewood to cook their food.

"The justice is mocked, bought and sold here in Pakistan," he added.

"It is a matter of fact that Feb 8 elections were won by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and all the political forces should sit together to find out a solution to this issue," Achakzai said.

Federal Minister Maritime Affairs reaches Gwadar: Gwadar to play key role in economic dev. of Pakistan in near future, says Qaiser

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on three day visit along with the Additional Secretary Maritime Affairs.

Upon arrival in Gwadar, the Chairman Gwadar Port Authority, Pasand Khan Buledi, Chief Executive Officer of China Overseas port Holding Company and other senior officials welcomed the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs.

The Chairman GPA briefed the Federal Minister about the development projects continued at the Gwadar port.

Afterwards, the Chairman China Overseas Port Holding Company briefed about the operations and recent progress of the port.

During the visit of free zone, the Federal Minister inspected the newly built desalination plant supplying 1.2 million gallons of water daily.

He reached the port city



LAHORE: Head of the Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Ayene-e-Pakistan (TTAP) Mahmood Khan Achakzai, addressing a press conference at press club, in the Provincial Capital.

20 passengers killed, 22 injured in GB bus accident

GUNAR (INP): At least 20 people have been killed in a tragic accident when a bus travelling from Rawalpindi to Hunza fell into a ditch early this morning near Gunar Farm in the Diamer area of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Rescue officials said the accident has also left at least 22 people injured. According to reports from the region, the passenger bus veered off the road while taking a turn near Yashukul Das and fell into a ditch around 5am on the Karakoram Highway.

Rescue operations were swiftly initiated, with teams rushing to the accident site to assist the injured and retrieve the deceased.

The Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister's spokesman said the injured were rushed to the Chilas Regional Headquarters Hospital for medical treatment. Emergency measures were implemented in hospitals in Chilas to ensure prompt care for the victims.

Appointments finalised for new Governors in Punjab, K-P, Balochistan

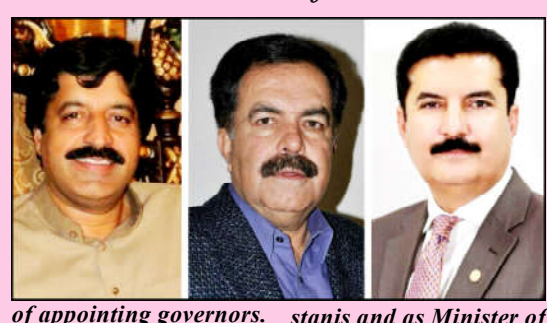
Sardar Salim Haider nominated for Punjab, Faisal Karim Kundi for K-P, and Jaffar Khan Mandokhel for Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In a significant development, the appointments of new governors for Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan have been confirmed following a high-level meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari.

Under an agreement reached between the ruling PML-N and PPP, Sardar Salim Haider has been selected as the governor of Punjab, Faisal Karim Kundi for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Jaffar Khan Mandokhel

for Balochistan. According to reports, these appointments were finalised subsequent to a meeting between Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz, where discussions primarily revolved around the gubernatorial positions in Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

During the meeting, PM Shehbaz hosted a luncheon for Bilawal, fostering an environment conducive to deliberations on the current political landscape of Pakistan and the crucial task



of appointing governors. Bilawal proposed various names for the governorships, which were ultimately endorsed by the prime minister.

Sardar Salim Haider, with prior experience as Special Assistant to the PM on Overseas Paki-

stanis and as Minister of State for Defence and Defence Production, was nominated for the role of Punjab's governor.

Faisal Karim Kundi, former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly under the federal government of PPP, currently as-

sumes the position of Secretary of Information within the party and has been designated as the governor of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

Jaffar Khan Mandokhel, known for his longstanding affiliation with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and his multiple tenures as an elected MPA, has been appointed as the governor of Balochistan.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Under siege

Journalists across the world are facing unprecedented threats — from legal and economic pressure to outright threats of violence — hindering their ability to report freely. The war in Gaza highlights the perils faced by journalists in conflict zones. Since Oct 7, at least 97 journalists and media workers have been killed.

In India, press freedom has seen a marked decline, driven by a political climate that increasingly stifles dissent. Media ownership is concentrated among a few aligning closely with the BJP — slated to win a third straight term in power — narrowing the diversity of voices in the media. Journalists face harassment and legal actions, and purse strings dictate media narratives. Meanwhile, Bangladesh, ranked lowest for press freedom in South Asia, faces its own challenges. The Cyber Security Act approved last year threatens to deepen the state's control over media, limiting journalistic freedom and leaving room for the arbitrary interpretation and application of the law. Such developments, alongside violence and judicial harassment of journalists, underscore a growing hostility towards independent journalism. A similar climate prevails in Pakistan, where the media has always been under siege. The battle is dual-fronted: the government and security establishment both assert control, looking to influence editorial policy. This suppression continues regardless of which party holds power. A notable example is the implicit 'ban' on media channels from naming PTI founder Imran Khan. This policy, initiated during Shehbaz Sharif's last tenure as PM, persisted through the caretaker rule and remains sporadically enforced.

Opposition parties, despite their cries for media freedom, often employ similarly suppressive tactics once in power. Whether through direct censorship, withholding advertising, or sinister measures such as harassment, legal intimidation and violence, the press in Pakistan navigates a hazardous terrain. Making matters worse is a troubling shift within segments of the media landscape, where the lofty ideals of journalism have been sidelined in favour of compliance. Many media houses, once bastions of fearless reporting, now capitulate under the aforementioned twin pressures.

This surrender is often motivated by financial incentives or coercive force, leading to journalism that panders rather than probes. Powerful corporate entities are an additional pressure, some of whom throw money at media houses to campaign against specific outlets. Most recently, four leading publications published an ad in response to an investigative report by Dawn, disgracefully attempting to run it as news.

The need for unity in Pakistan's media has never been stronger, to navigate pressures more effectively, maintain journalistic integrity and push back against attempts to influence editorial content.

The Army knows its constitutional limits

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



The army chief said that while the army understands its constitutional limits, those who criticize the army should also be aware of the constitutional boundaries set by Article 19 of the constitution which subjects all citizens to reasonable restrictions imposed by law which inter alia include the integrity, security, or defense of Pakistan, public order, decency and morality.

The army chief's speech at the passing-out parade of cadets at Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in Risalpur on May 2nd, 2024 was seen as a calculated and well-timed response to politicians, media personnel, and social media activists who have been unjustly criticizing the army and called for the army to uphold its oath, which includes respecting the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and refraining from engaging in any political activities.

The army chief's words can be interpreted as a rebuke to those who are using traditional and social media to condemn the army. He seems to be

implying that the army knows its responsibilities and no one has the right to dictate its actions. Instead, individuals should be mindful of their own actions and avoid crossing the boundaries set by Article 19 of the constitution.

Interestingly, the abuse and condemnation of the army on social media platforms are not unique to Pakistan. For example, in countries like the United States, United Kingdom, India, and others, the military has been subjected to criticism and abuse on social media on account of political differences, human rights concerns, and accountability issues. These countries have also implemented various remedial actions.

In the United States, the Communications Decency Act of 1996 includes provisions related to online harassment and obscenity. Additionally, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) includes provisions that address disrespectful behavior towards the military.

The Malicious Communications Act 1988 in the United Kingdom criminalizes the sending of electronic communications with the intent to cause distress or anxiety. Similarly, the Communications Act 2003 includes provi-

sions related to offensive and menacing messages sent over electronic communications networks.

In India, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, require intermediaries to take down certain types of content, including those that threaten public order or national security. Additionally, the Indian Penal Code includes provisions related to defamation, hate speech, and incitement to violence that can be applied to online behavior.

In Pakistan, there are 52 media laws, rules, regulations, and codes of conduct primarily aimed at imposing reasonable restrictions on the freedom of the press and social media. These can be used against any person found disseminating biased, baseless, false, and venomous propaganda against the armed forces of Pakistan. However, if there is a need to enact new laws, it should be done only after conducting a nationwide debate and benchmarking the best practices globally, involving all stakeholders to ensure their complete buy-in.

Additionally, social media platforms should be engaged proactively to imple-

ment policies, refine the existing tools and invent new ones to combat abusive behavior on these platforms to combat hate speech and harassment and holding accountable those who violate these policies.

Conscious efforts should be made to strengthen support for and promote traditional media, operated by seasoned, experienced, and highly refined professionals. These individuals are adept at the art and science of making difficult, sensitive, and critical communications in the best interests of our institutions, the people of Pakistan, and the country as a whole. This will enhance credibility in traditional media and discourage the spread of misinformation that often occurs in the unregulated jungle of social media. In social media, facts and reality are distorted with total impunity, often driven by the prime objective of increasing views, which translates to higher revenue. This creates added incentive for social media activists to create sensationalism, anarchy, and chaos in society. Therefore, the public should be incentivized to turn to traditional media by weaning them off social media.

However, the most important inter-

vention which will address this issue comprehensively lies in correcting the misconceived perception about the Pakistan army and its alleged involvement in non-traditional roles such as anti-narcotic duties, anti-smuggling duties, and engaging in commercial activities like housing schemes, construction, large scale manufacturing and banking and serving general are appointed against civilian posts which lead to the perceptions of overreach and a deviation from army core mandate of national defense.

Secondly, a misconceived perception which needs correction is the army's alleged involvement in politics, victimizing disfavored politicians and rewarding favored ones, including raising and eliminating political parties, influencing election results, and intimidating judges and election commissions, while the army time and again has assured that it has no role to play in the politics maneuvering.

Thirdly, misplaced perception is that army and institution under it are involved in human rights abuses, including abductions, torture, and intimidation of citizens, journalists and political activists to suppress free speech and dissent.

While it is para-

mount that the false and malicious propaganda against Pakistan's most important and vital institution must stop, equally important is to take steps to improve Pakistan's ranking on the Freedom of Press Index which currently rests at 150 out of 180 countries.

To dispel misperceptions about the Pakistan Army, an immediate and comprehensive strategic communication plan must be put into action. This plan should start by identifying the key misperceptions. Messaging should be crisp, clear, and consistent, emphasizing the Pakistan Army's core mandate of national defense, its contributions to security, and its unwavering commitment to democratic values.

Engaging with stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, and the general public, and forging partnerships with credible allies such as respected public figures and scholars, are crucial steps. Continuous monitoring and evaluation, coupled with transparency and sustained engagement, are fundamental elements for successfully dispelling misperceptions and fostering positive relationships with the public in Pakistan.

Commerce News



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level meeting regarding Saudi investments.

PM hopeful for productive engagement with upcoming Saudi business delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed the hope that the interaction with the delegation of Saudi businessmen expected to visit Pakistan in the next few days would prove productive.

The prime minister, who chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress on Saudi investment and projects in

the country, directed the authorities concerned to accord warm hospitality to the delegation.

The participants were briefed about the upcoming visit of Saudi businessmen and their expected investment in different sectors.

The prime minister thanked the Saudi leadership for promoting investment in Pakistan and taking measures for the

country's progress and prosperity.

Apprising the meeting of his recent Saudi visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the relevant ministers and officers for their well-preparedness.

He told the participants that the Saudi leadership had assured their all-out support for Pakistan's prosperity which was welcoming.

Referring to the bilateral cordial ties with Saudi Arabia that spanned over decades, he said Pakistan was fortunate to have a well-wisher friend like the Kingdom.

Prime Minister Shehbaz told the meeting that Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman were keenly interested in promoting investment in Pakistan.

World Bank sees brighter future for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Bank Group (South Asia) Regional Director, Mathew Verghis noted here Friday that Pakistan has the potential for a brighter future, leveraging its youth, natural resources, and strategic location to achieve 7-8% annual GDP growth.

Speaking at PIDE and World Bank Debate on Fiscal and Governance Reforms, Mathew emphasized the need to

prioritize reforms addressing the current economic crisis.

The WB Regional Director said Pakistan's existing economic model was unsustainable due to its reliance on borrowing to finance its fiscal and current account deficits, leading to a growing debt level, which has reached 80% of GDP.

He further added that Pakistan's spending exceeds its revenue, and it

imports more than it exports, resulting in increased domestic and external borrowing.

On the occasion, the Vice Chancellor of Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Dr. Nadeem ul Haque spearheaded a pivotal economic reform initiative titled "ISLAAH: Immediate Reform Agenda - IMF and Beyond, beginning with his opening remarks at this significant event.

Finance Minister for measures to enhance tax to GDP ratio

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday highlighted the importance of devising strategies to enhance the tax-to-GDP ratio and broaden the tax base to maximize revenue collection.

The minister visited the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)

Headquarters and during a meeting with the Chairman FBR and Members of the Board called for making all-out efforts to achieve the ongoing year's revenue collection target.

Attorney General, Mansoor Usman Awan was also present on the occasion, according to press statement issued by FBR.



Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan is being briefed on the matters pertaining to Pakistan Post.

Farmers' look for Govt helps for better wheat prices

PESHAWAR (APP): Jalal Khan, a progressive farmer, who achieved bumper wheat crop this season seemed upset after hearing news on print and social media about looming wheat prices crisis and started visiting different bazaars to know about actual prices of the commodity as well as makeshift godowns for its storage to avert possible financial loss this season.

"I came to Firdus wheat storage market to know about prices of wheat which was very low this season compared to last year in KP and the only viable option left with me these days to purchase five makeshift wheat godowns to store my 100 KG surplus wheat, hoping to sell it

once prices of the commodity soar in open market," said Nowshera born graduate farmer Jalal wearing in traditional turban.

"The farmers of KP require prices of wheat to be well in excess of Rs 4,000 per 40 kilograms bag to make a reasonable profit. However, the local and international prices were recently recorded as low as Rs 2,500 per bag meaning by

Rs 1500 loss to wheat growers per 40 kilogram bag which added to the worries of thousands of farmers in KP," he claimed.

"I had invested all my money in wheat harvesting this season and will wait to sell my surplus stock once its

prices increase in the local market of Peshawar and Nowshera," he said and expressed the hope that central and KP governments would help assist thousands of farmers in this difficult situation.

Zilakat Malik, former Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar told APP on Friday that the wheat prices crisis was looking more likely because of the poor decisions taken by the caretaker governments and bumper crop this year mostly in Punjab besides gaps in demand-supply chains in international markets.

He said that low international wheat supply means this season that exports would face

possible decrease, leaving farmers and relevant government agencies including food departments in provinces to absorb the wheat surplus margin to facilitate its farmers.

Dr Zilakat linked wheat prices crises due to Russian invasion of wheat rich Ukraine, adding the blockage of Ukrainian ports has resulted in global food shortage as Ukraine supplied about 10 percent the world grain supply at the time of attack.

He said Pakistan in the past was arguably most reliant on Ukrainian wheat as it represented about 59 percent of our grain imports and was cost effective for our country.

"The major reason of wheat prices issue in

Pakistan was Russia-Ukraine war, which has not only caused wheat prices to rise in our country but also affected supply chain among regional countries."

However, some of the increase has been offset by the grain export deal between Russia and Ukraine. He said when this deal was on the verge of expiring last year, Pakistan and other regional importers started building up stocks in advance due to poor decision of the caretakers setup, and that the last year also saw a record amount of land in our country was dedicated to growing of wheat keeping in view of high profit margin compared to other seasonal crops.

KP Food Minister inspects wheat godown in Mardan

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PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Minister for Food Zahir Shah conducted a thorough inspection of the wheat godown in Mardan, on Friday. During the visit, the minister was accompanied by deputy director and district officials, meticulously reviewed all arrangements related to wheat procurement at the godown.

According to the briefing received by the provincial minister, the wheat godown in Mardan has a storage capacity of

approximately 28,000 metric tons, with an existing stock of around 6,000 metric tons from previous seasons.

Zahir Shah instructed to ensure all necessary measures for wheat procurement during the ongoing season, including the installation of additional surveillance cameras for strict monitoring.

Shah emphasized the KP government's commitment to transparency and quality control in the wheat procurement process.

Gold rates decrease by Rs 1,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,400 and was sold at Rs 239,600 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs 241,000 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,201 to Rs 205,418 from Rs 206,619 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 188,300 from Rs 189,400, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,620 and Rs 2,254.80 respectively.

Free press imperative for strengthening democracy, democratic values: KP CM

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur on Friday said that the role of free press for the strengthening of democracy and democratic values in any society was imperative.

In his message in connection with the World Press Freedom Day, the CM said that the purpose of celebrating this day was to highlight the importance of free press for democracy.

He paid tribute to journalists across the country, especially in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, for the freedom of journalism. The role of journalist community is worthy of praise, he said adding that the journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are performing their duties with great dedication despite the extremely unfavorable conditions.

In the war against terrorism, the people and forces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as the journalists here have made great sacrifices, he remarked.

"I salute the sacrifices of journalists who lost

their lives in line of duty." He said that the provincial government believes in freedom of speech and will always welcome the positive criticism of the media and will take steps for improvement accordingly.

The chief minister said that the welfare of journalists and the solution of their problems are among the priorities of KP government, adding the present provincial government would play its role with journalists to ensure freedom of the press.



PESHAWAR: A delegation led by Patron-in-Chief of Khyber Eye Foundation Professor Dr. Dawood meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

Punjab plays role of big brother for all other provinces: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said on Friday that relief goods consisting of 25,000 ration bags had been dispatched for the flood and rain hit people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as per the direction of Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz.

According to a press release issued here, she said that recent flood and rain had badly hit the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

She said that she wanted to express solidarity with the people over the Gilgit-Baltistan bus incident.

Azma Bukhari said, "We are sending 6 trucks carrying food items to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." She further said that Punjab had always played a role of big brother for all other provinces.

The minister said that it was very unfortunate that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was paying no attention towards welfare of the people. Regarding wheat procurement, Azma Bukhari said that inquiry was underway as per the direction of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and soon findings would come in front of people.

LHC CJ visits Rawalpindi Bench

RAWALPINDI (APP): Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan of Friday visited the Rawalpindi Bench, where he was briefed on professional matters.

Upon his arrival at the Bench, the chief justice was warmly received by Justice Shujaat Ali Khan, Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan, Justice Mirza Waqas Rauf and Justice Chaudhry Abdul Aziz.

During the briefing, various administrative issues were also discussed. The chief justice also took round of various sections of the bench, and appreciated the staff for their professionalism.

US envoy Blome for bilateral collaboration in IT, health with Punjab

LAHORE (APP): US ambassador Donald Blome has attended multiple meetings with political and business leadership in Punjab to promote collaboration in the Information Technology (IT), health and education sectors. During his three-day sojourn in the provincial capital between May 1 and 3, the US envoy held meetings with Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, Speaker Punjab Assembly (Acting Governor Punjab) Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan and Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly Malik

Ahmed Khan Bhachar. US Consul General to Lahore Kristin Hawkins was also present during the meetings. During the meetings Ambassador Donald Blome explored opportunities to strengthen US - Pakistan partnership in the Punjab province. He also held meetings and attended events focused on bilateral collaboration in the fields of IT, health, and culture.

Besides exploring more areas for future collaboration, Blome underlines the positive impact of initiatives under the US - Pakistan 'Green Alliance' framework.



HYDERABAD: People are enjoying pleasant evening and cooling themselves during the hot weather, at River Indus in Jamshoro.

Over 35000 complaints handled in year 2023, says Ombudsman Punjab

RAWALPINDI (APP): Ombudsman Punjab, Major @ Azam Suleman Khan said that 35202 complaints were handled during the year 2023 whereas the number of complaints handled is greater than that of previous years' along with financial relief of Rs 22,504 billion.

He said that the 26229 kanals of public and private land worth Rs.15.834 billion were recovered while the total value of the financial relief received by the complainants was Rs.6.669 billion rupees.

The ombudsman said

this while addressing an event regarding the annual report of the Office of Provincial Ombudsman Punjab 2023, which held here on Friday. He presented a comparative review of the annual report and presented data related to the performance of his department, especially in redressal of complaints related to the Police, Local Government and Education departments. He highlighted that an improved data driven result of increased number of resolved complaints was a proof of the growing confidence of the public in the office of the Ombudsman Punjab.

CM orders to ensure sale of 100gm Roti at Rs 15

MULTAN (APP): In compliance with instructions from Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, district administration has started Geo-Tagging hotels and Tandoors in Multan to ensure no one could fleece the people and they get 100 gram Roti at Rs 15 per piece.

Delegation of KEF calls on Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): A representative delegation of Khyber Eye Foundation (KEF) called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali and informed him about the performance of the foundation.

The delegation was led by Patron-in-Chief of the foundation Professor Dr. Dawood comprised Adnan Jalil, Khawaja Khalid Sultan, Yawar Nasir and Ubaid Amjad. The delegation informed the Governor about the achievements of eye foundation and discussed with him the establishment of a hospital in Lower Dir.

Qasim inaugurates District Health Info System-2

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah Friday inaugurated the District Health Information System-2 which would help in improving health reporting mechanisms.

Talking to media men during inauguration, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah said that District Health Information System 2 would further improve the health reporting.

Implementation of DHIS 2 was inevitable for advanced reporting and initially, the S system is being implemented in five districts, Syed Qasim Ali Shah said.

The training of DHIS 2 in other districts will also continue and the upgraded system will be extended to the entire province soon, Syed Qasim Ali Shah added. With this system, it will be possible to better monitor the provision of resources and services of the health department, he confirmed.

15 dead, 1406 injured in 1280 road accidents in Punjab

Independent Report LAHORE: At least 15 persons were dead and 1406 injured in 1280 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 638 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 768 victims with minor injuries were treated at the site by rescue medical teams, thus reducing the burden of hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 767 drivers, 60 underage drivers.

Matric exams Action will be taken against those violating Section 144: DC Ghotki

By Tanveer Ahmed MIRPUR MATHELO: Decision to take action against copy culture during matric exams in district Ghotki, action will be taken against those violating Section 144, assistant commissioners will visit the centers on daily basis to provide reports. According to the details, Deputy Commissioner Ghotki Dr. Syed Mohammad Ali has instructed all the Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates of the district to visit the examination centers in their areas on a daily basis and take

effective measures against the copy culture of Section 144. Legal action should be taken against the violators.

The Deputy Commissioner says that the copy culture is no less than a pest for our education, the youth will realize in the future that they have wasted their precious time due to copying, so today the youth should abandon the trend of copying. Go ahead with hard work so that they don't have to face difficulties tomorrow because development is impossible without better education.

International News

UN says rebuilding in Gaza post-war at scale unseen since WWII

Monitoring Desk GAZA STRIP: The United Nations said on Thursday that the post-war reconstruction of Gaza would require an international effort unseen since the aftermath of World War II, estimating it could cost up to \$40 billion.

It came as Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh struck an optimistic tone over a possible truce and hostage release deal for Gaza, after weeks of largely stalled negotiations.

There have been reports of sticking points between the militant group and Israel nearly seven months into the war that has devastated the Palestinian territory.

But Haniyeh, head of

the group's Qatar-based political bureau, said in calls to Egyptian and Qatari mediators that Hamas was studying the latest proposal with a "positive spirit".

Much of Gaza has been reduced to a grey landscape of rubble and the United Nations estimated the cost of reconstruction at between \$30bn and \$40bn.

"The scale of the destruction is huge and unprecedented... this is a mission that the global community has not dealt with since World War II," UN assistant secretary-general Abdallah al-Dardari told a briefing in the Jordanian capital Amman.

The UN official said

"72 per cent of all residential buildings have been completely or partially destroyed". Reconstruction is made more difficult by the presence of large quantities of unexploded ordnance in the debris that Gaza's Civil Defence agency says triggers "more than 10 explosions every week".

Mediators have proposed a deal that would halt fighting for 40 days and exchange Israeli hostages for potentially thousands of Palestinian prisoners, according to details released by Britain.

An Israeli official not authorised to speak publicly said Israel was still waiting for Hamas's formal response to the latest proposal.



People stand next to a house damaged in an Israeli strike, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Russia says it has driven Ukrainian army from 211 square miles of territory this year

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said his troops had taken control of 547 square kilometres (211 square miles) of territory this year in what he called Russia's "new regions," a reference to four Ukrainian regions that Moscow says it has annexed.

Shoigu, in remarks on Friday to senior military commanders, said Ukrainian forces were retreating all along the front line and that Russian troops were

breaking what he called a network of Ukrainian strongholds.

"The Ukrainian army units are trying to cling on to individual lines, but under our onslaught they are forced to abandon their positions and retreat," said Shoigu.

"Over the past two weeks, the Russian Armed Forces have liberated the settlements of Novobakhmutivka, Semenivka and Berdychi in the Donetsk People's Republic."

Swinney set to be Scotland's new leader

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Scotland's likely next leader John Swinney is a political veteran who will have to unify his fractured separatist party and revitalise its flagging independence movement.

The 60-year-old belongs to the Scottish National Party's (SNP) old guard, and is an ally of tarnished ex-first minister Nicola Sturgeon, whom he loyally served as deputy for a record nine years.

Swinney is viewed as a calm head capable of stabilising Scotland's ruling party following 39-year-old Humza Yousaf's turbulent leadership and repairing its broken relationship with former power-sharing partners the Greens.

Turkiye halts all trade with Israel, cites worsening Palestinian situation

Monitoring Desk ANKARA: Turkiye stopped all exports and imports to and from Israel, the Turkish trade ministry said, citing "worsening humanitarian tragedy" in the Palestinian territories.

"Export and import transactions related to Israel have been stopped, covering all products," Turkiye's trade ministry said in a statement.

"Turkiye will strictly and decisively implement these new measures until the Israeli Government allows an uninterrupted and sufficient flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza."

The two countries had a trade volume of \$6.8 billion in 2023.

Turkiye last month imposed trade restrictions on Israel over what

it said was Israel's refusal to allow Ankara to take part in aid air-drop operations for Gaza and its offensive on the enclave.

Earlier on Thursday, Israel's foreign minister said that Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan was breaking agreements by blocking ports for Israeli imports and exports.

"This is how a dictator behaves, disregarding the interests of the Turkish people and businessmen, and ignoring international trade agreements," Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz posted on social media platform X.

Katz said he instructed the foreign ministry to work to create alternatives for trade with Turkey, focusing on local production and imports from other countries.



Britain's opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, Shadow Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner and Labour Party MP for Blackpool South Chris Webb meet with activist after Labour won a Parliamentary by-election in Blackpool, Britain.

Russia can't match a Western asset seizure, but it can inflict pain

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Russia's ability to mete out like-for-like retaliation if Western leaders seize its frozen assets has been eroded by dwindling foreign investment, but officials and economists say there are still ways it can strike back. The United States wants to seize immobilised Russian reserves - around \$300 billion globally - and hand

them to Ukraine, while EU leaders favour ringfencing profits from the assets, estimating they will total 15-20 billion euros by 2027. Much of that money is centrally held, meaning it is accessible if the West decides to go after it. Russia says any attempt to take its capital or interest would be "banditry" and has warned of catastrophic consequences.

Pro-China leader elected as Solomon Islands PM

Monitoring Desk HONIARA: Solomon Islands lawmakers elected China-friendly former foreign minister Jeremiah Manele as prime minister on Thursday, choosing him over an opposition leader intent on curbing Beijing's reach in the Pacific nation.

Manele won 31 votes in a secret ballot of 50 MPs, said Governor-General David Vunagi, the climax of a national election that will resonate in Beijing, Washington and across the South Pacific.

His opponent, democratic reformer and long-time opposition leader Matthew Wale, got 18 votes.

NATO members 'deeply concerned' by activities such as sabotage on alliance soil

Monitoring Desk BRUSSELS: NATO countries say they are deeply concerned by a campaign of hybrid activities on the military alliance's soil they attribute to Russia, and which they say constitute a threat to their security. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday in a message posted on the social media platform X that actions including disinformation, sabotage, acts of violence and cyber and electronic interference "will not deter us from supporting Ukraine." There was no immediate response

to a request for comment from the Russian Foreign Ministry to Stoltenberg's statement. Earlier this year, a U.K.-based think tank said Russia was rebuilding its capacity to destabilize European countries, posing a strategic threat to NATO as its members focus on the war in Ukraine.

"NATO Allies are deeply concerned about recent malign activities on Allied territory, including those resulting in the investigation and charging of multiple individuals in connection with hostile state activity affecting Czechia."

Georgian NGO worker says she's fighting for her country's future

Monitoring Desk TBILISI: Mariam Tsertsvadze, the co-founder of an animal charity in the Georgian capital, has managed only three or four hours of sleep a night in the past few weeks, but says she is full of energy. Tsertsvadze has joined thousands of other Georgians in nightly protests in the centre of Tbilisi to voice their opposition to a government bill on "foreign agents".

Students erect pro-Palestinian encampments across major Canadian universities

Monitoring Desk TORONTO: Quebec Premier Francois Legault said on Thursday the encampment at Montreal's McGill University should be dismantled as more students erected pro-Palestinian camps across some of Canada's largest universities, demanding they divest from groups with ties to Israel.

The Canadian protests come as police have been arresting hundreds on U.S. campuses and the death toll in Gaza has been mounting.

While McGill had requested police intervention, law enforcement had not stepped in Thursday to clear the encampment and said in a statement Thursday evening it was monitoring the situation.

Students also set up encampments at Canadian schools including the University of Toronto, the University of British

Columbia and the University of Ottawa.

"We want the camp to be dismantled. We trust the police, let them do their job," a spokesperson for Legault said.

There was also a pro-Israel counter-protest in Montreal Thursday. The two sides were kept separate. On Thursday morning, students at the University of Toronto set up an encampment in a fenced-off grassy space at the school's downtown campus where some 100 protesters gathered with dozens of tents.

According to a statement from organizers the encampment will stay until the university discloses its investments, divests from any that "sustain Israeli apartheid, occupation and illegal settlement of Palestine" and ends partnerships with some Israeli academic institutions.

PM Shahbaz optimistic for a polio-free Pakistan very soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed the hope that the government, in collaboration with the global partners and national institutions, would be able to eliminate polio from the country very soon. The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) led by Dr Christopher Elias, Chair of Polio Oversight Board and President of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Development Division, said the

government was fully resolved to purge the country of this fatal disease. The prime minister directed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to launch a joint awareness drive, in collaboration with the GPEI. He told the delegation that the government would carry out the accountability of the institutions involved in the polio eradication to ensure transparency in the process. He also assured to provide full security cover to the vaccination teams.

Prime Minister Shehbaz lauded the \$500 million donation by Saudi Arabia during the World Economic Forum for polio eradication. He said the Pakistan-Afghanistan cooperation was a must to eradicate polio from the region. The members of the delegation apprised the prime minister of the ongoing measures for polio eradication and appreciated the government's resolve to get rid of the disease. The delegation also highlighted the problems

faced during the immunisation. The delegation members observed that the government was resolved to ensure success of polio eradication drive by providing necessary technical expertise. Dr Christopher told the prime minister that Bill Gates was extremely pleased over the anti-polio initiatives taken during his both stints as Punjab chief minister. The meeting was attended by Regional Director of EMRO Dr Hanan Balkhi, Sanjay Wijesekera Unicef Regional Director of

South Asia, Dr Omotayo Bolu, Polio Branch Chief of Centres for Disease Control, Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative in Pakistan, Abdullah A. Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan, Dr Hamid Jafari, Director Polio Eradication, EMRO and Michael Galway, Deputy Director Polio Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, State Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, PM's Coordinator on Health Mukhtar Malik and relevant senior officers were also present.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative led by Dr Christopher Elias, Chair of Polio Oversight Board and president of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Development Division called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan discussing Pak-Australia historical relations with the Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mr. Neil Hawkins on the occasion of Australia Day in spring 2024.

Pak, Syria edu ministers discuss mutual coop. in education sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level Syrian delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Education of Syria Mr. Rami Al-Dhullli called upon the Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and discussed cooperation & exchange of expertise between both countries to bring advancement in the education sector. The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan Mr. Ramiz Al-Rai and the Deputy Ambassador of Pakistan to Syria Mr. Umar Hayat Khan, according to a press release on Friday.

He said that Pakistan hopes to provide every support possible to Syria to uplift its education system. He said that only through cooperation and exchange of expertise both countries can advance in the education sector. He emphasized the need to upgrade and expand technical skills development and said that Pakistan aims to train millions of youth in advanced-level Information and Technology courses. Secretary Education Mr. Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani briefed the delegation about the various initiatives of the government in its bid to adopt the latest best practices in the education sector.

KSrelief distributes 1,367 shelter aid bags in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) Friday distributed 1,367 shelter aid bags in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The assistance was provided to 9,569 individuals from vulnerable families residing in flood-affected areas, as part of the third phase of the 2024 relief materials and winter bags distribution project in Pakistan, SPA reported. The initiative is part of the Kingdom's ongoing humanitarian and relief endeavors, undertaken through its dedicated humanitarian arm, KSrelief, to support underprivileged and affected individuals across the globe.

Journalist among three martyred, eight injured in Khuzdar blast

QUETTA (APP): Khuzdar Press Club's President among three martyred and eight others sustained injuries in blast near Sultan Ibrahima Khan Road area of Khuzdar town on Friday. According to SHO Khuzdar City, the blast was occurred near the vehicle of the victim Journalist namely Muhammad Siddiqi when he was crossing the way to go the University of Khuzdar in a vehicle from his house. As a result, he died on

the spot and ten other suffered injuries. The police reached on the spot and cordoned off the entire area. The body and the injured were shifted to nearby hospital where two among the injured succumbed to their injuries during initial treatment processes. The SHO said that unknown armed men had opened fire at local journalist Muhammad Siddiqi few months ago but he had escaped in the attack.

Dy Chairman Senate, Irfan Siddiqui discuss legislative issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Sardar Syedaal Khan and parliamentary leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) in the Senate, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, held discussions on Friday regarding legislative issues currently under consideration in the Senate. During a meeting Irfan Siddiqui congratulated Syedaal Khan on his recent election as Deputy Chairman of the Senate, expressing his best wishes for a successful tenure. He also shared his optimism that Syedaal Khan will guide the Senate pro-

lease issued here. During the meeting, both leaders engaged in a detailed conversation about the political situation in the country. Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan expressed his gratitude to Senator Siddiqui for his kind words and his role as a leader within the Senate. He hoped that presence of Senator Siddiqui, as a parliamentary leader of the Muslim League (N), would serve as a source of strength for everyone. Syedaal Khan said that PML-N is the largest po-

litical party in the country and that its leadership plays a critical role in promoting harmony and cooperation within the House.



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Naqvi directs improving facilities for passengers at Lahore Airport

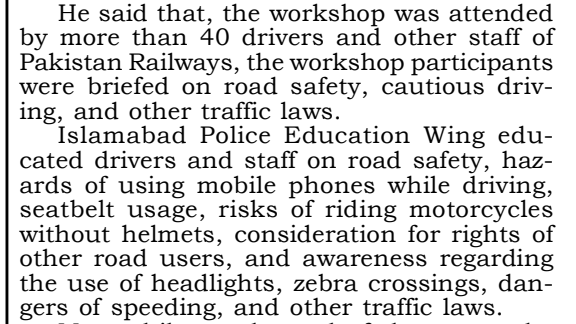
LAHORE (INP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi has said that the immigration counters at Lahore Airport will be increased for the convenience of the passengers leaving for abroad. He along with Minister for Aviation and Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif paid two hours long visit to Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore on Friday. Expressing dissatisfaction over the facilities available to passengers at the airport, the federal ministers emphasized the need for improvements. Mohsin Naqvi said that the immigration

counters will be increased for the convenience of the passengers going abroad and the lengthy and 3-tiered search process will be made easier and faster. He also ordered immediate resolution of the immigration issues and increasing facilities for passengers. The federal ministers instructed concerned authorities from ASF, ANF, and Customs to devise a comprehensive plan within the next 24 hours in this regard. Khawaja Asif stated that after the successful implementation at Lahore Airport, the simplified search process will also be implemented at other airports as well.

Islamabad Police Education Wing hosted a two-day workshop on road safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly dry weather for most parts of the country and hot in central and southern parts during the next 24 hours. However, partly cloudy weather conditions with chances of rain-windstorm/thunderstorm at few places in upper Punjab, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. The law minister said that the Constitution of Pakistan ensured freedom of expression. It is our duty, as guardians of justice, to ensure a conducive environment where journalists can work freely, he added. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP), launched an innovative e-learning tool kit designed to pro-

vide Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DI-DRR) for disabled vulnerable communities. The launching ceremony was held at NDMA's National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), attended by Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik and Country Heads of STEP and UNESCAP in Pakistan. Aiko Akiyama, UNESCAP, Muhammad Atif Shiekh, STEP Founder and CEO and Abia Akram, STEP Director Programs



ISLAMABAD (APP): According to details, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police Education Wing hosted a two-day workshop on road safety at Pakistan Railways Headquarters, a public relations officer said. He said that, the workshop was attended by more than 40 drivers and other staff of Pakistan Railways, the workshop participants were briefed on road safety, cautious driving, and other traffic laws. Islamabad Police Education Wing educated drivers and staff on road safety, hazards of using mobile phones while driving, seatbelt usage, risks of riding motorcycles without helmets, consideration for rights of other road users, and awareness regarding the use of headlights, zebra crossings, dangers of speeding, and other traffic laws. Meanwhile, at the end of the event, the SSP Traffic Mohammad Sarfraz Virk distributed certificates among the participants who completed the Road Safety Workshop. Pakistan Railway authorities praised the Islamabad Police for organizing the initiative which emphasizes the importance of such workshops in educating participants about various aspects of road safety. During the event, officers from the Education Wing advised participants to adhere to traffic laws and drive cautiously to ensure their and others' safety.

Faizabad Dharna, non allocation of reserved seats to PTI cases fixed for hearing

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has fixed for hearing Faizabad dharna case and non allocation of reserved seats to PTI. Hearing of the cases will take place next week. A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa will hear the case on May 6. The court has issued notice to the respective respondents. Federal government will present Faizabad Dharna commission report in the court. On the other hand the case on non-allocation of reserved seats to PTI has also been fixed for hearing on May 8. SC has constituted 3-member bench to hear this case. The bench headed by justice Mansoor Ali Shah will be comprising justice Muhammad Ali Mirza and Justice Athar Minallah.

Free, responsible media essential for democracy: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar has emphasized on the necessity of an independent and responsible media to promote democracy and accountability in the society. In his message on 'Press Freedom Day here Friday, he said, this year's theme, 'A Free Press for a Sustainable Future: Journalism Facing Environmental Challenges,' highlights the important role of the media in addressing environmental issues and sustainability. The law minister said that the Constitution of Pakistan ensured freedom of expression. It is our duty, as guardians of justice, to ensure a conducive environment where journalists can work freely, he added.

Aleem expresses grief over Chilas bus mishap

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communication Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday expressed grief and sorrow over the Chilas bus accident in which several people lost their lives and were injured. In a statement, the minister prayed to the Almighty to give deceased highest position in Heaven and speedy recovery to the injured. He said the whole nation was saddened over a great loss of lives.

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ISLAMABAD (Online): Minister for privatization Abdul Aleem Khan has said 10 larger institutions have expressed interest for privatization of PIA so far and obtained elementary documents.

Steel mills, DISCOs, women bank, HBFC, others being privatized: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (Online): Minister for privatization Abdul Aleem Khan has said 10 larger institutions have expressed interest for privatization of PIA so far and obtained elementary documents. "Privatization Commission (PC) is extending PIA privatization for 15 days. The documents regarding expression of interest can be filed till May 18 and this date will not be further extended, he said this during media briefing here Friday. He went on to say in certain news papers correct statistics with reference to privatization of PIA have not been given while real situation is encouraging because this institution has such potential now too that it can be transformed into profit yielding institution by integrating new planes. He went on to say the privatization of PIA which is running into deficit of Rs 830 billion is in national interest. I am sure whenever Bilawal Bhutto comes to know the real facts, he will support privatization too. He indicated that Steel Mills, DISCOs, First women bank, house building finance corporation and other institutions are too being privatized. He pointed out that government wants to privatize 6 to 7 DISCOs.

Islamabad police banned from wearing uniform off-duty

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad police have issued new orders banning police officers from wearing uniforms off-duty. As per details, the federal capital police issued the new orders via wireless, saying that no officer is allowed to wear a uniform while coming or going from duty. The police official stated that uniform will only be worn at the point of duty whereas during duty hours, two officers will accompany each other, and they will be required to carry their weapons with them all the time. The decision was made considering the current security

situation in the city. The police department has taken this step to ensure the safety and security of its officers and the general public. In a separate development, the Islamabad Police earlier unveiled an app aimed at enhancing public safety and crime prevention. The newly introduced ICT-15 app launched following the directions of the then Minister of Interior Sarfraz Akbar Bugti, promises to empower the general public in the capital city by enabling them to actively participate in the fight against crime and ensure the well-being of their communities.

Muqam grieves over loss of lives in GB bus incident

PESHAWAR (APP): Expressing profound grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives during the bus accident in Diamir Gilgit Baltistan, Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions and Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam contacted the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary of the Gilgit Baltistan and assured every possible support in this hour of difficulty. He directed the concerned authorities in Gilgit Baltistan to provide speedy assistance and medical care to the injured. He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. The Federal Minister expressed sympathies with the victims' families. He prayed Allah Almighty to may rest the departed souls in an eternal place.

NDMA launches e-learning tool kit for Disability-Inclusive DRR

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP), launched an innovative e-learning tool kit designed to provide Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DI-DRR) for disabled vulnerable communities. The launching ceremony was held at NDMA's National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), attended by Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik and Country Heads of STEP and UNESCAP in Pakistan. Aiko Akiyama, UNESCAP, Muhammad Atif Shiekh, STEP Founder and CEO and Abia Akram, STEP Director Programs

saster Management Professionals with essential skills and knowledge to effectively address the needs and concerns of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) during all disaster phases and across various disaster types. The launch of tool kit signifying a proactive and futuristic approach adopted by the NDMA. It reflects the authority's commitment to inclusivity and its dedication to building a disaster-resilient future where no one is left behind. This pioneering e-learning tool kit is a comprehensive resource aimed at empowering Di-

saster Management Professionals with essential skills and knowledge to effectively address the needs and concerns of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) during all disaster phases and across various disaster types. The launch of tool kit signifying a proactive and futuristic approach adopted by the NDMA. It reflects the authority's commitment to inclusivity and its dedication to building a disaster-resilient future where no one is left behind. This pioneering e-learning tool kit is a comprehensive resource aimed at empowering Di-



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