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

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

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Indian unilateral actions and solidarity with the Kashmiri Sharif on Thursday said that no so-called legislation or court verdicts could absolve India of its obligations on

Hurriyat leaders of Jammu and Kashmir during his daylong Pakistan effectively raised the Kashmir issue. visit here, said that Pakistan categorically rejected the Indian unilateral and illegal actions in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) regarding the revocation of its special status. He said Kashmir was an internationally recognised dispute that remained on the UN Security Council's agenda for the last seven decades and awaited settlement as per the UNSC's resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

The Hurriyat leaders appreciated the prime minister's role in handling the recent situation in the AJK and also thanked Pakistan for its steadfast stance in condemning

people. Prime Minister Shehbaz assured the delegation that Pakistan would continue extending its moral, politithe Jammu and Kashmir dispute, under international laws. The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of cited the recently held OIC summit in Gambia where

He assured that the Foreign Ministry as well as Pakistan's diplomatic missions would play their role to highlight the Kashmir cause at international forums more effectively. He also urged the Pakistani media to create global awareness of Indian atrocities in the IIOJK. The prime minister instructed the Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam to improve his coordination with the Hurriyat leaders. The delegation comprised Mehmood Ahmed Sagar, Ghulam Muhammad Sufi, Syed Faiz Ahmed Naqshbandi, Altaf Ahmed Bhat, Shehzad Wani, EJaz Rehmani, Zahid Ashraf and Altaf Hussain Wani



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



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

#### Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Iraq: Asif

Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has em-kistan strongly supports phasized that Pakistan at- the sovereignty, political taches great importance to unity and territorial integits relations with Iraq and rity of Iraq.

ISLAMABAD (Online): build capacities of their

Khawaja Asif said Pa-

#### Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday met with Chinese Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an and underlined the Government of Pakistan's reform agenda with a focus countries.

on governance, revenue, and ease of doing business to attract Foreign Direct Investment. The deputy prime

minister, who is on a fourday visit to China, also emphasized Pakistan's high priority to invest-**KP** Governor ments from China, and shared an overview of the Kundi calls priority sectors identified on President for this purpose, including agriculture, IT, mines and ISLAMABAD (APP): minerals and renewable energy. Deputy Prime Minis- cial stability.

#### reaffirms continued support for Pak financial stability BEIJING (APP): :Deputy ter Dar and Minister Lan Prime Minister and Foreign expressed profound appreexpressed profound appreciation for Pakistan-China financial and banking coop-

eration calling it a manifes-tation of the 'All Weather Strategic Cooperative Part-

**Chinese Finance Minister** 

view of growing business-to-business (B2B) linkages between Pakistan and China

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

### Parliament should be dissolved if ordinances are to be introduced, says CJP Isa

ISLAMABAD (INP): If president of the country ordinances are to be introduced, then parliament should be dissolved, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa remarked on Thursday, as the Supreme Court resumed hearing of arguments in the National Accountability (NAB) Ordinance 1999 amendment

The incarcerated founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) joined the proceedings through video link from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail in light of the court order issued on the previous hear-

"Through ordinances, the will of one person is imposed on the entire nation. Isn't this against democracy? Shouldn't the

provide detailed justifications along with the ordinances," the CJP said.

A five-member SC bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, heard the case.

Unlike previous hearings, today's proceedings were not live-streamed, but images of the PTI founder went viral on social media. The news of PTI founder's viral image irked the court which ordered an investiga-

tion to penalise the rules violator. At the outset of the hearing, Advocate Khwaja Haris came to the rostrum.

The chief justice said he (Haris) was a counsel in the original case and his absence was strange. The CJP said the court would like to hear his stance.

Haris said he would assist the court in the matter.

Advancing his arguments, federal government's lawyer Makhdoom Ali Khan ar-gued that the NAB amendment case was sub judice before the IHC.

At this point, Justice Isa asked him to present his arguments loudly so that the PTI founder could hear him on the video call. Justice Minallah asked

the lawyer, "Was the peti-tion pending before the high

court accepted for hearing?" The lawyer replied in the affirmative.

Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday called on President Asif Ali Zardari here.

The president congratulated the governor or

nership' between the two They discussed ideas to further enhance financial cooperation, especially in

wishes to expand cooperation in all fields of mutual interests especially defence.

He expressed these views while talking to Iraqi Ambassador Hamid Abbas Lafta, who called on him in Islamabad Thursday.

The Defence Minister said both Pakistan and Iraq should work closely to share their experiences and

stan.

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

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

portunities for develop-

ment and prosperity to

development and prosper-

ity of Balochistan will en-

sure the economic stabil-

of the country and Gwadai

Port is the hub of

business. The quality of life

of the people of

Balochistan would be im-

proved with the early

completion of ongoing

projects under CPEC in the

economic development is

He further said that

province, he added.

ity of the country.

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar Thursday said the development and prosperity of the people of Balochistan is the key priority of the government. He said that senators from Balochistan are given the opportunity to represent the people of the province in the upper house.

He expressed these views in a meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti to discuss the overall political and economic situation of the province, development projects. They expressed pledge to work together for the development of the province and the welfare of its people.

Syedaal Khan said that development, therefore the Upper House is detereffective measures must mined to resolve the probbe taken to further prolems faced by the provmote industries in the inces and provide opprovince



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Russia Albert Khorev called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

assuming the office, accordkistan has developed the ing to a President House best training facilities and press release. infrastructure for its Faisal Karim Kundi Armed Forces and numerthanked the president for ous foreign countries are reposing trust in him and availing these facilities, esappointing him as the govpecially the training reernor. lated, to counter terrorism.

President Zardari in-He encouraged the visiting structed Governor Kundi to work for the betterdignitary to avail more ment of the people and training facilities in Pakiexpressed good wishes for

> IHC bans entry of intelligence agencies personnel to

court room ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHĆ) has banned entry of intelli-

gence agencies entry to court room Justice Tariq Mehmood

Jahangiri issued order to ban entry of intelligence agencies personnel in court room Police man deployed outside court room has confirmed this order of the court. Police man told Online

it is directive of the court that personnel affiliated with the intelligence agencies be not allowed to enter to court its citizens. He said the room. It is pertinent to mention here new matters are coming to open on daily ba-

sis with reference to judges He said that the Senator Vawda held press conference after let-China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project is ter was written by Justice Babar Sattar. Registrar IHC a game changer for the degave reply to it formally. velopment and prosperity

Now IHC has banned entry of intelligence agencies personnel into court

New political party APP will be announced

room.

#### today

dependent on industrial ISLAMABAD (Online): New political party under former Prime Minister (PM) Shahid Khaqan Abbasi will be announced today (Friday). Name of new party has been pro-posed as "Awam Pakistan Party" (APP). Application for its registration will be filed in Election Commission (EC). Logo, anthem and membership forms have been prepared of this

development

Thursday.

party. The central leaders of ing, a news release said isparty are Shahid Khaqan sued here. Abbasi, Miftah Ismail. Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar. Sardar Mehtab Abbasi. Javed Abbasi and others.

#### Pakistan witnessed 1,514 terror incidents in 2023

National Assembly told

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pa- lighted the worsening law kistan witnessed 1,514 ter- and order situation in the ror inicidents in 2023, the country specially in KP, interior ministry told Nawhere 858 terror attacks tional Assembly (NA) on were reported that claimed Thursday. According to delives of 402 security pertails, the interior ministry sonal and 178 civilians. As many as 148 security persubmitted a written in the National Assembly regardsonal were martyred and ing law and order situation 198 were injured in 626 terof Pakistan. The report ror attacks in Balochistan stated that 572 security during the past year, the personnel were marytred report of the interior minisand 1292 were injured in the try said. In Sindh, 8 security forces were martyred, 26

terror incidents in 2023, while 358 citizens lost their lives and 700 sustained wounds. The report high-



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

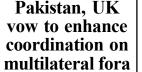
## boost economic activity in Gwadar area

ISLAMABAD (APP): as a key player of Federal Minister for Mari-Pakistan's economic prostime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed perity and emphasized the Sheikh presided over a need for concerted efforts meeting aimed at boosting to enhance import operaeconomic activities in tion and business activ-Gwadar Port area, emphaity sizing the government's

He reaffirmed the commitment to accelergovernment's commitment ate growth and regional to this cause, citing directives from the prime minin Balochistan region on ister to take decisive measures to enhance import of Federal Secretary Marigovernment goods through time Affairs, representa-Gwadar Port.

tives from ministry of finance, industries & production, fisheries department, ministry of commerce attended the meet-

China Lan Fo'an.



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

on Wednesday, a Foreign Office press release said on Thursday Additional Foreign Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Conference Secretary (Arms Control was held in the Ministry of & Disarmament) Ambas-Planning regarding the nasador Mohammad Kamran tional development agenda. Akhtar, and Director Defence and International Sedevelopment is possible curity at the Foreign, only through implementa-Commonwealth and Development Office

(FCDO), United Kingdom, Ambassador Stephen Lillie, led their respective delegations A broad spectrum of

topics relating to arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation came under discussion during the dia logue.

Furthermore, the federal minister emphasized the significance of previous decisions made by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and the directives of the

The federal minister prime minister in 2008 stressed the strategic imand 2022, respecportance of Gwadar Port tively



Ishaq Dar meets with the Minister of Finance of the People's Republic of

in the world.

voices," he said.

tion of SDGs.

erations'

Ahsan Iqbal's address at the

The minister said that

"It is also to be taken

into consideration that

Pakistan's budget would be

compatible with the SDGs", he said. Ahsan said

that natural resources were

misused in industrial

revolution.He said that

We want to retain a bet-

ter country for future gen-

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): The minister said that Federal Minister for Plansustainable development goals are included in ning, Development and Reforms, Ahsan Iqbal Thurs-Pakistan's 2025 agenda. day said that by 2047, Pa-

He said that Pakistan kistan would be included is among top ten countries amongst top 10 economies affected by climate change. The minister said that

By working hard, we parliamentarians have a can bring Pakistan to the very important role retop 10 economies of the garding sustainable development goals and the world by 2047 and for this we have to silence negative work of distribution of resources is done by the Par-Minister for Planning liament.

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

The Sustainable Development Goals, when formulated, were intended to develop and it is our responsibility to establish safe and sustainable development for future generations, he said. He said that We want to retain a better country for future generations". The minister said that sustainable development goals are included in Pakistan's 2025 agenda.



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

Qaiser chairs meeting to

were injured, while 6 civilians also lost their lives in the terror incidents in 2023

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**OPINION** 

#### Daily **Independent**

# Daily Aoice of Masse Independent

#### **Dubai properties**

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

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

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

# **Red-light** areas

F.S. Aijazuddin Narendra Modi and Sanjay Leela Bhansali have something in com-Sultanate's mon: they both view Pa-Alauddin Khilji. Both kistan through warped lenses. Modi's percep-Padmini (aka Padmaavat). tion is of a country over-In a fiery finale, Bhansali run by terrorists on the had Padmini lead a horde lookout for Indian soft of Rajput women, spots to attack. Bhansali trapped uses his camera lens to Chittorgarh fort, to comcreate spectacular falsities. His latest is an eight-(self-immolation). part Netflix series on Lahore's red-light area wait for Bhansali to fin-

ish his film. During its Heera Mandi. (It derived its name from Raja Hira shooting in Jaipur in Singh, a favourite of Ma-2017, stalwarts from the haraja Ranjit Singh.) Shri Rajput Karni Sena Bhansali — a talassaulted Bhansali, his ented filmmaker, pro-

crew and damaged the sets. Later, another group ducer, writer, and composer — is the despair of burnt a studio and the his critics. He challenged period costumes. them with films such as a Bhansali revenged himsaccharine adaptation of self when Padmaavat be-Shakespeare's romance came the highest-gross-Romeo and Juliet, titled ing film of the year.

Ramlila. It invoked the ire Bhansali's latest proof some orthodox Ram duction Heeramandi: The bhakts. He was forced to Diamond Bazaar is his change its name, elongatpersonal brainchild. He ing it to Goliyon Ki gestated the idea for 14 Raasleela Ram-Leela. years, then directed it, co-

His detractors made authored the script, comhim run the gauntlet of posed its music, and prothe Delhi High Court, and duced it as a mini-series then the Lucknow bench for TV. The story is set in of the Allahabad High Lahore's Heera Mandi Court, which, a week afduring the late 1940s. It ter the film's release, deals with the travails of banned the movie's the tawaifs (dancing showing in Uttar Pradesh. Despite these girls), struggling first for social, and then political, obstacles, GKRRL beacceptance. In a belated came the fifth highestburst of patriotism, they grossing film of 2013. Bhansali's next

project Bajirao Mastani (2015) extolled the love manding freedom (azadi) between the Maratha hero Peshwa Bajirao I and his second wife Mastani. ents. The descendants of Bhansali wanted Paki-Bajirao and Mastani disowned the film, claiming that "excessive creative liberty by Bhansali caused wrongful portrayal of their ancestors". The Bombay High Court, when approached for a stay, tactfully refused. Again, Bhansali answered his critics; this film who love it will not bia. If that Heera Mandi became one of the high- recognise the social toest-grossing Indian films pography of Bhansali's tional red-light suburb of of all time. Bhansali's Heeramandi. Even in a Bhansali's technicolour est-grossing Indian films Padmaavat (2018) pulled pre-1947 era, Lahore was mind. -- Courtesy Dawn

out of oblivion the 13th- not a poor cousin (as century Rajput ruler Bhansali would have his Rawal Ratan Singh of audiences believe) of Mewar and the Delhi Lucknow's cloying culture and fawning finesse. His multilingual ruler vied for the beautiful Rani cast parrot their Urdu dialogues passably well but ignore the niceties of proper pronunciation. His heroines are gorgeously dressed; his within muscular male actors ofmit a collective jauhar ten undressed; and only the lower orders — the Extremists did not

maids and a Sikh lovesick swain — speak Punjabi. His dancers swirl like dizzying dervi-sh--es, imitating their ol--der sisters in earlier Muslim social dram-as, particularly Mughal-i-Azam and Pakeezah. His men inexplicably wear furry caps once popularised by the late actor/ chief minister of Tamil Nadu M.G. Ramachandran.

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

in 1959, the UK promulmarch through the streets, their ghungroos gated the Street Offences (ankle bells) jingling, de-Act. It made loitering and solicitation in a public and independence from place an offence. Îts aim their erstwhile British cliwas to clean British citof importuning Apparently, ies streetwalkers. Comedian stani actors to perform in Peter Ustinov questioned the film. Politics interits utility, suggesting that cleaning the streets was vened. Not that Pakistani rather like clearing the table after a meal: "One actors could have provided a shield against the first charge hurled has to put the crockery somewhere." Over the by Bhansali's critics its lack of historical auyears, the crockery from thenticity. Many Lahoris Lahore's Heera Mandi has moved to richer exurand those outsiders exists at all, it is as a fictional red-light suburb of

#### Literature, including several cross-country empirical studies, highlights three broad macroeconomic outcomes of a country's programme engagement with the IMF. Programmes lead to an improvement in the cur- 2023.

rent account deficit, a build-up in foreign exchange reserves, and a fall in inflation albeit at a slower pace. This can broadly be defined as stabilisation. The consement policies used to of economic growth, at least in the short run.

Stand-by Arrangement nations. The nine-month (SBA) with the IMF in SBA gave policymakers July 2023, Pakistan's the necessary breathing economy is behaving ac- space to embark on a recording to the book. The has been restricted to \$0.5 billion during July-March (FY24) compared to \$4.1bn in the same period last year. Foreign ex- necessary but not suffichange reserves with the State Bank rose from a tainable growth and pros-June 2023 to \$9.1bn on May 3, 2024. Inflation ta- and meaningfully alter pered off from a high of the economy's funda-38 per cent year on year mentals. A growth framein May 2023 to 17.3pc in April 2024. Growth is estimated to remain sub- tic private sector, rededued at nearly 2pc for FY24. Pakistan's economy has reacted in the way economies are expected to respond when they enter into an are akin to survival. engagement with the in these areas have put

IMI Also, the SBA the country in a perennial helped avert debt default liquidity crunch in the exin July 2023, stabilised the ternal, energy, and fiscal rupee's free fall, and ensectors. Due to the shortsured that other lenders fall of both dollars and (bilateral, multilateral, and rupees, the state has limited resources to materifriendly countries) come on board to plug Pakistan's external gross ally improve the lives of the millions living an imfinancing gap, at least for poverished existence. FY24. Unfortunately, new They are debilitated by the poor quality of commercial funding and international bond issu- healthcare and educaance remain out of reach. tion in a country which ensure accountability. --Engagement with the has weak opportunities

# **Breathing space**

#### Khaqan Hassan Najeeb

debt to pay off the earlier stay afloat. Hence, Pakistan's external public debt rose from \$94.8bn in June 2023 to \$98.1bn in \$99.7bn in December

The adjustment policies under the SBA helped stem the alarming slide of the economy. These policies included a tighter monetary and fismacroeconomic cal stance and a flexible erer. exchange rate regime to quent effect of adjust- curb imports and push exports. In Pakistan, enachieve some level of ergy sector price passstabilisation is a slowing throughs are an additional conditionality as

Since embracing the regulators' price determiform mission to remove economy. So where do we go from here? We know that macrostabilisation is a cient condition for susthe only way to repair work based on unleashing a competitive domessigning Pakistan's crumbling energy sector away from the public sector-led constellation, and repairing the fiscal framework

IMF has enabled and rising inequality. It Pakistan's access to new is of little surprise that with each passing day, one, fund the current ac- the citizenry becomes count deficit, and thus more dissatisfied with the functioning of a lethargic state and feeble democracy. A successful at-September 2023 and to tempt to reform the economy demands a few

prerequisites. First, those at the helm should alter their perception of government func-tioning. They have to see the government as an enabler, not a deliv-

Second, some serious islands of competence and expertise are ne--eded within the public sector. Un-dertaking ref-orm surgeries and exwe delay adhering to ecuting the next Ex-regulators' price determi- tended Fund Facility (EFF) will be difficult with a weak professional team

Third, when we look at Pakistan's mediumcurrent account deficit the distortions in the term macro framework, we realise that the numbers on investment, productivity, exports, and debt will improve only marginally without a home-grown Herculean effort. That leads us to meagre \$3.9 billion in perity. Deep reforms are the fourth and last of the prerequisites — the realisation that whereas another programme supported by the IMF is a necessity, reconfiguring the economy on a productive footing goes much beyond the purview of a three-year EFF facility

Neverending technical assistance and foreign-funded Severe weaknesses projects have had little impact on a dysfunctional tax system. This should be an eyeopener to take matters into our own hands. The nation waits for the government to redefine its functioning based on the ideas highlighted by the aforementioned four prerequisites. The nation hold must the policymakers' feet to the fire on all these counts to Courtesv Dawn

**Commerce** News

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

Shehbaz Sharif on in April this year due to the Thursday directed for an urgent probe, within days, into reasons for the technical fault in the Neelum-Jhelum displeasure that the Hydropower Project findings of the inquiry into (NJHP) that led to the recent fault were still suspension of power generation.

issued the directives at the project site during his daygeneration after repair long visit to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) where he was briefed by the officials of had been spent on the NJHP Company about the recent technical fault during the last month.

The 969 megawatts project first faced suspension of power generation in 2022 due to the fault in head race tunnel and was later restored

MUZAFFARABAD after a year in September (APP): Prime Minister last year, and the recent one Shehbaz Sharif on in April this year due to the PM Shehbaz said it same technical fault.

was a project of national significance in the power The prime minister, while speaking on the sector after Tarbela and occasion, expressed his Mangla dams with a huge cost and must remain functional for decades.

He directed that the awaited and directed the inquiry should be carried officials concerned to out by third party experts The prime minister submit the report within and not by the designer or

days and restore the power contractor of the project. He also directed the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and NJHP work as early as possible. He said it was unfortunate that \$5 billion Company to complete the project despite an initial repair work of the tunnel estimate of \$40 million, but at the earliest and resume it was still facing technical generation.The prime issues. "I am very much minister appreciated the WAPDA chairman and his clear. I need a thorough probe whether lapses were team for their efforts to in the design or in the repair the fault in the construction, and the tunnel and resumption of responsibility should be generation last year.

**PSX stays** bullish, gains

266.72 points ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 266.72 points, a positive change of 0.36 per cent, closing at 74,930.70 points against 74,663.98 points the previous trading day.

A total of 407,625,139 shares valuing Rs 16.978 billion were traded during the day as compared to 572,420,772 shares valuing Rs 25.947 billion on the last day.

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

Call Telecom with 24,078,585 shares at Rs 1.38 per share.



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

# **Commerce minister chairs** high-level Committee on export facilitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Investment Facilitation Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday chaired various a high level meeting to address pressing issues in maritime and information Pakistan's export and business sectors.

technology sectors. On the direction of The meeting focused on creating actionable solutions by directly engaging with stakeholders Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a high-level committee was notified to address issues and challenges faced by the and relevant government bodies on matters periodically communicated business sector, said a press release issued here. by chambers of commerce, Attendees included the Pakistan Business Council (PBC), the

Pakistan's efforts for

financial and economic

stability and business

friendly policies.Ishaq Dar

particularly noted the

Foreign

projects in Pakistan

top exporters, business leaders, the Director business community, and General of the Special the Trade Development business community, and

**Deputy PM lauds EXIM** 

Bank's robust support for

development projects in Pak

ISLAMABAD (Online):

Chairman of EXIM Bank

of China, Wu Fulin called

on Deputy Prime Minister

and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar in

and Chairman **EXIM** Bank

discussed the EXIM

Bank's long-standing

cooperation with Pakistan

and its interest in future

outlined

investments in Pakistan.

He

The Foreign Minister

Beijing Thursday.

Council (SIFC), Maj. Gen. (TDAP) to the ministry. Minister Jam Kamal Tabassum Habib and Khan stressed the need for ministrv representatives from the high-ranking officials to FBR, finance, industry, ensure effective decision-

making.He expressed concern over the absence of the FBR Chairman, SBP Governor, and Secretary of Finance, emphasizing their importance in future meetings. Exporters and business representatives voiced concerns, which were directed to pertinent departments for an immediate response, with feedback required within 24 hours.

#### Gold rates up by **Rs 1,600** per tola ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs

Authority of Pakistan

1,600 and was sold at Rs 245,600 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs 244,000 on last trading day.

stellar performance of The price of 10 grams Pakistan Stock Exchange of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 1,371 to and renewed confidence of Rs 210,562 from Rs 209,191 whereas the prices international investors in Pakistan's economy. The of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 193,016 Minister appreciated EXIM Bank's from Rs 191, 758, the All robust support for important development Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Investment, Privatization Communications and besides ensuring the investors protection.

While presiding over a high level meeting on their chief ministers would "Ease of Doing Business", organized by the Board of Investment, the minister said that the consultation with the provinces would be done for legislation to be enacted at provincial level so that the investors can get a more satisfactory environment.

Finance Minister Minister for Board of Muhammad Aurangzeb, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Advisor to Abdul Aleem Khan Prime Minister Rana Ehsan Thursday said that a Afzal attended the meeting, coordinated and integrated where as federal secretaries system in collaboration and Chairman Securities with the provinces would and Exchange Commission be evolved to promote of Pakistan were also trade and investment, present in the meeting, said a press release.

Aleem Khan said that all the four provinces and also be taken into confidence in this regard, adding that ease of doing business would provide a clear road map for the promotion of business in the country while its related proposals, legislation and other important issues would be finalized soon.



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

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

Federal Minister for the proposal to withdraw Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb for these regions, the Thursday informed the minister explained that National Assembly that these exemptions had been there is no new legislation in place for six years and under consideration to are now set to expire on extend tax and duty June 30 of this year. exemptions for the The minister sai erstwhile Federally the business comm erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) regions. In response to a calling

ISLAMABAD (APP): attention notice regarding Senator tax and duty exemptions

The minister said that the business community, during interactions on the budget, has been advocating for a level playing field for all industries

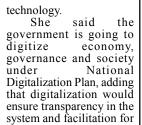


Fulin calls on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

### IT sector's uplift key priority: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication government is going to Shaza Fatima Khawaja digitize Thursday said that the governance and society development of IT sector under was the first priority and Digitalization Plan, adding the government that digitalization would welcomed this investment ensure transparency in the the by Pak-Qatar Group in Pakistan's IT Pakistan's

infrastructure uplift. While addressing the steps were underway for inaugural ceremony of Pak- better IT and Qatar IT Tower, she said Telecommunication there were number of infrastructure opportunities for our connectivity in the youth in this era of country.



the masses Shaza Fatima said that and

The three top trading companies were P.I.A.C (A) with 34,846,148 shares at Rs26.20 per share, Pak-Electric with 28.542.422 shares at Rs 26.47 per share and World ndependent

Friday May 17, 2024

# **Assembly passes** budget as opposition withdraw cut motions

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

The ministers tabled demands for grants of their while opposition withdrew their cut motions on the request of treasury culprits of May 9 benches. Afterwards, the vandalism and said that budget was passed when monuments of martyred Speaker approved all 66

the Provincial Capital.

MIRPUR-AJK (APP):

(DHQ) Teaching Hospital

services in Azad Jammu

and Kashmir (AJK),

signing a landmark

agreement to develop a

cutting-edge Hospital

Management System.

At the outset of ablaze on that day. session, treasury member, Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani, opposition members including Sobia Shahid of PML-N, Ejaz Muhammad and Rehana Ismail of JUI presented their cut motion when law minister tabled demands for grants of Rs respective departments being spent by caretaker

5.84166 billion that was him and said that budget setup. Sobia Shahid motions were accepted. demanded action against

assurance of law minister to accept demands of were damaged and building opposition members.

**Online open court** 

### Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): An online open court will be held at Tax House Peshawar to address the genuine problems of the taxpayers from 12:00 P.M to 1:00 P.M on May 21, 2024

Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue Regional LAHORE: Activists of Young Doctors Association holding a press conference for their demands in Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar, Zafar Iqbal **MUST, DHQ signs MOU** Khan will participate in the proceedings Commissioner Withholding Syed Khalid

Shah, Commissioner Peshawar Zone Dr Farooq Jameel,

Commissioner Corporate Zone Fazal Additional Malik, Commissioner Headquarters Bahadar Sher Afridi, Deputy Commissionei Headquarters Riaz Ahmad Khan and Assistant Commissioner/Focal Person Sheroz Ahmad Khan will be present for the assistance of the Chief Commissioner.

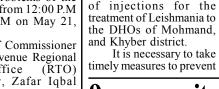
Trading community and other taxpayers have been invited for participation in the online open court to redress their problems through website www.facebook.com.

of Radio Pakistan was set She said that people might start protest again if perpetrators were not punished Mushtaq Ghani also demanded judicial inquiry on May 9 incident to sift fiction from reality. He withdrew cut motion later when Speaker placated would be revised if cut

All the members withdrew cut motion after

# at Tax House

Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Qasim on May 21 Ali Shah has taken important initiative to prevent epidemic wherein he handed over the first batch



while

organisations Punjab have pledged their full support to eradicate polio from the province, extending their cooperation from major cities to all districts.

was made at a jirga, organised at the office of the Director General Health Punjab here on Thursday, attended by over

representatives from significant community Falahi

Independent Report PESHAWAR: The Health Ali Shah told media men during distribution of injections to prevent Leishmania in both Mohmand and Khyber Leishmania Districts.

have been provided with the support of MSF, Syed Qasim Ali Shah said, adding, Glucantime adding, Glucantime injections have been sold It is necessary to take through UNICEF for the

timely measures to prevent treatment of Leishmania.

### 9 community NGOs pledge cooperation to end polio

LAHORE (APP): Heads Committee, Khattak of nine key community Welfare Association, Marwat in Association, Bajaur Ittehad, Welfare Organisation, Minzal Organisation, and Pakhtun Qabail Movement.

The commitment The session was chaired by Khizer Afzaal, the head of the polio programme in Punjab and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Coordinator.

National News

Deputy

**Speaker** 

SA calls on

Anthony

Page 03

#### Meeting discusses matters relating to provision of funds to KPHA

**Independent Report** PESHÁWAR: Provincial Finance Advisor, Muzamil Aslam Thursday chaired a meeting to discuss provision of funds to Chyber Pakhtnkhwa Highways Authority (KPHA) for land purchase. The meeting

The advisor said that government is utilizing resources to complete public welfare projects and strategy was being prepared to pay the to present their proposals and suggestions relating to matter in next meeting.

discussed provision of funds to KPHA for continuation of ongoing projects and to purchase land for future projects. Participants concurred to invite suggestions from Accountant General Office about payments of outstanding dues.

outstanding amount. He also directed participants Provincial Minister for Communication and Works, Shakil Ahmad, Secretary Works, Dr. Asad

Ali, Secretary Law, Akhtar Saeedm Managing Director KPHA, Asad Ali and concerned officials also attended the meeting.



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

### AG KP agrees to ensure withholding of sales tax on service

**Independent Report** PESHAWAR: Director General (DG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) held a meeting with the Accountant General (AG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Thursday to discuss issues relating to withholding of Sales Tax on Services from bills

processed through the AG The Accountant Khyber General Pakhtunkhwa Naseer Uddin Sarwar welcomed DG KPRA Fouzia Iqbal at Advisor to KPRA on Tax AG Office.

THE HAGUE: The United

Nations' top court on

Thursday opened two days

of hearings into a request

from South Africa to press Israel to halt its military op-

eration in the southern Gaza

city of Rafah, where more

than half of Gaza's popula-tion has sought shelter. It is the fourth time South Africa has asked the

International Court of Jus-

tice for emergency measures

since the nation launched

proceedings alleging that

Israel's military action in its

war with Hamas in Gaza

est request, the previous

preliminary orders by The

Hague-based court were not

sufficient to address "a bru-

tal military attack on the

sole remaining refuge for the

**Monitoring Desk** 

sources to keep going.

people of Gaza."

According to the lat-

amounts to genocide.

Enforcement Fazal Amin Shah and Assistant Collector (Withholding) Hizbullah Khan also accompanied the DG KPRA.

The DG KPRA and her team presented the agenda for the meeting and briefed AG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and his team that the exemption to erstwhile Federal Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and Provincial Administered Tribal Area (PATA) has expired on October 31, 2023 and the sales tax on services is his office for the meeting. extended to the regions so

#### to modernize healthcare services in Mirpur signed a Memorandum of Mirpur University of Understanding (MoU) to Science and Technology enhance and develop the (MUST) and Mirpur Hospital Management System revolutionizing the digital Divisional Headquarters System have teamed up to hospital's digital transform healthcare infrastructure. The partnership will see the university's Network and Telecommunication Centre (NTC) providing expertise and resources to improve patient care, streamline

According to APP operations, and increase Correspondent, Mirpur efficiency. This collaboration will strengthen University and DHQ Hospital have taken a the bond between MUST significant step towards and DHQ Hospital, modernizing healthcare advancing healthcare services in the region. The services and education in two institutions have Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

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

#### Qasim takes important initiative to prevent Leishmina epidemic

During the jirga, the organisations reviewed past organisations including Pakhtun reviewed past initiatives aimed at Tanzeem, eradicating polio in Mohmand Loya Jirga, Punjab, such as Afghan Refugees Aman awareness campaigns. Karim Kundi said.

**Governor KP** PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Naveed called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House here on Thursday.

Glucantime injections Bishop of Pakistan Humphrey Sarfaraz Peter was also present at the meeting.

Welfare

Deputy Speaker and Bishop Sarfraz Peter congratulated Faisal Karim Kundi on assuming the post of Governor and presented him with a

bouquet. The Governor thanked Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Anthony Welfare

Naveed and Bishop Sarfraz Peter for coming to congratulate him. Hazara Ensuring cooperation

and playing a role on a priority basis in solving the problems faced by the minorities in the province, the Governor assured them.

Governor KP appreciated the role of the minority community in the development.

The services of all the office. minorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially the Christian community, in all sectors including the education sector, are

International News

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

parts of Ukraine.

Congolese people react during the funeral of the

nine victims, including seven children who were

More than half of Zimbabwean

population will need food

aid, cabinet says

mittee (ZIMLAC).

government.

**Monitoring Desk** 

HARARE: More than half

of Zimbabwe's population

will need food aid this year

following a devastating

drought that led to wide-

spread crop failure as hu-

manitarian organisations

seek funding to save many

from hunger, the country's

cabinet heard late on Tues-

day. About 6 million people

in rural areas and 1.7 mil-

lion in urban areas will re-

province, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Monitoring Desk** BEIJING: Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday reaffirmed their "no-limits" partnership that has deepened as both countries face rising tensions with the West, and they criticized U.S. military alliances in Asia and the Pacific region.

At their summit in Beijing, Putin thanked China's proposals for ending the war in Ukraine, which have been rejected by Ukraine and its Western supporters as largely following the Kremlin's line.

Čhina claims to take a neutral position in the conflict, but it has backed the Kremlin's contentions that Russia was provoked into attacking Ukraine by the Nazism and militarism."

West, and it continues to supply key components "denazification" of Ukraine needed by Moscow for as a main goal of the miliweapons production.

tary action, falsely describ-China, which has not ing the government of criticized the invasion, pro-Ukrainian President posed a broadly worded Volodymyr Zelenskyy, peace plan in 2023, calling who is Jewish and lost relafor a cease-fire and for ditives in the Holocaust, as rect talks between Moscow neo-Nazis. "Both sides and Kyiv. The plan was rewant to show that despite jected by both Ukraine and what is happening globally, the West for failing to call despite the pressure that for Russia to leave occupied both sides are facing from the U.S., both sides are not

China also gave a rheabout to turn their backs on torical nod to Russia's nareach other anytime soon, rative about Nazism in said Hoo Tiang Boon, who Ukraine, with a joint stateresearches Chinese foreign ment Thursday that said policy at Singapore's Moscow and Beijing should Nanyang Technological defend the post-World War University. While Putin and II order and "severely con-Xi said they were seeking demn the glorification of or an end to the war, they ofeven attempts to revive fered no new proposals in their public remarks.

Iran switches to Friday, Saturday weekend **Monitoring Desk** 

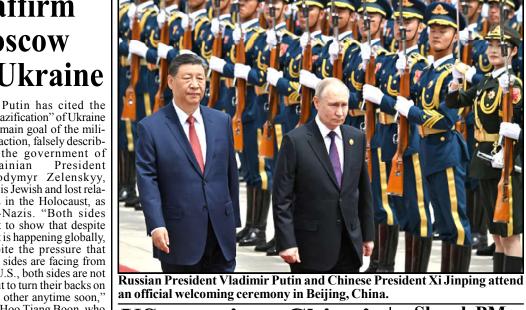
TEHRAN: Iran's parlia-ment approved changes to the working week for all government employees on Wednesday that would establish a 40hour working week with a Friday-Saturday weekend.

killed in a strike earlier this month at the Bulengo displaced persons camp (IDP), in Goma, North Kivu tutional watchdog the Guardian Council, would replace the existing 44-hour working week with a half-day Thursday and a full-day

off Friday. The change had been hotly debated, and quire assistance, according 136 lawmakers voted in to the Zimbabwe Livelifavour with 66 against hoods Assessment Comand three abstentions,

the official IRNA news Zimbabwe is among agency said. Lawmaker Mohsen the worst hit countries by the El Nino induced Pirhadi told parliament on Wednes-day that drought in Southern Africa,

with Zambia and Malawi leading cleric Ayatollah Javadi Amoli had also facing food shortages this year. This is raised no objection to Zimbabwe's worst drought Saturday as a weekin 40 years, according to the end day.



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

**Monitoring Desk** have more than 1,000 by WASHINGTON: China 2030. She said US officials has not responded to US met with Chinese counterparts last November, opens new tab to discuss arms control and proliferation, their first such talks in nearly five years. "The meeting enabled a preliminary discussion on potential measures for managing and reducing risks," she

said. "Unfortunately ... the PRC has declined a followon meeting and has not provided (a) substantive response to risk-reduction has 500 operational nuclear warheads and will probably ward," she said.

#### Four killed in New Caledonia riots; France declares state of emergency rioters torched vehicles and

**Monitoring Desk** SYDNEY: France declared businesses and looted stores. Schools have been shut and a state of emergency on the there is already a curfew in Pacific island of New Caledonia on Wednesday the capital. Rioting broke out over a new bill, adopted by after three young indigenous lawmakers in Paris on Tues-Kanak and a police official day, that will allow French were killed in riots over elecresidents who have lived in toral reform. New Caledonia for 10 years The state of emergency will give authorities addito vote in provincial elections

tional powers to ban gather--a move some local leaders fear will dilute the Kanak ings and forbid people from vote. "Since the start of the moving around the Frenchweek, New Caledonia has ruled island Police reinforcebeen hit by violence of a rare ments have been sent — and intensity more are on the way - after

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

HANDLOVA: Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico on Thursday was speaking but tired and still in a "really difficult condition" a day after being shot multiple times, the presidentelect said after visiting his ally.

"He is able to speak but only a few sentences and then he is really, really tired ... The situation is very critical," President-elect Peter Pellegrini told reporters outside the hospital.

#### Turkey says it killed PKK members in northern Iraq strikes **Monitoring Desk**

ANKARA: Turkey hit northern Iraq with air strikes on Wednesday and claimed to have killed 12 members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) sheltering there.

The Turkish defence ministry said the PKK militants had been "neutralised" in the Gara and Hakurk regions of northern Iraq.

The ministry's use of the term "neutralised" commonly means killed.

#### UN's top court opens hearings on the Israeli military's incursion into Rafah **Monitoring Desk**

South Africa said the situation was getting worse in the war-ravaged area.

"Israel's genocide has continued at pace and has reached a new and horrific stage," said Vusimuzi Madonsela, South Africa's ambassador to the Netherlands. Israel has portrayed Rafah as the last stronghold of the militant group, brushing off warnings from the United States and other allies that any major operation there would be catastrophic for civilians.

South Africa has asked the court to order Israel to withdraw from Rafah; to take measures to ensure unimpeded access for U.N. officials, humanitarian organizations and journalists to the Gaza Strip; and to report back within one week on how it is meeting these demands.

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

Among the injured were KYIV: Ukrainian units two medics, he said. Ukrainian authorilocked in street battles

ties have evacuated some with the Kremlin's forces 8,000 civilians from the in a key northeastern town. The Russian Ukraine town have halted the Russian advance, army's usual tactic is to reduce towns and villages military officials in Kyiv claimed Thursday, to ruins though a senior Moscow strikes b official said the frontline push had enough reto ruins with aerial strikes before its units Vovchansk, located

just 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the Russian border, Russian attempts to establish a foothold in has been a hotspot in the fighting in recent days. the town of Vovchansk, which is among the larg-est towns in Ukraine's Russia launched an offensive in the Kharkiv area late last week, signifinortheastern Kharkiv recantly adding to the presgion with a prewar popu-lation of 17,000, "have been foiled," Ukraine's sure on Ukraine's outnumbered and outgunned forces which are waiting general staff said in a for delayed deliveries of midday report. It was not possible to indepen-dently verify the claim. crucial weapons and ammunition from Western partners. Ukraine has re-Six people were inpeatedly tried to strike jured Thursday in one behind Russian lines, of-Russian daylight attack ten using drones though on Vovchansk using clus-Russia's response to the new technology used in ter munitions, local officials said, as emergency unmanned vehicles has workers and volunteers improved in recent were rescuing people affected by shelling. months.

nuclear-weapons risk-reduction proposals and Washington has questions about Beijing's call for nofirst-use talks while China continues to build up its arsenal, the top US arms control official said on Wednesday. Under Secretary of State Bonnie Jenkins told the Senate Foreign Rela-

tions Committee the US estimates China currently

which still requires a green light from consti-

#### Daily **Independent**, Islamabad

#### NDMA observes School Safety Day with safety kits handover, evacuation drills at federal schools

(GCC) of the National Disaster Management Author-

ity (NDMA) in collaboration with Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) and Aga Khan Agency for Habi-tat Pakistan (AKAHP) organized an event at Islamabad Model School for Girls to mark School Safety Day.

This event underscores the Authority's unwavering commitment to Comprehensive School Safety and Climate Change Adaptation and Risk Reduction (CCDRR/M), a news re-

lease said on Thursday. The NDMA's GCC has organized a three day refresher and Training of Trainers (ToT) under "Pakistan School Safety Framework" for Federal Directorate of Education Teachers

Likewise drills for school children were conducted encompassing a variety of disaster scenarios, including earthquakes and fire emergencies, to ensure that students, teachers, and



ISLAMABAD: Governor KPK, Faisal Karim Kundi calls on Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah at Parliament House.

#### Shaza inaugurated new branch of MARS BPO to generate 1000 more jobs for ICT sector

leadership.

Mars Capital signifies

company's journey, repre-

senting its commitment to

expansion and growth. This

newest addition to the

Mars BPO network is set

to uphold the company's

reputation for excellence

and redefine standards in

the industry. During the in-

auguration ceremony, the

President of Mars BPO

"The inauguration

Mars Capital marks a sig-

nificant milestone in our

journey, symbolizing our

unwavering commitment to

expansion and excellence.

**Independent Report** ISLAMABAD: Mars BPO, a leading name in the a new chapter in the BPO industry, announces the inauguration of Mars Capital, its latest branch located in Gulberg Greens Islamabad. The inauguration ceremony was graced by the presence of Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, who officially inaugurated Mars Capital.

highlighted the company's Established by entrevision for expansion, and he preneur Mr. Shoaib Akram, presented new ideas to broaden Mars' footprint Mars BPO has emerged as a beacon of success in the across Pakistan and be-Process yond. Business (BPO) indus-Outsourcing

ISLAMABAD (APP): staff are well-versed in The Gender and Child Cell emergency protocols and crisis management techniques.

In a significant move to bolster disaster preparedness and proactive response mechanisms, the NDMA presented All-Inclusive School Safety Kit consisting 20 items to School Safety Committee.

The NDMA's Gender and Child Cell in partnership with key stakeholders including Education Ministries, UNICEF, British Council, School of Leader ship, and AKAHP, has meticulously developed the Pakistan School Safety

Framework (PSSF). The PSSF initiative aims to enhance awareness and preparatory measures among students and educational institutes. NDMA's PSSF is the most robust and comprehensive School Safety Framework in the Asia Pacific Region recently lauded during UNICEF Regional Knowledge Exchange on Child Centered DRR/M in Kathmandu



ISLAMABAD: Signing of MOU between Sehat Sahulat Program, Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination and Health Services Academy. Dr. Malik Mukhtar Coordinator to PM on National Health, Dr. Luo dapeng WR WHO, Muhammad Arshad, CEO Sehat Sahulat Program, Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan, Vice Chancellor Health Services Academy, Franz Von Ronne, Principal Advisor (SP-SHP) GIZ, Dr. Shoaib Suddle, Chairman One Man Commission on Minority Rights witnessed the ceremony

#### **Education Ministry to conduct review of OOSC** to formulate plan for targeted interventions

aimed at reducing out-of-school children in the coun-ISLAMABAD (APP): Jnder Prime Minister directives and its declaration try.

as part of National education emergency, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training will conduct a comprehensive review of Out-Of-School Children(OOSC) and formulate the plan for targeted provincial levels. interventions.

According to the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the plan would be be shared for formal approval lateral partners. of the Prime Minister.

The ministry informed that Out-of-School gradually increase budget (Federal / Provincial alloca-Children Fund, by earmarking minimum Rs. 25 billion tion for education to 4 perin 5 years, would be estabcent of GDP shall be conlished to support innovasidered for infrastructural tive and effective strategies, improvements and provi-

son on next hearing.

former minister and her

name was included in Pro-

visional National Identifica-

tion List (PNIL) on the re-

quest of Islamabad and

Punjab police. The IHC heard the

case seeking removal of

Zartaj Gul's name from the

Exit Control List (ECL)

The state counsel informed

the court that the name of

the petitioner was included

record and adjourned fur-

in PNIL.

#### sion of quality education by 2029.

Meanwhile, the Min-However, the minisistry of Federal Éducation, try will also propose a task in coordination with provincial governments, will force, with the approval of initiate a fast-track quality Prime Minister, to devise and implement strategic recruitment across the solutions to the educational country to further improve crisis at national as well as educational standards. "A comprehensive na-

The task-force shall tional nutritional programme shall also be report directly to the Prime Minister's Office, comprislaunched for improving ing of provincial represenhealth of school-going chiltatives and bilateral/multidren enhancing their learning capabilities. BISP will The ministry further also take school meals initold that best efforts to tiatives in all backward dis-

trict on priority" the ministry added. Sharing additional details, the sources from Ministry of Federal Education said that community based

teaching incentivized, ensuring participation of every literate citizen to impart education

Pakistan Education tres of Excellence.

Skill Development Programme shall be launched to train 60,000 students with internationa certifications.

at relevant levels.

Endowment Fund will be established for sustainable financial support to students in backward districts of the country, incorporating provision of meritbased scholarships to underprivileged students, the Ministry added. It was informed that Daanish School system would be established in provinces as Cen-

However, National

transparency, innovation in ICT's governance ISLAMABAD (APP): ent and inclusive gover-The Diplomatic Insight nance, ensuring that all resi-Group recently hosted an dents of Islamabad benefit exclusive reception to from the city's progress. Spehonour Muhammad Ali cifically, he discussed plans Randhawa on his appoint- to improve the city's infra-

structure, including roads,

Friday May 17, 2024

**Randhawa stresses** 

transportation systems, and sioner of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and utilities, to support the grow-Chairman of Capital Develing population and ecoopment Authority (CDA). nomic activity. He also em-In his address, the phasized the importance of Commissioner sustainable development Randhawa outlined his strapractices, such as green tegic plans for the developspaces, waste management, ment of Islamabad, focusand renewable energy iniing on key areas such as intiatives, to preserve Islamabad's natural beauty frastructure, urban planning, and socio-economic and environment. Furthergrowth. He highlighted the more, Randhawa stressed importance of collaboration the role of technology and with various stakeholders, innovation in driving effiincluding government agenciency and effectiveness in cies, private sector entities, government services and and the diplomatic commupublic administration. The nity, to achieve these goals, event provided an opportusaid the spokesman of Chief nity for dignitaries, including ambassadors and diplomats, Commissioner Office Nouman Nazim here. to offer their congratulations Randhawa emphaand express their support for

sized the need for transpar-Randhawa's vision



**ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate** Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam gifting a plant to Ivonne Julitta Bollow, Senior Vice President of Metro AG Global.

### China to see stable growth in ICT spending amid AI boom: IDC

ISLAMABAD (INP): China's spending on information and communications technology (ICT) is projected to experience steady growth as various industries adopt the latest wave of digital transformation driven by artificial intelli-

gence (AI). According to global market research firm International Data Corporation (IDC), China's ICT spending is expected to increase by 9.8 percent year-onyear in 2024, surpassing the global average by two per-

new phase of transforma-

tion characterized by exten-

sive integration of AI," said

Wu Lianfeng, IDC China's

vice president and chief re-

held in Beijing on Wednes-According to Wu, many Chinese firms have

prioritized leveraging AI to drive business growth. In particular, the financial sector and retail industry in China are expected to witness a compound annual growth rate of over 20 percent in

spending on digital trans-

formation from 2024 to

IDC also predicts centage points. IDC further predicts strong growth in spending on generative AI in China. A recent study revealed

#### **IHC summons** Zartaj Gul ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday sought complete record of cases against former minister Ms Zartaj Gul from authorities and summoned her in per-During the hearing, the court was told that there were five cases against the

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Ms. Rubina Khalid, leads a pivotal discussion on the operational framework of the Skill Training Voucher (STV) program, accompanied by representatives from NAVTTC, PSDF, POEPA, and Akhuwat Foundation, at BISP Headquarters.

#### **BISP intends to build a sense of** pride in its beneficiaries: Rubina

Chairperson Benazir In- with the necessary techni- tify and provide data on elicome Support Programme cal skills to secure employ- gible Benazir Income Sup-

ISLAMABAD (APP): Programme beneficiaries rate with NAVTTC to iden-

search analyst, during the IDC Directions 2024 event

try. With a dedicated team of over 2,000 professionals, Mars BPO has achieved remarkable milestones over the past decade, under his



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja cutting ribbon to inaugurate Mars Capital office.

#### **Process to finalize standing** committees process to be completed today: Dr Fazal

**UEP, NUST join hand** 

to support students

ISLAMABAD (Online): UEP, including Ali Abbas

advantaged students en- Rector Research, Innova-

emony.

ISLAMABAD (INP): A the completion of the leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, informed the National Assembly on Thursday that the process of forming Standing Committees has been completed. Speaking in the National Assembly, he explained that there was a slight delay in the process due to the decision to suspend the membership of members of reserved seats.

He said that the Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, had set a deadline for next session of parliament.

United Energy Pakistan

Limited (UEP), the

nation's foremost gas and

oil exploration and produc-

tion company, has demon-

strated its commitment to

supporting financially dis-

rolled at the National Uni-

versity of Science and

dowments to facilitate

agreement, a Memorandum

of Understanding (MoU)

was recently signed be-

tween the two important

To formalize the

Representatives from at NUST

their education.

parties.

standing committee process by Friday.

tails of the standing committees would be submitted to Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq by the following day. The PML-N leader further said that seating ar-

rangements had been finalized, adjustments made, and documents signed by parliamentary leaders had been submitted to the Speaker's office.

He assured that the seating arrangements would be completed before the

Mirza, Manager C&EA

Syed Imran Ali Shah, Team

Leader, Planning, and

Gulam Ali, Head of Man-

agement Services, visited

Dr Rizwan Riaz, Pro

NUST for this purpose.

2024 He added that all de-

port the students.

mas programs till May 30 A significant number of students who were unable to pay their admission fees for various reasons requested the university authorities for an extension in the enrolment deadline, said a press release on Thursday. In response to

BBA, postgraduate diplo-

the requests, Vice-Chancel-lor Prof. Dr. Nasin Mahmood approved the extension, emphasizing that AIOU is implementing all necessary measures to sup-

### **IRSA releases** 192,000

cusecs water ISLAMABAD (APP) Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 192,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 200,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1470.57 feet and was 72.57 feet higher than

tion, and Commercialization, along with Arooba its dead level of 1,398 Technology (NUST) by Gilani, Director of the feet. Water inflow and establishing circular en- University Advancement outflow in the dam was re-Office, were also present corded as 56,600 cusecs during the signing cerand 65,000 cusecs respec-

tively. The water level in Later, the team visited River Jhelum at Mangla the National Science and Dam was 1174.60 feet, Technology Park. The which was 124.60 feet team was also briefed about higher than its dead level the innovation ecosystem of 1,050 feet.

The petitioner's law-(BISP), Rubina Khalid has ver argued that his client said that the BISP wants to had been granted bails in build a sense of pride in its the cases registered against beneficiaries. her. The court sought the

While highlighting the significance of skill training as a means to tackle the is-

ther hearing AIOU extends admissions deadline for continue students

counselling so that youth ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open could get jobs easily. The meeting primarily University(AIOU) has exaimed to deliberate on the

tended enrollment deadline operational modalities of of Spring Semester 2024 the Skill Training Voucher for continuing students of (STV) program, a collabo-Associate degree in Arts (BA General), Associate rative effort between BISP and NAVTTC. degree in Commerce The initiative seeks to (B.Com), Associate degree

equip children of Benazir in Education, BS (ODL) programs, B.Ed programs, Income

ment opportunities, both within Pakistan and abroad. Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Rubina Khalid

emphasised the significance of training programs such sue of youth unemployas Hospitality Management, in a meeting with repment, Graphic Designing, resentatives of NAVTTC at Gems and Stone Polishing, Beautician, Nurse Care, and the BISP Headquarters today, Rubina Khalid said Plumbing, stating that they are highly practical and in that the major focus of their technical institutions demand. These fields offer should be to provide qualample employment oppority skill training and proper tunities for youth, either in established industries or through entrepreneurship, allowing them to establish

their small businesses, she added. Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad, highlighted the pilot phase of the STV program as a pioneering initiative aimed at lifting people out of poverty.

Under this phase, he said that BISP will collabo-Support

port Programme beneficiaries for skill training. The formal launch of the pilot phase is imminent, he added

Executive Director of NAVTTC, Muhammad Aamir Jan, outlined the plans for the pilot phase, stating that 1000 children of Benazir Income Support Programme beneficiaries from selected districts will receive technical skill training. He said that upon completion of the program, they will be provided with employment opportunities, thereby contributing to their socioeconomic empowerment.

Addl. Secretary BISP, Dr Muhammad Tahir Noor, DG (CI) BISP Saira Atta and representatives of PSDF, POEPA, and Akhuwat Foundation were also present in the meeting.

that the growth rate of ICI spending in China may that approximately 28 perreach 10.2 percent year-on-year in 2025, continuing to cent of the surveyed enterprises achieved a return on outpace the global average. investment within one year "We are observing that after investing in generative the ICT sector is entering a AI

In recent years, China has been actively promoting the integration of digital technologies across various industries



ISLAMABAD: NDMA handed over school safety kit to Islamabad Model School for Girls on account of School Safety Day.

### IG Islamabad pins rank badges to newly promoted 120 ASIs

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, a series of departmental promotions are underway in Islamabad Police, a public relations officer said.

He said that, in this regard, a prestigious ceremony was held to promote new officers to the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector at Police Lines Headquarters

sistant Sub-Inspectors, he congratulates them, and expresses good wishes for their future endeavors.

On this occasion, IGP Islamabad welcomed and congratulated the police officers and their families who participated in the ceremony. The happiness I am feeling today is beyond words. Your happiness is

our happiness, and our hardships are shared, he added.

He further said that all the families present here are my family because our life's purpose is to save everything for the people without hesitation. If our purpose is one, then our family is also one. You all should have a spirit of serving humanity. Today, Allah has hon-

ored you and has enlightened your shoulders. Now, after adorning this rank on your shoulders, your responsibilities given by Al-

Today, this rank has POLICE COMMUNITY CENTE

been bestowed upon my

friends and my family

members. These ranks are

for discipline. Every mem-

ber of this family, who

thinks about serving hu-

manity with full dedication,

every person who aims to

eliminate criminals and

protect the lives and prop-

erty of citizens is an In-

spector General of Police,

said IGP

Islamabad

IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi graced the event as a special guest, while senior police officers, and the families of newly promoted Assistant Sub-Inspectors were also lah will also increase. You will become the voice of the oppressed and a shelter for the helpless and this is our training

We are part of a de-partment that is the inheritor of Ghazis and martyrs. Your job is only to eliminate anti-social elements and criminals, and protect the lives and property of people

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Court Bar Association, Mujahid Asif Islam presetting souvenir to Hurrivat Leader, Shamim Shawl on the occasion of International Mother's Day, a tribute to mothers of Kashmir and Gaza

### Traffic volunteer students of Iqra University visits Safe **City, Operation division**

Independent Report work, a public relations of-ISLAMABAD: The stuficer said. dent volunteers of Iqra

center hall. They were fully briefed about the procedures and advantages of this Safe City Islamabad

> Additionally, the student delegation was informed that Safe City

esent on this occasion. IG Islamabad pins rank badges to newly pro-moted 120 Head Constables to the rank of As-

Islamabad is playing a significant role in varidepartments through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center. Data Hub Unit

University on Thursday visited the Safe City Islamabad and SSP Operations office under the "Friend of Police Program" and met with the senior police officers.

A public relations officer said that in response to the special directives of project. the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the SSP Operations Division

and SSP Safe City wel-

comed the student delega-

tion of Traffic Police vol-

unteer of Igra University

at Safe City and Operation

division and briefed them

about operational police

egation visits the command and control center, the data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the police operations

He said that, the del-