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

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Pakistan firmly upholds one-China principle, says President Zardari

President Zardari's remarks on One-China principle, highly appreciable: Wang Wenbin

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has reiterated that Pakistan firmly adhered to the one-China principle as the country always chooses to stand on the right side of history.

"Pakistani people loved China as 'there is no conditionality between us,' the president remarked in an interview with the Chinese media published on Wednesday, marking the 73rd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan.

This was the first such interaction of President Zardari with any foreign media after being re-elected for the second time in March.

Recalling the rapport between the previous leaders of the two countries, Zardari said, "My late father-in-law, Pakistan's former Prime Minister

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto told the nation to look East, to look towards China."

President Zardari, who had visited China nine times during his first term as Pakistani president, reaffirmed Pakistan's stance of upholding the one-China principle, rejecting any form of "Taiwan independence."

"Taiwan is part of China. There's no other way," the president said, adding that Pakistan will always stand with China and safeguard China's core interests.

Commenting on the development of Gwadar Port, a starting point of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Zardari said a lot of work had been done at the Gwadar Port since the launch of the CPEC 11 years ago, noting that the Port would always welcome investors from all

over the world. Zardari said Pakistan is encouraging more schools to adopt the Chinese language into their compulsory curriculum.

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, he called for more policies to facilitate the movement of people between the two countries.

INP adds: President Asif Ali Zardari's statement reiterating Pakistan's firm adherence to the One-China principle and its opposition to Taiwan Independence, is highly appreciated. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Wang Wenbin said on Wednesday. Addressing his regular briefing, the spokesperson said that President Zardari recently reiterated on behalf of Pakistan its firm adherence to the One-China principle.

PM to visit UAE today

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising key ministers of his cabinet, on Thursday, will pay a visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

This will be the prime minister's first visit to the UAE since his election. During the visit, the prime minister is expected to meet President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed.

FIA seeks permission to file extra evidence in cipher case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Wednesday sought the permission of Islamabad High Court (IHC) to present the statement of US Assistant Secretary Donald Lu given before a Congress committee as evidence in the cipher case against the PTI founder and Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

The FIA, in a miscellaneous application submitted to the IHC bench of Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, requested for allowing it to file more evidence in the cipher case.



TEHRAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Acting President of Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Mohammad Mokhbar and offers condolences over the sad demise of Iranian President Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions.

Fact-finding committee formed on Bishkek violence as over 4,000 students return: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): With the return of around 4,000 students to Pakistan from Bishkek consequent to an incident of violence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has formed a fact-finding committee to look into the factors leading to the happening besides assessing the role of Pakistan's mission there in handling the situation.

"For our own satisfaction, for the satisfaction of the ministry and the prime minister, we have decided to form an inquiry committee under Additional Secretary (Admin) Muhammad Saleem. This will carry out the fact-finding as how these developments took place. It will interact with the relevant people including at Pakistan mission and the

Kyrgyz government," Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said addressing a press conference on his return from Bishkek.

Ishaq Dar, who visited Astana to attend the meeting of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers flew to Bishkek from there along with his Kyrgyz counterpart, said the committee would submit its report within two weeks.

He told the media that the federal ministers had to cancel their visit to Bishkek on the suggestion of Kyrgyz authorities, however, during his interaction with Kyrgyz counterpart in Astana, he conveyed his desire for the visit to meet the Pakistani national affected by the violence, which led to his trip there.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visiting CDA Hospital.

Interior Minister visits Capital Hospital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday visited Capital Hospital to review the treatment facilities including the condition of operation theaters in the hospital.

Mohsin Naqvi also visited the patients under treatment in the emergency block and inquired about the treatment facilities.

He asked for a master plan from Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Mohammad Ali Randhawa and ordered to upgrade emergency block and lab of the hospital.

Most of the patients expressed satisfaction with the facilities provided in the hospital, however, some patients complained of lack of medical facilities.

Raheela, a cancer patient, cried while telling Federal Interior Minister

Mohsin Naqvi about the disease.

"I have been coming here for 3 months, no one pays attention" she told the minister upon which the Naqvi consoling with the patient asked the executive director to provide best treatment to the patient.

"Do not worry. No effort will be spared in your treatment" Mohsin Naqvi assured the patient.

The minister also met the doctors and asked their problems while he inquired about the facility of free medicines and free tests to the patients. The minister inspected water plant, dialysis unit, and other wards of the hospital checked the records of dialysis patients.

Naqvi also reviewed the situation of laundry room and cleanliness in the hospital and directed to improve the condition.

Tarar lauds Intl organizations' support to strengthen electoral process in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Wednesday that the cooperation of international organizations to strengthen the electoral process in Pakistan was commendable.

During a meeting with the United Nations Electoral Needs Assessment Mission, the minister appreciated the services rendered by the mission for the transparency of electoral process in Pakistan.

In the meeting, provision of technical support to

Election Commission of Pakistan through UNDP Election Support Programme, fake news, misinformation, disinformation and other important issues were discussed. "Election campaigns in Pakistan have changed in the digital age," the minister said adding the rise of social media had given a new shape to political engagement. In the present digital era, where the way for digital-based strategies was being paved, there were also challenges of fake news, misinformation and disinformation.

PM meets Turkish VP, FM, Emir of Qatar

TEHRAN (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday met Vice President of Türkiye Cevdet Yılmaz and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan at a commemorative ceremony organised in honour of late Iranian President Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions.

During their meeting, both sides discussed the bilateral and other issues of mutual interests, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

They also agreed to further enhance the bilateral ties between Pakistan and Türkiye in diverse fields.

Separately, the prime minister also met with Emir of State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.

Similar sentiments were expressed during the meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Emir of State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.

Salik praises Saudi govt. for excellent Hajj arrangements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhary Salik Hussain on Wednesday praised the Saudi authorities for the excellent arrangements made by them to make performing of the Hajj obligation convenient for the pilgrims.

"We are highly appreciative of the assistance and cooperation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the smooth conduct of Hajj every year," he said while talking to the PTV News.

The minister said innovative reforms had been introduced by the Saudi authorities for the facilitation of intending pilgrims.

He urged the Pakistani Hajj group operators to follow the directives of the Saudi Government.

He said both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were firmly committed to make the Hajj inclusive for all segments of the society, especially women and special persons.

Over 9100 SIM cards of non-filers blocked

ISLAMABAD (INP): The telecommunication companies on a recommendation of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) blocked over 9,100 SIM cards of non-tax filers.

Talking to a private TV channel on Wednesday, FBR Spokesperson Bakhtiar Ahmed Khan said that they have provided data of 30,000 non-filers to cellular companies, hinting that more SIM cards will be blocked.

Bakhtiar Ahmed Khan said that the FBR will provide data of 5,000 non-filers daily to telecom companies so that strict action could be taken against them.

The spokesman said the FBR so far identified over 550,000 non-filers.

Meets Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei PM expresses unwavering solidarity with Iran at time of national tragedy

TEHRAN (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday met the Supreme Leader of Iran Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and expressed condolences on the tragic death of Iranian President Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions.

The prime minister underlined that President Raisi was a visionary leader who manifested steadfast dedication to serving his country and people.

Recalling late President Raisi's recent visit to Pakistan in April 2024, the prime minister highlighted his commendable role in further strengthening of Pakistan-Iran bilateral relations, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed solidarity with the Iranian brethren and sisters at the critical juncture in history and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening the bonds of friendship and brotherhood with the Government and the people of brotherly Iran.

He expressed the resolve to continue the vision of late president for strengthening of the bilateral relationship and trade between the two countries.

He said that President Raisi's contributions for the unity of Muslim Ummah as well as for the besieged people of Gaza would be etched in history.

The prime minister was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, and Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said that they appreciated the sentiments of the Government and the people of Pakistan in the critical time and expressed gratitude to them.

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TEHRAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of Islamic Revolution.

29 terrorists killed in operations along Pak-Afghan border since April 21: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Security Forces, in addition to other areas along Pakistan-Afghanistan border, are conducting effective operations in general area Sambaza in Zhob District of Balochistan, since April 21, that helped in neutralising 29 terrorists successfully in the past one month.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Wednesday, "Off late, Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terrorist incidents orchestrated from Afghan soil, wherein, terrorists from Afghanistan attempt to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan Border and target Security Forces as well as the innocent civilians."

In the same series of

operations, during an intelligence based operation on May 14, Major Babar Khan also embraced, Shahadat, while fighting gallantly.

"Pakistan's Security Forces are determined and remain committed to secure the borders and ensure safety of its citizens against the scourge of terrorism," the ISPR said.

It added that Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of border.

"Interim Afghan Government is expected to fulfill its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by terrorists for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan," the ISPR said.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the meeting regarding Prisons Reforms.

Maryam directs authorities to prepare comprehensive plan for prison reforms

CM also visits to Holy Family hospital, directs for instant health services

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a meeting here on Wednesday, reviewed the prison reforms in the province.

She directed the authorities concerned that new jails be set up outside the city. She directed them to present a comprehensive plan in this regard.

The chief minister approved a project to revamp Bakshi Khanas and lock-ups across Punjab. She also gave in principle approval for the establishment of women's

jails in Faisalabad and Rawalpindi.

Earlier, a concern was raised in the meeting about possible external contacts of criminals with the prisoners.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information & Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari and MPA Sania Ashiq attended the meeting. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Home Secretary Nurul Amin Mengal, IG Prisons Farooq Nazir and other relevant officers were also present.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday paid a surprise visit to Holy Family Hospital where she inspected various wards including pediatric emergency and Mother-Child Block. The chief minister directed the hospital administration to keep vigilant for instant health services to the patients.

According to the details, the chief minister examined administrative and health facilities of the hospital in detail.



KARACHI: Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani talking to media persons during his visit at Mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Dialogue only way to solve problems, says Gilani

KARACHI (INP): Acting president and Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani says dialogue is the only way to solve the problems.

He expressed these views during his visit to the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to pay homage to the Father of the Nation on Wednesday. The acting president laid a floral wreath and offered فاتحہ.

He also recorded his impressions in the visitors' book placed at the mausoleum. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah was also present on the occasion.

Speaking to the media, the acting president said Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a true and genuine leader of the Subcontinent and our youth should be aware of the fact

that he (Quaid) was the true leader and he had created Pakistan therefore we should not be running after a 'black cat in a dark room'.

Gilani said that his father was an associate of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and when Quaid visited Lahore in 1940 and he was asked why he did not come to Multan, he had said that Gilani was there to represent me therefore no need of my visit to Multan. Gilani said Quaid did not visit Multan but Mohtrama Fatima Jinnah had visited our Dargah there. He said that for the first time he visited the base of the Mazar of Quaid Azam and offered فاتحہ at the Mazars of Quaid e Azam, Nawab Liaquat Ali Khan, Mohtrama Fatima Jinnah, Noorul Amin and all our forefathers buried here.

PTI demands judicial probe into attack on Raof Hasan

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has demanded formation of a judicial commission to investigate the attack on party's Information Secretary Raof Hasan.

The PTI information secretary was attacked on Tuesday afternoon by unidentified transgender persons with a blade in Islamabad's G-7 area. He suffered a cut in the face.

Addressing a press conference on Wednesday, Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Omar Ayub said an attempt was made to kill party's spokesperson.

"We reject the FIR launched by the Islamabad police. Why the sections of terrorism are not included in the FIR," questioned Ayub.

He added that the PTI would launch a strong protest all over the country if such tragic incidents happened again.

Addressing the press conference, Raof Hasan said it was an assassination attempt as the assailants wanted to "cut my throat".

"They were not transgender persons. They were well trained in such acts," he added.

"My wounds and cuts would be healed up sooner or later but the injustice done to this country would never end," he said.

He was of the view that the PTI faced a really difficult time during the last two years but people gave their verdict on Feb 8.

"The voters gave us two-thirds majority despite all the state oppression against our party," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Acting Chairman Senate, Syedaal Khan in a meeting with the Ambassador of Turkey, Mehmet Paçacı at Parliament House.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Bulldozed bill

Why is the Punjab government so keen on imposing dangerous legislation that would be unacceptable to any self-respecting society? The forced passage of the Defamation Bill 2024 over the protestations of both journalists and opposition lawmakers in the Punjab Assembly on Monday is a troubling reminder of how the PML-N has abandoned its principles ever since it returned to power.

Where once the party was championing the people and their voices, it is now devising new means to silence them. It has been said before but needs to be stressed again: this new law will likely come back to bite it. The party had previously introduced the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act, which became a noose around its neck once it fell out of favour with the establishment. Those who were urging the Punjab government to get all stakeholders on board merely wanted it to avoid repeating that mistake.

In a demonstration held after the Monday session of the Punjab Assembly, the Lahore Press Club president recalled that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had joined the protests when the PTI had been attempting to strengthen Peca to make it more effective in suppressing public criticism. But here she was now, going ahead with equally condemnable legislation "aimed at gagging the media".

Was her earlier position based merely on political expediency? Has her party considered what the consequences of such a law would be in case it once again runs afoul of the powers that be? The last time this happened, its leadership was still able to vent its frustration and publicly name those whom it held responsible. The ability to do so kept it alive politically. The next time it happens, the party and its leaders would be condemned to suffer in silence thanks to the law they have just passed.

Defamation is a societal problem, not something that concerns the Punjab government alone. The journalists' community had merely asked the Punjab government for a week to reconsider the law and arrive at a consensus. Meanwhile, the opposition had suggested certain changes to the law, some of which, it seems, could have improved it considerably. By involving these two stakeholders in its deliberations, the government in Lahore would have had the opportunity to make the law fairer and acceptable to everyone. That it chose to push them aside suggests a disinclination to honour the democratic principles of the legislative process and, instead, a tendency to impose its will on the people. This disregard for the opposition and other dissenting voices — now seen in multiple successive governments — is the primary reason why the Pakistani political process seems unable to deliver. The Punjab government must withdraw this dangerous bill and engage with other stakeholders. There is still time.

Preparing for crises

Naveen Hussain

If the society you live in was about to experience catastrophe or collapse due to climate change, rising geopolitical tensions and all-out war, or growing inequality leading to civil unrest, what would you do to protect yourself and your family?

A Karachiite of my acquaintance owns a small farm which has previously been used for weekends in the country. He fears that with rising inequality and hunger, civil unrest will increase. And if the US initiates another regional war, Pakistan may get dragged in again. He is preparing to move to his farm to become a full-time homesteader. He believes that this will be the safest place to ride out any coming storm.

Homesteading is an off-grid, self-reliant lifestyle. His farm is well stocked with fruit and vegetables, and he rears a few chickens and other animals. Solar panels provide electricity, and he has a water bore for clean drinking water. This is classic homesteading. All that's needed is to store non-perishable foods and pickle and preserve surplus fresh foods.

Adapting our lifestyles to survive is human nature, and yet popular culture depicts homesteaders as eccentric and possibly extremist. The Good Life, a popular BBC comedy, which aired in the 1970s, depicted a couple who gave up corporate life to start homesteading in their middle-class suburban house, much to the dismay of their wealthy neighbours. More recently, the Netflix film Leave the World Behind showed us what life might look like if the world we knew became hostile to us.

Not everyone owns a farm they can retreat to. Most city dwellers live in urban settings like apart-

ment blocks. These people are more likely to be "preppers" rather than homesteaders. Preppers stockpile essentials against inevitable economic and climate crises. In the past, the most prepping an urban person might do was to carry a map, a torch, a spare tyre, and a tyre iron in their car boot. Drivers in harsh climates might also have kept blankets, dry clothes, energy bars, and water, as a precaution against the car breaking down.

Covid-19 was the first time that most people born into a globalised world experienced a truly global supply chain disruption. People in Europe began stockpiling dry pasta while those in Asia stockpiled rice. Hand sanitiser became a luxury item; my personal supply was stolen from my desk by 'persons unknown' and replacing it became a mission that took weeks for more sanitiser to be shipped, at great cost, from abroad. Most of us stockpiled something.

Online prepper guides and videos focus on the US and Australia, which are now regularly subject to large uncontrolled forest fires or hurricanes and require emergency evacuation from their homes. Increasing flooding in the UK has locals turning to prepping.

The basic needs of the prepper relate to water, food, and energy. They stockpile bottled water, tinned foods, dry rice, batteries, candles, matches, first aid equipment and essential medication. They have backup torches, solar-powered lamps, and a solar panel charger for mobile devices. Travel documents and ID are kept with other essentials in a 'go' bag or 'bug out' bag which can be grabbed easily if evacuation becomes necessary.

You may be sur-

prised to discover that your neighbours in Pakistan are also prepping. I have met families in ground floor apartments who have installed solar panels on their patios. Those who cannot install solar are ensuring they have portable, affordable solar lanterns. Increasingly, families who can afford to are stockpiling essentials and non-perishables, hedging against ever-increasing food prices. They may not discuss prepping, but they are taking comm-on sense precautions against uncertainty.

Climate shocks, rising geopolitical tensions, and a global cost-of-living crisis mean many people cannot afford to stockpile essentials. As rising prices force the middle class to devolve into the working poor, they become as vulnerable as the unemployed. The gap between the haves and have-nots becomes ever more extreme. When disaster strikes such unequal societies, what happens next? How far will people go to save their family?

Our species thrived because we lived in communities. Homesteading succeeds when the fruits of your labour are shared with labourers and other homesteaders. Prepping works best when people share their skills and pool their knowledge within their neighbourhood. As climate events become more brutal, individual survival becomes more difficult; we must look to our distant past and recognise that the manual labourer is as critical to our survival as the scientist or strategist.

We need community leaders within neighbourhoods and apartment blocks to build trust and put disaster provision plans in place now. It will be too late after a disaster strikes. -- Courtesy Dawn

Unusual trifecta

Mahir Ali

There appears to be no reliable source for the quote that there are decades when nothing happens and weeks when decades happen, commonly (and possibly apocryphally) attributed to Vladimir Lenin, but the beginning of this week felt a bit like that.

The likelihood that Iran's president and foreign minister had perished in a helicopter crash alongside seven others seemed obvious long before Tehran officially acknowledged the tragedy and announced five days of mourning. This was followed by reports that the International Criminal Court's (ICC's) chief prosecutor had sought warrants against leading figures in Israel and Hamas. Soon afterwards came the news that a pair of British judges had allowed Julian Assange the right to appeal against the British government's determination to extradite him to the US for a trial on patently absurd and politically motivated espionage charges.

Ebrahim Raisi, elected president in 2021 on a low turnout, and his foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, were guests in Islamabad last month after a period of tensions between the two countries and an exchange of hostilities targeting purported militants on both sides of the Balochistan border. Last Sunday, they were returning from a dam inauguration on the border with Azerbaijan also attended by the latter nation's president, Ilham Aliyev — the scion of Heydar Aliyev, who segued easily from a reliable Soviet apparatchik to a typical Central Asian potentate.

For the Iranians, the transport back to Tabriz relied on an old, US-designed helicopter, flying through hilly terrain in poor weather. A 'hard landing' was the initial

official description in Tehran, although segments of Iranian media were talking about a crash early on, and the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, tried to reassure the nation that the consequences would not be disruptive long before official sources admitted that there were no survivors.

Raisi will be succeeded by his unelected first vice president, Mohammad Mokhber, in an interim capacity, with fresh presidential elections due within 50 days. There is no reason to expect the pattern will be any different from the recent past, with the clerical hierarchy effectively picking the favoured candidate while offering the mirage of a democratic contest. It hasn't always been easy, though, with the clergy occasionally facing mild resistance from the likes of Rafsanjani, Khatami and Rouhani. Even the militantly conservative Ahmadinejad was too much of a loose cannon for it.

With Khamenei now 85, Raisi was considered a contender for the top job. The former is the second supreme leader since 1979. When Ruhollah Khomeini died 10 years later, the Khaleej Times put out a special edition. The only picture we could find of Khomeini with a foreign leader featured Yasser Arafat soon after the revolution. That found a prominent place in the paper — and one of the KT's photographers came close to being roughed up by Iranian mourners at a mosque in Dubai because of that image. The Palestinian leader had apparently turned into persona non grata since the early days of the revolution, after which the regime had welcomed arms from Israel as part of the Iran-Contra deal under the Reagan set-up.

Iran has lately stood

out as the only significant Middle Eastern power to meaningfully rage against the genocide in Gaza, but its motivations are suspect. Raisi had been implicated for decades in the repression that has stood out as a key characteristic of the regime that smothered the best aspects of the rebellion against the Pahlavi monarchy 45 years ago.

Iran might have been a very different country had the US not conspired seven decades ago to turn it into an Israel-friendly Middle Eastern satellite. Today, it is determined to defend Israel, with Joe Biden denying any 'equivalence' posited by the ICC between Hamas and the Zionist regime, notwithstanding their deadly inclinations — let alone the Israeli Defence Forces' military supremacy, courtesy of a steady supply of US military hardware.

As a s a n g e ' s WikiLeak exposed the brutal absurdity of America's military endeavours in places where it has no right to be, which is why the Trump and Biden administrations have conspired to permanently silence him. It would make sense for Biden's government to drop the ridiculous charges, given that the British establishment would reprehensibly be unwilling to liberate him without Washington's imprimatur. The ICC's endeavour has been condemned by Hamas, Israel and Biden. That alone suggests it might be worthy, even though the prosecutor's request is yet to be processed by the judges. It is, of course, highly unlikely that either the Israeli or the Hamas leadership will ever find itself in the dock at The Hague, but pushing this genocidal conflict in the direction of accountability just might bring it to a halt. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Gemstones.

Gold rates dip by Rs 300 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 300 and was sold at Rs 248,200 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs 248,500 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 236 to Rs 212,791 from Rs 213,048 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 195,059 from Rs 195,295, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs2,850 and Rs2,443.41, respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$3 to \$2,415 from \$2,418.

PM for steps to grant industrial status to gems, precious stones sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the relevant authorities to take the required steps for granting the industrial status to the gems and precious stones sector of the country. The prime minister, chairing a meeting on the gems and precious stones sector, called for necessary legislation and consultation with the provinces and the private sector to uplift the sector besides immediately activating the Gems and Jewelry Development Company.

He said that most of the country's areas particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir were rich with immense natural resources which needed to be fully exploited. Prime Minister Shehbaz also called for ensuring the international certification of stone products and their display at international exhibitions. He also instructed for launching training programs to promote value addition of the stone

products, and carry out the geological mapping of KP, GB and AJK on the availability of precious stones. The participants of the meeting were told that a strategy was being formulated to promote investment in the fields of gems and rare stone. Federal ministers Ahmad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Jam Kamal Khan and Dr Musaddik Malik, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Musadik Malik says: Govt. to enhance indigenous production of petroleum products

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum, Musadik Masood Malik said on Wednesday that the government will enhance the indigenous production of petroleum products, including gas and crude oil. Addressing an energy symposium, he said that the government has put blocks for bidding and is actively trying to attract global players in exploration activities. He said that Pakistan is open for business and committed to completely digitizing the regulatory process to increase transparency. Malik highlighted the importance of the TAPI gas pipeline project, which he said would provide cheaper gas. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring an uninterrupted and affordable energy supply, recognizing it as a top priority. He said that Pakistan currently spends over \$18 billion annually on energy imports. The minister

reassured attendees that the government is expediting oil and gas exploration within the country and welcomes foreign companies to invest in this sector. He said that investment processes and information regarding oil and gas exploration have been digitized and simplified to facilitate this. To reduce electricity tariffs, the government is working on various proposals, he said. By supplying local gas to efficient power plants, the cost of electricity could be reduced to Rs 12 per unit, compared to Rs 24 per unit when using LNG. He acknowledged the high theft and losses in the gas sector, particularly in Balochistan, where gas losses have increased in Sui-Southern. To combat urban gas theft, modern systems, including comprehensive monitoring of the gas network using technology, are being implemented. He advocated for

increased utilization of Pakistan's abundant renewable energy resources, especially as the country's solar energy costs have significantly decreased. He said that multiple policies have been formulated to boost local production after a long period. Regarding the TAPI framework, he said that project financing would be jointly provided by Pakistan and Turkmenistan. He highlighted Turkmenistan's vast gas reserves and limited market, primarily China, and proposed that European countries purchase LNG from Turkmenistan to enhance their energy security. He said that Pakistan has proposed to European countries the idea of purchasing LNG from Turkmenistan, which would provide energy security to Europe. He explained that a gas pipeline will come from Turkmenistan to Pakistan, and gas will then be supplied to Europe via a train.

Atif Ikram says: Govt should make border management system more active to prevent smuggling

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the government should make the border management system more active to prevent smuggling. Movement of smuggled goods into the country is affecting tax revenue which can be increased only through

prevention of smuggling. We support the government's measures against non-filers in the upcoming fiscal year budget. Tax should be collected from those who are not in the tax net. Federation President Atif Ikram said that the tax target should be kept closer to reality in the next financial year. The business community is ready to help the government in increasing the tax net.

Green Energy Transition to help Pakistan build sustainable economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts at the Green Financing Summit held here on Wednesday underscored the need for Pakistan to embrace a paradigm shift in its policy to achieve renewable energy transition through subsidized energy frameworks helping to achieve a sustainable economy. The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) under its

Network for Clean Energy Transition organized the virtual conference titled "Green Financing Summit: Driving Energy Transition through alternate and Green Financing Mechanisms". In his opening remarks, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI, Dr Sajid Amin said the discourse on clean energy transition was crucial as shift over green energy was the country's journey.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Park Ki Jun called on Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where five ships, Hope Island, Conti Courage, Tethis-7, Al-Thakhira and Advantage Paradise carrying Container, Palm oil, LNG and Gas oil, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Elmy Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Tuesday. Meanwhile two more ships, Marathopolis and Torn Venture carrying Container and Gas oil also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day. A total of twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships.

Industries Minister meets Korean envoy, discusses bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Park Ki Jun to discuss the bilateral cooperation. The delegation from leading South Korean companies also accompanied the ambassador, said a news release issued here. The minister said that both countries enjoyed historical and cordial relations and engaged in multifaceted bilateral cooperation in

many areas including in the field of economic and culture. The matters of mutual interest, including bilateral cooperation and the challenges faced by Korean companies in Pakistan also came under discussion. The minister assured the visiting delegation for prompt resolution of all pending matters. Rana Tanvir apprised the visiting ambassador that the government had taken a number of steps to boost up industrial activities in the country.

KP CM distributes scholarship certificates among 65 students

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Minister Education Endowment Fund (CMEEF) held a scholarship award distribution ceremony at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Wednesday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur as the chief guest.

Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi, MNA Shahid Khan Khattak, officials of Higher Education Department and other concerned officials attended the ceremony.

The chief minister on this occasion, distributed scholarships and certificates among 65

deserving and talented students for graduate and undergraduate programs.

Briefing the participants about the scholarships so far awarded under Chief Minister Education Endowment Fund, it was informed that the fund was established in 2014 with seed amount of Rs. 940 million, under which, a total of 444 scholarships worth Rs. 546.47 million had been awarded till date.

According to the details, 107 graduate scholarships worth Rs. 47 million and 327 undergraduate scholarships worth Rs. 302 million, have been awarded in the approved leading national institutes. Similarly, 3 MS

and 7 PhD scholarships worth Rs. 197.47 million, have been awarded in the top universities of the world. Addressing the ceremony, the chief minister congratulated the students awarded with scholarship certificates and hoped that they would move forward with more dedication and hard work and play well at their part in making the name of the nation bright at international level. On this occasion, the chief minister announced increase in the seed amount of Endowment Fund from Rs 490 million to Rs 2.00 billion aimed at awarding more scholarships as well as supporting the orphan students in the province.



A delegation of People Lawyers Forum District Dir meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor's House Peshawar.

Kundi vows to present province's development case at every forum

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday said that the province is currently facing security and economic challenges, and he will present the case for the province's development at relevant forums, including the merged districts.

The Governor said that unemployment and law and order issues are the root causes of terrorism and emphasized that all political parties and the nation must unite with zero tolerance to eradicate menace of terrorism completely.

He expressed these views during a study tour of the 35th Senior Management Course participants at the Governor's House in Peshawar. The participants included officers from various service groups and ministries.

The Governor apprised them on his constitutional obligations, powers, and responsibilities, and answered their questions about security, higher education, law and order, Afghan refugees, and political and economic stability.

PA Deputy Speaker visits site of Arts Council

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Malik Zaheer Iqbal Channar on Wednesday visited the ongoing construction work of the Divisional Arts Council Bahawalpur.

Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa and Director Arts Council Sajjad Hussain was also present on this occasion.

The Deputy Speaker visited various sections of the under-construction building and inspected the progress. He emphasized the importance of completing the development work of the Bahawalpur Arts Council building on time with high standards.

Punjab Governor says: Ibrahim Raisi great supporter of the unity of the Muslim Ummah

Independent Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan today visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Islamabad to extend his condolences to Iranian Ambassador, Raza Amiri Moghadam on the martyrdom of the Iranian president and his companions in a helicopter crash. He offered Fataha and prayed for the elevation of ranks of the deceased and patience to the bereaved families.

Punjab Governor, Saleem Haider Khan said that they equally share the grief of Iranian people and

the government. Governor Punjab said that Ibrahim Raisi was a visionary leader. He added that Ibrahim Raisi was a great supporter of the unity of the Muslim Ummah. He said that the late Iranian president had recently made a successful visit to Pakistan in which important agreements were signed. Governor Punjab also signed the condolence book. Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam expressed his gratitude to the Pakistani people and government on behalf of the government and people of Iran for sharing their grief and standing with them in this difficult time.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider writing his condolence remarks during his visit to Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

New school building constructed in different rural areas with support of FFC inaugurated

By Tanveer Ahmed Soomro

MIRPUR MATHELO: Resident Manager of Fauji Fertilizer Company Mirpur Mathelo Brig (Retd) Muhammad Saleem Cheema, Col Shakeel Ahmed Chatha, Col Shujaat Minhas, PRO FFC Amanullah Shar and Ahmed Ali Soomro along with F.F.C. Inauguration of the new school building constructed in different rural areas with the support of FFC, the school administration and local residents appreciated the efforts of Brigadier Muhammad Saleem Cheema in relation to education. In

addition to providing, pay attention to the education of boys and girls because an educated man is the foundation of an educated society, resident manager Brigadier Muhammad Saleem Cheema told reporters.

According to the details of Fauji Fertilizers Company, an industrial enterprise of district Ghotki. Resident Manager Brigadier Muhammad Saleem Cheema, along with Colonel Shakeel Ahmed Chatha, Colonel Shujaat Minhas, PRO FFC Amanullah Shar and Ahmed Ali Soomro with the support of FFC administration.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique inaugurates In-door Pharmacy at Allied Hospital-II.

DIG Operations meets business community

LAHORE (APP): DIG (Operations) Lahore Muhammad Kamran held a meeting with business community to discuss security, law and order situation of the markets and the liaison between LCCI and Police Department, here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Wednesday.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt and a large number of members including presidents of

various markets participated in the meeting.

In his address, LCCI President Kashif Anwar said, "We sit safely in our homes due to the presence of our law enforcement agencies." He said that the police lay down their lives to protect the citizens. He said that there is a very good relationship between the police department and the LCCI. He said that during the previous visit of DIG (Operations), few issues were discussed including police verification of employees and workers in factories and markets.

Azma expresses deep condolences to acting Iranian Consul General

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Information Azma Bokhari expressed her deep condolences to the Acting Iranian Consul General Ali Asghar Moghari on the death of the Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister.

The Provincial Minister also inked condolence comments in the Guest Book at the Iranian Embassy.

She said that the entire Pakistani nation is deeply grieved over the death of the Iranian President and Pakistan equally shares the grief of their Iranian brothers and sisters.

"We express our deep sense of sorrow and condolence over the martyrdom of the Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian."

Azma Bokhari said that the President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi was a great Mujahid and a revolutionary leader of the Islamic World.

Government committed to improve treatment facilities in hospitals: Health Minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafiq on Wednesday said that the government under the dynamic leadership of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was committed to improve medical treatment facilities in all hospitals on modern lines. During his visit to Allied Hospital-I here, he said that huge funds were being spent on up-gradation and revamping of government hospitals where nursing staff would also be recruited soon to overcome their shortage in the hospitals.

He said that the Punjab Government was

contemplating for providing Health Professional Allowance which would help improve performance of this sector. He visited various sections of the hospital and directed to complete revamping work till June 10. He said that Rs.2.7 billion were being spent on up-gradation of this hospital and this project would be completed on war-footing. Medical Superintendent (MS) Dr Muhammad Faheem Yousuf briefed the Health Minister and said that 68 ventilators were in working condition in the hospital while pediatric ward was being upgraded.

Three die in separate incidents in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Three people were killed on Wednesday in separate incidents took place in different localities of Dera Ismail Khan district. According to details, a dumper fell into Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC) near Saidu-wali area of Tehsil Paharpur resulting, driver drowned into the canal while four other people were rescued by the local people. Later, the body of the deceased driver was also fished out by the local people.

According to the Rescue 1122 team the dumper was also took out by using heavy machinery.

International News

Iran's supreme leader prays for late president and others killed in helicopter crash

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran's supreme leader prayed Wednesday over the coffins of the country's late president, foreign minister and other officials who were killed in a helicopter crash earlier this week. Later, hundreds of thousands of people followed a procession honoring the dead down Tehran's main boulevard.

Iran's Shiite theocracy views mass demonstrations as crucial evidence of its legitimacy and the people's support.

Still, Wednesday's funeral service for President Ebrahim Raisi and others saw a turnout that onlookers described as noticeably lower than the 2020 pro-

cession honoring Revolutionary Guard general Qassem Soleimani, who was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad.

Many of the participants said they came to Tehran for the ceremony from other cities and towns across the Islamic Republic, an indication of how those in Iran's capital viewed Raisi, who won the presidency in a record low turnout and later oversaw repeated crackdowns on dissent — including in the wake of the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini that sparked street protests over Iran's mandatory hijab, or headscarf. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who openly wept for Soleimani, also re-

mained composed while reciting the standard prayer for the dead.

"Oh Allah, we didn't see anything but good from him," Khamenei said in Arabic, the language of Islam's holy book, the Quran. Iran's acting president, Mohammad Mokhber, stood nearby and openly cried.

The death of Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and six others in the crash on Sunday comes at a politically sensitive moment for Iran, both at home and abroad.

Raisi, who was 63, had been discussed as a possible successor to Iran's supreme leader, the 85-year-old Khamenei.



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei performs prayer at a funeral for victims of helicopter crash that killed Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Abdollahian and others, in Tehran, Iran.

Israeli forces raze parts of Jabalia camp, hit Rafah

Monitoring Desk

GAZA: Israeli forces thrust deeper into the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza on Tuesday, laying waste to residential districts with tank and air bombardments, residents said, while airstrikes killed at least five people in the southern city of Rafah.

The Israeli army used bulldozers to clear shops and property near the local market in Jabalia of refugee camp, residents

said, in a military operation that began almost two weeks ago.

Israel said it has returned to the camp, where it had asserted to have dismantled Hamas months ago, to prevent the group from regrouping.

Health authorities and Gaza Civil Emergency Service said dozens of bodies were trapped under rubble of houses and on the roads in Jabalia, but were out of reach of rescue teams.

US pushes for G7 response to China's industrial overcapacity

Monitoring Desk

FRANKFURT: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Tuesday that the United States and Europe needed to respond to China's industrial overcapacity in a "strategic and united way" to keep manufacturers viable on both sides of the Atlantic.

Yellen told reporters during a visit to Frankfurt that G7 finance ministers shared US concerns about Chinese efforts to dominate clean energy industries, but did not need "detailed coordination" on trade actions following the imposition of steep US tariffs on Chinese goods. "But I do think that

the concerns about China's strategy are shared and all I'm suggesting is that given that many countries share this concern, it's more forceful to communicate to China as a group," Yellen said.

In remarks on the US-European alliance in Fran-ckfurt, Yellen said China's excess industrial capacity threatened both American and European firms as well as the industrial development of emerging market countries. "China's industrial policy may seem remote as we sit here in this room, but if we do not respond strategically and in a united way,

DR Congo thwarts Kinshasa 'coup attempt': Army

Monitoring Desk

KINSHASA: The DR Congo military on Sunday thwarted an attempted coup near the offices of President Felix Tshisekedi in Kinshasa involving "foreigners and Congolese", the army spokesperson said.

The coup bid took place in the early hours of the morning outside the residence of economy minister Vital Kamerhe, in the Gombe area in the north of the capital, near the Palais de la Nation which houses the president's offices. "An attempted coup d'etat has been stopped by the defence and security forces."

UK's ex-Post Office boss Paula Vennells says she was 'too trusting'

Monitoring Desk

LONDON: Former British Post Office boss Paula Vennells sobbed on Wednesday after telling a public inquiry the wrongful conviction of hundreds of postmasters had been caused by errors not conspiracy, and if anything she had been "too trusting" of others. More than 700 local post office branch managers, who were often at the heart of small communities, were convicted between 1999 and 2015.

Palestinian state is recognized by several European countries

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Norway, Ireland and Spain have recognized a Palestinian state in a historic move. Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said on Wednesday it was coordinated with Spain and Norway, "an historic and important day for ... Palestine."

Several other European countries have in the past weeks indicated that they plan to recognize a Palestinian state, arguing a two-state solution is essential for lasting peace in the region. European countries are recognizing a Palestinian state while dozens of countries have recognized a Palestinian state, none of the major Western powers has done so. The decisions from Norway, Ireland and Spain may generate momentum.

The recognitions mark a significant accomplishment for the Palestinians, who believe it confers international legitimacy on their struggle, especially amid international outrage over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Here's more on how and why the new European announcements could be important.

Ireland, Norway and Spain have recognized a Palestinian state. Several other European countries have in the past weeks indicated that they plan to make the recognition, arguing a two-state solution is essential for lasting peace in the region. Meanwhile, France indicated that it isn't ready to join other countries in recognizing a Palestinian state, even if it isn't opposed to the idea in principle.

Protesters interrupt Blinken's testimony over Israel policy

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken faced criticism from the right and left over Israel policy in Congress on Tuesday, with Republicans accusing the Biden administration of failing Israel and Democrats saying it's doing too little to help civilians in Gaza. Furious protesters interrupted Blinken as he began his testimony before the Democratic-controlled Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There were shouts that he has "blood on his hands," and Blinken flinched from a protester who approached him from behind waving a sign that said "criminal" before security officers carried her out of the room. Blinken reiterated the support of President Joe Biden's administration for Israel, but insisted it was focused on easing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

"In the Middle East, we're standing with Israel in its efforts to ensure what happened on October 7 never happens again, as we do everything we can to bring an end to the terrible human suffering in Gaza and prevent the conflict from spreading," he said.

Blinken was scheduled to appear later on Tuesday before the Senate appropriations subcommittee that oversees diplomatic and foreign aid spending. He returns to Capitol Hill on Wednesday for two more rounds of testimony at hearings of the Republican-led House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee and a House appropriations subcommittee. Republicans criticised Biden for saying this month that he would delay a shipment of bombs to Israel and consider withholding others if Israeli forces launched a major invasion of Rafah.



Palestinians evacuate Kamal Adwan hospital following an Israeli strike in Beit Lahia, the northern Gaza Strip.

German defence minister not ready to compromise on 2025 budget demand

Monitoring Desk

LITHUANIA: German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said on Wednesday he was not prepared to lower his demands for the 2025 defence budget or accept a compromise right now. Speaking during a visit to the Pabrade training ground in Lithuania, he told reporters he would neither disclose his negotiating strategy in talks with the finance minister nor send any signal whether he saw room for compromise.

"I am not prepared to do either," he said, responding to a question whether

he might step back from his demand of topping up the 2025 defence budget by 6.7 billion euros (\$7.3 billion).

Due to the spending requests from ministries, the ruling coalition of Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and Free Democrats (FDP) will hold further talks on next year's budget.

Germany has for years been criticized for spending too little on defence, effectively relying on the United States to underpin its security despite being Europe's biggest economy.

Death of Iran's president has delayed talks with IAEA, Grossi says

HELSINKI: The deaths of Iran's president and foreign minister in a helicopter crash have caused a pause in the UN nuclear watchdog's talks with Tehran over improving cooperation with the agency, the watchdog's chief Rafael Grossi told Reuters on Wednesday.

"They are in a mourning period which I need to respect," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Grossi said in Helsinki, where he spoke at a nuclear conference.

"But once this is over, we are going to be engaging again," he said, describing it as a "temporary interruption that I hope will be over in a matter of days". Grossi said the IAEA was planning to continue technical discussions with Iran but they had not yet taken place due to last weekend's helicopter crash that killed President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian.

PM for early completion of Islamabad's IT Park, third party evaluation of software parks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday instructed for the early completion of IT Park being developed in Islamabad and carrying out the third-party performance evaluation of software technology parks.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the matters related to the IT parks, lauded the establishment of such parks in the country to promote information technology, IT exports and to facilitate the startups.

Briefing the prime minister about the IT Parks, the officers of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications said that Islamabad's IT

Park being established through South Korean cooperation, would be completed by next year. The facility would feature startups, incubation centers, banks, restaurants and other facilities.

Besides, another IT Park being developed with South Korea's support near the Jinnah International Airport of Karachi would be completed by 2027.

Federal ministers Ahmad Khan Cheema and Muhammad Aurangzeb, State Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Jahanzeb Khan, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Azam Nazeer Tarar says Appointment of Rector of COMSATS university in final stage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Azam Nazeer Tarar, informed the Senate on Wednesday that the process to appoint the Rector of COMSATS University Islamabad is in its final stage.

Responding to a calling attention notice moved by Senator Dr. Zarqa regarding the recent appointment and amendment of

rules by the interim Rector of COMSATS University Islamabad, he said that a search committee constituted by the President would soon submit its recommendations to the appointing authority.

He said that the committee had shortlisted 80 candidates, from which three names would be submitted to the President of Pakistan for the final decision.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Information Technology Parks.

Ministry of Interior launches 'No Hajj Without a Permit' mobile exhibition

MADINAH (SPA/APP): The Ministry of Interior is holding the mobile exhibition "No Hajj Without a Permit" in Madinah, between May 20 and 25, 2024, to raise awareness among the residents about safe and secure Hajj practices.

Visitors gain insights into the ministry's use of artificial intelligence to manage crowds during Hajj, but also get familiarized with the Makkah Route Initiative, which is part of the broader 'Pilgrim Experience Program, which falls under Saudi Vision 2030 and whose goal is to serve pilgrims.

CPEC's projects enhancing developmental capacity for Pakistan: Chinese Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong said here last night that China-Pakistan Friendship will keep flourishing and prosper forever.

In his address delivered at "friendship forever" event celebrating China Pakistan establishing 73 years of diplomatic relations held here at Pakistan-China Center, he said he is very happy to celebrate the 73rd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. On behalf of the Chinese Embassy, he extended his warm congratulations and sincere gratitude to friends from all walks of life who have long been committed to China-Pakistan friendship!

President Xi Jinping said that China-Pakistan friendship is like a thriving tree with deep roots and luxuriant leaves, he said.

He said, "Since the newly born People's Republic of China established diplomatic ties with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1951, the two countries have embarked on a new chapter of China-Pakistan friendship.

It has evolved into an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. From the Chinese tallow tree planted by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in Shikarpur Park in 1964, to the pine trees planted by President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House in 2015, under the nurturing of the leaders of our two countries and the joint efforts of both sides, China-Pakistan friendship has grown into a towering tree, deeply rooted in the hearts of the two peoples.

Over the past 73 years, leaders of the two countries frequently visited each other like close relatives, guiding the development of China-Pakistan relations. In 2015, President Xi Jinping's historic state visit to Pakistan elevated the bilateral relations to all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, and set the goal of building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era, which provided fundamental principles and operational guidelines to the development of China-Pakistan relations.

Federal Ombudsman resolves over 0.2mln complaints in past year, sees increase in public trust

Independent Report
KARACHI: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi announced on Wednesday that the Ombudsman's office resolved over 200,000 complaints last year, with 150,000 coming from overseas Pakistanis.

Addressing a news conference, Ejaz Qureshi highlighted that most complaints were related to electricity and gas bills, as well as issues with passports and National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) services.

He mentioned that around 180 federal departments and agencies fall under the Federal Ombudsman's jurisdiction. Ejaz Qureshi noted a 24% increase in complaints, indicating growing public trust in the Ombudsman's office. The Ombudsman emphasised that their office resolves complaints within 60 days, and citizens do not need to hire lawyers to have their issues addressed. He also stated that the Federal Ombudsman's office is enhancing coordination with Provincial Ombudsman Offices to provide maximum relief to citizens.

Senior Advisor to the Federal Ombudsman in Karachi, Anwar Haider also spoke at the event and said that the Karachi office aims to resolve complaints within 60 days, achieving a 70% implementation rate on complaints. Last year, approximately 12,000 cases related to electricity and other utilities were resolved, reflecting increased public trust and rising complaint numbers, he stated.

Earlier, Ejaz Qureshi held a detailed meeting with representatives from various federal government departments and agencies.

SSP Operations says: Police committed to resolve public issues on priority

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: As per the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Ali Rizvi, the SSP Operations, Malik Jameel Zafar said that the police were committed to resolve public issues on priority.

According to public relations officer, the SSP Operations said this while listening to the complaints

complaints of the citizens and marked their applications for timely action on merit. The SSP also directed them to send reports to his offices in the given time frame.

He further said that strict action would be taken against officials involved in bribery or corruption and a zero tolerance policy would be adopted in that regard.



ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar chairing a meeting with the representatives of various federal government departments/agencies at the Ombudsman Secretariat.

No member of incumbent federal cabinet drawing salary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar stated on Wednesday that no member of the incumbent federal cabinet is drawing a salary, as they have all voluntarily decided not to withdraw it.

Speaking in the Senate, the minister explained that ministers pay Rs. 143,000 in rent for their single official accommodation and cover the utility bills for their residences themselves. According to the rules, ministers are not entitled to have their utility bills, including gas and electricity, paid by the government, and these bills are covered by them personally.

He mentioned that ministers are allotted 300 or 350 liters of petrol for an 1800 cc vehicle, along with one driver and one security guard. If a minister exceeds this allocation, they cover the additional costs from their own resources.

KSRelief distributes 9,000 shelters, non-food items among Pakistan's flood-hit families

ISLAMABAD (APP): The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) announced on Wednesday it has distributed 9,000 shelters and non-food items to flood-affected families in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provinces to meet the needs of people affected by recent rains. The death toll from rain-related incidents in Pakistan's Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provinces surged to 78 last month, Arab News reported. Heavy rains in these provinces inundated the streets of several districts, damaging thousands of houses. The casualties included at least 33 children and 15 women, while many others were also injured and displaced.

"These relief kits, containing vital items such as shelters, solar panels, blankets, plastic mats, kitchen sets, water coolers, and antibacterial soap provided comprehensive support to 63,000 individuals," KSRelief said in a statement.

The Saudi aid agency added the "vital assistance during this critical time" would benefit flood victims in Upper Dir, Lower Chitral, Swat, Charsada and Dera Ismail Khan districts of KP and Gwadar, Chaghi and Pishin districts of Balochistan.



ISLAMABAD: Dr Sultan Temuri Principal Ayesha Kayani pose for group photo with students in program on gender equality organised by International Governance and Sustainability Institute held at Margalla Model College F-7/4 on Wednesday.



ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam chairing first Advisory Committee meeting on Climate Change.

Collaborative efforts on climate change necessary for national level impact: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): PM's coordinator on climate change and environmental coordination has said, the joint collaboration of all the stakeholders from government and non government sides is necessary to create national level impact to deal with climate crisis.

She was chairing the first meeting of advisory committee on climate change which includes the representation from SIFC, ministry of federal education, HEC, COMSATS, PM youth program, IRS, SDPI, planning Commission, ministry of Power (K-electric) NGOs, CSOs, private universities and banking sectors, a news release said.

The committee members highly appreciated the initiative of PM's coordinator to bring all the stakeholders at single platform to work together to fight against climate change.

It was agreed that the dashboard for data collection would be created by ministry of climate change. PM's coordinator has apprised the committee that she has fully imposed ban on plastic use and also holding events in five stars hotels. PM's coordinator sought the ideas from committee members to promote climate literacy, climate security, climate waste management and climate she power.

Chairman HEC said that he directed all the vice chancellors of universities to make it mandatory that every student (six million plus) and staff members plant a sapling of their part in university area to contribute in national cause. Chairman HEC also remarked that one of the biggest issue of Pakistan is lack of systematic approach in the country.

Ministry of education apprised the coordinator that FDE had banned plastic use in schools besides other activities including kitchen gardening, awareness campaigns, incorporation of climate change in national curriculum through national curriculum council etc.

SIFC also shared their findings in connection with pollution reduction due to bikes, bricks kilns and cutting trees by housing societies. They recommended to introduce electric bikes, revival of cycle culture, introducing of cement blocks instead of bricks kilns and celebration of dry day.

PM's coordinator while expressing her gratitude for all the participants remarked that she was pained when she heard in European countries that Pakistan was graveyard of wastes and she wanted to change this thought and want to make Pakistan one of the best place on planet. All stakeholders assured their full support to PM's coordinator for accomplishment of this national cause.

PML-N to review, amend party constitution

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has decided to review and amend the party constitution, a notification has been issued in this regard.

A seven-member committee was formed to revise and amend the party constitution of the Muslim League-N. The provincial president of PML-N Punjab, Rana Sanaullah, was appointed as the convener of the constitutional amendment and revision committee. The Member National Assembly

Intl Day of Biological Diversity observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): International Day of Biological Diversity was observed on Wednesday.

This year, the theme of the day was "Be part of the Plan". This is a call to action for all stakeholders to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity.

It is a United Nations-sanctioned international day for the promotion of biodiversity issues and observed on May 22 each year.



KARACHI: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi chairing a meeting with the representatives of various federal government departments/agencies at the Ombudsman Secretariat.

CDA chairman directs increased water supply in densely populated areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Wednesday directed a daily increase of 6 million gallons of water from Simly Dam and extended the duration of water supply in densely populated sectors and areas to meet the summer demands of citizens.

Chairing a key water management meeting at CDA headquarters, Chairman CDA Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Randhawa cancelled staff leaves to ensure an uninterrupted water supply for citizens.

Chairman CDA, while praising the performance of the water supply wing, urged the staff to maintain their hard work and dedication to ensure that citizens do not face water problems.

Attended by senior officers from the Water Supply Wing, the meeting resolved to keep the tanker service on high alert around the clock and to address all pipeline leakage complaints immediately.

Chairman CDA emphasized the need for long-term solutions to address water issues. He also instructed immediate action on Shahdara, Tarbela, Chinioi, and Khanpur dams to provide a permanent resolution to the water problem.

Chairman CDA expressed his anger over the theft of 40% of the water from Khanpur Dam to Sang jani Plant Canal.

FS, SAARC SG discuss dynamics of organization

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Secretary General Mohammad Golam Sarwar on Wednesday discussed the current dynamics of the organization and the possibility of its revitalizing.

The foreign secretary also hosted a lunch in the honour of visiting SAARC Secretary General, a post on X said.

The SAARC secretary general is currently on a maiden visit to Pakistan.

OEC starts Japanese language course for skilled workers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) has launched a short Japanese language course for skilled workers to get jobs in Japan as basic knowledge is must for job seekers who are interested to work in Japan. An official source told APP here on Thursday, that OEC as a manpower promotion public agency which was playing a vital role to provide maximum jobs to Pakistanis in abroad to generate the huge remittances. In this regard OEC seeking application from eligible candidate to apply for the Japanese language course, should have minimum education middle, 18 to 39 age limits and one year experience must for relevant field. Course fee Rs 1000 non-refundable and course duration around three months and two session one in morning and other in an evening.

Training session of drivers of Senate Secretariat held in PIPS

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: A training session of drivers of the Senate Secretariat was held here in Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS) Islamabad on Wednesday.

Training session was held by the City Traffic Police, Islamabad under the supervision of the transport branch of the Senate Secretariat. Joint Secretary of Senate Secretariat Jamil Ahmed Khoso, Executive Director Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services Mr. Muhammad Anwar and Chief Traffic Police Officer, Islamabad SSP Sarfraz Virk attended the session.

The drivers of the Senate Secretariat were comprehensively briefed regarding evolving traffic rules and road safety measures in the training session.



Speaking on the occasion Joint Secretary Jameel Ahmed Khoso said that safe driving was extremely important for safety at the road. He said, it also reflects the general attitude and behaviour of a nation. Underlings the importance of safe driving he said, it holds more importance when it relates to the employees of the Upper House of the country.

This is the reason that the Senate Secretariat has been regularly conducting the training sessions, he added. He said that today's session was also the part of this ongoing process for imparting evolving traffic rules and responsible behaviour in our drivers.

Executive director of PIPS and CTO Islamabad also expressed their views on road safety on this occasion. Joint Secretary Senate Secretariat presented honorary souvenirs to CTO Islamabad and other traffic police officials at the end of the training session.