

Independent

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Pakistan, World Bank agree to New Partnership Framework for reforms, development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and the World Bank on Wednesday agreed to collaborate on a new, robust and ambitious Country Partnership Framework (CPF) to carry forward the country's reform and development agenda.

The agreement was reached during a meeting between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and a delegation led by Regional Vice President of the World Bank for South Asia Martin Raiser. Welcoming Martin Raiser, Prime Minister Shehbaz lauded the contribution of the World Bank to the development of Pakistan.

The prime minister appreciated the support extended by the Bank for building the climate resilient infrastructure in the wake of 2022 floods in Pakistan.

He briefed the delegation on the reform agenda of the government including digitization of the entire tax system, power sector reforms, enhancing per acre yield in the agriculture sector, addressing the issue of child stunting, etc.

Appreciating Pakistan's aggressive reforms agenda, Martin Raiser said the World Bank was ready to collaborate with the country in its journey of transformation of the economy aimed at sustainable development. Both sides agreed to engage in a long-term, focused partnership under a new Country Partnership Framework with an annual review mechanism to assess progress and ensure that results are achieved. The strategy will include flexibility for future course cor-

rection. The new partnership will have the ambition to achieve transformational impacts over a decade on a selective set of critical development priorities for Pakistan. The initial set of priorities that were discussed in the meeting included structural economic reforms including domestic resource mobilization, particularly via digitalization and tax policy reforms. Human capital development, specifically addressing child stunting and improving foundational learning was also discussed. Likewise, the energy sector reforms, including increased participation of the private sector in transmission and distribution, and transition to green energy to make energy cheaper, cleaner and financially sustainable also came under discussion.



ISLAMABAD: World Bank's Regional Vice President for South Asia Martin Raiser, along with a delegation including country representative Najy Benhassine called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

300,000 MT wheat to be procured from leftover areas: CM

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday has announced that the provincial food department out of 900,000 tons of wheat has procured 600,000 tons and the remaining crop is being procured from the areas where growers missed out.

CM Murad Shah said that the problem of wheat procurement was aggravated when the wheat imported by the caretaker federal government started arriving at the port. "In principle importance of wheat was not feasible when the local crops were being harvested," he said and added this caused loss to the local growers.

Talking about wheat procurement situation in Sindh, CM said that the Sindh food dept had 400,000 tons of wheat in its godowns, and only 900,000 tons were required to meet the provincial requirement, therefore, a procurement target was set at

900,000. He added that so far 600,000 tons of wheat has been procured and the remaining 300,000 tons would be procured from the areas where complaints of judicious distribution of bardana were received.

CM said that after receiving the complaints of unfair distribution of bardana for wheat procurement he has already ordered an inquiry into the complaints. "Minister Irrigation & Food Jam Khan Shoro is conducting an inquiry and so far, I have suspended four District Food Controllers (DFCs)," he added.

This he said while speaking at the consultative meeting of elected representatives and party workers of Shaheed Benazirabad Division at a banquet hall. Talking about holding consultative meetings with party workers at the grassroots level, Murad Shah said that it was essential for the inclusive development of the province. "Chairman Bilawal Bhutto

wants every worker of the party must be consulted to make Sindh one of the most developed provinces of the country," the CM said. During the meeting the party workers raised multiple local problems for which the Sindh chief minister issued directives through the concerned ministers then and there. A party worker told the chief minister that there are various major dhoras/drain along the Rohri Canal in district Naushehroferoze. The CM said that he has already approved lining of various natural waterways and Dhoras of Shaheed Benazirabad Division.

He directed Irrigation minister to review the lining of Dhora schemes and include those discussed in the meeting. Shah said that the Irrigation department would examine the proposal of lining of the 10-km area of Rohri Canal located in Naushehroferoze district closed to major drains.

9th May to be remembered as a dark day in Pakistan's history: President Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has said that 9th May 2023, will always be remembered as a dark day in Pakistan's history when a politically instigated mob ran amok across the country, damaging public property and military installations.

Condemning the violence, he said that the unfortunate incidents severely tarnished the country's image, which only served the interests of Pakistan's enemies.

The president, in his message, termed the mob attacks an attempt to challenge the writ of the state, undermine the rule of law and weaken the institutions.

He said that peaceful demonstrations and constructive criticism were the essence of democracy, emphasizing that Pakistan's Constitution enshrined the

fundamental rights of assembly and expression.

Nonetheless, he stressed the vital importance of exercising "these rights with utmost responsibility, adhering strictly to the bounds of constitutional and legal provisions".

He affirmed that any attempt to misuse "these rights to incite violence will never be tolerated. We have never seen such vandalism in responsible democracies, with violent mobs wreaking havoc on state properties for political gains."

The president expressed pride in Pakistan's Armed Forces and its institutions, which had been a vanguard in defending the nation against various threats.

He emphasised that those responsible for the May 9 violence should be held accountable according to the law.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori meeting with Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy.

PM vows to collaborate with Uzbekistan, complete connectivity projects

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has expressed Pakistan's commitment to working with Uzbekistan to speed up and complete all bilateral trade and connectivity projects.

He was talking to Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov, who called on him in Islamabad on Wednesday.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's readiness to provide access to Uzbekistan to Pakistani Ports.

He also emphasized the importance of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project and Pakistan's commitment to its early completion. During the meeting, the two sides discussed enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and

Uzbekistan in the fields of trade and economy, security and defense, connectivity and people to people contacts.

The importance of peace and development in Afghanistan for regional connectivity was also discussed in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the Uzbek Foreign Minister, while congratulating the Prime Minister on his re-election, also conveyed the invitation of President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev for Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to undertake an official visit to Uzbekistan at his earliest convenience.

The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev and said that he is looking forward to meeting him.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan H.E. Bakhtiyor Saidov called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Bilawal, Aseefa Bhutto to arrive in Lahore on Friday

LAHORE (INP): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and MNA Aseefa Bhutto Zardari will reach Lahore on Friday.

Bilawal and Aseefa Bhutto will attend the swearing-in ceremony of PPP-nominated Punjab Governor Sardar Salim Haider Khan.

Sources said that Bilawal Bhutto and Aseefa will stay in Lahore for two days.

Electricity price hiked by Rs 2.83 per unit

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Wednesday hiked electricity price by Rs 2.83 per unit under the monthly fuel adjustment.

According to the details, the increase in electricity price will be applicable to the current month's (May) electricity bills. However, the Life Line and K-Electric consumers are exempted from the hike.

The revised price is expected to put an additional burden of over Rs 26 billion on the consumers.



SHAHEED BENAZIRABAD: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah addresses party workers during divisional meeting at a Banquet Hall.

Governor KP visits Sehwan Sharif, lays wreath at Qalandar shrine

HYDERABAD (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Faisal Karim Kundi reached Sehwan Sharif on Wednesday, visited the shrine of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, laid a wreath, and prayed for the safety of the country and the nation.

The Sindh minister for culture, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, was also present on the occasion.

Governor Kundi expressed gratitude to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Faryal Talpur for nominating him as governor and pledged to serve the people of KP diligently.

Later, while talking to the media in Sehwan Sharif, he mentioned the ongoing inquiry into the wheat scandal and assured legal action against those responsible.

He further said, "May 9 is the darkest day of Pakistan, and those responsible for what happened on that day should be punished, and if the culprits involved are not punished, then any other group will be encouraged to do such heinous acts."

Governor Kundi said, "The governor house will play its full role for the welfare of the people of the province."



GARHI KHUDA BUX: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi showering rose petals and offering Fateha for the peace of departed soul at the graves of PPP Founder, Martyred Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Martyred Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto during his visit to Bhutto Mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bux.

SHC resents over inaction in 10 missing persons' cases

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court on Wednesday expressed resentment over inaction of investigation officers and others in search of 10 missing citizens.

"It has not yet decided even after 12 years that the missing persons went themselves or someone take them by force," Justice Naimatullah Phulpoto remarked.

"No doubt the JIT and provincial Task Force holding sessions. The families of the missing persons are worried there should be relief for them," Justice Phulpoto said.

"The case of a missing citizen was with the

AVCC for 12 years, now it has come to us," an IO said. The court directed the investigation officers for progress in the probe on daily basis.

The bench also called reports from all jails and detention centres in the country.

The court also summoned the head of the joint investigation team (JIT) over failure in tracing a missing citizen, disappeared for last 12 years from Ajmer Nagri of Karachi.

The bench also directed for financial assistance of the family of a citizen missing from Mominabad locality of Karachi since year 2012.

Governor Sindh Assembly session on May 09

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Law, Parliamentary Affairs & Criminal Prosecution Department has notified that Governor of Sindh, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, summon the Provincial Assembly of Sindh to meet on May 9 at 02:00 p.m. at the Sindh Assembly Building, here.

This was stated in a statement on Wednesday.

President approves appointment of Rubina Khalid as BSP Chairperson

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari Wednesday approved the appointment of Rubina Khalid as Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

He also accepted the resignation of Dr Amjad Saqib from his position as Chairperson, a press release issued by the President House said.

The president approved the appointment under Section 5(3) of the Benazir Income Support Programme Act 2010.

Govt ensuring one stop solution to industrialists: Ikramullah Dharejo

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dharejo, Wednesday, said that industries department was setting up a facilitation center at SITE area as one stop solution for providing all the relevant facilities to industrialists online.

He expressed the views during visit of Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE) Limited. Secretary Industries and Commerce Muhammad Yasin Shar Baloch, MD SITE Ghazanfar Ali Qadri, Secretary SITE Syed Muzaffar Ali Shah and other officers were also present on the occasion.

The minister received a briefing regarding the facilitation center established at the SITE and directed to make the facilitation center functional at the earliest.



President Asif Ali Zardari seen off by the Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail and Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti at the conclusion of his official visit to Quetta.

Pakistan attaches high importance to its ties with Iran: Pirzada

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Wednesday said that Pakistan attached high importance to its brotherly ties with Iran. He was talking to Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghaddam, who called on him. Pirzada said that it was an honour for him to meet and welcome Iranian President Ayatollah Ibrahim Raisi and accompany him during his visit to Pakistan.

The minister acknowledged the ambassador's tireless efforts for strengthening the two countries' relationship. During the meeting, the two sides discussed various bilateral issues.

They emphasized the shared commitment of Iran and Pakistan to standing up for the rights of the people of Kashmir and Palestine.

They noted that the two countries had been resolute in their support for the two long-standing conflicts. Minister Pirzada lauded the stance taken by

Iran on the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Palestine, where the world had witnessed a concerning silence from so-called human rights advocates. He highlighted the importance of Iran's principled position in the face of grave injustice.

The minister informed the ambassador that the message of the Iranian President for the Prime Minister of Pakistan had been duly conveyed. Moreover, he himself delivered the Iranian President's message to the people of Pakistan through a speech in the National Assembly, he added.

Ambassador Moghaddam commended the efforts and arrangements made by the government to facilitate the visit of the Iranian President, underscoring the importance of such high-level exchanges in strengthening bilateral ties. He expressed appreciation for Minister Pirzada about his speech in the National Assembly upon the Iranian President's recent visit to Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Reza Amiri Moghaddam, Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan called on Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Federal Minister for Housing and Works at his office.

'I should be apologised to, I don't owe apology to anyone', Imran Khan on DG ISPR call

Imran Khan distances PTI from violent May 9 protests; Says he condemned riots in front of then-CJP Bandial; Backs the military's demand to investigate 2014 sit-in

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan has turned down the military's demand to apologise for the May 9 events and distanced his party from the violent protests that broke out in the country last year soon after his arrest.

"Why should I tender apology, it should be sought from me," the deposed prime minister said during an informal conversation with journalists in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail

on Wednesday where he has been incarcerated since August last year after he was booked in a number of cases ranging from corruption to violating Official Secrets Act.

The PTI founder was responding to a question related to Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Tuesday's press conference wherein he demanded "those involved in the May 9 violent protests to apologise" and shun politics of "anarchy" before holding any dialogue.

In the hours-long presser, the chief military spokesperson had also ruled out any dialogue with those who attacked military installations and insulted the nation's martyrs.

He had also said that the May 9 accused and perpetrators would have to be punished as per the Constitution and law.

The May 9 events refer to violent protests triggered by the arrest of former PM Imran Khan in a corruption case from the premises of Islamabad High Court (IHC) last year.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent Narcotic darkness

We have plenty of smoke with fire. Citizens, particularly parents, caught in Pakistan's grave drug problem are on edge. Despite frequent reports of police and the ANF busting drug cartels, information about legal actions against peddlers is as scant as the conviction rate. The Organised Crime Unit of Lahore has captured an international ring that provided narcotics and 'party drugs' to elite youth. These criminals — the Jordan Gang — ran a network from Central Asia, Mexico, Canada, the US and other countries, and supplied exorbitantly priced drugs in Lahore and Multan, targeting select students in academic institutions. Their modus operandi — offer deals to youngsters on the internet through fake IDs and in partnership with corrupt GPO and police officials — should be a cause of concern for the authorities. This is not the first attempt at infecting the young: last August, two security officials at the Islamic University of Bahawalpur were caught with crystal meth and offensive videos of teachers and students. The Punjab Police released an alarming report last month: some 234 police officers were involved in the drug trade across Punjab.

Young people are experimental, anxious and restless, keen to dodge routine with a heady hit. Small wonder, then, that public health experts urge policymakers and law enforcement to understand that punishment-driven strategies are counterproductive. Instead, they must weed out rogue personnel and powerful groups who claim a lion's share of the profits from narcotic rackets, so that sealing supply routes, including those along a porous border, is successful. The crisis also demands awareness campaigns and collaboration among parents, NGOs and educational facilities to identify signs of addiction and provide therapy and rehabilitation. Long-term success hinges on restructured narcotic courts so that faster trials can ensure a rise in conviction levels — the latter should, ideally, match the regularity of narcotic seizures. This country cannot allow addiction to rip through society and ravage our future generations.

Fly on Great Wall

Shahzad Sharjeel

As our great neighbour becomes greater by the day, we are moving from being 'another brick in the wall' to nothing more than a fly on the wall — the Great Wall, that is. Geographical proximity and the mostly congenial nature of ties notwithstanding, do we really know China?

Folklore in the Gilgit-Baltistan region would have you believe that before the ancient mountain passes fell into disuse, one could run with a hot chapati and arrive on the Chinese side with the bread still warm. Exaggeration, perhaps, but the road distance between Islamabad and Tash-

kur-gan, the Chinese border town, via the Khunjerab Pass is half the distance between the federal capital and Karachi. Besides the fabled Silk Road, the Great Wall, the Xinjiang region, and the names of a few cosmopolitan centres like Beijing and Shanghai, most of us would be hard-pressed to name a couple more cities or regions.

All of it can't be blamed on the lack of curiosity on the part of China's neighbours, particularly in the subcontinent. The ebb and flow of our interest in knowing China has also been regulated by policy decisions in great Chinese capitals over the millennia. How two of the greatest civilisations on earth can live cheek by jowl and yet be barely acquainted has been discussed in detail by Shyam Saran, former diplomat and author, in his wonderfully narrated book *How China Sees India And The World*.

How the subcontinent and China have managed to remain indifferent towards each other for most of recorded history is marked by epochs of respectful distance and

cons of self-importance bordering on disdain on the latter's part. In the first millennium, people of the Middle Kingdom regarded India with some awe as an emblem of Eastern sophistication and spirituality. In the second millennium, everything beyond the core of the Mandate of Heaven began to be considered 'barbaric'. Trade caravans through the storied Silk Road — in reality, a microcosm of routes and maritime exchanges through the ports in southern India — preceded the even more talked-about Indian export, the teachings of Lord Buddha. Monks from both sides crisscrossing the mountain passes, Central Asian steppes, sea routes, and the Tibetan plateau never outnumbered the merchants of silk, porcelain, jade, and spices. Tibet and the fight over it between the two neighbours came much later.

It's unimaginable today that Tibet, a Shangri-La wrapped in a mythical mist between 8th and 9th CE, extended its control to present-day Yunnan, Sichuan, Inner Mongolia, and the Mongolian People's Republic. Images of Tibet for us swing between the sublimity of Buddhist monasteries, to things as pedestrian as a plaza famous for auto parts in Karachi, and a moisturiser-cum skin-lightening agent named after snow from the roof of the world. The difficult-to-translate Arab tradition of al-wala, wal-bara (embrace the beneficial and disavow the harmful) can be seen at work during Mao's speech to the politburo in 1962, before the Indo-Chinese border war. While describing the 'one-and-a-half' prior wars between them, he declared a skirmish between a Tang dynasty diplomatic mission to India in 647 CE and a local adventurer who tried to usurp King Harsha's

throne in Kanauj a full war, whereas Timur's attack in 1398 merited only the status of a 'half war', owing to his Mongolian identity.

How interesting that a Muslim invasion against their coreligionists' rule in India, and the indiscriminate horror unleashed by the conquering hordes, is owned by another country, albeit half-heartedly because of Timur's Mongol identity. Ev—everyone outside of the Middle Kingdom, the centre of the Chinese civilisation between the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, qualified, at best, as 'half-Chinese.' This sort of accounting can also be described as 'too clever by half' or 'deed-hoshiyari', its Urdu equivalent.

The two-way influences of the Chinese and Indus-Gandhara civilisations are too numerous to list here. A few disparate examples are 'Tanchoi', commonly known as the 'Banarasi' sari, which derives its name from three Gujarati artisans who travelled to Shanghai in 1856 as apprentices to one Mr Chhoi, a famous silk weaver. 'Tan' means three in Gujarati dialects, and when the weavers returned to Surat, Tanchoi was born. As demand for the fabric decreased, the artisans and their craft shifted to Banaras, and the name has stuck since. 'Zen', meaning meditation, evolved from the Sanskrit word 'dhyana'. 'Bokhara', a variation of 'vihara', meaning monastery. Central Asia was a bastion of Bud-dh-ism before the Muslim influence. Archae-olo-g-ists like Aurel Stein called the entire Cen-tral Asian zone 'Serindia'. The affinities and irritants between Pakistan and China have been left out for another piece. -- Courtesy Dawn

Gaza's fate

Mahir Ali

Waking up yesterday to the news that Hamas had accepted a ceasefire proposal came as a pleasant surprise, but it did not last long. It was accompanied by reports of Israel's long-threatened infiltration into Rafah, a day after it had urged 100,000 'civilians' to evacuate a city in Gaza that has become a refuge for almost 1.5 million Palestinians.

The sector subsequently began to be pounded — presumably with ammunition supplied by the US and UK — under the apparent assumption that any Hamas operatives in the area would not have left among the tens of thousands who evacuated on foot, by vehicles or on donkey carts.

Almost every international ally of the Zionist regime has seemingly tried to talk it out of invading Rafah, yet their weapons keep flowing to Israel. Global history is peppered with instances of hypocrisy, but seldom have they been as egregious or stark as in 2024. In the past, sufficiently serious cautions from Washington have often produced the desired effect by at least temporarily reducing Israeli excesses. Benjamin Netanyahu, however, falls in a different category. Any semblance of a pause in hostilities, let alone a sustainable ceasefire, would spell his doom.

The revived demonstrations in Israeli cities are by no means dedicated to securing a ceasefire, although some of the protesters support that goal. Their demands on Gaza are somewhat more oblique, but invariably entail the return of the surviving hostages — which would inevitably involve at least a temporary cessation of hostilities. But any kind of peace, however fragile, does not suit Netanyahu. Apart from the indictments for corruption, he

presides over a regime that ignored — possibly deliberately — the clear warning signs of a Hamas assault against kibbutzim on the periphery of Gaza, populated to a considerable extent by Jews who do not buy into the narrative of exclusively Jewish nationhood.

Netanyahu and his more vicious allies are almost as contemptuous of conciliatory Jews, Israeli or otherwise, as they are of Palestinians. In their blighted vision, the Jewish students participating in protests in the US, UK or Australia are far more problematic than the goyim who can more easily be dismissed as antisemitic.

The anti-genocide protests have been spreading beyond the US to Europe and even Australia, with the encampments routinely derided by antagonistic politicians pointing out that Jewish students feel intimidated — albeit presumably not as much as children, women and men in Gaza, where the death toll since Oct 7 is approaching 35,000.

Later this week, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) is expected to vote on whether to admit Palestine as a full member, yet a probable vote overwhelmingly in favour of the proposition won't cut ice with the Security Council, where the US veto will prevail, as it has so many times whenever a challenge to Zionism has been considered.

Almost 50 years ago, in November 1974, Yasser Arafat addressed the UNGA, having arrived with his holster and an olive branch, famously declaring: "Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand". In his landmark speech, Arafat decried Zionist acts of "barbarism" and the "temerity" of the "Zionists and

colonialists ... to describe the just struggle of our people as terror".

A couple of decades before the post-Oslo Palestinian Authority he initially presided over became a handmaiden of the Zionist occupation, Arafat pointed out to the UN that "when it became obvious that the Palestinians would not recuperate one inch of Palestine through exclusively political means, our people had no choice but to resort to armed struggle".

He made no mention of a two-state solution, which is currently the favoured option among many of those who have contributed over the decades towards diminishing the possibility of such an outcome. Arafat held out a long-term hope for "one democratic state where Christian, Jew and Muslim live in justice, equality and fraternity". That remains a dead man's dream. Neither a one-state nor a two-state outcome is on the cards, and that would not change with Netanyahu's replacement by a superficially less obnoxious figurehead.

The drift towards Palestinian genocide dates back at least to 1947-48, and the resistance to it has been equally evident since then. The olive branch that Arafat brought to the UN didn't fall. It was effectively wrested from his hand. All too many olive trees have been chopped down since then, particularly after the trend towards illegal settlements was ramped up, backed by successive US governments. Replacing the Netanyahu regime with an equally absurd alternative would only mean that, a further 50 years hence, future generations will still be marveling at the impotence of their ancestors. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM directs early establishment of Pakistan Skill Company, Skill Development Fund

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to immediately initiate the process of establishing the Pakistan Skill Company and Pakistan Skill Development Fund to unify the technical and vocational education countrywide and provide better employment to

Pakistani workers abroad. The prime minister, chairing a high-level meeting to review the matters of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, and National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), decided to introduce reforms in the said organisations.

He instructed to further activate the NAVVTC to provide world-class technical and vocational training to the young workforce and also called for ensuring the globally renowned and international certifications in all technical fields.

The prime minister also emphasised the collaboration between the center and provinces to

elevate the quality of Pakistan's technical manpower and human resource development.

He called for establishing an integrated system of regulating the manpower equipped with the best and world-class professional technical skills.

Besides, in coordination with NADRA.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a sectoral briefing regarding NAVTTC and Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development.

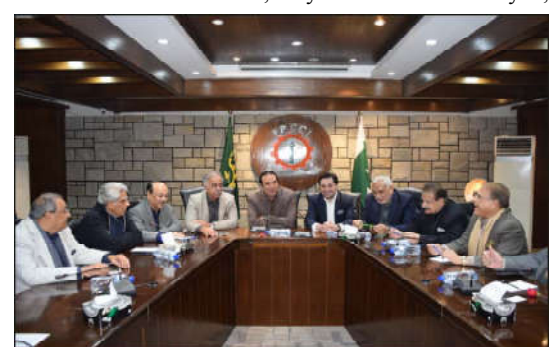


ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain chairing a meeting of Fertilizer Review Committee.

May 9th incidents condemnable, Business community stands with Pak Army: Atif Ikram

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has strongly condemned the events of May 9 and said that the business community stands in solidarity with the Pakistan Army. We pay tribute to the services of Pakistan forces and the proud spirit of martyrdom for Pakistan. The efforts of the Special Facilitation Council (SIFC) to bring investment to the country are commendable, he expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the business community.

President Atif Ikram said that on May 9 last year, Jinnah House, sensitive installations,



damaged at the international level. The economy is badly affected by incidents like May 9,

so a plan should be made so that these incidents cannot be repeated in the future.

government and private properties were vandalized and surrounded by fire, and the country's prestige was

Fertilizer companies not to be allowed to take undue profit: Rana Tanveer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries & Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday said that fertilizer companies must not be allowed to take undue profit. Steps should be taken to ensure uniform price of the urea fertilizer across the country for the convenience of farmers, he directed while chairing a meeting of the Fertilizer Review Committee.

Besides the Federal Secretary of Industries and Production and agriculture

Pakistan, Algeria to boost trade relation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan and Algeria agreed to further strengthen bilateral ties in diverse areas of mutual interests, particularly to boost economic ties. The two sides agreed to boost bilateral trade volume through enhancing economic activities.

The notion to elevate bilateral economic ties was discussed during a visit by Dr. Ibrahim Romani, Ambassador of Algeria to Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) here on Wednesday. During the visit, a

meeting between the visiting ambassador and RCCI officials was held in which both sides expressed strong desire to enhance trade, investment, and cultural exchange. Matters pertaining to bilateral relations, investment opportunities, trade facilitation measures, cultural exchange and tourism, diplomatic relations & economic development also came under discussion. According to details the ambassador said that his country was keen to promote trade and economic ties with Pakistan.

Jam Kamal urges Pakistan, Belarus trade boost: Potential yet to be fully exploited

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Wednesday stressed the need for Pakistan and Belarus to elevate their bilateral trade relations to fully exploit their potential.

Pakistan has been exporting a diverse range of goods to Belarus, including medicaments, optical/medical apparatus, rice,

leather articles, textiles, cutlery, footwear, sports requisites, cotton garments, salt, and mangoes, said a press release issued here.

However, Pakistan's imports from Belarus consist of agriculture tractors, fertilizer, wood pulp, and motor vehicles.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan highlighted Pakistan's significant

position as the fourth-largest dairy producer globally, suggesting that the country has the capability to become a major exporter in this sector. He urged the exploration of new avenues and potential to capitalize on this opportunity, proposing that Belarus upgrade its tractors to meet Pakistan's agricultural requirements.

PSX loses 159 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) Wednesday witnessed bearish trend and shed 159.38 points, a negative change of 0.22 percent, closing at 72,601.82 points against 72,761.20 points the previous trading day.

A total of 970,325,029 shares valuing Rs 23,514 billion were traded during the day as compared to 621,826,404 shares valuing Rs 24,970 billion the last day.

Some 388 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 149 of them recorded gains and 208 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 31 remained unchanged.

IT, Telecom role vital for economic uplift: Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level delegation of Telecom Infrastructure Services Company

EDOTCO Group led by its Group CEO Mohamed Adlan Ahmad Tajuddin on Wednesday called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja and discussed matters of mutual interest and related to Telecom infrastructure.

The other members of the delegation included Anis Sheikh Mohammed, Group CFO, Noreen Sabrina Mohd Noor, Group Head of Corporate Communications, Abdul Aziz, Country Managing Director, and Muhammad Rehan Farooqi, Director

of Corporate Affairs and Planning, said a news release.

While talking to the delegation, Shaza Fatima said that steps are being taken for digitalization in the country. She said that the present government is committed to the provision of quality broadband and Internet services to the masses. Shaza Fatima said that the IT and Telecom sector has an important role in the economic uplift of the country. She said that the Ministry of IT & Telecom was taking alongside the telecom industry, adding that issues confronting the Telecom industry will be resolved.

CM KP launches wheat procurement process

Independent Report
DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur inaugurated the wheat procurement drive in the province here on Wednesday.

Accompanied by Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru, the chief minister launched the province-wide procurement process in a ceremony held here at Provincial Reserve Center.

The chief minister was also briefed about wheat procurement and its storage-related matters.

During the briefing, it was informed that that about 600,000 metric tons wheat would be purchased

in the province under a project worth Rs 29 billion. Out of which 300,000 metric tons of wheat would be purchased from local farmers.

As part of procurement process, 40,000 metric tons of wheat would be purchased from local farmers in Dera Ismail Khan as a stock of about 10500 metric tons was already available in the district. Addressing the ceremony, the chief minister said "the payment of purchased wheat would be made within 24 hours."

He said the government was committed to the welfare of farmers and priority was being given to provision of

facilities to them. "Farmers are hardworking people so their welfare and provision of facilities to them was among our priorities," he said.

He emphasized that transparency and quality assurance as core principles of the procurement process and in this regard, he added, effective measures had been made.

"Not buying wheat from Pakistan Agricultural Storage & Services Corporation Limited (PASSCO) resulted in a benefit of Rs 12 billion which would be utilized in the construction and maintenance of warehouses," he said.



LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique chairing the fourth meeting of the Sub-Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, held at the home department.

Punjab CM reviews health reforms

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presided over a special meeting to review health reforms, here on Wednesday.

The chief minister expressed her dismay over the previous government not paying any attention to the public health issues. She expressed her severe indignation over the loss of Rs. 4 billion caused to the government exchequer in the Murree hospital project. The meeting decided that legal action would be taken against those who caused huge losses to the government exchequer by delaying the project. The CM said it was highly heart-rending and deplorable to impede provision of health facilities to people during the

previous government's tenure. "It is our duty to safeguard people's money and we cannot permit its loss. We want to establish state-of-the-art health facilities for people in every district. We will provide high quality treatment facilities to the common man."

The proposal to establish a medical college with the help of public-private partnership in Attock, Mianwali, Vehari, Bhakkar and Jhelum was reviewed. A comprehensive briefing was given on the construction, rehabilitation of hospitals: 'Clinic on Wheels', free medicines and other matters, along with undertaking health reforms and other affairs were reviewed during the meeting.

PHC issues notices in suspension of Mashal advocacy license case

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asad Ullah on Wednesday heard a petition challenging the suspension of advocacy license of Advisor to the Chief Minister for Social Welfare, Mashal Yousafzai by the PHC Bar.

The counsel for the petitioner, Qazi Anwar told the bench that on 3rd January, police allegedly maltreated Advocate Alamzab at the gate of PHC and the same was highlighted by the petitioner Mashal on social media as a witness of the incident. Following her post, he said, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council suspended the license of Mashal Yousafzai, adding that on a request of the petitioner, Chairman KP Bar Council reinstated her license however, the KP Bar filed an application with Pakistan Bar Council that again suspended her license. The Chief Justice inquired whether the language used in the post was appropriate for a lawyer? Advocate Qazi Anwar replied in negative and said he had already denounced the language of the post.

CM takes notice of schoolteacher torture

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has taken note of a torture incident, committed against a teacher at the Government High School 9/95 L, Sahiwal.

She sought a report from Commissioner Sahiwal in this regard and ordered for arrest of the accused at the earliest.

The CM ordered to provide the best medical treatment facilities to the injured schoolteacher. She strongly condemned the attack, committed by boys on their teacher. She said, "Attack being perpetrated on a schoolteacher is unacceptable under any circumstance."



FAISALABAD: Chairman Ulema Council Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi addressing a press conference.

CM's directive prompts relocation of mother and children to welfare center

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: On the directives from Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur, the district administration has relocated a mother and her kids to social welfare rehabilitation center after a video surfaced on social media depicting them sleeping in pathetic conditions along the roadside.

Under the supervision of the Child Protection and Welfare Commission and Social Welfare Department, a rescue operation was conducted at Kareem Pura Bazaar. The woman and children were subsequently shifted to a social welfare rehabilitation center. The viral video showed the woman and her children begging in the city's markets, with the children lying on the footpath.



GILGIT: Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir Ahmad Advocate addressing during Red Cross/Red Crescent Day celebration.

Health minister leads efforts to ensure peace, order across province

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has said the government will ensure peace and order throughout the province.

He was chairing the fourth meeting of the Sub-Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, held at the home department here on Wednesday, on the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

The minister paid tribute to the Punjab policemen, who were injured while fighting the enemies of law and order.

Dacoits killed innocent person due to nonpayment of ransom money

SHIKARPUR: An other shameful incident occurred in Shikarpur District in which dacoits throws the tortured dead body of one innocent kidnapped elderly person of Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

According to initial reports reached here that one dead body identified as Agha Sohail of 70 resident of Rawalpindi was found from katcha area of 26 Mail in the jurisdiction of Naparkot police station on Wednesday and the villagers informed the area police about a dead body lying on side of Irrigation Canal there.

Area police with the help of villagers transported the dead body of deceased to Taluka Hospital Khanpur for Medico Legal formalities. The driving license of deceased elderly person was found from place, area police added. Similarly it came to know from local sources that the elderly person was kidnapped by the outlaws few months ago and the kidnapers after brutally torturing on him killed him when the family of deceased innocent elderly person failed to pay the Ransom Money to the dacoits.

Marriyum Aurangzeb orders swift completion of CM's 33 special projects

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has issued directions for swift completion of Punjab chief minister's 33 special projects, and prioritising health development initiatives on an urgent basis.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, she said that according to the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, seven mega projects in the health sector, worth Rs. 145 billion, were nearing completion. She disclosed that the first phase of the Nawaz Sharif Cancer Institute in Lahore would be completed in a year, while the opening of the

US Consul General visits FF Steel

PESHAWAR (APP): US Consul General, Shante Moore visited FF Steel in Peshawar on Wednesday to reinforce bilateral trade and investment ties between the US and Pakistan.

During his visit, he met with the senior management team, and praised FF Steel's contributions to Pakistan's economy. FF Steel is one of Pakistan's leading steel manufacturers, known for producing high-quality steel products and investing in research and development. The visit is expected to further enhance economic cooperation between the two countries, which already have a strong bilateral trade relationship with nearly \$2.08 billion in trade in 2023.

International News

Putin tells the West: Russia will talk only on equal terms

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Vladimir Putin has been 'honoured', in similar fashion to a 'Russian tsar' from the country's past. During his swearing-in for a fresh six-year term as Russia's President, Putin had a double-edged message for the West: "the Kremlin is ready to talk but Russia is girding for victory in Ukraine".

Putin, rose to the senior-most position at the Kremlin only eight years after the fall of the Soviet Union. He is now set to overtake Josef Stalin and effectively become Russia's longest-serving ruler since 'Empress Catherine the Great', should he complete the term.

The 71-year-old, who is also former KGB 'spy' exuded confidence

in the carefully choreographed inauguration. The West and his opponents (who are mainly in jail or abroad) cast this as 'a fig leaf of democracy', 'covering a corrupt Russian autocracy'.

As the Russian elite waited in the Hall of Saint Andrew within the Grand Kremlin Palace (where the imperial throne once sat), Putin dissected documents in his office. After this, he walked down the corridors of the Kremlin saluting guards and even stopped to 'leisurely' study a picture on the wall.

"We do not refuse dialogue with Western states," Putin stated after being sworn in. He added that he was ready for talks on 'security and strategic stability' but only on the condition that there was no "arrogance" on the part of the United States and its allies.

Russia's chief (of more than 24 years) promised "victory" and said all Russians were now "answerable to our thousand-year history and our ancestors." He departed from the ceremony to the music "Hail" from Mikhail Glinka's opera "A Life for the Tsar". The words "Hail, hail, my Rus! Hail you are my Russian land" rang out in the Kremlin. The original words are "Hail, hail, our Russian tsar!".

"The authority of our president is higher than ever, higher than the American president, higher even than the Russian tsar. So much depends on our president" said Gennady Zyuganov (a leader of the Communist Party).



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Israel seizes Rafah crossing amid global outcry

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: Israel sent tanks into Rafah in southern Gaza, seizing control of the border crossing with Egypt on Tuesday, an operation the UN said denied it access to the key humanitarian passage.

The military's thrust into the eastern sector of the city packed with displaced civilians came with negotiators and mediators due in Cairo in the latest effort towards a prisoner release and ceasefire in the seven-month-old Israeli offensive. A senior Hamas official, requesting anonymity to discuss the negotiations, warned that it would be Israel's "last chance" to free the estimated 128 prisoners still held in the Palestinian territory, including 35 the military says are dead.

A Hamas delegation was headed "shortly" to Cairo, the official said. Israel has said it would also send negotiators, and mediator Qatar announced it was dispatching a team as well.

John Swinney elected as Scotland's new leader

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Scotland got its second leader in as many years on Tuesday, as parliament approved political veteran John Swinney to lead the country as first minister.

Swinney, 60, succeeds Humza Yousaf, who formally resigned from the role earlier in the day, following his announcement last week that he would step down after just over a year in charge. Yousaf, 39, announced his resignation last Monday before a confidence vote in the Scottish parliament that he was set to lose, having ditched his junior coalition partners, the Scottish Green Party.

3 policemen killed in bomb attack in northeastern Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: Three policemen were killed and five were wounded on Wednesday when a sticky bomb was detonated next to a security convoy tasked with clearing illegal poppy crops in northeastern Afghanistan, the interior ministry said.

The improvised explosive device (IED) was attached to a motorcycle which targeted a convoy of police vehicles in Faizabad, the capital of mountainous Badakhshan province, around 11am local time.

"The bomb exploded while the convoy of police forces was on its way to destroy poppy cultivation," Taliban Interior Ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani posted on X.

The explosion comes days after Taliban security officials and residents clashed over the violent clearance of poppy crops in two Badakhshan districts, leaving two dead and sparking rare protests.

Afghanistan was the largest producer of opium before poppy cultivation was banned in a decree by the Taliban supreme leader in April 2022.

Farmers have been encouraged to plant different crops, but none compete with the financial draw of the poppy, leading some to continue discreetly cultivating small plots.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

An AFP journalist saw Taliban authorities searching homes and detaining dozens of people near the scene.



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy shake hands at a press conference in Berlin, Germany.

UK will expel Russian defence attache over 'malign activity'

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain will expel Russia's defence attache, remove diplomatic status from some properties and limit the length of Russian diplomatic visas in response to what interior minister James Cleverly called Moscow's "malign activity".

Addressing parliament on Wednesday, Cleverly said Britain was already "an extremely challenging operating environment for Russian intelligence services" but the measures would "only serve to strengthen our resilience to the Russian threat".

Britain has introduced several waves of sanctions on Russian companies and individuals since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and Cleverly said the Conservative government would not falter in its support of Kyiv.

Italy PM Meloni in Libya to sign cooperation deals

Monitoring Desk
TRIPOLI: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni began a visit to Libya on Tuesday to sign cooperation agreements, and was set to meet leaders from rival administrations in the conflict-torn country. Accompanied by a ministerial delegation on her second visit to Libya since taking office in October 2022, Meloni met the head of the Tripoli-based government, Abdelhamid Dbeibah, Libyan officials said. "Declarations of intent" were due to be signed on cooperation in health,

Brazil polls show mixed scenario for Lula's approval ratings

Monitoring Desk
SAO PAULO: Brazilian opinion polls released this week show a mixed scenario for the approval ratings of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's administration, with two surveys indicating a decline while a third one sees an improvement.

Approval of his government fell to 33% in May from 35% in February, a Genial/Quaest poll showed.

Russia hits Ukraine's power grid with a 'massive' attack on a day marking the WWII defeat of Nazism

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Russian forces unleashed a nighttime barrage of more than 50 cruise missiles and explosive drones at Ukraine's power grid Wednesday, targeting a wide area in what President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called a "massive" attack on the day the country celebrates the defeat of Nazism in World War II.

The bombardment blasted targets in seven Ukrainian regions, including the Kyiv area and parts of the south and west, damaging homes and the country's rail network, authorities said. Three people, including an 8-year-old girl, were injured, according to officials.

Russia has repeatedly pounded Ukraine's energy infrastructure during the war that is stretching into its third year and has claimed thousands of lives. By taking out the power, the

Philippine military chief accuses China of 'malign influence effort'

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: The Philippines' military chief accused China of a "malign influence effort" on Wednesday, after a local newspaper reported a Filipino vice admiral had made a deal with Beijing to de-escalate tensions in the South China Sea. The Manila Times published what it said was a transcript of a phone conversation during which it

said a Philippine admiral had agreed to China's proposal of a "new model", where the Philippines would use fewer vessels in resupply missions to troops at the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, and notify Beijing about missions in advance. Reuters has not heard the reported phone conversation and could not verify the contents of the published transcript.

Pakistan desires to strengthen trade, commercial ties with Uzbekistan: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday said that Pakistan desired to enhance its ties with Uzbekistan in multiple sectors, including trade and commerce.

The deputy prime minister discussed bilateral relations in a meeting with Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov, who is on a two-day official visit to Pakistan.

On his arrival at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ishaq Dar received the guest, which followed their one-on-one meeting.

The deputy prime minister said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoyed strong and friendly relations. The Uzbek foreign minister expressed his pleasure in visiting Pakistan, saying they considered Pakistan their second home.

In the meeting, the two sides underscored the cultural, civilizational and historical ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan which provided a solid foundation for robust partnership in multiple domains.

They also expressed satisfaction at close security and defence cooperation and robust engagement at multilateral fora such as the United Nations, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. The two sides reaffirmed commitment to early implementation of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railways project, which would give a boost to bilateral and regional trade, and become a bridge between South and Central Asia.

They discussed at length economic cooperation, trade, investment and connectivity between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. They noted that following operationalization of the Transit Trade Agreement, bilateral trade had increased 1.4 times during the previous year and had the potential to reach the targets set during the last Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) held in Tashkent in February 2023.

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ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov held delegation level talks at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori distributed laptops among IT students at the Governor House.

Sindh Governor distributes laptops among IT students

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori distributed laptops among IT students at the Governor House on Wednesday.

Laptops were given to IT students who were earning 200 to 300 dollars, said a statement.

The Governor Sindh said that the start earning by the IT students is welcome and, it will give them an opportunity to improve their economic condition.

Gilani decries May 9 incident as dark day in Pakistan's history

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Wednesday described May 9 incident as a dark chapter in Pakistan's history.

In a message, he expressed strong dismay over the acts of vandalism and attacks on significant national assets, including Jinnah House, emphasizing that such reprehensible actions have no place in civilized societies.

The Chairman Senate reiterated that the entire nation was shocked and outraged by the distressing events of May 9.

He lamented the desecration of monuments and martyrs' memorials emphasizing that martyrs hold a revered place in the hearts of every Pakistani, deserving utmost respect. He said that those who orchestrated these events deserved no leniency.

Gilani paid glowing tributes to the sacrifices rendered by Pakistan's armed forces for the defence of motherland. He called upon all political entities to unite in addressing Pakistan's challenges and contribute positively to the country's development, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts.

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President Zardari concludes 3-day Quetta visit, returns to Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari Wednesday concluded his three-day visit to Quetta, and returned to Islamabad.

The president was seen off by Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, and Chief Minister Mir Saifur Ahmed Bugti. During his visit, he was briefed on the law and order situation in Balochistan and the ongoing development projects in the province.

President Zardari reiterated his commitment to the development and prosperity of Balochistan and the resolution of public issues.

Murad summons budget schemes proposals from party workers

NAWABSHAH (INP): Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday summoned proposals from PPP workers for development schemes in budget.

Addressing a gathering in Shaheed Benazir Abad division, Sindh CM said that the provincial budget has been under preparation and asked party workers to submit their proposals for development schemes.

He said, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto has directed that the Sindh's government will be run by the party's workers. He promised to supply clean water to all villages of Sindh during next five years.

He said 2022 flood wreaked havoc in the province, Bilawal Bhutto contacted global institutions for relief to arrange aid and loans for rebuilding. He said that the construction of houses, schools and hospitals has been underway for the flood affected people.

Pakistan to continue facilitating Sikh community's visits to their religious places: Masood Khan

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan will continue to provide all possible facilities to the Sikh community around the world wanting to visit their religious places in the country, Ambassador Masood Khan said Tuesday.

The Pakistani envoy was talking to a delegation of the American-Punjabi Society, which called on him, according to an embassy press release.

The Government and the people of Pakistan, Ambassador Masood Khan said, fully understand the religious sentiments of the Sikh community and "our doors are open" to them.

The President of the American-Punjabi Society, Gary Sikka, told the Ambassador that his organization consists of one hundred thousand Punjabi-Sikh members, some of whom are also from Pakistan, and that a Society's delegation of 115 people would soon visit Pakistan to visit religious places in Lahore, Faisalabad, Islamabad and Kartarpur.

Referring to their previous visits, the delegation members, especially spoke about their pilgrimage to Kartarpur and said that the hospitality of the Pakistani people was heart-warming.

While welcoming the delegation at the embassy, Ambassador Masood Khan said that the Government and people of Pakistan respect the religious sentiments of the Sikh community.

Uzbek Minister says: Pak-Uzbekistan to start work on trade corridor with Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Uzbek Deputy Minister for Transport and Aviation, Jasurbek Choriev has said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have decided to start work on the trilateral trade corridor with Afghanistan, which is of great importance in regional economic and trade integration.

Including Afghanistan, all three parties are willing to complete this trade corridor and its completion will increase regional trade and boost economic activities in the regional countries, Jasurbek Choriev said this at the Tashkent International Investment Forum (TIIF) while talking to APP. The minister said that Pakistan was our foremost priority economic partner as well in the recent future, with which we are working in many spheres at the economic and trade level.

He said that the Pakistan-Uzbekistan partnership is of great importance in regional economic and trade integration and Uzbekistan considers Pakistan will have a significant partner in this regard.

The Minister said that Uzbekistan is the central country of Central Asia and similarly, Pakistan is also a Geo-Strategically important country of South Asia located in the neighbouring Central Asia.

He said that air, rail and road connectivity between Pakistan and Uzbekistan is essential to increase bilateral trade between the two countries.

Jasurbek Choriev said that the direct flight between Pakistan and Uzbekistan will start in October this year 2024.

He said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have a central role in global and regional trade and the strategic partnership of the two countries can usher in a new era of economic prosperity in the region.

Replying to a question, he said that the economic and trade relations between the two countries started from the historic Silk route and both countries are determined to revive the old Silk route.

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DC vows to best health care facilities in hospitals for residents

SUKKUR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Sukkur, Raja MB Dharejo has paid a surprise visit to District Headquarters Hospital, Sukkur to inspect facilities here on Thursday. He inspected various departments of the hospital including Emergency, Laboratory, Operation Theatre and OPD.

Deputy Commissioner interacted with the patients and inquired about the medical facilities. He directed the hospital's management to deal with all kinds of emergencies 24 hours. He said that provision of best health care facilities to the residents was the priority of the Sindh Government and no compromise would be made on it.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting at CDA Headquarters.

Fruitful policies of institutions need of hour: Sherry Rehman

ISLAMABAD (APP): PPP parliamentary leader in the Senate Sherry Rehman Wednesday stressed for introducing fruitful policies of Institutions which would not only encourage efficiency but also facilitate the employees.

Talking to a private news channel, she said that said Pakistan People's Party always believed in the politics of public welfare and prosperity of Pakistan.

The resolution of public problems are top priority of President Zardari and stressed the need for working round the clock on public welfare projects, she added.

She said that PPP's mission is to solve and address public grievances.

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Pak-Qatar Family Takafal achieves Rs156.3 turnover in 2023

KARACHI (APP): The Pak-Qatar Family Takafal Limited (PQFTL) announcing financial results for year 2023 on Wednesday, informed that it achieved a turnover of Rs16.30 billion while Shareholders Fund has posted Rs156.30 million net profit after tax.

According to a statement issued here, profitability of the Shareholders Fund was calculated with earning per share (EPS) of Rs1.20 per share despite all challenges while the Participants' Takafal Fund (Waqf Fund) generated a surplus of Rs37.5 million. The company has increased its balance sheet footing through

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MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with the different delegations at Circuit House.

SFA sealed Rukana Dairy, Gharib Nawaz hotel

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Food Authority Hyderabad team on Wednesday conducted an operation in Latifabad area under the supervision of Deputy Director Fida Hussain Khoso under the direction of Director General Sindh Food Authority Agha Fakhr Hussain.

The team sealed Rukana Dairy for freezing of milk in an unhealthy way, while milk from Gharib Nawaz Hotel was found to be adulterated with chemical.

Sindh Food Authority team destroyed the milk available at Rukana Dairy and Gharib Nawaz Hotel on the spot and imposed a fine of one lakh rupees each on them.

US expresses concern about safety of incarcerated Imran Khan

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has highlighted the importance of ensuring safety and security of all prisoners in Pakistan, including former prime minister Imran Khan.

Speaking at his daily news briefing in Washington on Tuesday, State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller confirmed a meeting between US Ambassador Donald Blome and leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), including opposition leader Omar Ayub Khan in Islamabad.

Miller said Ambassador Blome met the leader of the opposition, and other senior members of the opposition to discuss a broader range of issues important to the bilateral relationship, including continuing US economic support to Islamabad.

About discussions with PTI on rights and 'fabricated' charges against Imran Khan, Miller reiterated the US stance on political neutrality. "Our position is the same as we have stated previously, which is we take no position on elections in Pakistan," he said. He emphasized the importance of upholding basic human rights while maintaining impartiality towards political parties.

Miller addressed reports of Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer's reported warning to Pakistan regarding the safety of Imran Khan, affirming the US commitment to human rights. He said Senator Schumer might have coordinated with the State Department while telling the Pakistani ambassador that Imran Khan's safety was a high priority in Washington but he (Miller) was not aware of that conversation.

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Rangers arrest five robbers

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and the Police collaborated on multiple operations, resulting in the apprehension of five suspected robbers across different districts of the megalopolis.

The detainees were nabbed from various locations including Gulshan Iqbal, Gadap Town, and Ghosia Mobile Market, as per the spokesperson for Sindh Rangers on Wednesday.

During the operations, the law enforcement agencies seized a 30 bore pistol, ammunition, a mobile phone, and two motorcycles from the possession of the apprehended individuals. The arrested suspects were identified as Qaisar, Sameer, Moiz Tanoli, Aqib, and Usama. Subsequently, they along with the recovered weapons and ammunition, were transferred to the police custody for further legal procedures.



KARACHI: Members of Civil Society are holding protest demonstration against Israeli cruel and inhumane acts and express unity with the innocent people of Palestine, at Karachi press club.

District admin Matiari decides robust crackdown against power theft

HYDERABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Matiari Muhammad Yousif Shaikh chaired a high-level meeting to initiate a comprehensive crackdown against electricity theft across the district, and various committees have been established at both the district and taluka level to ensure effective coordination between the Revenue, HESCO, and Police departments. SSP Matiari Syed Asghar Shah, during the meeting, assured full cooperation for the crackdown on electricity thieves, stressing that HESCO should pursue cases in courts with proper evidence and witnesses to avoid any inconvenience.

DC directed XEN HESCO Maitairi Asad Pirzado to identify illegal connections and prepare a list of individuals involved in power theft, which will be disclosed through the media. He also instructed XEN to also expose corrupt officials within the HESCO system who facilitate theft and take departmental action against them.

Additionally, the DC directed the Public Health Engineering officials to use all resources to activate 56 RO plants in the district immediately. He directed HESCO to provide maximum support to the Public Health Engineering department for powering the inactive RO plants. "The provincial energy department will be approached to get electricity connections for the RO plants, as providing safe drinking water is a basic necessity and a prime responsibility of relevant government departments.

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LAHORE: After clashes between lawyers and police in Lahore GPO Chowk, lawyers are throwing iron barriers to enter the High Court.

World Asthma Day marks across northern Sindh

SUKKUR (APP): World Asthma Day observed with theme of the day this year is 'Asthma Education Empowers' here on Wednesday. In this connection various events and activities held across the northern Sindh to raise awareness about the disease and its management.

To mark World Asthma Day, hospitals and health organizations in Sukkur, Khairpur, Ghotki and other districts organized awareness events, free check-ups, and lung function tests for a chronic respiratory disease that affects over 340 million people globally.

Medical professionals used social media to share information and resources, and to encourage people to seek medical help if they are experiencing symptoms of asthma.

Dr Syed Najaf Ali Shah, a senior health expert at Government Khairpur Medical College Hospital emphasizing the need for greater awareness and education. "Asthma is a treatable condition, but it requires proper management and treatment," he asserted.

Syed Najaf Ali Shah said by educating people about their condition, we can help them avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and improve their overall health.

Man killed over resistance during robbery, three held after encounter

KARACHI (INP): One person was killed and another injured over resistance during robbery here on Wednesday. Three accused held after police encounter. According to details, armed robbers gunned down a citizen in Steel Town area of Karachi after he resisted during mobile phone and cash snatching incident.

Near Korangi No 6 area of Karachi, robbers shot and critically injured a man for offering resistance.



HYDERABAD: People from different organizations with children patients of Thalassaemia Day organized by Fatimid Foundation at Press Club Road.