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

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

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that no so-called legislation or court verdicts could absolve India of its obligations on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, under international laws. The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of Hurriyat leaders of Jammu and Kashmir during his daylong visit here, said that Pakistan categorically rejected the Indian unilateral and illegal actions in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) regarding the revocation of its special status. He said Kashmir was an internationally recognised dispute that remained on the UN Security Council's agenda for the last seven decades and awaited settlement as per the UNSC's resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

The Hurriyat leaders

appreciated the prime minister's role in handling the recent situation in the AJK and also thanked Pakistan for its steadfast stance in condemning Indian unilateral actions and solidarity with the Kashmiri people. Prime Minister Shehbaz assured the delegation that Pakistan would continue extending its moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people and cited the recently held OIC summit in Gambia where Pakistan effectively raised the Kashmir issue. He assured that the Foreign Ministry as well as Pakistan's diplomatic missions would play their role to highlight the Kashmir cause at international forums more effectively. He also urged the Pakistani media to create global awareness of Indian atrocities in the IIOJK.

The prime minister instructed the Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam to improve his coordination with the Hurriyat leaders. The delegation comprised Mehmood Ahmed Sagar, Ghulam Muhammad Sufi, Syed Faiz Ahmed Naqshbandi, Altaf Ahmed Bhat, Shehzad Wani, Ejaz Rehmani, Zahid Ashraf and Altaf Hussain Wani. Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhary Anwaar ul Haq and federal ministers were also present in the meeting. Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday calling the progress of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir linked with each other, assured that his government, in collaboration with the AJK leadership, would ensure the implementation of mutual understanding and seek a permanent solution to the issues facing the Kashmiri people.



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

Sindh govt, UNICEF to launch Child Protection Program

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and UNICEF Country head Abdullah A Fadil agreed to launch a Child Protection program to strengthen evidence-based policy and legislation.

In a meeting held here at CM House on Thursday, the chief minister and the UNICEF Country representative discussed matters related to Child protection program.

Minister of Health Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Secretary School Education Zahid Abbasi, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, Secretary Social Welfare Sajid Jamal Abro, PD Zubair Channa were also present on the occasion.

The UNICEF delegation members include Chief Field Officer Prem Chand, Executive Officer Ms. Xene, health Specialist Dr Kamal and others.

The CM and the UNICEF Country chief after a thorough discussion,

agreed that UNICEF would foster enabling environment to strengthen evidence-based policy and legislation under child labour survey, child protection policy, birth registration by-laws, protection from child online abuse and exploitation and prevention strategies would be carried out to reduce child protection violations and harmful traditional practices.

The key points of the program for child protection include prevention of child marriage, parenting packages for positive parent-child interaction, Child Online Protection-ethical and safe use of cyber technology. Strengthening of community-based protection structures, Service Strengthening to deliver equity-based gender-responsive services for children and adolescents, Case management and referral system including Certified of Proficiency in information system management (CPMIS), Capacity strengthening of the child protection workforce and Community-based mental health

and psychosocial support (MHPSS) including in humanitarian situation were discussed in detail.

The CM was told that UNICEF was supporting strengthening the health system for inclusive, resilient, equitable and gender-responsiveness within the framework of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). UNICEF also supports improving Maternal and Neonatal Child Health (MNCH) services for equitable access and utilisation," he said.

The meeting agreed that UNICEF would support the health department for the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) for better immunisation services for full immunisation of all children.

In the meeting, the chief minister and the UNICEF Country chief agreed to launch a strong nutrition-responsive system in the health department to ensure optimal nutrition for mothers and children, improved nutrition for adolescents and middle-aged children.

PTI founder appears before SC via video link in NAB amendments case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder on Thursday appeared before the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan larger bench to present his arguments in the National Accountability (NAB) Ordinance 1999 amendment case.

A five-member SC bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice

Athar Minallah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, is hearing the case. Arrangements to ensure the PTI founder's appearance before the Supreme Court bench via video link were finalised in light of the apex court's order.

The case is not being live-streamed but images of the PTI founder go viral on social media. At the outset of the hearing, Advocate Khwaja Haris came to the

rostrum. The chief justice said he (Haris) was a counsel in the original case and his absence was strange. The CJP said the court would like to hear his stance. "Did you submit the bill for the fee as a lawyer?" asked Justice Isa. Haris replied that he did not need a fee. "You are senior to all lawyers," the CJP remarked. Haris said he would assist the court in the matter. Justice Isa asked him to present his arguments loudly so that the PTI founder could hear him on the video call. Federal government's lawyer Makhdoom Ali Khan argued that the NAB amendment case was sub judice before the IHC. "Was the petition pending before the high court accepted for hearing?" Justice Minallah asked. The lawyer replied in the affirmative. The chief justice then sought the complete record of the case in the IHC.



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

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

ISLAMABAD (Online): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has emphasized that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Iraq and wishes to expand cooperation in all fields of mutual interests especially defence.

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

The Defence Minister said both Pakistan and Iraq should work closely to share their experiences and build capacities of their Armed Forces.

He said Pakistan strongly supports the

sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Khawaja Asif said Pakistan has developed the best training facilities and infrastructure for its Armed Forces and numerous foreign countries are availing these facilities, especially the training related, to counter terrorism. He encouraged the visiting dignitary to avail more training facilities in Pakistan. In his remarks, the Iraqi Ambassador reaffirmed the commitment of the people and the government of Iraq to work closely with Pakistan and further strengthen their bilateral relations, especially in the field of defence.



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

Qaiser chairs meeting to boost economic activity in Gwadar area

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh presided over a meeting aimed at boosting economic activities in Gwadar Port area, emphasizing the government's commitment to accelerate growth and regional development in Balochistan region on Thursday.

Federal Secretary Maritime Affairs, representatives from ministry of finance, industries & production, fisheries department, ministry of commerce attended the meeting, a news release said issued here.

The federal minister stressed the strategic importance of Gwadar Port as a key player of Pakistan's economic prosperity and emphasized the need for concerted efforts to enhance import operation and business activity.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment

to this cause, citing directives from the prime minister to take decisive measures to enhance import of government goods through Gwadar Port.

Furthermore, the federal minister emphasized the significance of previous decisions made by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and the directives of the prime minister in 2008 and 2022, respectively. These directives emphasized stimulating economic activities in Gwadar area to fortify port operations and unleash the region's immense potential as a thriving economic hub.

In the preliminary meeting, the federal minister directed the stakeholders to work in unison and commitment to realize the vision of transforming Gwadar Port into a vibrant center of trade and commerce.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing a MoU signing ceremony between JDC and Shamim Sheikhani for construction of free cancer hospital.

PTI founder 'launched to harm' Pakistan: Sharjeel Memon

Independent Report

KARACHI: Sindh Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said on Thursday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder launched a campaign to harm the country. Addressing an event in Karachi, Memon stated: "Israel talks about the violation of human rights in Pakistan. Israel, which is involved in the genocide of the Palestinians, is supporting the PTI founder. Israel has funded the PTI founder for the elections." "The PTI founder was made victorious through the worst rigging in the 2018 general elections. The PTI, parliament, and police officials were attacked," he said. "The entire country was closed due to a 126-day protest," Memon said. Memon took a dig at the PTI founder, saying,

"The PTI founder had always embraced the politics of anarchy."

Speaking about the law and order situation in Sindh, Memon said: "The Sindh government is serious about the law and order situation in the province. Everybody is on one page in terms of maintaining peace in Sindh."

Sharjeel Memon on warpath against PTI - Few days back, Memon fired a broadside at the PTI. Expressing his thoughts, Memon asserted: "The PTI is launching a smear campaign against the institutions. The PTI had been involved in terrorism on social media." Memon said: "The PTI does not want to hold negotiations, but it is pleading for the deal, but the institutions are not ready for the deal."



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Transport and Mass Transit, Information and Exise and Taxation Sharjeel Inam Memon talking to media persons at Orangi Town.

Karachi administration working to simplify domicile issuance process: Commissioner

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi announced on Thursday that Karachi administration was working to simplify the process of issuing domicile for citizens.

He emphasized that the administration is working with aim to eliminate delay in obtaining domicile.

He made these remarks during inauguration of the Digital Domicile Desk at the office of Deputy Commissioner Korangi. Commissioner Hassan Naqvi sought feedback from applicants present on the occasion

about the current facility. He stated that digital domicile issuance would be implemented across the districts, replacing the traditional procedure.

Hassan Naqvi highlighted that efforts are underway to make the domicile issuance system online throughout Karachi.

Deputy Commissioner Korangi Jawad Muzaffar provided a comprehensive briefing on the domicile issuance process to the Commissioner. The Commissioner inspected the domicile desk and engaged with the citizens. He was informed that

KP Governor Kundi calls on President Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday called on President Asif Ali Zardari here.

The president congratulated the governor on assuming the office, according to a President House press release.

Faisal Karim Kundi thanked the president for reposing trust in him and appointing him as the governor.

President Zardari instructed Governor Kundi to work for the betterment of the people and expressed good wishes for him.

IHC bans entry of intelligence agencies personnel to court room

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has banned entry of intelligence agencies entry to court room. Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri issued order to ban entry of intelligence agencies personnel in court room.

Police man deployed outside court room has confirmed this order of the court. Police man told Online it is directive of the court that personnel affiliated with the intelligence agencies be not allowed to enter to court room.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister For Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh chairs a meeting regarding exemption from Import/Export Policy order and foreign currency issues for Gwadar Zone.

Sindh Collaborates with NAVTTCC for Out-of-School Children's Education and Vocational Training

Independent Report
KARACHI: The Government of Sindh, in collaboration with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTCC), has reached an agreement to provide non-formal education, skills, and technical training to out-of-school children. Gul Mena Bilal Ahmed, Chairperson of NAVTTCC, met with Sindh's



Education Minister, Syed Sardar Ali Shah, to discuss initiatives for technical education and skill development for the youth of Sindh. Present at the occasion were Mr. Abdul Aleem Lashari, Chairman of the Sindh Textbook Board; Mr. Aziz Chandio, Director General NAVTTCC Sindh; and Dr. Junaid Ali Samoon, Chief Program Manager at RSU.



ISLAMABAD: Senior Deputy Convener Muttahida Quami Movement Pakistan Syed Mustafa Kamal addressing a press conference at National Press Club in the Federal Capital.

Tarar felicitates AEMEND's newly elected office-bearers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday felicitated the newly elected office-bearers of the Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMEND). The minister, in a message, highlighted the critical role of AEMEND in the area of journalism and broadcast.

He expressed the hope that the newly elected body of AEMEND including its President Azhar Abbas, Senior Vice President Ayaz Khan, Vice President Muhammad Usman, Secretary General Tariq Mehmood, Joint Secretary Mian Tahir, Joint Secretary Rehan Khan and Finance Secretary Shahab Mehmood, would play its role in curbing fake news in the country.

Sharif strongly condemns "shocking" attack on Slovak PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemned the "shocking" attack on his Slovak counterpart Robert Fico. "Strongly condemn shocking attack on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico our thoughts and prayers (are) with him and his family. Wish him a quick recovery and good health," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Dubai properties

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

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

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

Red-light areas

F.S. Aijazuddin

Narendra Modi and Sanjay Leela Bhansali have something in common: they both view Pakistan through warped lenses. Modi's perception is of a country overrun by terrorists on the lookout for Indian soft spots to attack. Bhansali uses his camera lens to create spectacular falsities. His latest is an eight-part Netflix series on Lahore's red-light area Heera Mandi. (It derived its name from Raja Hira Singh, a favourite of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.)

Bhansali — a talented filmmaker, producer, writer, and composer — is the despair of his critics. He challenged them with films such as a saccharine adaptation of Shakespeare's romance Romeo and Juliet, titled Ramlila. It invoked the ire of some orthodox Ram bhakts. He was forced to change its name, elongating it to Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela.

His detractors made him run the gauntlet of the Delhi High Court, and then the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court, which, a week after the film's release, banned the movie's showing in Uttar Pradesh. Despite these obstacles, GKRRL became the fifth highest-grossing film of 2013.

Bhansali's next project Bajirao Mastani (2015) extolled the love between the Maratha hero Peshwa Bajirao I and his second wife Mastani. The descendants of Bajirao and Mastani disowned the film, claiming that "excessive creative liberty by Bhansali caused wrongful portrayal of their ancestors". The Bombay High Court, when approached for a stay, tactfully refused. Again, Bhansali answered his critics: this film became one of the highest-grossing Indian films of all time. Bhansali's Padmaavat (2018) pulled

out of oblivion the 13th-century Rajput ruler Rawal Ratan Singh of Mewar and the Delhi Sultanate's ruler Alauddin Khilji. Both vied for the beautiful Rani Padmini (aka Padmaavat). In a fiery finale, Bhansali had Padmini lead a horde of Rajput women, trapped within Chittorgarh fort, to commit a collective jauhar (self-immolation).

Extremists did not wait for Bhansali to finish his film. During its shooting in Jaipur in 2017, stalwarts from the Shri Rajput Karni Sena assaulted Bhansali, his crew and damaged the sets. Later, another group burnt a studio and the period costumes. Bhansali avenged himself when Padmaavat became the highest-grossing film of the year.

Bhansali's latest production Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar is his personal branchchild. He gestated the idea for 14 years, then directed it, co-authored the script, composed its music, and produced it as a mini-series for TV. The story is set in Lahore's Heera Mandi during the late 1940s. It deals with the travails of the tawafis (dancing girls), struggling first for social, and then political, acceptance. In a belated burst of patriotism, they march through the streets, their ghungroos (ankle bells) jingling, demanding freedom (azadi) and independence from their erstwhile British clients.

Apparently, Bhansali wanted Pakistani actors to perform in the film. Politics intervened. Not that Pakistani actors could have provided a shield against the first charge hurled by Bhansali's critics — its lack of historical authenticity. Many Lahoris and those outsiders who love it will not recognise the social topography of Bhansali's Heeramandi. Even in a pre-1947 era, Lahore was

not a poor cousin (as Bhansali would have his audiences believe) of Lucknow's cloying culture and fawning finesse.

His multilingual cast parrot their Urdu dialogues passably well but ignore the niceties of proper pronunciation. His heroines are gorgeously dressed; his muscular male actors often underdressed; and only the lower orders — the maids and a Sikh love-sick swain — speak Punjabi. His dancers swirl like dizzying dervish-es, imitating their ol-der sisters in earlier Muslim social dram-as, particularly Mughal-i-Azam and Pakeezah. His men inexorably wear furry caps once popularised by the late actor/ chief minister of Tamil Nadu M.G. Ramachandran.

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

Some may recall that in 1959, the UK promulgated the Street Offences Act. It made loitering and solicitation in a public place an offence. Its aim was to clean British cities of importuning streetwalkers. Comedian Peter Ustinov questioned its utility, suggesting that cleaning the streets was rather like clearing the table after a meal: "One has to put the crockery somewhere."

Over the years, the crockery from Lahore's Heera Mandi has moved to richer exurbia. If that Heera Mandi exists at all, it is as a fictional red-light suburb of Bhansali's technicolour mind. — Courtesy Dawn

Breathing space

Khaqan Hassan Najeeb

Literature, including several cross-country empirical studies, highlights three broad macroeconomic outcomes of a country's programme engagement with the IMF. Programmes lead to an improvement in the current account deficit, a build-up in foreign exchange reserves, and a fall in inflation albeit at a slower pace. This can broadly be defined as macroeconomic stabilisation. The consequent effect of adjustment policies used to achieve some level of economic growth, at least in the short run.

Since embracing the Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF in July 2023, Pakistan's economy is behaving according to the book. The current account deficit has been restricted to \$0.5 billion during July-March (FY24) compared to \$4.1bn in the same period last year. Foreign exchange reserves with the State Bank rose from a meagre \$3.9 billion in June 2023 to \$9.1bn on May 3, 2024. Inflation tapered off from a high of 38 per cent year on year in May 2023 to 17.3pc in April 2024. Growth is estimated to remain subdued at nearly 2pc for FY24.

Pakistan's economy has reacted in the way economies are expected to respond when they enter into an engagement with the IMF.

Also, the SBA helped avert debt default in July 2023, stabilised the rupee's free fall, and ensured that other lenders (bilateral, multilateral, and friendly countries) come on board to plug Pakistan's external gross financing gap, at least for FY24. Unfortunately, new commercial funding and international bond issuance remain out of reach. Engagement with the

IMF has enabled Pakistan's access to new debt to pay off the earlier one, fund the current account deficit, and thus stay afloat. Hence, Pakistan's external public debt rose from \$94.8bn in June 2023 to \$98.1bn in September 2023 and to \$99.7bn in December 2023.

The adjustment policies under the SBA helped stem the alarming slide of the economy. These policies included a tighter monetary and fiscal stance and a flexible exchange rate regime to curb imports and push exports. In Pakistan, energy sector price pass-throughs are an additional conditionality as we delay adhering to regulators' price determinations. The nine-month SBA gave policymakers the necessary breathing space to embark on a reform mission to remove the distortions in the economy.

So where do we go from here? We know that macrostabilisation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for sustainable growth and prosperity. Deep reforms are the only way to repair and meaningfully alter the economy's fundamentals. A growth framework based on unleashing a competitive domestic private sector, redesigning Pakistan's crumbling energy sector away from the public sector-led constellation, and repairing the fiscal framework are akin to survival.

Severe weaknesses in these areas have put the country in a perennial liquidity crunch in the external, energy, and fiscal sectors. Due to the shortfall of both dollars and rupees, the state has limited resources to materially improve the lives of the millions living an impoverished existence. They are debilitated by the poor quality of healthcare and education in a country which has weak opportunities

and rising inequality. It is of little surprise that with each passing day, the citizenry becomes more dissatisfied with the functioning of a lethargic state and feeble democracy.

A successful attempt to reform the economy demands a few prerequisites. First, those at the helm should alter their perception of government functioning. They have to see the government as an enabler, not a deliverer.

Second, some serious islands of competence and expertise are needed within the public sector. Undertaking reform surgeries and executing the next Extended Fund Facility (EFF) will be difficult with a weak professional team.

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

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

Commerce News

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

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed for an urgent probe, within days, into reasons for the technical fault in the Neelum-Jhelum Hydro Power Project (NJHP) that led to suspension of power generation.

The prime minister issued the directives at the project site during his day-long visit to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) where he was briefed by the officials of NJHP Company about the recent technical fault during the last month.

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

after a year in September last year, and the recent one in April this year due to the same technical fault.

The prime minister, while speaking on the occasion, expressed his displeasure that the findings of the inquiry into the recent fault were still awaited and directed the officials concerned to submit the report within days and restore the power generation after repair work as early as possible.

He said it was unfortunate that \$5 billion had been spent on the project despite an initial estimate of \$40 million, but it was still facing technical issues. "I am very much clear. I need a thorough probe whether lapses were in the design or in the construction, and the responsibility should be

fixed. No more delay will be acceptable," he added.

PM Shehbaz said it was a project of national significance in the power sector after Tarbela and Mangla dams with a huge cost and must remain functional for decades.

He directed that the inquiry should be carried out by third party experts and not by the designer or contractor of the project.

He also directed the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and NJHP Company to complete the repair work of the tunnel at the earliest and resume power generation. The prime minister appreciated the WAPDA chairman and his team for their efforts to repair the fault in the tunnel and resumption of generation last year.

PSX stays bullish, gains 266.72 points

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

A total of 407,625,139 shares valuing Rs 16,978 billion were traded during the day as compared to 572,420,772 shares valuing Rs 25,947 billion on the last day.

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

The three top trading companies were P.I.A.C (A) with 34,846,148 shares at Rs26.20 per share, Pak-Electric with 28,542,422 shares at Rs 26.47 per share and World Call Telecom with 24,078,585 shares at Rs 1.38 per share.



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

Commerce minister chairs high-level Committee on export facilitation

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

On the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a high-level committee was notified to address issues and challenges faced by the business sector, said a press release issued here.

Attendees included top exporters, business leaders, the Director General of the Special

Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Maj. Gen. Tabassum Habib and various ministry representatives from the FBR, finance, industry, maritime and information technology sectors.

The meeting focused on creating actionable solutions by directly engaging with stakeholders and relevant government bodies on matters periodically communicated by chambers of commerce, the Pakistan Business Council (PBC), the business community, and the Trade Development

Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) to the ministry.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan stressed the need for high-ranking officials to ensure effective decision-making. He expressed concern over the absence of the FBR Chairman, SBP Governor, and Secretary of Finance, emphasizing their importance in future meetings. Exporters and business representatives voiced concerns, which were directed to pertinent departments for an immediate response, with feedback required within 24 hours.

Deputy PM lauds EXIM Bank's robust support for development projects in Pak

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman of EXIM Bank of China, Wu Fulin called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Beijing Thursday.

The Foreign Minister and Chairman EXIM Bank discussed the EXIM Bank's long-standing cooperation with Pakistan and its interest in future investments in Pakistan. He outlined

Pakistan's efforts for financial and economic stability and business friendly policies. Ishaq Dar particularly noted the stellar performance of Pakistan Stock Exchange and renewed confidence of international investors in Pakistan's economy. The Foreign Minister appreciated EXIM Bank's robust support for important development projects in Pakistan.

Gold rates up by Rs 1,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 1,600 and was sold at Rs 245,600 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs 244,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 1,371 to Rs 210,562 from Rs 209,191 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 193,016 from Rs 191,758, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan Thursday said that a coordinated and integrated system in collaboration with the provinces would be evolved to promote trade and investment, besides ensuring the investors protection.

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

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Advisor to Prime Minister Rana Ehsan Afzal attended the meeting, where as federal secretaries and Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan were also present in the meeting, said a press release.

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



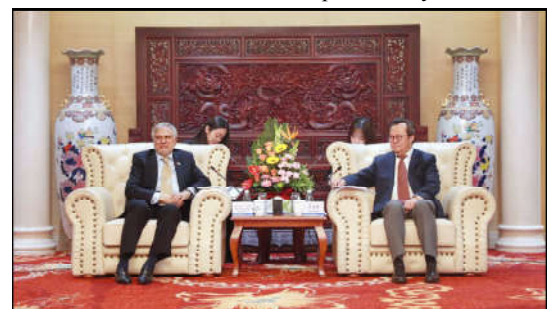
ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja addresses the inaugural ceremony of Pak-Qatar IT Tower.

Aurangzeb says:

No new legislation under consideration to extend tax, for erstwhile FATA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb Thursday informed the National Assembly that there is no new legislation under consideration to extend tax and duty exemptions for the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) regions. In response to a calling

attention notice regarding the proposal to withdraw tax and duty exemptions for these regions, the minister explained that these exemptions had been in place for six years and are now set to expire on June 30 of this year. The minister said that the business community, during interactions on the budget, has been advocating for a level playing field for all industries.



BELJING: Chairman of EXIM Bank of China Wu Fulin calls on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

IT sector's uplift key priority: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Thursday said that the development of IT sector was the first priority and the government welcomed this investment by Pak-Qatar Group in Pakistan's IT infrastructure uplift.

While addressing the inaugural ceremony of Pak-Qatar IT Tower, she said there were number of opportunities for our youth in this era of

technology. She said the government is going to digitize economy, governance and society under National Digitalization Plan, adding that digitalization would ensure transparency in the system and facilitation for the masses.

Shaza Fatima said that steps were underway for better IT and Telecommunication infrastructure and connectivity in the country.

Assembly passes budget as opposition withdraw cut motions

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

The ministers tabled demands for grants of their respective departments while opposition withdrew their cut motions on the request of treasury benches. Afterwards, the budget was passed when Speaker approved all 66

demands for grants. At the outset of session, treasury member, Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani, opposition members including Sobia Shahid of PML-N, Ejaz Muhammad and Rehana Ismail of JUI presented their cut motion when law minister tabled demands for grants of Rs 5.84166 billion that was being spent by caretaker setup. Sobia Shahid demanded action against culprits of May 9 vandalism and said that monuments of martyred were damaged and building

of Radio Pakistan was set ablaze on that day. She said that people might start protest again if perpetrators were not punished. Mushtaq Ghani also demanded judicial inquiry on May 9 incident to sift fiction from reality. He withdrew cut motion later when Speaker placated him and said that budget would be revised if cut motions were accepted. All the members withdrew cut motion after assurance of law minister to accept demands of opposition members.



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

Qasim takes important initiative to prevent Leishmania epidemic

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: The Health Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Qasim Ali Shah has taken important initiative to prevent Leishmania epidemic wherein he handed over the first batch of injections for the treatment of Leishmania to the DHOs of Mohmand, and Khyber district. It is necessary to take timely measures to prevent the epidemic, Syed Qasim Ali Shah told media men during distribution of injections to prevent Leishmania in both Mohmand and Khyber Districts. Glucantime injections have been provided with the support of MSF, Syed Qasim Ali Shah said, adding, Glucantime injections have been sold through UNICEF for the treatment of Leishmania.

Deputy Speaker SA calls on Governor KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Anthony Naveed called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House here on Thursday. Bishop of Pakistan Humphrey Sarfaraz Peter was also present at the meeting. Deputy Speaker and Bishop Sarfaraz Peter congratulated Faisal Karim Kundi on assuming the post of Governor and presented him with a bouquet. The Governor thanked Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Anthony Naveed and Bishop Sarfaraz Peter for coming to congratulate him. Ensuring cooperation and playing a role on a priority basis in solving the problems faced by the minorities in the province, the Governor assured them. Governor KP appreciated the role of the minority community in the development. The services of all the minorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially the Christian community, in all sectors including the education sector, are commendable, Faisal Karim Kundi said.

Meeting discusses matters relating to provision of funds to KPHA

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Finance Advisor, Muzamil Aslam Thursday chaired a meeting to discuss provision of funds to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Highways Authority (KPHA) for land purchase. The meeting discussed provision of funds to KPHA for continuation of ongoing projects and to purchase land for future projects. Participants concurred to invite suggestions from Accountant General Office about payments of outstanding dues. The advisor said that government is utilizing resources to complete public welfare projects and strategy was being prepared to pay the outstanding amount. He also directed participants to present their proposals and suggestions relating to matter in next meeting. Provincial Minister for Communication and Works, Shakil Ahmad, Secretary Works, Dr. Asad Ali, Secretary Law, Akhtar Saeed Managing Director KPHA, Asad Ali and concerned officials also attended the meeting.



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

AG KP agrees to ensure withholding of sales tax on service

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Director General (DG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRRA) held a meeting with the Accountant General (AG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Thursday to discuss issues relating to withholding of Sales Tax on Services from bills processed through the AG office. The Accountant General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Naseer Uddin Sarwar welcomed DG KPRRA Fouzia Iqbal at his office for the meeting. Advisor to KPRRA on Tax Enforcement Fazal Amin Shah and Assistant Collector (Withholding) Hizbullah Khan also accompanied the DG KPRRA. The DG KPRRA and her team presented the agenda for the meeting and briefed AG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and his team that the exemption to erstwhile Federal Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and Provincial Administered Tribal Area (PATA) has expired on October 31, 2023 and the sales tax on services is extended to the regions so AG Office.



LAHORE: Activists of Young Doctors Association holding a press conference for their demands in the Provincial Capital.

MUST, DHQ signs MOU to modernize healthcare services in Mirpur

MIRPUR-AJK (APP): Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) and Mirpur Divisional Headquarters (DHQ) Teaching Hospital have teamed up to transform healthcare services in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), signing a landmark agreement to develop a cutting-edge Hospital Management System. According to APP Correspondent, Mirpur University and DHQ Hospital have taken a significant step towards modernizing healthcare services in the region. The two institutions have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance and develop the Hospital Management System (HMS), revolutionizing the hospital's digital infrastructure. The partnership will see the university's Network and Telecommunication Centre (NTC) providing expertise and resources to improve patient care, streamline operations, and increase efficiency. This collaboration will strengthen the bond between MUST and DHQ Hospital, advancing healthcare services and education in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Online open court at Tax House Peshawar on May 21

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

Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue Regional Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar, Zafar Iqbal Khan will participate in the proceedings while Commissioner Withholding Syed Khalid Shah, Commissioner Peshawar Zone Dr Farooq Jameel, Commissioner Corporate Zone Fazal Malik, Additional Commissioner Headquarters Bahadur Sher Afridi, Deputy Commissioner Headquarters Riaz Ahmad Khan and Assistant Commissioner/Focal Person Sheraz Ahmad Khan will be present for the assistance of the Chief Commissioner. Trading community and other taxpayers have been invited for participation in the online open court to redress their problems through website www.facebook.com.

9 community NGOs pledge cooperation to end polio

LAHORE (APP): Heads of nine key community organisations in Punjab have pledged their full support to eradicate polio from the province, extending their cooperation from major cities to all districts. The commitment was made at a jirga, organised at the office of the Director General Health Punjab here on Thursday, attended by over 30 representatives from significant community organisations including Pakhtun Falahi Tanzeem, Mohmand Loya Jirga, Afghan Refugees Aman Committee, Khattak Welfare Association, Marwat Welfare Association, Bajaur Ittehad, Hazara Welfare Organisation, Muzil Welfare Organisation, and Pakhtun Qabail Movement. The session was chaired by Khizer Afzaal, the head of the polio programme in Punjab and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Coordinator. During the jirga, the organisations reviewed past initiatives aimed at eradicating polio in Punjab, such as awareness campaigns.

International News

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

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday reaffirmed their "no-limits" partnership that has deepened as both countries face rising tensions with the West, and they criticized U.S. military alliances in Asia and the Pacific region. At their summit in Beijing, Putin thanked China's proposals for ending the war in Ukraine, which have been rejected by Ukraine and its Western supporters as largely following the Kremlin's line. China claims to take a neutral position in the conflict, but it has backed the Kremlin's contentions that Russia was provoked into attacking Ukraine by the West, and it continues to supply key components needed by Moscow for weapons production. China, which has not criticized the invasion, proposed a broadly worded peace plan in 2023, calling for a cease-fire and for direct talks between Moscow and Kyiv. The plan was rejected by both Ukraine and the West for failing to call for Russia to leave occupied parts of Ukraine. China also gave a rhetorical nod to Russia's narrative about Nazism in Ukraine, with a joint statement Thursday that said Moscow and Beijing should defend the post-World War II order and "severely condemn the glorification of or even attempts to revive Nazism and militarism."



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend an official welcoming ceremony in Beijing, China.

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

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: China has not responded to US nuclear-weapons risk-reduction proposals and Washington has questions about Beijing's call for no-first-use talks while China continues to build up its arsenal, the top US arms control official said on Wednesday. Under Secretary of State Bonnie Jenkins told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the US estimates China currently has 500 operational nuclear warheads and will probably have more than 1,000 by 2030. She said US officials met with Chinese counterparts last November, opens new tab to discuss arms control and proliferation, their first such talks in nearly five years. "The meeting enabled a preliminary discussion on potential measures for managing and reducing risks," she said. "Unfortunately... the PRC has declined a follow-on meeting and has not provided (a) substantive response to risk-reduction suggestions we put forward," she said.

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

Monitoring Desk
HANDLOVA: Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico on Thursday was speaking but tired and still in a "really difficult condition" a day after being shot multiple times, the president-elect said after visiting his ally. "He is able to speak but only a few sentences and then he is really, really tired... The situation is very critical," President-elect Peter Pellegrini told reporters outside the hospital.



Congolese people react during the funeral of the nine victims, including seven children who were killed in a strike earlier this month at the Bulengo displaced persons camp (IDP), in Goma, North Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Iran switches to Friday, Saturday weekend

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran's parliament approved changes to the working week for all government employees on Wednesday that would establish a 40-hour working week with a Friday-Saturday weekend. The legislation, which still requires a green light from constitutional watchdog the Guardian Council, would replace the existing 44-hour working week with a half-day Thursday and a full-day off Friday. The change had been hotly debated, and 136 lawmakers voted in favour with 66 against and three abstentions, the official IRNA news agency said. Lawmaker Mohsen Pirhadi told parliament on Wednesday that leading cleric Ayatollah Javadi Amoli had raised no objection to Saturday as a weekend day.

Four killed in New Caledonia riots; France declares state of emergency

Monitoring Desk
SYDNEY: France declared a state of emergency on the Pacific island of New Caledonia on Wednesday after three young indigenous Kanak and a police officer were killed in riots over electoral reform. The state of emergency will give authorities additional powers to ban gatherings and forbid people from moving around the French-ruled island. Police reinforcements have been sent — and more are on the way — after rioters torched vehicles and businesses and looted stores. Schools have been shut and there is already a curfew in the capital. Rioting broke out over a new bill, adopted by lawmakers in Paris on Tuesday, that will allow French residents who have lived in New Caledonia for 10 years to vote in provincial elections — a move some local leaders fear will dilute the Kanak vote. "Since the start of the week, New Caledonia has been hit by violence of a rare intensity."

Turkey says it killed PKK members in northern Iraq strikes

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Turkey hit northern Iraq with air strikes on Wednesday and claimed to have killed 12 members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) sheltering there. The Turkish defence ministry said the PKK militants had been "neutralised" in the Gara and Hakurk regions of northern Iraq. The ministry's use of the term "neutralised" commonly means killed.

UN's top court opens hearings on the Israeli military's incursion into Rafah

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: The United Nations' top court on Thursday opened two days of hearings into a request from South Africa to press Israel to halt its military operation in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's population has sought shelter. It is the fourth time South Africa has asked the International Court of Justice for emergency measures since the nation launched proceedings alleging that Israel's military action in its war with Hamas in Gaza amounts to genocide. According to the latest request, the previous preliminary orders by The Hague-based court were not sufficient to address "a brutal military attack on the sole remaining refuge for the people of Gaza." South Africa said the situation was getting worse in the war-ravaged area. "Israel's genocide has continued at pace and has reached a new and horrific stage," said Vusumuzi Madonsela, South Africa's ambassador to the Netherlands. Israel has portrayed Rafah as the last stronghold of the militant group, brushing off warnings from the United States and other allies that any major operation there would be catastrophic for civilians. South Africa has asked the court to order Israel to withdraw from Rafah; to take measures to ensure unimpeded access for U.N. officials, humanitarian organizations and journalists to the Gaza Strip; and to report back within one week on how it is meeting these demands.

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

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukrainian units locked in street battles with the Kremlin's forces in a key northeastern Ukraine town have halted the Russian advance, military officials in Kyiv claimed Thursday, though a senior Moscow official said the frontline push had enough resources to keep going. Russian attempts to establish a foothold in the town of Vovchansk, which is among the largest towns in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region with a prewar population of 17,000, "have been foiled," Ukraine's general staff said in a midday report. It was not possible to independently verify the claim. Six people were injured Thursday in one Russian daylight attack on Vovchansk using cluster munitions, local officials said, as emergency workers and volunteers were rescuing people affected by shelling. Among the injured were two medics, he said. Ukrainian authorities have evacuated some 8,000 civilians from the town. The Russian army's usual tactic is to reduce towns and villages to ruins with aerial strikes before its units move in. Vovchansk, located just 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the Russian border, has been a hotspot in the fighting in recent days. Russia launched an offensive in the Kharkiv area late last week, significantly adding to the pressure on Ukraine's outnumbered and outgunned forces which are waiting for delayed deliveries of crucial weapons and ammunition from Western partners. Ukraine has repeatedly tried to strike behind Russian lines, often using drones though Russia's response to the new technology used in unmanned vehicles has improved in recent months.

Chinese Finance Minister reaffirms continued support for Pakistan's financial stability

BEIJING (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday met with Chinese Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an and underlined the Government of Pakistan's reform agenda with a focus on governance, revenue, and ease of doing business to attract Foreign Direct Investment.

The deputy prime minister, who is on a four-day visit to China, also emphasized Pakistan's high priority to investments from China, and shared an overview of the priority sectors identified for this purpose, including agriculture, IT, mines and minerals and renewable energy.

Deputy Prime Minister Dar and Minister Lan expressed profound appreciation for Pakistan-China financial and banking cooperation calling it a manifestation of the 'All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' between the two countries.

They discussed ideas to further enhance financial cooperation, especially in view of growing business-to-business (B2B) linkages between Pakistan and China.



BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meets with the Minister of Finance of the People's Republic of China Lan Fo'an.

Pakistan accepts IMF's condition to abolish subsidy to energy sector

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has accepted to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) condition to abolish subsidy on the energy sector on Thursday.

Quoting its sources, the channel reported that the IMF had also set the condition of timely issuance of the notification of annual tariff adjustment.

Sources disclosed that both sides also agreed on speeding up the collection of electricity bills.

Besides that, they revealed, Pakistan and the Fund had agreed on presenting a plan for abolishing the subsidy the government had offered on tube wells.

The international money lending organization, they elaborated, had also demanded the government to eliminate circular debt in the gas sector.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Ahsan Iqbal Thursday said that by 2047, Pakistan would be included amongst top 10 economies in the world.

"By working hard, we can bring Pakistan to the top 10 economies of the world by 2047 and for this we have to silence negative voices," he said.

Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal's address at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Conference was held in the Ministry of Planning regarding the national development agenda.

The minister said that development is possible only through implementation of SDGs.

"It is also to be taken into consideration that Pakistan's budget would be compatible with the SDGs," he said.

Ahsan said that natural resources were misused in industrial revolution.

He said that Pakistan is among top ten countries affected by climate change.

The minister said that parliamentarians have a very important role regarding sustainable development goals and the work of distribution of resources is done by the Parliament.

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

The Sustainable Development Goals, when formulated, were intended to develop and it is our responsibility to establish safe and sustainable development for future generations, he said.

He said that "We want to retain a better country for future generations".

The minister said that sustainable development goals are included in Pakistan's 2025 agenda.

Today, all the stakeholders, civil society and private sector can also play a role in achieving sustainable development goals, he stressed.

National Assembly told Pakistan witnessed 1,514 terror incidents in 2023

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan witnessed 1,514 terror incidents in 2023, the interior ministry told National Assembly (NA) on Thursday.

According to details, the interior ministry submitted a written in the National Assembly regarding law and order situation of Pakistan.

The report stated that 572 security personnel were martyred and 1292 were injured in the terror incidents in 2023, while 358 citizens lost their lives and 700 sustained wounds. The report highlighted the worsening law and order situation in the country specially in KP, where 858 terror attacks were reported that claimed lives of 402 security personnel and 178 civilians.

As many as 148 security personnel were martyred and 198 were injured in 626 terror attacks in Balochistan during the past year, the report of the interior ministry said.

In Sindh, 8 security forces were martyred, 26 were injured, while 6 civilians also lost their lives in the terror incidents in 2023.

Punjab witnessed eight terror incidents in 2023 that claimed lives of 11 security personnel and a civilian.

Nine security officials and 2 civilians were also injured. In Gilgit-Baltistan, three security officials and six civilians were martyred in three terror incidents. Earlier, Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif stated that Pakistan will not tolerate any more cross-border terror attacks on its soil.

Shehbaz Sharif proposed the formulation of a joint strategy with the sincerity of purpose to defeat the scourge of terrorism.

He said collective efforts against terrorism will help establish peace in the region and address other issues such as that of poverty.



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

Livestock, Fisheries play significant role in national economy: Najmi

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Chief Minister's adviser on Livestock and Fisheries Syed Najmi Alam Thursday said that Livestock and Fisheries play a significant role in the national economy, and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has specifically instructed for further development of this department to alleviate poverty and improve people's lives.

He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting with officials of the Livestock and Fisheries department at the Directorate General's office. Provincial adviser arrived in Hyderabad as part of his one-day visit, where he conducted a detailed tour of all directorates of the Livestock department including Animal Extension, Poultry, Research, Diagnostics, etc., and received briefings from relevant authorities. Provincial adviser directed all the officers to improve the animal vaccination process and to train the officers in this regard.

He said that a veterinary center should be fully functional in every tehsil and wherever the development projects of the department are lagging behind, it is the responsibility of the officers of the department to take care of it and write to us so that the projects can be completed on time and benefit the people.

About the shortage of staff, he said that all the vacant posts in the department should be filled immediately by issuing an advertisement so that the shortage of staff can be filled. While giving a briefing to the provincial adviser.

DG Livestock Hizbullah Bhutto said that 418 veterinary officers are working in the province while the sanctioned posts are 688 and the remaining posts will be recruited through the commission. He further informed that 8.161,980 million large animals have been vaccinated and 10.30 million small animals were also being vaccinated.



KARACHI: Leader of Jafaria Alliance Shabar Raza Zaidi and others viewing the exhibition at Qualigraphic exhibition at Kolachi Art Gallery, Markazi Islami, in the Provincial Capital.

MD SITE announces Rs.3.2b package for infrastructure improvement

HYDERABAD (APP): The Managing Director Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE) Ghazanfar Qadri has said that Rs. 3.2b package had been prepared for Hyderabad Site area and as soon as funds were released from government, the work would be started on the package.

According to a press release, he was addressing members of Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) on Thursday. He said that industrialists were backbone of economy and when industries perform the employment opportunities will be created. He disclosed that digitized online facilitation centers would be set up for industrialists to provide them facilities at their doorsteps. He maintained that new industrial zones were being set up and Rs. 3bn would be spent for drainage and treatment project. He added that industrialists were tenants of Site area and without Site's no objection certificate they would not pay tax to any other department. He said that the Sindh government was not providing funds to the Site, and salaries and pensions of employees were being paid through amount collected under tenancy. He said that efforts would be made to utilize tenancy for betterment of site.

HCCI President Adeel Siddiqui welcomed MD Site and said that HCCI felt that Site was serious in resolving problems of industrialists and industrialists contribute 90pc of GDP in the country. He said conditions of Site were before everyone whereas infrastructure was just broken. He said that accidents had become the order of the day and provision of water supply and drainage had become a major problem for industrialists.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing a ceremony held at Governor House in connection with rozgar scheme.

Registrar IHC No constitutional restriction on holding dual citizenship for becoming judge

ISLAMABAD (Online): Registrar of Islamabad High Court (IHC) has given reply to the letter from Faisal Yawda stating that there is no restriction on holding dual citizenship or residency in other country in the constitution for becoming judge.

No information about dual citizenship is sought from a lawyer on the occasion of becoming judge of high court. Holding dual nationality or residence in other country does not disqualify any one from becoming judge as per constitution.

3rd Pakistan Banking Summit on Safe, Sustainable and Affordable Banking

KARACHI: Director General Sindh Food Authority Agha Fakhar Hussain has attended the 3rd Pakistan Baking Summit as a guest of honour, held at a local hotel here in Karachi in conjunction with World Baking Day.



The summit's theme was, "Safe, Sustainable & Affordable Baking," underscores the importance of responsible practices in the baking industry. Stakeholders from various sectors convened to discuss crucial topics such as food safety, sustainability, and accessibility in baking. The summit aimed to foster collaboration and innovation to address these pressing issues. The agenda highlighted topics such as safe baking practices, nutritious options, and export potential. DG SFA Agha Fakhar Hussain emphasized on prioritizing consumer health and environmental stewardship.

Action to be taken against quacks, unregistered laboratories, medical stores

Independent Report MIRPUR MATHILO: According to the details, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Ghotki Dr. Syed Muhammad Ali in his actions are needed so that the district can improve. Otherwise, a report will be provided to the authorities against them. He said that those running illegal clinics, laboratories or medical



stores are playing with human lives, so the Sindh Healthcare Commission should also play its role and take effective action against such elements and the district administration should provide full support in this regard. Will do.

He directed the DHO to provide a report on unregistered medical stores across the district. No one will be allowed to operate a laboratory or clinic illegally because it is a matter of human lives.

Dr Farukh Ali appointed as SSP Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): The Inspector General of Sindh Police Ghulam Nabi Memon has transferred Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Hyderabad Amjad Ahmed Shaikh and posted as SSP District Sukkur with immediate effect.

According to a notification issued on Thursday, Amjad Ahmed Shaikh has been replaced by BS-19 Dr Farukh Ali to head the Hyderabad district police.

On posting as SSP, District Hyderabad, Dr Farukh Ali shall look after the work of the Senior Superintendent of Police, District Dadu in addition to his own duties with immediate effect and until further orders.

Rangers arrest most wanted criminal

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police in a coordinated intelligence-based operation, arrested a highly wanted suspect from the Sammo Goth area of Karachi.

The suspect, identified as Nasir alias Chipu, was involved in numerous street crimes, a spokesman for Rangers said on Thursday.

During the arrest, authorities recovered a 30-bore pistol and ammunition from his possession.

Nasir also confessed to participating in an attack on a Rangers mobile unit in 2021. He has a prior history of imprisonment.

Efforts are ongoing to capture his accomplices.

The arrested suspect, along with the seized weapons and ammunition, has been handed over to the police for further legal action.

Five family members involved in drug business arrested

KARACHI (APP): The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Karachi Police on Thursday arrested seven drug peddlers including five members of a family and in a separate operation recovered more than seven kilograms of drugs.

According to SSP SIU Adeel Chandio, the SIU in its action in Magso Goth, arrested five of a family involved in the drugs trade and recovered 5.5 kg of hashish from them. They were identified as Khuda Bukhsh, Abdul Ghafoor, Asma, Gul Bano and Noor Saba.

The arrested were inter-provincial drug traffickers who purchased drugs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan and sold it in different areas of Karachi.

Minister affirms support for hosting fourth T20 Blind Cricket World Cup in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Sardar Muhammad Bux Khan Mahar, has highlighted Pakistan's prominent position in the world of Blind Cricket, noting that the nation's blind cricketers excel across all formats of international cricket.

In his conversation with PBCC Chairman Sultan Shah, Mahar expressed confidence in discussing the matter with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, aiming to ensure that the province does not miss this crucial opportunity. He promised to follow up next week.

Hosting the Blind Cricket World Cup, Mahar noted, would not only aid in reviving inter-national sports in the country but also give Pakistani players a chance to display their talents before a home audience.



10 injured as anger over tea bill boils over in Larkana

LARKANA (INP): At least ten people were injured when a tiff on a tea bill led to violent clash between a customer and hotel administrators in Larkana on Thursday morning.

More customers also jumped in and batons were used against each other while chairs were flying at what could have been a peaceful breakfast spot.

The argument was stemmed from a tea bill which the waiter demanded from the customer. This quickly turned into exchange of blows and slaps and later clubs were used and chairs were thrown at each other.

The hotel venue gave a look of a battlefield while at least 10 people were injured in the violent clash.

The wounded were later shifted to trauma centre of Chandika Hospital.

Meanwhile, in another incident in Lahore Mohallah of Larkana rival parties came to blows in presence of police over a dispute regarding a plot.

The members of the victim party later staged a protest demonstration outside the Press Club against the influential party.

No need to show any health card; all treatment is free in Sindh: Ghanwar

Independent Report KARACHI: "Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's healthcare institutions should compete without bias," says the spokesperson for the Sindh Government.

"People come to Sindh for treatment not just from all over Pakistan but from around the world," emphasizes the Sindh Government's spokesperson. "If there's any hospital like Agha Khan University Hospital, SIUT, or Gambat Hospital, let us know?" asks Ghanwar Khan Isran.

"There's no temporary free treatment system like KP in Sindh; we're always here for the people's service," asserts the spokesperson for the Sindh Government.

"In any hospital in Sindh, there's no need to show any health card; all treatment is free," confirms Ghanwar Khan Isran.

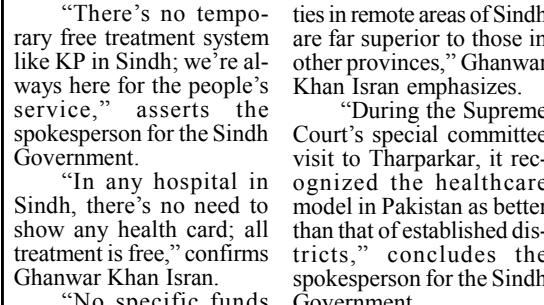
"No specific funds have been allocated for the treatment of Sindh's people; the government bears the cost of any expensive treatment," states Ghanwar Khan Isran.

"Around 400,000 people receive dialysis annually at SIUT, which conducts more than 1,200 dialysis sessions daily," informs Ghanwar Khan Isran.

"Even the most expensive treatments like open-heart surgery and pacemaker implantation are completely free in Sindh," highlights the spokesperson for the Sindh Government.

"The healthcare facilities in remote areas of Sindh are far superior to those in other provinces," Ghanwar Khan Isran emphasizes.

"During the Supreme Court's special committee visit to Tharparkar, it recognized the healthcare model in Pakistan as better than that of established districts," concludes the spokesperson for the Sindh Government.



KARACHI: Pakistani Shiite Muslim protesters shout anti-Israeli slogans, marking the 76th anniversary of Nakba of what the Palestinians call the Nakba, or "catastrophe," referring to their uprooting in the war over Israel's 1948 creation, during a protest in Karachi, in Karachi.

Pakistan, UK vow to enhance coordination on multilateral fora

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and the United Kingdom have expressed their commitment to further enhance coordination on multilateral fora on matters relating to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

The commitment was expressed during the 6th Round of Pakistan-UK Dialogue on Arms Control & Non-Proliferation here on Wednesday, a Foreign Office press release said on Thursday.

Additional Foreign Secretary (Arms Control & Disarmament) Ambassador Mohammad Kamran Akhtar, and Director Defence and International Security at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom, Ambassador Stephen Lillie, led their respective delegations.

A broad spectrum of topics relating to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation came under discussion during the dialogue.

Bogie of train coming from Multan to Karachi derails

KARACHI (INP): The bogie of train coming from Multan to Karachi derailed at Drug Road in the megacity on Thursday.

One bogie of Bahauddin Zakaria Express was derailed. However, there was no casualty in the accident.

After the bogie of the train was derailed, the down track was closed and all incoming vehicles will be brought from up track (single track).