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Pakistan urges OIC states to get united for ceasefire in Gaza

Deputy PM voices Pakistan's deep concern over Israeli brutal military onslaught against Palestinians; Reiterates need for peace talks to resume, condemns India's anti-Pakistan rhetoric and Islamophobic narratives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday expressed Pakistan's deep concern over Israel's ongoing brutal military onslaught against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank.

In the backdrop of the genocide of Palestinians and atrocities of Israeli forces, he urged the OIC Member States to work together for an immediate and uncondi-

tional ceasefire and uninterrupted humanitarian assistance to the besieged Palestinians.

Addressing the 15th Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Summit Conference in Banjul, the capital of The Gambia, he also expressed Pakistan's support for Palestine's admission as a full member of the UN, resumption of the peace process for realization of the two-State solution and establishment of a

viable, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

Highlighting Indian atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), especially after India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, the deputy prime

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Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan receiving a high-level Saudi business delegation upon its arrival.

PML-N invites PPP to join coalition Govt

ISLAMABAD (INP): The PML-N has again contacted the People's Party to join the coalition government. According to media reports, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has contacted via mutual friends inviting the PPP to join the government.

The PPP sources said that the PML-N has requested the party to join the government prior to the next budget. "The challenges faced by the country could not be tackled by a single political party," PML-N said. "We want to guide the country out of the crises by joining hands with the PPP," ruling party said in its message.

"The PML-N intends to present the budget along with the People's Party," sources said. The ruling party has also asked the PPP to submit its budget proposals as partner in the government.

According to party sources, the PPP didn't yet convey its answer to those who brought the message.

The PML-N repeatedly invited the PPP to be the part of the government scores of times," PPP sources earlier said.

"The PML-N also invited the PPP earlier at the oath taking of Aseefa Bhattu as MNA," party sources said. The party has been invited to join the federal as well as Punjab government as an ally.

"The PPP didn't respond to the government offer, neither the party held consultations over the issue," sources said. Sources said that the PPP leadership has been under pressure to join the government. The party's parliamentarians from Sindh backing to join the government.

However, a senior party leader from Sindh has vehemently opposed the offer and communicated the opinion to the party's leadership. The People's Party's Punjab leadership opened to join the government in Punjab instead of the Centre.

CM Balochistan lauds successful operations against miscreants

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti on Sunday expressed his satisfaction over the successful operation against miscreants in the Quetta and Kachi districts of the province.

The district administration, police, Levis and took timely action against the outlaws, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti adding that the timely operation of the law enforcement agencies against elements hostile to peace is a manifestation of the professional performance of the force.

The CM, expressing zero tolerance to the elements opposed to peace, said the elements that undermine peace will be dealt with strictly. Protection of life and property of the people is the constitutional responsibility of the government and the state knows well how to play its role in dealing with violent incidents and restoring peace, he remarked.

Jamali calls for providing conducive environment to midwives in remote areas

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Health, Sardarzada Faisal Khan Jamali has underlined the need to provide conducive working environment to the midwives in remote areas of the province.

The Minister said that the role of midwives is very important in provision of healthcare facilities in the remote areas so we should ensure conducive environment to them so that they may serve in the remote areas befittingly.

Sardarzada Faisal Jamali was addressing a ceremony held in connection with the

Midwife Day under auspices of MNCH Programme here at a local hotel on Sunday.

The Secretary Health, Abdullah Khan and other concerned high ups were present in the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister Health said that basic objective behind observance of the day is to recognize the services of midwives and provide them identity in the society.

He also stressed the need to provide jobs to the midwives on contract basis besides giving them monthly stipends.

He said that it would also be our utmost endeavour to provide desired kits to them so that they perform their duties well.

He noted with contentment that there is marked reduction in maternal mortality rate because of the trained midwives who join the profession.

The Secretary Health Abdullah Khan appreciated performance of the MNCH Programme and said that there is key role of community midwives in the far flung areas of the province. As a result, mothers are getting better healthcare facilities, he added.



BANJUL: Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar addressing 15th OIC Islamic Summit Conference.

Pak-Saudi investment conference to be held today Saudi trade delegation arrives Pakistan for mutual investment cooperation

50-member delegation aims to explore various avenues of trade and investment between the two countries

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 50-member high-level Saudi trade delegation led by the Assistant Investment Minister of Saudi Arabia, Ibrahim Al-Mubarak, arrived here on Sunday with the aim of exploring various avenues of trade and investment to further strengthen and promote bilateral relations between the two countries.

Upon their arrival at Noor Khan Air Base, the Saudi dignitaries were welcomed by Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Petroleum Minister Musadik Masood Malik, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Commerce.

Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan highlighted that the three-day visit of the Saudi delegation geared towards enhancing trade relations between investors from both countries and identifying trade and investment opportunities across various sectors of Pakistan's economy.

He said that the Ministry had selected numerous Pakistani companies in relevant sectors for Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings with their Saudi counterparts, adding that leading Pakistani companies would collaborate with 30 Saudi companies across different sectors.

The B2B meetings will specifically target sectors such as agriculture, mining, human resources, energy, chemicals and maritime. Moreover, discussions will extend to investment prospects in other sectors including refinery, IT, religious tourism, telecom, aviation, construction, water and power generation, he further observed.

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BANJUL: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar met with Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Zheng Jianbang, on the sidelines of the 15th OIC Islamic Summit Conference.

Deputy PM, VC Zheng express determination to complete CPEC projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Zheng Jianbang on Sunday expressed their determination to complete all China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and further upgrade this cooperation to achieve shared objectives.

During a meeting on the sidelines of the 15th OIC Islamic Summit Conference in Banjul, The Gambia, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister reiterated Pakistan's firm support to

China's core issues and underscored the importance of enhanced mutually productive ties through close economic collaboration and cooperation. Vice Chairman Zheng Jianbang reaffirmed China's support Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and development, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

"The two sides reaffirmed the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Pakistan and China and exchanged views on deepening exchanges between the Parliament of Pakistan and the National People's Congress of China," it was added.

Around 99 percent target of polio immunization achieved as drive comes to an end

Independent Report QUETTA: Around 99 percent target of the polio immunization has been achieved as the seven-day special anti-polio campaign came to an end on Sunday.

The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication Balochistan sources informed that the seven-day anti-polio campaign launched in 30 districts of the province was concluded on Sunday with the aggregate target of 99 percent achieved.

The campaign was launched in 30 out of total 36 districts of Balochistan on Monday last. The EOC sources said that more than 10,000 teams including mobile, fixed sites and transit point teams were constituted to vaccinate the children below five years of age and thus achieve the due target.

Jaffar Mandokhail to take oath as 24th Governor of Balochistan today

New nominated Governor vows to strengthen and support coalition government, take measures for improving relations between province and federation further

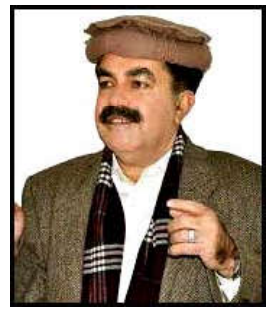
Independent Report

QUETTA: The senior politician and provincial President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail is due to take oath as 24th Governor Balochistan today (Monday) morning.

According to the sources of Governor House, the graceful oath taking ceremony of Governor Balochistan is scheduled to be held at 11:00 AM today (Monday) at the Governor House.

The Chief Justice High Court, Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar will administer oath to Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail.

The Chief Minister, Mir Sarifaz Ahmed Bugti,



provincial ministers, parliamentarians, political personalities, tribal elders, Chief Secretary, administrative secretaries of provincial government departments would participate in the oath taking ceremony.

It may be mentioned here that the PML-N leadership had nominated Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail as new Gov-

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Provincial Minister for Communication & Works Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa being briefed during his visit to under construction District Headquarters Hospital Soharpur

Aimal Wali elected ANP's Central President; Asfandiyar as Leader of Movement

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday congratulated Sadiq Khan on his election as Mayor of London for the third consecutive term.

The prime minister offered his heartfelt felicitation to the newly elected Mayor Sadiq Khan 'on his hat trick', PM Office Media Wing said in a press release issued here.

As a hard-working British Pakistani, he not only raised the head of his parents high but also made every Pakistani to rejoice his victory with pride, he further observed.

Former Chief Minister Amir Haider Khan Hoti suggested the name of Senator Aimal Wali Khan for the presidency and all members of the Central Council approved it.

Senator Daud Khan will be the Central Senior Vice President while Dr. Muhammad Saleem Khan will be the Secretary General.

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GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with Federal Minister for Communication Abdul Aleem Khan at CM Secretariat.

HRCP expresses concern over journalist's killing in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Balochistan Chapter on Sunday expressed concern over the journalist's killing in Balochistan.

A statement issued here said HRCP is appalled by the apparent targeted killing of Khuzdar Press Club president Muhammad Siddique Mengal in a car bomb attack that had left two others dead and several injured - ironically enough on World Press Freedom Day.

In a province where journalists already work under immense

pressure and at risk to themselves, this attack is bound to have a chilling effect on the media, with many working journalists having migrated from Khuzdar out of fear, according to accounts shared with HRCP.

HRCP statement further urged that the attackers must be brought to book swiftly.

Balochistan must also urgently enact laws protecting journalists' safety and establish a safety commission to ensure that perpetrators of such attacks are held to account, it maintained.



QUETTA: Provincial Health Minister Sardarzada Mir Faisal Khan Jamali addressing a ceremony held in connection with International Midwife Day

DC, SSP Ghotki inspect under construction Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge

By Tanveer Ahmed
MIRPUR MATHELO: Deputy Commissioner Ghotki, along with SSP Ghotki and SSP Special Branch visited the under construction Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge, took a detailed briefing about the construction Sumair Noor Channa and SSP Special Branch Mansoor Mughal visited the under-construction Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge and reviewed the situation. Speaking on this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Ghotki Dr. Syed Muhammad Ali said that the construction of Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge is the first priority of the Sindh Government's, this project will reduce the distance between the two districts and will especially benefit the business people. He said that the construction work of the bridge has started with the full cooperation of the police and other law enforcement agencies, the district administration is trying to complete the construction work as soon as possible, all arrangements have been made in this regard. Speaking on this occasion, SSP Ghotki said that the law and order situation in the district is better, no one will be allowed to affect the construction work of the bridge. Later, the Deputy Commissioner and SSP also planted saplings near the under-construction bridge.

12 dead, 1324 injured in 1194 RTCs in Punjab

Independent Report
LAHORE: At least twelve persons were killed and 1324 injured in 1194 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 600 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 724 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 699 drivers, 38 underage drivers, 141 pedestrians, and 496 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 226 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 246 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Multan 82 in with 90 victims and at third Faisalabad with 76 RTCs and 90 victims.



Federal Minister for Kashmir affairs and Gilgit Baltistan along with States and Frontier regions Engineer Amir Muqam taking oath from newly elected cabinet of the District Bar Association, Buner.

Second, third phases of "Suthra Punjab Program" being launched simultaneously: Minister

SIALKOT (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government Punjab Zeeshan Rafique has said that after the success of the first phase of the "Suthra Punjab Program", the second and third phases are being started simultaneously. He expressed these views at a press conference in Daska. He said in the second phase, the provision of equal facilities of municipal services in rural and urban areas is being ensured. At the tehsil level, there will be a sentry worker for 250 houses in the rural and rural areas who would be responsible for cleaning the streets, removing garbage from houses, cleaning the drains and sewerage etc. To ensure this, the cleaning and sanitation system will be outsourced at the tehsil level. Garbage collected from houses, neighborhoods and markets will first be shifted to the temporary collection points, he added. Zeeshan Rafique said that digital monitoring of the new sanitation system will be done in rural and urban areas. To recycle the garbage collected at the village and ward level, the waste will be processed into energy and fertilizer at 10 recycling plants at the divisional level, while the remaining garbage will be made safe from every aspect by following modern requirements in the landfill sites, so that the environment can be made human friendly, he maintained. He said that



PESHAWAR: Delegation from different walks of life meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

Polio team Incharge kidnapped

By Adeel Ahmed
SHIKARPUR: Two more including a Polio Team Incharge of UC Sehwan were Kidnapped in two separate incidents from Shikarpur on Saturday night. According to initial reports reached here that one Polio Team Incharge named Khalid Ahmed son of Sibghatullah Bhayo was Kidnapped by some group of armed men from the jurisdiction of Naparkot police station and took them away forcibly on gun point towards kaicha area of Rustam. Today on Sunday, the kidnapers had called the parents of kidnapped Polio Team Incharge Khalid Bhayo from his mobile phone and demanded for release of their accomplices (dacoits) who were arrested by Shikarpur.

CM Sindh vows to maintain peace in Karachi at any cost

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has vowed to maintain peace in Karachi at any cost, saying that the city has already paid a heavy price of bloodshed. "We have paid a heavy price for peace in Karachi by sacrificing citizens, political workers, police, rangers, and army personnel. Therefore, peace in the city is very important to us." He was speaking at the condolence meeting of Shaheed Akbar Nagori, the younger brother of former provincial minister Javed Nagori held at Kikri

Ground, Lyari. The meeting was attended by Local Govt Minister Saeed Ghani, MNAs Nabil gabol, Qadir Patel, Senator Masroor Ahsan, MPA Asif Khan, and a large number of party workers, and people of Lyari. Murad Shah stated that the PPP government had previously restored law and order in the city, and they would do the same to tackle the street crime challenge efficiently. In May 2015, a terrorist attack claimed the life of Akbar Nagori, a dedicated political worker, Murad Shah recalled the tragic incident. He also highlighted the immense sacrifices the people of Lyari, including men, women, and children, made to restore and strengthen democracy in the country. According to the CM, the people of Lyari are truly patriotic and politically aware. "They have actively participated in various political movements, including men, women, and even their children," he said. The chief minister mentioned that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto has instructed him to provide Lyari's people with health, education,

GB CM urges PM to deploy motorway police on KKH

GILGIT (INP): Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Chief Minister (CM), Gulbar Khan, has written a letter to Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif, urging the deployment of motorway police on the Karakoram Highway (KKH). CM Gulbar Khan stressed that the deployment of motorway police is essential for safe travel on the Karakoram Highway, which has witnessed several fatal accidents in recent times. Gulbar said that he has ordered an investigation into the recent accident near Chilas and directed that measures be taken to prevent such incidents in the future. The Karakoram Highway has seen a surge in traffic accidents, resulting in the loss of precious lives. The Chief Minister noted that these accidents are not only causing human loss but also having a negative impact on tourism in Gilgit Baltistan. It is pertinent to mention here that last year in December, at least 10 people, including two soldiers, lost their lives, and 21 passengers received injuries when unknown attackers opened fire at the Rawalpindi-bound bus from nearby hills in Chilas, causing the vehicle to collide with a goods truck. As per details, Deputy Commissioner Diamer Captain (Rtd) Arif Ahmad stated that the incident occurred in Chilas district where unknown assailants opened fire on a passenger and the uncontrolled bus collided with a truck.



MULTAN: Former PMLN MPA Shahzad Maqbool Bhutta announcing party decision to support PPP candidate in NA 148 by election.

Pakistan People's Party believes in freedom of expression: Shazia Mari

SANGHAR (APP): Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Pakistan People's Party central Information Secretary Shazia Mari has said that Pakistan Peoples Party believes in freedom of expression. She expressed these views while talking to media during her visit to Press Club Sanghar here on Sunday. She said that Pakistan Peoples Party has always given sacrifices for the restoration and survival of democracy and flogged in jails that is the reason roots of Pakistan Peoples Party lying in people. She said that she has always delivered best performance which will be continued in future and all promises would be fulfilled made with people because Pakistan People's Party was determined to serve people. Shazia said that National Press Club has always done positive and real journalism that is why she value it. She said that now a days journalism have become more active and circulating fake news and blackmailing on media was common, however real journalists were those who were firmly determined to their cause. Meanwhile MNA Shazia Mari on the occasion announced to inaugurate new building of National Press Club equipped with latest facilities and holding a seminar in its auditorium on "survival and benefits of democracy".

Thar coal declared suitable for gasification, diesel, best for power generation: Nasir

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Minister for Energy and Planning & Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has said that the South African experts have declared the Thar Coal very suitable for the gasification, diesel and best for the power generation. While presides over a high-level meeting on the Sindh Coal Authority (SCA), in which a detailed review of a report received from South Africa regarding the coal sample of Thar Coal Block II conducted, a communique said. The Minister Nasir Shah said that a SCA delegation consisting of expert officers would be sent to China to have a detailed look at the transfer of technology. The decision of the previous meeting to make a policy of gasification at the provincial level was also considered in detail. It was decided in the meeting that the Energy Minister Nasir Shah would contact the federal government regarding the policy of gas efficiency at the provincial level.



TARBELA: Chief Guest, Chief Engineer (TDP) Turesh Kumar viewing handmade stuff prepared by special children during ceremony on the occasion of Annual Day Function-2024 of Mashaal Initiative Institute of Special Education at Sobra City Colony.

Federal Ombudsman DIK office on top for resolving IRD cases

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The Federal Ombudsman's Regional Office DI Khan has resolved 799 cases under the Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD) mechanism during 2023, which is the highest figure of any regional office in the country. It was stated by the Senior Investigation Officer of Federal Ombudsman (Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat) Regional Office DI Khan Imran Khan while talking to APP here on Monday. He informed that IRD started in April 2022, was a mechanism under which the Ombudsman office plays a mediation role in resolving disputes even out of its jurisdiction. Moreover, he said, the regional office DI Khan has disposed of about 4961 cases out of a total of 5391 registered complaints received during last year with an 80 per cent success ratio. He also mentioned that the Complaints Collection Center, Wana which was established in December 2022.

Minister for quality edu. in educational institutions run by Labour Dept

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister of Labour Department Fazal Shakoor Khan Sunday said that provision of quality education in educational institutions run by the labour department is the topmost priority of our government. He urged the teachers to work hard and focus on provision of quality education to laborer children studying in different schools of the labour department. He was addressing a prize distribution ceremony organized by Rahamkar Welfare Social Foundation at Working Folks Grammar School Kaka Sahib district Nowshera. Earlier, the provincial minister visited different sections of the school while the school principal briefed the minister regarding school administration. The minister was also informed about various challenges and shortcomings faced by the school.

KP people still await change: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said that people of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) are waiting for change for the last 10 years. In a statement issued here on Sunday, she said that condition of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa schools and hospitals was very poor. Azma said instead of focusing on welfare of people, the KP government was afraid of performance of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, who was working very hard for betterment of people of the province.



MUZAFFRABAD: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat chanting slogans during protest against Indian Army at Azadi Chowk in the city.

Sharjeel vows to put transport sector on its feet, says Red Line to have Pak 1st biogas buses

KARACHI (INP): Senior Sindh Minister for Information, Transport & Mass Transit and Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Sharjeel Inam Memon on Sunday pledged to put the transport sector of the Sindh province including Karachi on its feet to facilitate the general public. Talking to media persons during his visit to the BRT Red Line site, he said that the Sindh government had started work on Red Line BRT once again. He said that the government would not leave any stone unturned to complete the project. He said that the Red

Line project was delayed due to the utility services, which were being shifted and on the part of the provincial government there would not be even a delay of a single day in its completion. The minister said that the BRT Red Line project was an important project of the PPP-led Sindh government. He said that the resolution to the problems of the people was a top priority of the present government. He said that the Sindh government was seriously working on all projects and intended to complete them on time. Replying to a question, he said that the infrastructure of the buses cost more than the buses. He excused the university students for facing problems due to the project. He said that the PPP-led government performed practically instead of only paying lip service. Replying to another question, he said that some issues were being faced in the operation of People's Bus Service due to the load shedding of electricity by K-E and the power entity had been asked to resolve the matter. Replying to another question, he said that it did not mean that if PPP was not in the federal government.

Stolen vehicle of GB Education Minister recovered

RAWALPINDI (INP): The New Town police station in Rawalpindi has successfully recovered the stolen official double cabin vehicle belonging to Ghulam Shahzad Agha, the Provincial Education Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan. The vehicle, which was reported stolen from D Block Satellite Town in March, was retrieved by authorities, leading to the arrest of the perpetrators. According to police, the accused individuals, identified as members of an organized car theft group, were apprehended by the police following a thorough investigation. The operation also resulted in the recovery of six additional vehicles believed to have been stolen by the same group. The diligent efforts of the police team involved tracing the inter-district gang of car thieves through a combination of CCTV footage analysis and human intelligence. Subsequent raids were conducted in various areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Landi Kotal, Charsadda, and Peshawar, leading to the apprehension of key suspects Yasir and Tariq.



LAHORE: Students Organization showing solidarity with Palestine during a All-Pakistan Parties Conference held in Provincial Capital.



KARACHI: A large number of candidates lining up for the entry test for Sindh Services Commission jobs in NED University, in the Provincial Capital.

KP law minister announces Rs 2m for Aghosh to help orphans

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate on Sunday said that helping welfare organizations, especially those patronizing and helping the orphans and poorest of the society were able for international award. This he said while addressing the ceremony held at Aghosh Al-Khidmat Kohat Campus as chief guest. Central PTI Leader Shehryar Khan Afridi MNA, Members Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Shafiq Jan and Shah Turab Khan, Aghosh Al-Khidmat Kohat chief Hafiz Abid Hamad and other notables also addressed the event. The ceremony beside others was also attended by the former MPA Muhammad Ali, important religious, political and social figures of Kohat, elders of the area, staff and students of the institution in large numbers. The law minister maintained that participating in a ceremony of this important welfare institution of his native district as chief guest was a matter of great honor and pride for him, for which he was personally grateful to its organizers.

Escalating Tobacco Tax by 37% proposed by SPDC & WHO to save lives, boost revenue

ISLAMABAD (INP): An increase of 37% in Federal Excise Duty (FED) on tobacco products has been proposed by the Social Policy Development Centre (SPDC) to reinforce the gains already achieved and to advance further in enhancing public health outcomes and revenue collection.

"Pakistan can save as many as 265,000 lives, generate an additional revenue of Rs 37.7 billion and push 757,000 people

to quit smoking through increasing the FED by 37 percent," said the SPDC policy paper name "Recovering Healthcare Costs and Saving Lives" that aligns recommendation of World Health Organization (WHO) and Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK).

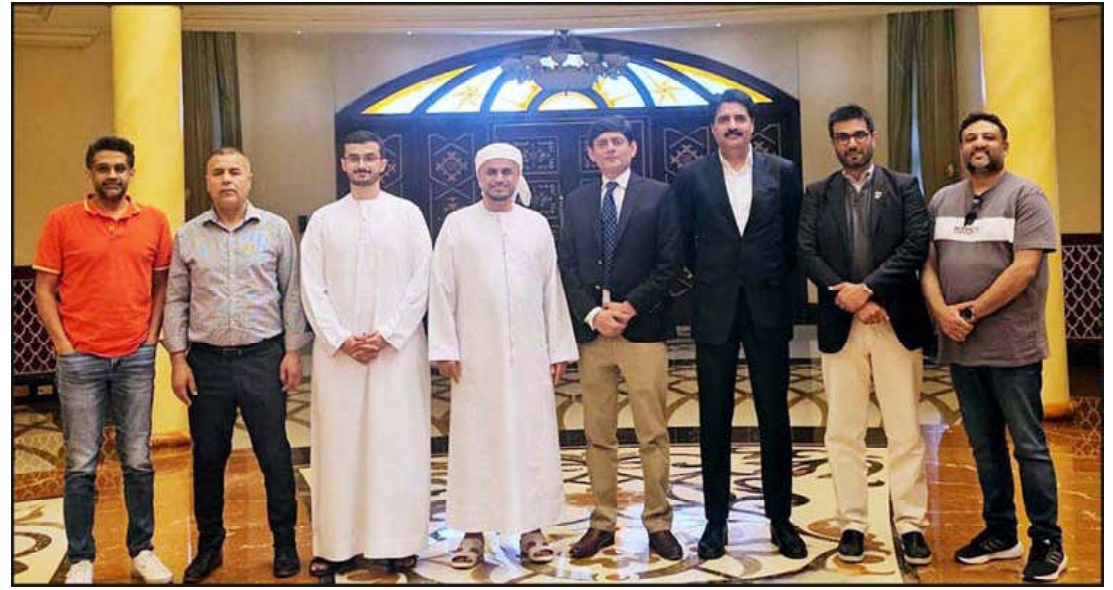
The SPDC proposal comes when the government prepares to outline its budgetary agenda, in a bid to prioritize public health and economic

prosperity through targeted tobacco tax reforms. Pakistan has two-tiered system of FED on cigarettes. The country made significant strides and increased the FED on cigarettes in 2022-23 with substantial increase in FED. The current FED share in retail prices is 48 percent and 68 percent respectively for low and high tiers. The SPDC has warned of negative effect on both the revenue and public health efforts if the

rates (FED) were not increased and trend was not maintained. Therefore, it advocated to further adjust the FED in line with international standards, to take the tax share of retail prices towards 70 percent.

The proposal seeks to take the FED share to 54 percent or Rs 154 and 72.1 percent or Rs 452 for economy and premium brands, respectively.

The proposal is backed by the gains of previous tax adjustments.



DUBAI: A team of Pakistan's Consulate in Dubai headed by Ali Zeb Khan, Trade & Investment Counsellor received by H.E. Mohammed Khalifa Bin Dhaen Al Mheiri, Group Chairman Bin Dhaen Holding & Chairman of Jumeira University at Khalifa Bin Dhaen Majlis, Zabeel Dubai.



RAWALPINDI: Vice Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Mian Aslam addressing the protest sit-in organized to express solidarity with the farmers.

SNGPL executives and engineers demand removal of disparities in salaries

Independent Report ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: The junior and middle executives and engineers of the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited have demanded removal of certain disparities in salaries and implementation of the policies approved in the HR Manual.

In a representation addressed to the SNGPL Managing Director dated April 20, 2024, the SNGPL junior and middle executives and engineers said that they had been the most deprived segments of the organization as they had been struggling hard to meet their daily needs owing to the company's ironic compensation packages.

These executives and engineers have to work in hostile and challenging environments with limited resources sometimes in hazardous conditions like as frequent incidents of shootings, beatings, threats, harassment and legal court cases registered against them by high profile individuals or

general public inside or outside the SNGPL premises on a repeated basis.

They underlined that even though the SNGPL has consistently been recording high profits for years, largely due to the persistent efforts of its junior and middle executives and engineers (I to VI), yet not a single penny has been granted to them from this windfall profit. Such actions and practices by the SNGPL authorities have created a sense of deprivation among the hardworking staff.

They have requested the SNGPL Managing Director to implement the policies approved in the HR Manual as well as approved time to time like as release of full CPI since financial year 2020-21; disbursement of pending portion of 50% CPI for FY 2019-20 on immediate basis; disbursement of Disparity Allowance vide circulars no. F.4(3)R-4/2011-Revision dated: 26-Jul-2021, F.4(3)R-4/2011-Revision dated: 06 Sep-2022.

Govt needs to minimize production cost, enhance exports: Anjum Nisar

ISLAMABAD (INP): replacing the lengthy procedures that involve interaction of manufacturers with various agencies. The government agencies were harassing the textile industry every day. Social Security, EOBI and other taxes should be merged and deducted at the source. He asked the government to appreciate the role of industry for its potential to harvest maximum benefits, providing mass employment to the jobless population of the country. He also sought government's attention for formulating aggressive marketing plan and hurdle-free policies as well as urgent decisions in favor of exports while taking on board major stakeholders. He called for concerted efforts for exploring new markets both traditional and non-traditional in order to introduce home made products.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that business community was facing tough challenges because of limited business; therefore, the government should formulate regional, provincial and central level task force besides chalking out sector wise regional policies which would help it to address the problems confronted by exporters.

Mian Anjum Nisar suggested that One Window Operation should be introduced for the

Power Looms Association demands special package for industry

MULTAN (APP): Power Looms Association demanded of the government to reduce prices of electricity in order to revive power looms industry.

Thousands of the people are associated with the power looms industry and they are under immense stress due to the worst crisis in this sector.

This was stated by Central Chairman Khaliq Qandeel Ansari while chairing a meeting of the Association here Sunday. He stated that thousands of extra-units were injected into electricity bills which aggravated the situation further. The power looms industry is unable to move forward due to high prices of electricity, he said.

He demanded of the government to introduce special package for the industry. He also called for action against employees of Meeco who were responsible for extra billing.

On this occasion, Chairman Haji Bashir Pehlwan, Muhammad Younis, Sanaullah Ansari, Farhan Shani and many others were also present.

PFC to take part in Riyadh Intel. expo

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will take part in a 3-day Riyadh international expo starting from May 21 to explore business opportunities and find new global markets. PFC Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq stated this in a meeting with a delegation of furniture manufacturers and exporters led by Muhammad Arah here on Sunday. He said: "This fair attracts thousands of global exhibitors, investors, importers, exporters and buyers from all over the world which showcase their products."

He said PFC would exhibit its international quality products to capture their share in international market. It is an excellent opportunity to showcase Pak products and develop business deals with international buyers.

FBR set plan to register shopkeepers through its own staff

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has announced plan to automatically register shopkeepers through its own staff who remained evaded to participate in the Trader-Friendly Scheme. Media reports indicate that millions of traders across the country evade direct tax payments, prompting the FBR to initiate measures to address registration discrepancies.

Surveys will be conducted nationwide to facilitate registration, with dedicated teams deployed for on-the-spot registration checks. Specialized teams will conduct field visits in

respective cities to oversee the registration process.

Traders were offered the opportunity to contribute to the country's economy through minimal tax payments under the Trader-Friendly Scheme. However, apprehensions about being ensnared in the tax net led many traders to refrain from registration altogether. Despite the expiry of the registration deadline for the FBR's Trader Dost Scheme, millions of traders remain outside the tax net.

In light of the lack of trader participation, the FBR has decided to take action against non-registrants under the scheme.



MULTAN: Farmer family busy in their routine work in the field.

CARs in Pak currency KP exporters demand incentives over export of goods to Afghanistan

PESHAWAR (APP): All Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Exporters Association has demanded of government to announce incentives over exporting of goods to Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs) in Pak rupees along with establishing a legal channel to avoid complications and inquiries by law enforcing agencies in receiving payments.

The demand was made at a meeting held at Landikotal city of Khyber District with President KP Exporters Association, Haji Jabir in the chair.

Others who attended the meeting included Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi, Director PAJCCI, Imtiaz Ahmad Ali, General Secretary KP Exporters, Ashfaq Shinwari, SVP Haji Nisar Shinwari, VP Mujeeb Shinwari, Secretary Legal

Affairs, Amir Afridi and others.

The participants of the meeting also demanded to convert trade of 16 items from PKR to US dollars because State Bank of Pakistan has well established set up for payment of rebate in US dollars and not in Pak rupees.

They were of the view that exporters are exporting these 16 items to Afghanistan and Central Asia in Pak currency and they are not given any rebate over this.

Along with this they also expressed grave concern over legal complications in receiving export proceeds declared in PKR at the time of custom clearance.

In export through US dollar, government pays a rebate and the same practice should be adopted in export through PKR, they reiterated.



SARGODHA: A vendor displaying loquat on his cart to attract the customers.

Excessive water, pesticide use dampens soil productivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): WWF-Pakistan, with funding from the Laudes Foundation, launched the Regenerative Production Landscape Collaborative (RPLC) Pakistan to drive new business models and farming practices that holistically tackle current challenges faced by smallholder farmers and address the environmental issues resulting from unsustainable practices.

Supported by textile and food brands, RPLC Pakistan will be implemented in the Jhang and Sahiwal districts of Punjab and Barkhan and Lasbela districts of Balochistan. The initiative offers a demonstrable approach to landscapes

that has already seen success in India, Brazil, and Tanzania.

Speaking at the launch event, the Director General, WWF-Pakistan, Hammad Naqi Khan shared that the initiative addresses the long-term challenges of unsustainable agricultural practices in Pakistan. Highlighting that agriculture faced major issues of excessive use of water, chemicals and pesticides impacting the crop and soil productivity, which is further aggravated by climate change, he noted that this has led to increasing vulnerabilities of local communities and smallholder farmers.

"To address these challenges, this initiative

NPO launches program for development of gemstone sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Productivity Organization (NPO) initiated a technical assistance program for the gemstone sector in collaboration with the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Tokyo, Japan for the development of sector.

Consultancy and workshops focused on gemstone identification, certification, cutting and polishing techniques with experts from the Gems and Jewelry Institute, Thailand, said a press release issued here Sunday.

Sessions held in Peshawar, Gilgit, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and

Lahore aimed to enhance stakeholder capacity and foster economic growth through knowledge sharing and skill development.

The program involved industry professionals, associations and international experts, promoting collaboration and economic prosperity in the gems and jewelry sector.

The experts shared knowledge and hands-on skills and practices for enhancing the capacity of the stakeholders, paving way for broader collaboration and propelling towards sustained economic prosperity.

The objective is to promote international standards in gemstone products; provide comprehensive knowledge of cutting, polishing, designing and heating techniques; and enhance understanding of best practices and technological advances in gemstone value chains. Engage relevant associations such as PGJTEA, APCEA and PGMA, industry experts, business professionals involved in the sector with the international experts to learn latest techniques and processes thereby leading to overall productivity enhancement within the sector.

SNGPL disconnects 12 connections of gas pilferers

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) teams took action against twelve more gas pilferers and disconnected their connections. According to the details, a customer was found using a household meter for a generator and hospital machinery at Amin Hospital Burewala, on which the task force team disconnected his meter. Likewise, five connections of consumers were removed in Burewala for being illegally installed far away from the required distance.

FPCCI urges urgent action amidst Pakistan's economic situation

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Former Federal Minister and Acting patron in-chief of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) S M Tanveer on Sunday outlined the severity of the country's economic challenges, citing the uncontrollable electricity rates and the closure of industries not only in KPK but also in other parts of the country.

He expressed these views while addressing a seminar organized by the Abbottabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(ACCI) and the Industrialist Association.

S.M. Tanveer compared this situation with the progress being made by neighboring country Afghanistan in promoting industry and textiles to boost its economy.

He stressed the urgent need for action to address these issues, particularly emphasizing the untapped potential of the Hazara region's natural resources.

The seminar was attended by the President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh.



LAHORE: People are buying secondhand items in Sunday weekly bazaar at Shadman area, in the Provincial Capital.

Wheat Crisis: JI holds rally to support farmers

MULTAN (APP): Jamat-e-Islami (South Punjab) took out rally to express solidarity with farmers and stressed upon government to purchase wheat from farmers at the earliest.

The rally was led by Ameer Jamat-e-Islami south Punjab Rao Muhammad Zafar. The rally participants were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans in support of the peasants. Rao Muhammad Zafar while addressing the participants stated that Jamat-e-Islami

PED committed to collaborate with Kyrgyzstan: Meher

LAHORE (APP): Honorary Consul of Kyrgyzstan Meher Kashif Younis said that Punjab Education Department (PED) was committed to fostering collaboration and support with Kyrgyzstan to enhance their higher educational disciplines, particularly in the realm of technical education, aligning with global standards.

Talking to the media, he said that a high-level

joint delegation of the consulate of Kyrgyzstan and Gold Ring Economic Forum (GREF) comprising the GREF Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Sikander Afzal, President Engineer Hasnain Reza Mirza and he himself had a fruitful and result-oriented meeting with Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat and worked out possibilities modalities of cooperation with Kyrgyzstan.



CHINIOT: Farmers busy in threshing wheat crop in their field at Jhang Road.

Russia accuses Nato of preparing for conflict

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Nato's four-month-long military exercises near Russia's borders...

through May. Russia said at the time the drills marked an 'irrevocable return' of the alliance to Cold War schemes.



Palestinian children look up as they walk at the site of an Israeli strike on a house, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Gaza truce talks resume in Cairo without Israel

Monitoring Desk GAZA STRIP: Talks resumed in Egypt on Saturday aimed at halting months of war in Gaza between Hamas and Israel...

Colombia breaks diplomatic ties with Israel

Monitoring Desk BOGOTA: Colombia has become the latest Latin American country to announce it will break diplomatic relations with Israel...

Canada has 'political compulsion' to blame India for murder of Sikh separatist: New Delhi

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Canada's investigation into alleged Indian involvement in the killing of a Sikh separatist in Vancouver last year is a 'political compulsion'...

India tries to put the ball in Canada's court

Monitoring Desk BHUBANESWAR: India will wait for Canadian police to share information on the three Indian men it has arrested and charged with the murder of a Sikh separatist leader last year...



France's Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, China's President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan walk under umbrellas upon their arrival for an official two-day state visit, at Orly airport, south of Paris.

China's Xi praises French ties as Macron prepares to talk trade

Monitoring Desk PARIS: President Xi Jinping lauded China's ties with France as an international model on Sunday as he arrived in Paris for a rare visit against a backdrop of mounting trade disputes with the EU.

North Korea's UN ambassador says new sanctions monitoring groups will fail

Monitoring Desk SEOUL: Efforts led by the US and other Western countries to form new groups to monitor sanctions on North Korea will fail, the country's UN envoy said on Sunday...

Russia hits Ukraine regions, Zelenskiy says Su-25 bomber downed

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Russian attacks on Ukraine's Kharkiv and Dnipro regions and the Black Sea port city of Odesa killed at least two civilians, set a food factory ablaze and damaged other infrastructure...

Israeli police raid Al Jazeera after shutdown order

Monitoring Desk JERUSALEM: Israeli police raided a Jerusalem hotel room used by Al Jazeera as its de facto office on Sunday following a government decision to shut down the Qatari-owned TV station's local operations...



People are rescued by residents after the floods in Canoas, at the Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil.

Israeli private eye arrested in London over alleged hacking for US firm

Monitoring Desk LONDON: An Israeli private investigator wanted by the United States was arrested in London over allegations that he carried out a cyberespionage campaign on behalf of an unidentified American PR firm...

Poland wants best ties with US no matter who's in power

Monitoring Desk WARSAW: Poland wants 'the best possible relations with America, regardless of who is in power,' Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said during a visit to Washington...

Bangladesh reopens schools as searing temperatures drop

Monitoring Desk DHAKA: Schools in Bangladesh reopened on Sunday and classes were continuing over the weekend after a searing heatwave a week ago that suspended lessons as the country baked in temperatures that surged to well over 40 degrees Centigrade.

Netherlands remembers World War Two dead amid tight security

Monitoring Desk AMSTERDAM: Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Prime Minister Mark Rutte joined around 4,000 people on Saturday for the country's annual World War Two remembrance ceremony amid restricted public access and heightened security due to the war in Gaza.

Gaza needs biggest post-war reconstruction effort since WWII: UN

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

Brazil mounts frantic rescue effort as flooding kills 66

Monitoring Desk RIO GRANDE DO SUL: Authorities in southern Brazil raced against the clock on Sunday to rescue people from raging floods and mudslides that have killed at least 66 and forced more than 80,000 to flee their homes.

Ukraine marks its third Easter at war under fire from Russian drones

Monitoring Desk KYIV: As Ukraine marked its third Easter at war, Russia launched a barrage of drones concentrated in Ukraine's east and claimed its troops took control of a village they had been targeting.

Students in Ireland and Switzerland join Gaza protest wave

Monitoring Desk DUBLIN: Students at Trinity College Dublin and Lausanne University in Switzerland have staged occupations to protest against Israel's war in Gaza, joining a wave of demonstrations sweeping US campuses.



People attend an Orthodox Easter service in the town of Kostiantynivka, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, near a front line in Donetsk region, Ukraine.

